



# FOREST HILLS

## MEMORY GARDENS

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*A member of the Farris Service Group*

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### **A Message from the Farris Family to the Owners and Visitors of Forest Hills**

Today, you are receiving a new flower and decoration policy and we wanted to take a moment with this letter to explain the thoughts and rationale for making these changes because we realize the consequences for us all. From 12 burials in 1962, to 6,000 burials as of May 2010, things have changed and our upkeep and mowing challenges along with them.

First, let us say that we empathize with you because we too are property owners and visitors of this cemetery. We have parents, grandparents, several cousins, a niece and three infant children that are buried in Forest Hills. This cemetery is equally special to us and we visit our loved ones and grieve just like so many who have entrusted their loved one to the perpetual care at Forest Hills. Like you, we have used solar lights, wind chimes, potted plants, trinkets and shepherd's hooks to decorate our family's graves.

Secondly, this new flower and decoration policy is more confining than those over the past fifty years. Since its inception, the policies here have been an evolving and changing document that is referenced in our contracts and Deeds that you have received.

We have tried to allow families freedom in decorating their loved ones grave; however, it has become necessary to make changes for the following reasons:

1. **Safety of our visitors:** we must be able to provide a safe environment for the public to park and walk around the cemetery. We have had a visitor recently cut by broken glass, a car door damaged by flying debris from a mower, and a lady trip and fall on a shepherd's hook. Small and breakable items have never been allowed but regretfully tolerated. We will now be more diligent in removing all items in violation so please help us by complying with these policies.
2. **Safety for our employees and equipment:** we also must be able to provide a safe working environment. We fall under Worker Compensation laws and OSHA (Occupational Safety). In the past, we have employees injured trying to take care of the cemetery. Three weeks ago, an employee was hit in the leg by flying debris from a mower that cut through his pants and lacerated his leg. We have also had countless flat tires caused by various wires and decorations.
3. **Efficiency:** the public and Virginia Cemetery law expects us to mow and maintain the cemetery. We cannot do so if we have to stop countless times every week to move and/or relocate decorations by stopping and starting mowing equipment.

Thus, for liability reasons as advised by our lawyer and insurance agent; to be in compliance with state and federal worker safety codes, and to improve the overall appearance of the cemetery and reduce mowing time, we hereby place enforce this new flower and decoration policy beginning **July 1, 2010**.