

## **The Fielder Flash**

Arlington Historical Society

May 2023 Newsletter



### **Our Venues**

**Fielder Museum** | 1616 W. Abram Street

**Knapp Heritage Park** | 201 W. Front Street

**Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds** | 600 W. Arkansas Lane

### **Contact Us**

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### **A note from the editor**

Earlier this month, we had our Dedication Ceremony for the Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds. There was such a great turnout to celebrate and honor this historic site. This month's newsletter mainly focuses on the ceremony. Check out our Facebook page for more photos!

**Jason S. Sullivan, 05-25-23**

Newsletter Editor

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### **Upcoming Events**

- **June 14**—Saga of the Seven Seas exhibit ends at Fielder Museum
- **September 21**—North Texas Giving Day

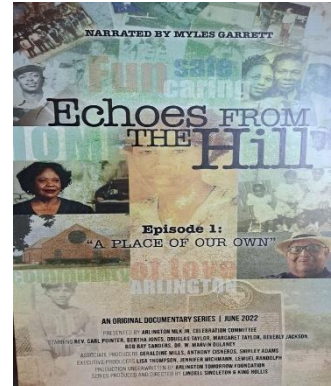


**Arlington Historical Society news**

*“Echoes From The Hill” film poster*

**“Echoes From The Hill” Screened in Fort Worth**

On April 27, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth hosted a screening of “Echoes From The Hill”—a documentary about life in The Hill, Arlington’s historic Black community. The Arlington Historical Society was heavily involved with the documentary, as our Executive Director Geraldine Mills was a producer and appeared on-screen in interviews. The production team used Fielder Museum as a filming location, and photos from our collection helped populate some of the additional footage.



This was the fourth screening of the documentary since it premiered in June 2022, with previous showings during the Arlington Juneteenth Jubilee, at UTA, and the Denton Black Film Festival. Like previous formats, the event included a screening and a panel discussion with cast members afterward. What made this screening different, and perhaps even more memorable, was the smaller audience. Only about 30 people attended, giving it a more intimate feel. The intimacy carried over into the panel discussion afterward, with the panel sharing personal stories about their experiences. There is no word yet on future screenings but expect there to be others.

**Fielder Museum news**

*Some of Artium’s art on display at Fielder*

**Artium Art Show and Sale is a Success**

Artium, a nonprofit art organization from Mansfield, held an art show and sale on April 18-22 at Fielder Museum. It was a special event, and we were excited to host them. On display and for sale were about 150 pieces of art, including photography, oil paintings, pastels, watercolors, acrylics, mixed media, woodworking, and more. These were unique and beautiful pieces by talented local artists. Artium mentioned afterward on their Facebook page that they sold lots of art, and the show was a huge success.

For more information about Artium, visit their website at [www.artiumtx.org](http://www.artiumtx.org) or follow them on Facebook at ArtiumTx DFW.



## Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds news

**Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds**, located at 600 W. Arkansas Lane, is the collective name of an area encompassing three separate historic cemeteries—the Middleton Tate Johnson Family Cemetery (est. 1850), the Mill Branch Cemetery (est. 1850), and the Colored Cemetery (est. 1900). While “colored” may seem inappropriate, that’s what they called themselves, and cemetery supporters, many of whom are Black, have been emphatic about maintaining the legacy and heritage.

The cemetery is one of the Arlington Historical Society’s venues and a City of Arlington Local Landmark. Its history is tied to the origins of Arlington, as it’s the final resting place for more than 100 people, many of whom were early settlers and pioneers of Arlington. Burials also include Colonel Middleton Tate Johnson, who founded Johnson Station; he is also known as the Father of Tarrant County and the namesake of nearby Johnson County. The cemetery has a Texas Historical Marker in his honor. Additionally, at one time, the cemetery was the only place in Tarrant County allowing burials for Black people.



*City of Arlington Local Landmark and  
Middleton Tate Johnson’s Texas Historical Marker*

Although a historic site with burials occurring from the 1850s to the 1950s, it’s been a struggle to maintain the grounds. Intermittent interest and support led the property to falling into neglect, but recently, there was a resurgence. Restoration efforts began a few years ago, and have paid off, as the site was recently re-dedicated.

On May 12, more than 100 people attended the dedication ceremony for the Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds. Arlington Historical Society Board Members, elected city and county officials, City of Arlington employees, supporters, residents, and many others were in attendance. The ceremony showed the result of much dedication and hard work. A committee was formed in 2017, with a nonprofit organization forming in 2018, working hard to honor the past, focus efforts, and turn plans into reality. It was a joint effort involving the Arlington Historical Society, the City of Arlington, Tarrant County, and others.

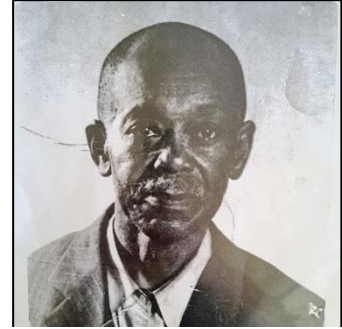
The ceremony included speeches conveying gratitude, appreciation, support, and preservation.

Chaplain Rich Stoglin, part of the AHMG Fundraising Committee, reminded us in his welcoming remarks, *“This is our history; this is Arlington, Texas.”*

In her speech, Geraldine Mills said, *“This is such a great day.”* One of the most significant moments in the ceremony was when Geraldine held up a photo of Allen Pointer (1872-1941), buried at the cemetery. Geraldine explained that Mr. Pointer was one of her greatest inspirations for getting involved in this project, noting his eyes had a story to tell. It helped humanize the project, reminding us that cemeteries—and the people buried there—have many stories to tell.



Jeff Williams, Arlington's Mayor from 2015 to 2021, also spoke at the ceremony. He praised the project as part of Arlington's can-do spirit and a poignant way to honor our past. He pointed out that the ceremony was decades in the making and took hundreds of people to get involved. He concluded his speech was his catchphrase, *"It's a great day in Arlington."* I think everyone attending the ceremony felt the same way, as it was a special day for Arlington and the history of our community.



*Allen Pointer*

Fundraising efforts, with generous grants from the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation, among others, helped transform the cemetery into a beautiful area and something of an interactive park. This was much more than picking up trash and dusting off old headstones.

The groundbreaking began in February 2019. Restoration and improvement projects included a new parking lot, exterior fencing, interior sidewalks, flagpoles, lighting, landscaping, engraving, brickwork, and a Donor Walk of Honor. Perhaps more notably, workers installed eighteen QR Codes throughout the cemetery. These can be scanned with a smartphone, allowing visitors to learn more about the cemetery and specific gravesites.



In addition to the physical upgrades, further research helped identify unmarked graves and compile information about their lives that had been lost over time—truly the project's most meaningful and challenging work. When the project began, there were 77 known graves in the cemetery; further research has identified about 30 more, for a total of 109. Not all burials have headstones, though; others are buried there but in unconfirmed locations. Further research will be needed to locate those graves and additional funds to erect headstones in their honor.

The dedication ceremony and improvements will surely raise greater awareness, which is undoubtedly needed. As Geraldine Mills pointed out in her speech, *"There is still a lot to do."* Many people on social media were interested in the dedication ceremony but didn't know much about the cemeteries. While putting together this article for the newsletter, I had to ask questions and get clarification—showing that even those in the Arlington Historical Society still have things to learn about our history.

Additionally, the Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds Corporation provided information on their website regarding further plans for the site:

*"Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds Corporation has forged an agreement with Arlington Independent School District to provide for educational opportunities through in-person, virtual, and on-site visits for teachers and students to experience the meaningful history associated with the cemetery and all who are buried there. This rich history will now be preserved forever."* – [www.ahmgc.org](http://www.ahmgc.org)

Thank you to everyone who attended the ceremony and those who worked tirelessly to make this project happen!




Photos from the Dedication Ceremony  
(clockwise from top left)

- Geraldine Mills
- Chaplain Rich Stoglin
- Former Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams
- Members of the Lucretia Council Cochran Chapter, NSDAR - Arlington, TX (Photo Credit: Fielder Museum Facebook page)
- Members of the Arlington Police Department and others (Photo Credit: Arlington Police Department Facebook page)

**Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds**  
Arlington, Texas

**I am bound to them though I cannot see into their eyes or hear their voices. I honor their history; I cherish their lives. I will tell their story. I will remember them. Say their names and they will be remembered. They are not only voices from the past, but our hope for the future.**



A photograph of the entrance to Arlington Heritage Memorial Grounds. The entrance features a stone archway with a sign that reads "ARLINGTON MEMORIAL" and "HERITAGE GROUNDS". There are several flags flying in the background.