

Tribute to Delbert and Judy Crisman

Delbert was hired by the Board of Trustees at the August 26, 1988, Board meeting to be the Sexton of the Arlington East Hill Cemetery. Although Judy was not named in the minutes of the meeting, the Board had actually hired Delbert and Judy to take care of the cemetery.

During the thirty years that they were the Sextons, there were 1,016 burials of which, they opened and closed at least 960 of them. They sold 624 burial spaces and mowed the grounds at least 868 times. They trimmed around the approximately 2,000 headstones, trees and any other obstacles at least 500 times. They installed at least 550 foundations. They installed a tile ditch in section 5 that ran all the way to the shed. They sprayed the driveways and the grass areas in the cemetery, put stone on the driveways, filled potholes, removed snow, picked up limbs, cut trees and performed so many other tasks that were needed in the cemetery grounds. They handled all phone calls and communicated with the funeral directors and all other individuals that had any dealings with the cemetery. They reported to the Board of Trustees and made recommendations regarding changes that needed to be made. They even had to fight a lawsuit that was brought against them that cost them in lawyer fees a whole year of compensation. The good news was that the court found in Delbert and Judy's favor.

But these statistics were not important to Delbert and Judy. They knew they were in the business of helping people when they were going through one of the sadist and hardest times of their lives. They made sure that the burial of the family's loved one did not create any additional problems for the family during this terrible time. When the funeral arrived at the cemetery, everything was set and ready for the grave side service.

Delbert and Judy set a goal to keep the cemetery grounds looking as neat as possible and stay within the budget. This is not an easy task. In a lot of cases, they had the weather to contend with. Sometimes, there was too much rain and other times there was not enough rain. High winds caused limbs and even trees to fall within the cemetery grounds. Sometimes, Delbert would climb into the front end loader bucket on his backhoe and Judy would operate the bucket so Delbert could cut a limb from a tree. To avoid the possibility of the mowers and

other equipment from being stolen at the cemetery, they stored the mowers in their barn and transported them to the cemetery in their trailer. You could find Delbert and Judy working in the cemetery at about all hours of the day. To avoid the heat of the day, they would mow in the evenings until dark. They have had to open graves in the rain, the snow, and when the ground was frozen. Sometimes, individuals would bring them a milkshake or something cold to drink as a jester of their appreciation for what Delbert and Judy did for the cemetery. At least once, they even had one couple bring them a meal when they were working late. During the mowing season, it was not unusual for them to eat their dinner at 9 or 10 at night. They were on call 24 hours a day seven days a week. It was very difficult for them to take a vacation without being interrupted by a phone call regarding a burial or some other matter.

Delbert and Judy were always together and they were a great team. The Association has been very fortunate in having them as the Sextons of the cemetery. There are no words that can express how much the Board and the members of the Association appreciate what they have done for the cemetery over the past thirty years. The best we can do is say thank you, Delbert and Judy, for thirty years of dedicated service and commitment as caretakers to our cemetery.

To see a picture of Delbert and Judy, click on the page named Memory Lane Photo Gallery.