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Restoration Continues

Friends Undertakes Three New Projects

Friends of Hollywood Cemetery has initiated a fundraising campaign that will provide for restorations involving the Harvie Plot, the Lawn, and iron fencing in Section K.

“Each of these priority projects involve historically significant parts of the cemetery that have fallen into disrepair with the passage of time,” said Kelly Wilbanks, the nonprofit’s Executive Director. “We hope to bring them back to their full glory with the help of our supporters.”

Fundraising is already underway thanks to gifts totaling \$42,500 from the **Richard & Caroline T. Gwathmey Trust** and the **Windsor Foundation Trust** to support the renovation of the Harvie Plot.

The Harvie Plot (\$150,000)

The Harvie Plot pre-dates the creation of Hollywood and includes a brick walled-in area, visible on a hill



Current entrance to the Harvie plot area

overlooking Westvale Avenue. “Within, and without, these walls rest members of the family of Col. John Harvie, 1742-1807,” reads a plaque.



Brick wall around Col. John Harvie family plot to be repointed

The section is made up of 12 large family lots where nearly 100 Harvie family members are buried including Col. Harvie, a signer of the Articles of Confederation and the Bill of Rights and lifelong friend of Thomas Jefferson; his wife, Mary, the daughter of Chief Justice John Marshall; and their son, Jaquelin.

“Hollywood purchased 43 acres from the Harvie family to develop the cemetery. One contingency of the sale was that Hollywood would maintain the Harvie burial grounds that were part of the land purchase,” said David Gilliam, Hollywood’s General Manager.

Currently, the plot is hidden away, and visitors enter it by way of dilapidated steps. The \$150,000 project will create a safer entry and help the plot stand out more.

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New Projects (continued)

Plans include adding a cobblestone pavement on the road to mark the entrance, resetting the stairs and adding a handrail, improving and extending a cobble retaining wall, repairing the brick walled enclosure, and installing a new plaque.

“We feel it is time to call attention to this area of the cemetery,” said Gilliam.

The Lawn (\$150,000)

Located near Davis Circle, and overlooking the river, the Lawn is a familiar site to visitors. The area is home to the Branch lot, with its dramatic sculpture of a mourning woman leaning against a cross; the grave of Japanese businessman Tokukichiro Abe; and numerous mausoleums set into the hillside, including those of the Sauer, Robins, and Gray families. In the middle, an elliptical area is divided by concrete sidewalks.



View of the Lawn at Hollywood

“To me, it is ironic that a sidewalk was installed in a section called the Lawn. It is the only section in the cemetery where the walkways were not left as grass,” said Gilliam.

The Lawn was created in 1893 with a stipulation common in modern cemeteries of the time: Each plot could have only one upright monument with the family’s name; the rest of the markers had to be flush to the ground to designate individual burial spaces.



Current concrete walkways

“This was the first section in the cemetery in which this design was implemented. It was a step away from having granite borders around lots and numerous upright monuments within the lot,” said Gilliam. This was meant to streamline the look of one’s family plot, so it was uncluttered and made perpetual care easier for the cemetery.

The \$150,000 project will provide for the removal of the old sidewalks, the restoration of the walkway to a grass path, and the addition of granite curbs and cobblestone paving to tie in the Lawn with more recently renovated sections of the cemetery. To meet the demand for more burial sites, 230 cremation niches will be installed in the area by Hollywood Cemetery Company.



Rendering of new cobblestone apron and grass walkways

Finally, an existing water feature and planting will be removed, allowing space for sculpture, new plantings, or additional burial sites.

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New Projects (continued)

Restoration of Iron Fences in Section K (\$275,000)

According to Gilliam, the cemetery began a project to preserve and restore iron fencing in the early 1990's. Funding in recent years has enabled the cemetery to continue this restoration.

The cemetery has recently turned its attention to Section K, the site of the first burial in Hollywood following its establishment. Located near Presidents Circle, Section K also stands out for its ornate cast iron fencing—part of a plan to boost sales in 1854.

According to John O. Peters in his book *Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery*, Hollywood's board "was so convinced of the appeal of decorative ironwork that, in March 1854, it entered into an agreement with the firm of Bowers, Snyder, & Carter to enclose eight unsold lots in section K with iron railing."



Mitchell Fence in Section K

Gilliam observed that "the fencing appealed to families because it separated them from other family plots. It likely proved to be costly to the cemetery as this was not carried out for a long period of time."

Sadly, as with other sections of the cemetery, time, weather, and the shifting tree roots of mature trees have taken a toll on the iron and stonework in Section K. Friends is raising \$275,000 to restore the iron fences framing sections of the Womble and Mitchell Plots and repair the damaged stonework.

"In the Womble plot at the center of Section K was the biggest magnolia I've ever seen, about 5 feet in diameter. It pushed stones up, knocked the fence down. I had to have patterns made to recast some of those pieces," said

Robert Chase, who is the principal of the Richmond-based firm Chase Architectural Metal. Approximately 10% of the ironwork will be recast.

Each fence section weighs about 250-300 pounds and had to be brought to the studio and back on flat-bed trucks and trailers, then carted to the site on ATVs.

The funding will support the restoration of 655 feet of iron fencing as well as stonework in sections 77-92 of the Womble plot. Some of that fencing has significant deterioration and is missing four gates, nine finials, and numerous posts.

Funds will also provide for the restoration of "the opulent fence surrounding the Mitchell lot, which features an unusual double gate inverted torches and Gothic tracery," said Chase. The project will involve about 160 linear feet of fencing in sections 93-96.

All restorations will be completed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

How to help

Wilbanks appreciates the generosity of the **Gwathmey Trust** and the **Windsor Foundation**. "These lead gifts from our longtime supporters have helped us launch the campaign and create excitement," she said. "We now hope others who love Hollywood Cemetery will join us as we move forward in this important campaign."

If you would like to learn more about making a tax-deductible donation to these projects, please contact Wilbanks at (804) 648-8501 or by email at kwilbanks@hollywoodcemetery.org.

Does the name sound familiar?

Chase Architectural Metal's many notable projects include those commissioned by the VMFA, the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Thomas Jefferson's cemetery — as well as the restoration of President James Monroe's tomb ("the birdcage") in Hollywood Cemetery.

Meet the new Co-owners of Van Yahres Tree Company

A Family Legacy of Excellence: Meet the new co-owners of the Van Yahres Tree Company.

Shana Clarke and Jake Van Yahres grew up in a tree-focused family.



Shana Clarke (with a brand new vest)

“When we would go on family vacations in New York, we’d be walking to a museum or restaurant and Mom would say, ‘We need to walk 15 blocks this way because there’s some wonderful trees we need to see,’” said Jake with a laugh, remembering how he and his sister would groan at the extra distance.

Today the siblings are co-owners of the Charlottesville-based Van Yahres Tree Company, the arborists who tend Hollywood Cemetery’s trees. They are the fourth generation of their family to run the company, started in 1919 by their great-grandfather, George Van Yahres.

“I have met them both and they are very impressive young people. They strike me as being very sincere in their desire to carry on the family legacy of excellence in tree care,” said David Gilliam, the cemetery’s General Manager. “I have no doubt that they will continue to see that Hollywood Cemetery continues to receive excellent service in the management of our trees for another generation.”

The new owners purchased the company from their father, Mike Van Yahres, in February 2020—about four weeks before COVID-19 hit.

“We were considered an essential business, so overnight

we had to learn about developing protocols and additional safety measures to keep the company safe,” said Shana. “We’re proud to say that we managed to go through 2020 without one positive case of COVID.”

The family’s first annual contract with Hollywood Cemetery began in 1994 and has been maintained ever since with the help of VYTC’s most experienced working arborist, Jeremy Thompson. The company provides tree maintenance and care for institutional clients including Monticello, Virginia Episcopal School, and The University of Virginia as well as private estates.

Jake first began working at the cemetery during the summers when he was a student at VCU. His grandfather, Mitch Van Yahres, made the first inventory of Hollywood’s 2,000 trees. “It’s this huge notebook, with tons and tons of pages,” said Jake.



Jake Van Yahres in front of his mural “Together We Grow” in downtown Charlottesville. The mural is meant to show how trees come in all shapes and sizes, but below the surface, they grow stronger together, much like people

Mike and his wife, Peggy, both landscape architects, oversaw the digitization of the records.

“The digital tree planner allows Hollywood to more precisely and efficiently develop a maintenance plan each year,” said Shana.

The digitized records were an important part of Hollywood’s successful designation as an arboretum. The cemetery received reaccreditation in March.

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Van Yahres Tree Company (continued)



Jeremy Thompson, lead VYTC crew chief, on a limb

new tree plantings so that there are these gorgeous and legendary trees for generations to come to enjoy them.”

In Spring 2020, the company planted tulip poplars, which grow fast and provide a lot of shade, on the sunny overlook near Davis Circle. Fall 2020 saw plantings near the front of the cemetery, including Southern magnolias, arborvitae, oaks, and hollies, for which the cemetery is named.

February’s back-to-back ice storms caused significant damage to the evergreen trees in the cemetery, especially those with heavy leaves. Fortunately, the arborists had pruned the magnolias at Presidents Circle a few weeks before the first storm. While many magnolias in other parts of the cemetery lost big branches, “there was hardly a leaf on the ground” at Presidents Circle, said Jake.

“That is why preventative pruning and preventative care with these mature trees is so critical, because it can help them withstand ice and windstorms,” added Shana.

The new owners’ plan to improve

“There are a number of trees that predate the cemetery. The vision of the landscape architect that created it [John Notman] was to leave the trees there and create the cemetery within the forest,” said Jake.

Van Yahres will also plant about 120 new trees this year in the cemetery, said Shana. “It’s really important to plan for replenishment and continue with the

new tree plantings so that there are these gorgeous and legendary trees for generations to come to enjoy them.”

Jake Van Yahres Tree Fact:

A teaspoon of soil has more organisms in it than there are people on the entire planet.

<https://vytc.com/>

the digital tree planner by adding a feature that grades the trees by importance. They will also focus on preventative plant health care, including treating the ash trees for emerald ash borers.

“Once the emerald ash borers infect an ash tree, it will inevitably die unless treated,” said Shana.

They will continue their family’s environmentally friendly approaches to plant health care and tree care. For instance, they apply custom-blended nutrient treatments instead of fertilizer to the soil under the trees.

“We’re seeing so many environmental stressors on these trees, particularly in the last few years,” said Shana.

“Eighty percent of the health of a tree comes from soil. You can’t just treat the tree from the trunk up.”

The company’s custom-blended nutrient treatments are made from locally-sourced rainwater, micronutrients, enzymes and other natural conditioners, she said.

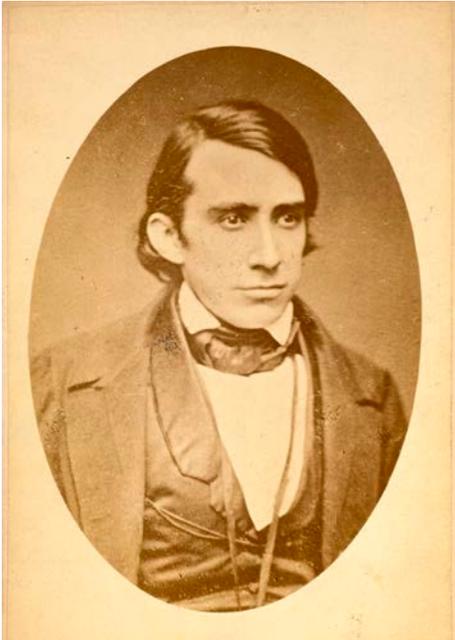
“Essentially, our nutrients are recreating the forest floor... falling exactly in line with what Hollywood was at the start.”



VYTC crew in the trees

Firebrand Editor of the 19th-Century South

The most widely read—and hated—radical southern newspaperman, John Moncure Daniel (1825-1865) ridiculed opponents throughout his brief incendiary career and spewed vitriol across the political spectrum without regard to consequences. Violence followed him: by some accounts he faced opponents in nine duels. Only when friends buried him at Hollywood the week that Confederate Richmond expired in flames were his voice and his pen silenced.



*John Moncure Daniel (1825–1865).
Credit: Virginia Museum of History &
Culture (1990.50.21)*

Born in Stafford County in 1825, Daniel drifted to Richmond, studied and abandoned law for journalism, and by the age of twenty-three became editor and owner of the new Richmond *Examiner*. His brilliant, slashing style, full of invective and sarcasm, quickly gained him notice and enemies. Within a year he was described as “an electric

battery, full charged, whose touches shocked the staid and lofty leaders in Virginia politics.” His long, raven hair, gleaming brown eyes, aquiline nose, and pugnacious, thrusting chin gave him a look befitting his irascible temperament. He was an ambitious young man “of warm attachments and bitter hatreds; above all things Southern, almost fanatically Virginian,” recalled an associate.

In 1850 an elaborate ceremony surrounded laying the cornerstone of Thomas Crawford’s grandiose equestrian statue of Washington that would dominate the upper precinct of Richmond’s Capitol Square. The editorial barbs that Daniel shot at the proceedings offended participating dignitaries, as he intended. He mocked the Sons of Temperance, “remarkable for their red noses and faces,” who turned out for the parade, and savaged the Masons for their deplorable “mummeries.” The whole

affair reeked of “essential stupidity” to Daniel’s jaundiced eye.

Dueling Editors

Two years later he and Edward Johnston, editor of the competing Richmond *Whig*, hotly disputed the merits of one of the most famous and controversial statues of the century, Hiram Powers’s *Greek Slave*. As the first sculpture of a fully nude female figure to be publicly displayed in this country, the life-sized marble figure attracted wide attention when it went on tour. The two editors agreed to resolve their differences about Powers’s work on the field of honor. In what was probably Daniel’s first duel, both fired and missed.

When Edgar Allan Poe angrily disputed terms for contributing to the *Examiner*, the volatile poet issued a challenge to Daniel. When he arrived at the newspaper office, not quite sober, Daniel coolly asked him to sit down and gestured to a brace of dueling pistols. No less temperamental than Poe, on this occasion Daniel uncharacteristically declined to fight. Later, in a review he called Poe’s words “the only records of a wild, hard life,” which shone “with the diamond hues of eternity.” But he couldn’t let the matter rest there and undercut his praise by dismissing most of Poe’s writings as mediocre. As the poet was safely dead by the time the review appeared, there was no threat of another duel.

Diplomatic Service

In 1853 President Franklin Pierce appointed Daniel chargé d’affaires at Turin, capital of the kingdom of Sardinia and the center of the Risorgimento, the drive for an independent Italy. Although critics said he shirked his duties, that may have been on account of a controversy he sparked soon after arriving when a private letter home became public. In Turin, he sniffed, the women were ugly, the men empty-headed, and the whole country stank of garlic. When an enemy had the letter translated into Italian and reprinted, it did nothing to advance his diplomatic reputation. At least he had sense to decline when the nationalist general Giuseppe Garibaldi urged him to make the city of Nice an American protectorate. More significantly, his years in Turin coincided with the wars for Italian unification, which

(continued on page 7)

Editor of the South (continued)

reinforced his belief that a unified, independent South was the only answer to the sectional crisis back home.

Daniel never married and earned the reputation as a woman hater in some quarters. But this was mistaken. He consciously cultivated a Byronic air, and during his Italian years rumors repeatedly linked him romantically with Marie, the princess de Solms, a much-married great niece of Napoleon. Her salon in the capital attracted Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas, and lesser literati. She once famously scandalized Turin high society when she arrived at a soiree on the arm of the American diplomat. In later years Daniel kept on his mantle in Richmond the self-portrait painted on ivory that she gave him as a remembrance.

The War Years

Daniel survived these contretemps for eight years, but on learning of South Carolina's secession in December 1860, he hastened back to Virginia and reasserted control of the *Examiner*. He took the most extreme proslavery position, urged immediate disunion, denounced northerners as a separate race of "incarnate demons," and sneered that the "baboon" Lincoln reached the White House by a path "strewn with condensed lumps of imbecility, buffoonery and vulgar malignity." He scorned Jefferson Davis in equally offensive terms.

Twice he served briefly as a Confederate staff officer. He loathed hardship ("I hate pain, I cannot bear it") and



French foreign legionnaires at the battle of Solferino, 1859. Daniel's residence in Turin during the wars for Italian unification helped persuade him that southern independence back home was the solution to the sectional crisis.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

took along his enslaved cook and valet to ease the discomfort of life on campaign. But he knew the benefit of army service and was rewarded with a slight wound at Mechanicsville in 1862.

He surrounded himself with other fierce young writers, including the Irish nationalist John Mitchel, who had escaped from British exile in Tasmania and quixotically supported slavery, and Edward Pollard, whose turbulent persona was "marred by episodes of sex and violence." In the luxuriously decorated apartment that Daniel outfitted above the *Examiner*'s offices, he enjoyed declaiming to his cronies about his favorite passions: secession and southern superiority.

Always of slight build and beset all his life by pulmonary complaints, Daniel died of tuberculosis on March 30, 1865, not yet forty. After a service at Second Presbyterian Church, his friends buried him near Presidents Circle overlooking the rapids of the James River. Four days later the great Evacuation Fire incinerated the business district, leaving a vast smoking ruin of ash heaps punctuated by tottering brick chimneys from Capitol Square down to the river. The Burned District encompassed nearly all the newspapers, including the *Examiner*. It, like the Confederacy, was utterly consumed, in the words of Daniel's angry, unrepentant colleague, Edward Pollard, "as a scroll in the fire!"

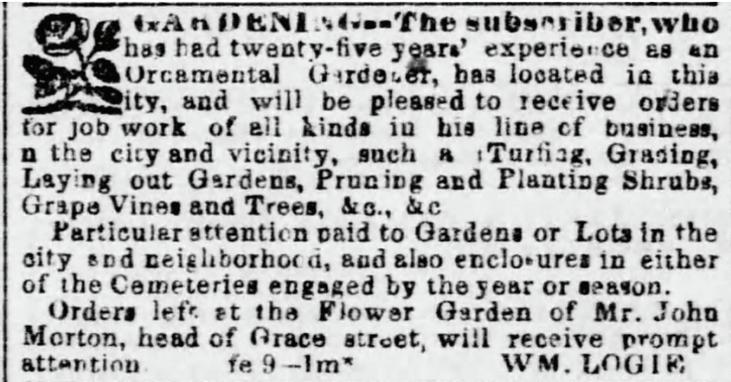
**Contributed by Nelson D. Lankford, Ph.D.,
Board of Directors, Hollywood Cemetery**



*Gravestone of John Moncure Daniel
Credit: Bill Draper Photography*

Cradle Graves (continued)

remain bare. The most famous cradle grave in Hollywood is guarded by the iron dog and belongs to Florence Bernardin Rees who was two-years-old when she died in 1862. While the Rees cradle grave does not include plant-life, it has become a tradition for visitors to leave trinkets, coins, and shells at the grave.



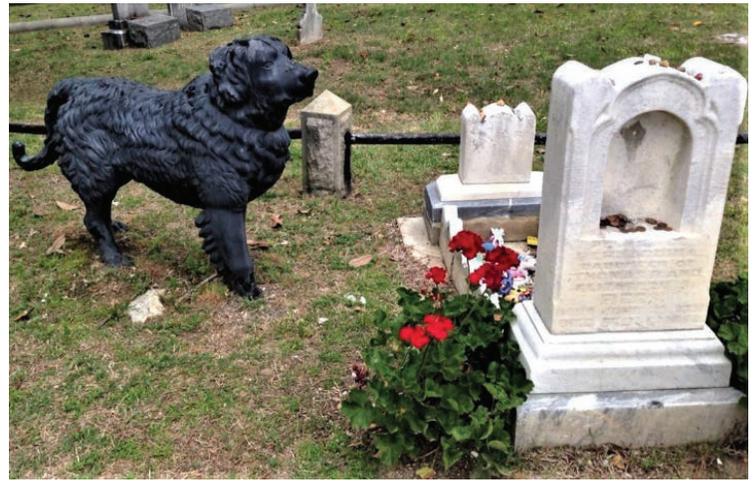
Advertisement from the Richmond Dispatch on Feb. 23, 1857. A gardener with twenty-five years of experience advertises his services for work in private gardens and in cemeteries

Cradle Graves can be found in a variety of sizes and they were not only used for children's graves. The grave of Mary Jane Wortham who was 38-years-old when she died in 1859 is nearly ten feet tall. To understand the grandness of this particular cradle grave, I asked my friend Debby Renna to take a picture. I am 5'5 and the height of the



*The grave of Mary Jane Wortham towers above the author
Photo credit: Debby Renna.*

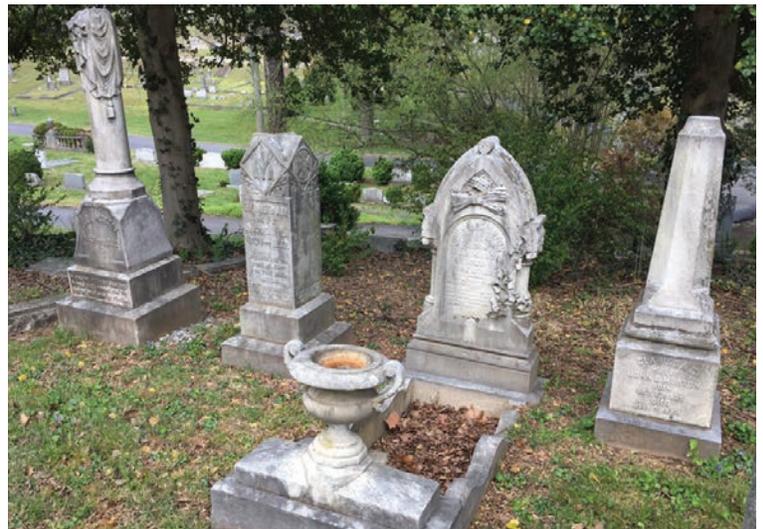
grave-marker towers above me. Wortham's grave includes engravings of a floral wreath and a flowers on both the headstone and footstone as well as an urn topped with stone florals. The side slabs are intricately carved. Her family would have tended the garden in the cradle grave as a way to process the death of a loved one and to have something grow from that loss. An already stunning work of art would be beautified with the inclusion of a flower bed.



The cast-iron Newfoundland stands over the cradle grave of a little girl who died in 1862

The cradle grave of John B. Morton, who was 73-years-old when he passed away in 1881 demonstrates that the design was not specific to only women and children.

Rural cemeteries in the U.S. differ from those in Europe in that the focus is more on nature than sculptural design. In 2017, Hollywood was recognized as a level 1 accredited arboretum, which continues the legacy of the American rural cemetery. In recent years, rural cemeteries across the country have established gardening programs and provided workshops to help resurrect cradle graves to their intended purpose as container gardens. As more trees are planted throughout Hollywood, and the historic roses continue to thrive, one hopes to see in the coming years the cradle graves filled with lavender, rosemary, sage and flowering bulbs.



The grave of John B. Morton.

**Contributed by Sharon Pajka, Ph.D.
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We are indeed grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Friends through April 8, 2021. You have enabled us to raise awareness of Hollywood and to continue vital monument and fence restoration. Thank you for helping us to preserve Hollywood Cemetery for generations to come.

Ed

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Entrance to Hollywood Cemetery postcard, ca. 1905, V.2019.04.621, The Valentine

Just in time for spring and summer, a new exhibit – ***Breathing Places: Parks & Recreation in Richmond*** – opens at the Valentine on May 5!

In 1851, Richmond’s Committee on Public Squares recommended “securing breathing places in the midst of the city...” Since then, the region has developed “breathing places” for some residents while limiting and denying access to others. ***Breathing Places*** explores the design, use and change of Richmond’s carefully crafted parks, recreation areas and natural spaces and their effect on the region’s residents today.

For more information, see <https://thevalentine.org/exhibition/breathing-places-parks-recreation-in-richmond/>

2021

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2021

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**412 South Cherry Street
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*A new fountain comes to life in the restored Glade section
Credit: Bill Draper Photography*