



COUNTY OF CHESTER
OFFICE OF RECORDER OF DEEDS
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CHRIS PIELLI, Esquire, Recorder
Erin VanRyn, First Deputy

NANCY W. PINE, Esquire, Solicitor
Diane O'Dwyer, Second Deputy

— **MEDIA ALERT** —

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

WHAT: In observance of Memorial Day, officials from the County of Chester will join several community organizations in placing flags and markers on veteran gravesites at the Old Evergreen Cemetery in Coatesville. The idea for the event began as a collaborative venture between Recorder of Deeds Chris Pielli, a veteran of the U.S. Army; volunteer caretaker Teresa Graham and family; and Chaplain Bob McGonigle of the V.F.W. Post 287 in an effort to honor local fallen heroes and unite the community. A short ceremony will commence, followed by remarks from county and local officials and the placing of flags and markers at roughly 50 gravesites by participants and local veteran and volunteer groups.

The Old Evergreen 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, just outside of Coatesville, PA. It was filled to capacity in the 1960s prior to the founding of the New Evergreen Cemetery adjacent extension.

WHO:

- Chester County Recorder of Deeds Chris Pielli and Teresa Graham & family
- Chester County Commissioners Marian Moskowitz, Josh Maxwell & Michelle Kichline
- Chester County Veteran Affairs Director Susan Price
- Elected officials to include U.S. Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan and PA State Representative Dan Williams
- Valley Township Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Patrice Proctor

WHEN: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 – 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Rain or shine (please plan accordingly).

1:00-1:15 PM: Opening Ceremonies

Filming/Photo Opportunities – Presentation of colors, wreath-laying

1:15 PM: Speaker Remarks (official & dignitaries)

1:40 PM: Placement of flags & markers on veteran gravesites

Note: Times are estimated. See photo and filming opportunities below to coincide with these times.

WHERE: Old Evergreen Cemetery – 206 Cemetery Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

Members of the press may park in the Attendee Parking Lot at the corner of Barber Avenue & High Street or along the southern-most part of Cemetery Road accessed from Barber Avenue (see attached map).

Cont'd on next page.



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WHY: The ownership of Old Evergreen Cemetery has remained ambiguous over decades and thus gone abandoned and unattended, except by a single family who has descendants interred on-site and local volunteers who have attempted to care for its grounds over the past several years. This memorial collaboration aims to sustain and distinguish this important historical site now and in the future.

PHOTO & VIDEO OPPORTUNITIES: Nat sound to include Presentation of Colors by the Coatesville Area Senior High School AFJROTC, singing of the national anthem a cappella by professional vocalist & Chester County Recorder of Deeds' Special Projects Coordinator Kim Bydlon. Wreath-laying ceremony by Chester County Prothonotary Debbie Bookman and family member(s) of interred veterans. Taps performed by Coatesville V.F.W. Post 287 Chaplain Bob McGonigle.

INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE WITH:

- Marian Moskowitz, Chair of the Chester County Board of Commissioners
- Chester County Commissioners Michelle Kichline and Joshua Maxwell
- Christopher Pielli, Chester County Recorder of Deeds
- Teresa Graham, Volunteer Caretaker of Old Evergreen Cemetery
- Lt. Col. James Turnbull & MSGT Christopher Sidoli, Aerospace Science Instructors, Coatesville Area Senior High School Air Force Junior Reserve Training Corps (AFJROTC)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- Coatesville Area Senior High School AFJROTC PA-771 Cadets
- Members of the Coatesville V.F.W. Post 287
- Chester County Prothonotary Debbie Bookman
- Chester County Marine Corps League Detachment #286 – Adjutant Jack Meighan
- Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Bradbury Camp #149 – Officers Andy & Brian Lefko

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Attendee Public Parking Map

