



The County of Chester
RECORDER OF DEEDS
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For Immediate Release
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Photo Information: Some photos attached and additional available upon request.

**Chester County Officials and Community Organizations
Commemorate Veteran Gravesites at Coatesville Cemetery**

COATESVILLE, PA – The Chester County Recorder of Deeds and Veteran Affairs departments, along with the Chester County Commissioners and several community organizations, commemorated deceased veterans and placed flags and markers on their gravesites at Old Evergreen Cemetery in Valley Township in observance of Memorial Day on Wednesday, May 26th.

Old Evergreen Cemetery (203 Cemetery Rd, Coatesville, PA 19320), formerly known as “Evergreen Colored Cemetery,” was originally constructed during a time when segregation was still prominent in the United States and thus contains gravesites solely of African Americans, many of whom belonged to the Hayti (pronounced Hay-tie) community of Valley Township. It was filled to capacity in the 1960s prior to the founding of the adjacent New Evergreen Cemetery adjacent. Ownership of the cemetery has remained ambiguous over decades and thus gone abandoned and unattended, except by the Graham family who has descendants interred on-site and various other volunteers who have done their best to care for the grounds over the years.

The ceremonies began with a brief introduction and welcome by Master of Ceremonies and Chester County Recorder of Deeds Chris Pielli, followed by the Presentation of Colors by the Coatesville Area Senior High School Air Force Junior Reserve Office Training Corps (AFJROTC) PA-771 Cadets and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Bradbury Camp #149 while vocalist and Recorder of Deeds’ Special Projects Coordinator Kim Bydlon performed the national anthem a cappella. Then, a solemn moment as volunteer cemetery caretaker Teresa Graham and Chester County Prothonotary Debbie Bookman and her daughter (an AFJROTC Cadet) placed a wreath on the site to the sound of Taps played by V.F.W. Post #287 Bob McGonigle.

Following ceremonies, attendees heard from an array of speakers including U.S. Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan, Commissioner and Chairwoman Marian Moskowitz on behalf of the Chester County Commissioners, PA State Representative Dan Williams (District 74), Valley Township Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Patrice Proctor and Volunteer Cemetery Caretaker Teresa Graham. The final commemoration featured the spectators, contributors and participants placing flags and markers on 50 veteran gravesites.

The Recorder of Deeds is the county-elected official responsible for managing the repository for real estate records, military discharges and other official documents in Chester County. The office recorded its first deed in 1688.

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