

THE

# BEECHWOOD

MAGAZINE

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# Beechwood

## Letter from the editor

Dear Beechwood Community,  
As the Director of Marketing, Communications, and Community Outreach at Beechwood Cemetery, I am constantly reminded of the incredible community that stands behind us. In this season of renewal, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you—our loyal donors—who continue to support the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation with unwavering generosity.

Despite the challenges posed by the Canada Post strike, your steadfast commitment has not gone unnoticed. Your support has reached us through every channel, and we have truly felt the power of your dedication. It is a testament to your belief in the importance of honouring Canada's history, culture, and identity through the National Cemetery of Canada.

This issue is a celebration of all that you have made possible. From enhancing the serene beauty of our grounds to supporting educational programs and remembrance ceremonies, your donations have touched every corner of Beechwood. You have helped us preserve the legacy of those who have shaped our nation and ensured that future generations have a place to reflect, learn, and remember.

Your support goes beyond donations; it reinforces Beechwood's role as a symbol of Canadian identity. As the National Cemetery of Canada, we serve as a gathering place where stories of courage, service, and community are honoured. It is your generosity that allows us to uphold this mission with integrity and compassion. In the coming months, we look forward to continuing this journey together. With your ongoing support, we will keep building on this legacy, fostering remembrance, and creating spaces for reflection and growth.

Thank you for your invaluable support. We are truly grateful for your trust and partnership in this meaningful journey.

As always, we invite you to stay connected and engaged with Beechwood:

- Facebook (@BeechwoodCemetery, @NMCBeechwood, @cimetieryBeechwood)
- X (@BeechwoodOttawa)
- Bluesky (@beechwood-ottawa.bsky.social)
- Instagram (@beechwoodcemetery)
- YouTube (Beechwood Cemetery)

We hope you enjoy this issue, knowing that each story, ceremony, and initiative within these pages was made possible because of you.

With deepest gratitude,

**Nick McCarthy**

*Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach*

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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada, and read back issues at:

### We want your feedback on how we are doing!

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# Under the Maple Leaf: A New Program and Tradition of Honour and National Identity

By Nicolas McCarthy, Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach.

From the Rockies to the coastlines of the Atlantic, from the northern lights over the North to the bustling cities across the land, one symbol flies proudly over our country: the Canadian flag. It represents more than just a country; it embodies the shared values, history, and unity of a diverse and dynamic nation.

Yet, the maple leaf, like all flags, is not immune to time. It becomes tattered by the wind, faded by the sun, and worn by the elements. When a flag can no longer fly with dignity, it deserves a respectful and honourable farewell.

To address this, Beechwood Cemetery, the National Cemetery of Canada, is launching an important new initiative: “Under the Maple Leaf – Respecting the Canadian Flag.” Supported by Heritage Canada, this program invites Canadians from coast to coast to send their old, tattered, faded, and ripped Canadian and provincial flags to Beechwood for respectful disposal.

This initiative isn't just about retiring flags; it's about reinforcing our national identity and ensuring that every flag, no matter its condition, is honoured with the dignity it deserves.

## The Importance of Proper Flag Disposal

In Canada, the maple leaf is more than just fabric; it is a symbol of unity, a testament to our shared values, and a reminder of our collective identity. It flies high at government buildings, marks moments of celebration, and offers solace during times of mourning. But when a flag becomes worn and tattered, it cannot simply be discarded.

Cremation is the only proper and respectful way to retire a Canadian or provincial flag. This dignified method ensures that the flag is honoured even at the end of its service. It is a tradition that respects the history, pride, and identity the flag represents.

At Beechwood Cemetery, our cremation facilities ensure that this process is carried out with the utmost dignity. As the steward of this national responsibility, Beechwood is committed to honouring these symbols and preserving the respect they command.

As Canadians, we owe it to our national symbols to retire them with dignity, and this initiative is about showing respect not only to the flags but also to the country and all those who live under the red and white.

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The Canadian flag has united us as a nation for 60 years, and its legacy continues to inspire pride from coast to coast to coast. Whether flying over schools, military bases, government buildings, or private homes, the maple leaf represents a shared history and identity.

“Under the Maple Leaf – Respecting the Canadian Flag” is more than just an initiative to collect and retire flags—it is a national act of remembrance, pride, and unity. It reinforces the importance of the flag as a symbol of Canada’s values: freedom, diversity, and unity.

This program also offers a chance for Canadians to reflect on the importance of national symbols in shaping our identity. By participating, Canadians contribute to a legacy of respect and national pride.

The program will culminate in an annual sunset ceremony at Beechwood Cemetery, where the collected flags will be honoured in a solemn and dignified procession. A new flag will be raised to fly proudly, representing the continuity of our national identity.

With participation from members of the RCMP, the Canadian Armed Forces and community leaders, this ceremony will symbolize our shared values and unity as a nation. It will become an annual tradition, ensuring that future generations understand the importance of honouring our national symbols with dignity and respect.

As the National Cemetery of Canada, Beechwood is uniquely positioned to lead this initiative. By providing a dignified method to retire our national and provincial flags, Beechwood ensures that we show respect to our country, our symbols, and all those who live under the red and white.

## How You Can Participate

Do you have a tattered, faded, or ripped Canadian or provincial flag tucked away at home, in your garage, or at the cottage? Now is the time to give it the dignified farewell it deserves.

Send your old flags to:

Under the Maple Leaf  
c/o Beechwood Cemetery  
280 Beechwood Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1L 8A6

or bring them to the reception desk during business hours.

Your flag will be honoured at the inaugural sunset ceremony on June 18, 2025, and then respectfully retired through cremation, ensuring it is treated with the utmost dignity.

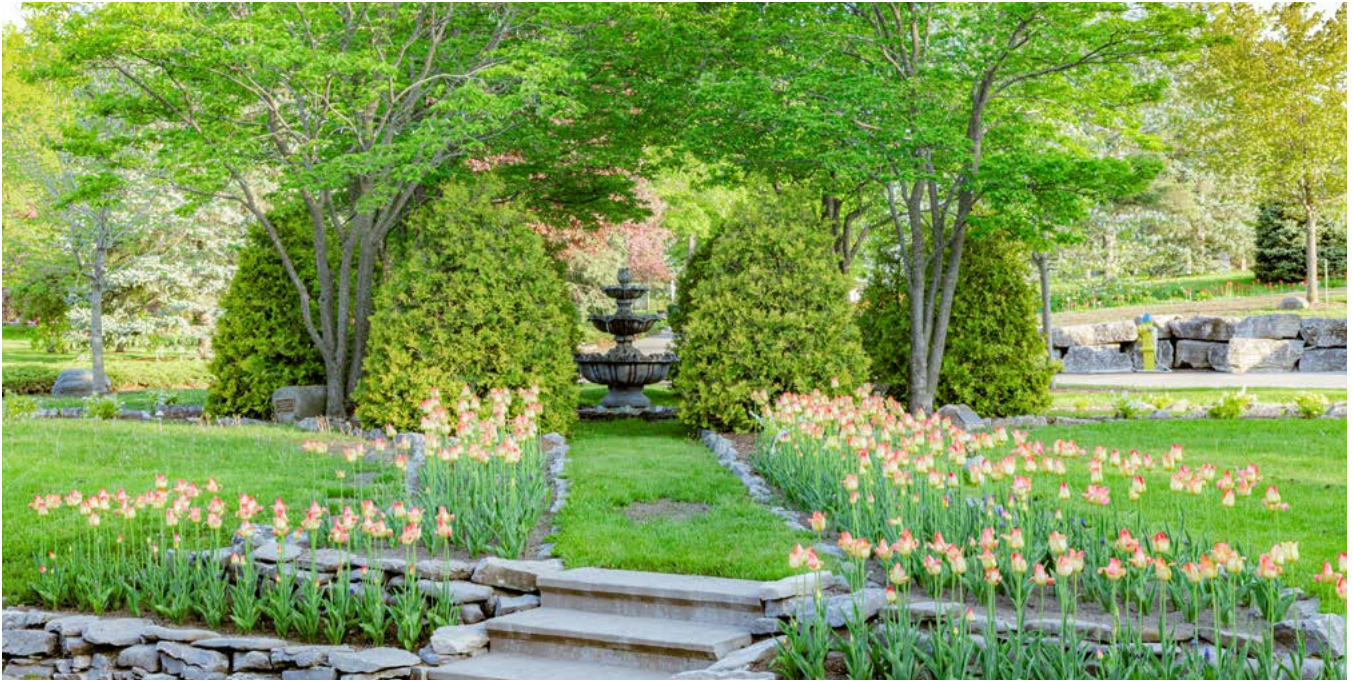
“Under the Maple Leaf” is not just about retiring flags. It is about honouring Canada’s history, celebrating our identity, and inspiring our future. It is about reminding us of the values that bind us together as a nation.

Whether you attend the ceremony, send a flag, or simply reflect on the importance of the maple leaf, your participation matters. This initiative is about bringing Canadians together under one symbol—one that represents who we are and what we stand for.

Join Us in Honouring Our National Symbols

This June, be part of this new national tradition. Help us give retired flags the respectful farewell they deserve and show your pride in the maple leaf and our provincial symbols.

Let’s Honour the Maple Leaf Together!



## Embracing the Future: Beechwood Cemetery's Latest Enhancements

By Andrew K. Roy, President of Beechwood Cemetery Company and Executive Director of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation.

At Beechwood Cemetery, our mission is clear: Honour, celebrate, and remember life by providing superior end-of-life services in a comforting environment, always striving to exceed the expectations of each family we serve. Our latest enhancements are designed with this purpose in mind, ensuring a respectful and beautiful environment while meeting the evolving needs of our community.

From new flag posts symbolizing national pride to thoughtfully designed cremation and burial spaces, these improvements reflect our commitment to honouring service to country and supporting families during times of reflection and remembrance.

### **New Flag Posts: A Tribute to Service and Sacrifice**

Flags are more than symbols—they are a tribute to service, sacrifice, and patriotism. Beechwood has proudly installed new flag posts in key sections, including the National Military Cemetery, CSIS National Memorial Cemetery, RCMP National Memorial Cemetery, and the Ottawa Police Service Memorial Cemetery.

These flag posts stand as powerful reminders of courage and commitment, honouring those who served in the Canadian Armed Forces, law enforcement, and national security. By enhancing these sacred spaces, we reaffirm our dedication to respecting the memories of those who gave so much.

### **New Columbaria in the National Military Cemetery**

To provide more choices for military families, Beechwood has completed the construction of new columbaria in the National Military Cemetery. These dignified cremation spaces offer a meaningful way for families to honour their loved ones who served our country.

Located within the serene landscape of the National Military Cemetery, these columbaria are designed to offer a place of reflection and respect, ensuring that the legacies of Canada's military heroes are preserved with dignity and honour.



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## Planning the Future: Section 109 in the National Military Cemetery

Looking ahead, Beechwood is actively designing Section 109, the future of the National Military Cemetery. Situated across from the current Section 103, this new area is thoughtfully planned to continue the tradition of honouring Canada's military service members.

By expanding the National Military Cemetery, we ensure that future generations of military families have a place of remembrance that reflects the highest standards of dignity and respect. Section 109 is a testament to our commitment to serving those who served our country.

## Section 111: Expanding Cremation Options

In response to the growing preference for cremation, Beechwood has established Section 111—a dedicated area designed specifically for cremation burials. This beautifully landscaped section provides a tranquil setting, offering families a peaceful and respectful space to honour their loved ones.

At Beechwood, we understand that every family's needs are unique, and Section 111 reflects our commitment to providing flexible and meaningful options that respect personal choices and traditions.

## Meeting Community Needs: Expanding Choices for Families

At Beechwood, we believe in providing choices that matter to our community. That's why we're exploring the development of new sections to offer even more options for families. Whether it's traditional burials, cremation options, or specialized memorial spaces, we are dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of our community.

Our focus is on ensuring that every family finds the right space to honour their loved ones with respect, dignity, and meaning.

## Beautiful Garden Spaces: A Place for Reflection and Peace

All of our enhancements are accompanied by a commitment to garden spaces that provide serenity and comfort. Our beautifully landscaped areas are designed to offer peaceful environments for reflection and remembrance.

Beechwood is dedicated to maintaining its reputation as a place of beauty and tranquillity, ensuring that every visit offers a moment of peace and reflection for families and visitors alike.

## Commitment to Service and Community

At Beechwood Cemetery, our purpose is to serve our community with compassion and respect. Our latest enhancements reflect this commitment by providing dignified spaces that honour the lives of all Canadians.

We are proud to be a place of remembrance and respect, offering a variety of options to meet the evolving needs of the families we serve.



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# A Legacy of Citizenship and Service: Honouring George Springate at the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery

By Kevin Mole, Chair of the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery Committee.

On Friday, June 27, 2025, at 10:00 AM, a historic event will take place at the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery within Beechwood Cemetery, Canada's National Cemetery. For the first time, a citizenship ceremony may be held on the grounds of a cemetery—an unprecedented and powerful setting that adds deep symbolic meaning to the occasion.

This special ceremony will not only welcome new Canadians as they take their Oath of Citizenship, but will also honour the legacy of the late George Springate, a man whose life embodied the values of public service, justice, and Canadian identity. In a place of remembrance and reflection, this event bridges the past with the future, linking the stories of those who served Canada with those who are just beginning their Canadian journey.

Holding a citizenship ceremony at a cemetery is a unique and meaningful choice. It may be the first time in Canadian history that such an event takes place in a setting dedicated to honouring those who have served and sacrificed for the nation. This historic location connects new Canadians with the legacy of service, community, and belonging, grounding them in the rich history that defines Canada.

The RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery is a sacred space that commemorates members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who dedicated their lives to duty and justice. It is a place where the values of service, honour, and sacrifice are remembered. By choosing this location, the ceremony acknowledges the continuity of Canadian identity, from those who served to those who are now pledging their allegiance.

This momentous occasion also serves as a tribute to the late George Springate, whose life was defined by public service and dedication to Canadian citizenship. A man of many talents and deep commitment to his country, Springate served as an Honorary Member of the RCMP Veterans' Association-Ottawa Division and later became Chief Citizenship Judge of Canada. In his role, he welcomed countless new Canadians, guiding them through their citizenship journey with respect, kindness, and a deep sense of national pride.

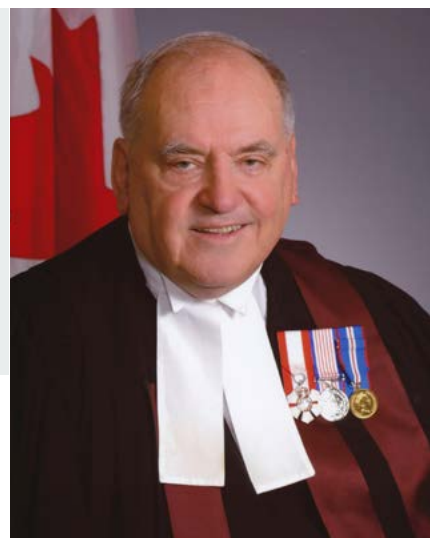
To honour his extraordinary life and legacy, Beechwood Cemetery will unveil the Great Canadian Plaque in his memory. This plaque stands as a testament to his contributions, ensuring that his story will inspire generations to come. It will be placed within the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery, connecting his legacy of service to the enduring values of Canadian citizenship.

George Springate's legacy continues through his impact on countless lives, his contributions to justice and citizenship, and his unwavering belief in the power of community. His memory is celebrated not only for his remarkable achievements but also for his vision of an inclusive and united Canada.

The plaque reads:

George Springate  
1938–2019

An Order of Canada recipient, he was a man of diverse careers: 11 years as Montreal police officer, a lawyer, a criminal law professor, 11-year Member of the Quebec National Assembly, CBC sports commentator and program host, newspaper columnist, a speaker and fundraiser. As a kicker for the Montreal Alouettes, he played on the 1970 Grey Cup team and was an Honorary Member of the RCMP Veterans' Association-Ottawa Division. Most notably known for being a Canadian citizenship judge, serving the last five years as Canada's Senior Judge.



*Photo provided by Judy Hill*

The Great Canadian Plaque serves as more than a memorial; it is a living reminder of Springate's dedication to the values that define us as Canadians—service, community, and belonging. By honouring his life during this historic citizenship ceremony, Beechwood Cemetery reaffirms its role as a place of remembrance, reflection, and community connection.

This ceremony is more than just an event; it is a gathering of community, legacy, and hope. It brings together new Canadians, RCMP members, community leaders, and citizens to celebrate the values that unite us as a nation. It is a moment to reflect on our shared history, honour those who have served, and welcome those who are about to begin their journey as Canadian citizens.

As new Canadians pledge their allegiance to Canada, they will do so surrounded by the memory of those who dedicated their lives to service and justice. This powerful setting serves as a reminder that citizenship is not merely a status but a commitment to participate in Canada's ongoing story—a narrative of diversity, resilience, and hope.

On Friday, June 28, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery at Beechwood Cemetery, we celebrate citizenship and honour the life of George Springate. This ceremony is a tribute to a man who dedicated his life to public service, justice, and the spirit of Canadian citizenship—a legacy that will continue to inspire future generations.

This historic event marks a new chapter in Canadian citizenship, where the past and future come together to celebrate identity, community, and hope.

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## Death Dialogues Series

By Erika Wagner, Program and Fundraising Coordinator

Death is often viewed as a challenging and uncomfortable subject, something that people tend to avoid discussing until it's unavoidable. However, there is a growing recognition that open dialogues surrounding death, dying, and what comes after can play a crucial role in how individuals and families experience loss. Beechwood Cemetery has been at the forefront of changing how we think about and approach death, offering services that help guide individuals and families through these often difficult times.

Beechwood Cemetery's Foundation is committed to redefining the topic of death and dying through community-focused events, discussions, and education.

One of the newest programs to launch is Death Dialogues. This series brings professionals within the death industry to give presentations aimed at educating the public on the planning that takes place before and after death. Often, families find themselves unprepared when the inevitable happens, and these conversations can help ensure that wishes are honoured and legacies are respected.

The first Death Dialogue presentation, in the fall of 2024, was titled Preserving Family Heirlooms with La Maison D'Or. For many people, objects passed down through generations hold deep emotional significance. Whether it's a cherished piece of jewelry, an antique, or a treasured photo album, these heirlooms connect people to their past and preserve the memories of loved ones.

The process of organizing and documenting family heirlooms may seem small, but it can have a huge impact on how families process grief and honour their loved ones. Knowing that these memories and traditions will live on helps families feel more connected to their past, even as they move forward.

In February 2025, the Death Dialogue was titled Changing the Experience of Death and Dying in Our Community: The Role and Services of a Death Doula. A death doula, sometimes known as an end-of-life doula, is a trained professional who offers support to individuals and their families as they approach the end of life. Their role is to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual care to the dying, helping to ease the transition through comfort, guidance, and a calming presence. Death doulas are also equipped to assist with practical matters, like helping families make decisions around end-of-life care, funeral plans, and navigating grief.

Beechwood's death doulas work within a compassionate framework that ensures families can make informed choices about the end of life. This holistic approach fosters peace of mind for both the dying individual and their loved ones, reducing the stress and uncertainty that often accompany this time. The support extends beyond the passing itself, helping families with aftercare, grief support, and even the decision-making process surrounding memorials.

Beechwood's dedication to redefining the experience of death and dying speaks to a larger cultural shift toward treating death with more openness, understanding, and empathy. The Death Dialogues series is part of a growing movement to normalize conversations surrounding death and offer comprehensive support to families navigating the complexities of these decisions. Beechwood Cemetery believes that with the right resources and conversations, it can be an opportunity for families to come together, honour their loved ones, and preserve their legacies in meaningful ways.