Media Contact:
Mark DePalma
Director of Marketing & Communications
Mobile: 716-440-3595
Email: mark@mdepalma.com

June 15, 2022

Lancaster Rural Cemetery Merges with the Forest Lawn Cemetery Group

Merger will assure the future of the Town of Lancaster's most historic cemetery.

(BUFFALO, NY) – Yesterday, with the approval of the New York State Division of Cemeteries and the New York State Supreme Court, the Erie County Legislature, Forest Lawn's Board of Trustees and lot owners and Lancaster Rural Cemetery's Board of Directors and lot owners, Lancaster Rural Cemetery has merged with the Forest Lawn Cemetery and Crematory Group.

The Town of Lancaster's oldest cemetery, located at the northwest corner of Cemetery Road and Broadway, will now be owned and operated by the Forest Lawn Cemetery and Crematory Group, which includes Forest Lawn, St. Matthew's Cemetery in West Seneca, Lakeside Cemetery in Hamburg, two cemeteries in the Village of Williamsville – Williamsville Cemetery and Gethsemane Cemetery – as well as the Forest Lawn Cremation Company.

"We are very pleased to pass the stewardship of Lancaster Rural Cemetery to the Forest Lawn Group, one of New York State's strongest, most well run not-for-profit cemetery organizations," said Lancaster Rural Cemetery's Board Secretary Audrey Keysa. This merger with the Forest Lawn Group, which has a proven track record of successful mergers with other cemeteries, will assure the future of Lancaster Rural Cemetery – keeping the promise of perpetual care made to all those who rest within our gates."

No changes to Lancaster Rural Cemetery After the Merger

"The families of those interred at Lancaster Rural Cemetery and those who own burial space here will be very pleased to know that there will be no changes to the cemetery following the merger," Keysa said. "It will be maintained by the same people who have been doing so for years, and there will be no increase in the cost of burial space or any service fees."

Forest Lawn Group President Joseph Dispenza added "Now the families of Lancaster Rural Cemetery will be able to take advantage of other benefits which are exclusively available at Forest Lawn Group cemeteries. For example, for families choosing cremation, we allow multiple cremation urns (up to 4 urns) to be buried in a single grave. That can represent a significant cost savings, but more importantly, will assure that a family can remain together forever."

(more)

"In addition, a free memorial page, where family and friends can post photos, videos, and stories about their loved one is be established on our website for every individual who is interred at any of our cemeteries. We also provide grief support to families who have lost a loved one. And we allow pets (cremated, domestic pets) to be buried with their owner in all our cemeteries," Dispenza said.

"For many years, the Board of Directors of the Lancaster Rural Cemetery Association has been proud to serve the families of those who are interred here and provide them with the finest in perpetual care," Keysa said. "We are now pleased to entrust the highly experienced and very capable leadership of the Forest Lawn Group with this sacred responsibility."

###

About Lancaster Rural Cemetery
Located at the northwest corner of Cemetery Road and Broadway, Lancaster Rural Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in the Town of Lancaster. It was formed from a plot of land donated in 1808 by Captain James Clark, one of the original settlers of Cayuga Creek Settlement, later to be known as Lancaster. The first burial took place in March 1812. In 1870 the Lancaster Rural Cemetery Association was formed to ensure the continued care and upkeep of the hallowed lands. The Board of Directors of the Association continues to this day to oversee the use and maintenance of the cemetery. This non-profit, non-sectarian cemetery is the final resting place for many of the original settlers of the area as well as veterans of our nation's wars, and the many families who gave us our Lancaster heritage. The cemetery is also one of a few in the area privileged to be the resting place for many Revolutionary War veterans.

About the Forest Lawn Cemetery & Crematory Group
The Forest Lawn Cemetery and Crematory Group is a non-profit cemetery organization that includes five cemetery properties which provide perpetual care for nearly 245,000 people who rest within the gates of our cemeteries, as well as New York State's most active crematory.
- **Forest Lawn** in Buffalo is one of the first deliberately designed and professionally landscaped rural cemeteries in the United States – the only local full-service cemetery for cremation and traditional casketed arrangements listed on the State and National Registries of Historic Places. As a destination for art, history and genealogy research, Forest Lawn's 269 acres offer year-round guided tours, educational programming, an annual flag retirement ceremony, countywide special veteran programming on Memorial Day and Veterans Day and more. For more information, visit www.forest-lawn.com.
- **Lakeside Cemetery** is a 220 acre historic cemetery in the Town of Hamburg that merged with Forest Lawn in 1998.
- **Williamsville Cemetery** located in the heart of the Village of Williamsville, this nearly 8 acre cemetery merged with Forest Lawn in 2001.
- **St. Matthew's Cemetery** in West Seneca is a neatly 80 acre nondenominational cemetery that serves the needs of all faiths. It was acquired by the Forest Lawn Group in 2008.
- **Gethsemane Cemetery i**n the Village of Williamsville was acquired by the Forest Lawn Group in 2018. It was once a private cemetery reserved exclusively for burial of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann communities. It is now open to people of all faiths.
- **Forest Lawn Cremation Company** (formerly Buffalo Cremation Company, Ltd.), which was acquired by Forest Lawn in 2012, is believed to be the oldest continuously operated crematory in the United States.