



## **Maryland Cemetery Legislative Advocates (MCLA)**

Following the 2024 Maryland General Assembly session, advocates involved with cemeteries began meeting to share information about problems and challenges, review existing laws, and to agree on priorities for legislative changes to propose to the General Assembly. The working group includes individuals active in cemetery preservation, care, and maintenance as well as descendants, genealogists, and nonprofit organizations.

### **Members of Maryland Cemetery Legislative Advocates are**

- David Zinner, chair; consumer member, Office of Cemetery Oversight, coordinator of Preservation and Rehabilitation Initiative for Neglected Cemetery Entities (PRINCE), Howard County
- Candy Warden, Rosa Bonheur Society, Baltimore County
- Elinor Thompson, Genealogist, Historian, Broadneck African American Project, Anne Arundel County
- Josh Silver, Bethesda African American Cemetery Coalition, Montgomery County
- Hope Metzler, President of the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites
- Tina Simmons, Anne Arundel Genealogical Society, Anne Arundel County
- Katie Myers, President, Howard County Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board
- Eileen McGuckian, Past President of the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites and President of Montgomery Preservation, Montgomery County
- Yvonne Fisher, Chair of the Maryland Advisory Council for Cemetery Oversight, Baltimore County
- Mark Edwards, Montgomery Preservation, Inc. Montgomery County
- Greg Burton, Baltimore County Genealogical Society
- Jesse Bennet, Mt. Auburn Historic African American cemetery, Baltimore City

In the 2025 legislative session, MCLA was successful in passing a bill to establish a work group to Create the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites to study issues related to the establishment and maintenance of a unified State cemetery inventory system. The work group submitted its report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

A second bill that passed was to set up an Abandoned and Neglected Cemetery Fund. Regulations to implement that bill are being finalized.

For 2026 the MCLA is submitting two bills - one to establish a process to acquire ownership of abandoned cemeteries and turn over their care to a non-profit organization. A second bill will give descendants of those buried in a cemetery a voice when the cemetery owner intends to sell the cemetery for another use.

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