

The M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge  
Arlington Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony  
Monday May 29, 2023, 12:00 PM

Remarks by Rosemarie Smurzynski, Former Board Member  
and Trustee, Arlington Historical Society

Welcome all this noon: members of the Prince Hall Lodge in Dorchester, members of the Order of the Eastern Star, members of the Arlington Historical Society, gathered friends, family, and neighbors, and especially to M. W. Bro. Yves-R Maignan, Grand Master of the Prince Hall Lodge.

Memorial Day is a day we set aside to remember—To remember who? To remember what? We remember those who died serving in the American Armed Forces and all our loved ones who are gone and no longer with us. Today we gather here to remember the dead buried in this Cemetery, Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery, and the man whose life inspired theirs.

Thirty-three years ago, on June 7, 1990, this cemetery, after having been forgotten, was reclaimed through the work of a newly formed committee of Masons and Historical Society members, the Prince Hall Mystic Arlington Cemetery Association, Inc. They planned a day of rededication. The day was reported in the local newspapers. Participants gathered on the lawn of the Arlington Historical Society, Prince Hall Masons, Arlington Historical Society members, and townspeople of Arlington, and marched from Jason Street, the site of the Historical Society to Gardner Street, the site of the Prince Hall Cemetery. They marched together down Massachusetts Avenue, to the Fire Station, left on Franklin Street, right on Broadway, left on Gardner Street. They marched because they were about to celebrate the rededication of historic sacred space. Every year since on Memorial Day the Prince Hall Lodge travels from Boston to Arlington to honor this burial place, the people buried in it and the man for whom it is named.

And that relationship continues.

Last year, the Arlington Town Meeting designated June 24 as Prince Hall Day in Arlington, to honor Hall's life and legacy and his relentless efforts in Colonial times toward Black Emancipation.

We celebrated that resolution on June 24, 2022, the year of the resolution, by reading, Prince Hall's *Charge delivered to the African Lodge June 24, 1797, at Menotomy* in its entirety, on the steps of the Town Hall.

This year, 2023, three Arlington institutions will come together fulfilling a promise of the resolution. The Arlington Masonic Lodge, the Arlington Historical Society and an Arlington Town Committee, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. I hope some of you here today might join us on the night of June 24 at the Arlington Masonic Temple for this event.

A great thank you to Bro. Alan Jones for coordinating the June 24, 2023 activity, and offering space for it to happen at the Arlington Masonic Temple.