

## Historic preservation celebration at Harlington Cemetery a success

BY KAREN LEHMANN

Waverly Historic Preservation Commission

More than 60 local citizens and historic preservation enthusiasts joined an open house and celebration at Harlington Cemetery on Saturday, May 11.

Sponsored by the Waverly Historic Preservation Commission (WHPC) in honor of May's National Preservation Month, the event was held to offer awards, recognition, and tours of both



**Above: The concluding event was an optional tour around the cemetery grounds past some of its unique monuments and headstones. The tour was led by Dr. Terry Lindell, a local historian and longtime professor at Wartburg College's History Department. Right: Craig Mehmen, retired cemetery superintendent, presented a short program highlighting stories about his many years working in Harlington Cemetery. COURTESY PHOTOS**

the cemetery office building and the historic cemetery campus.

The cemetery's brick office building, at the entrance to the grounds, was open from 10 a.m. to noon for exploration, from basement to attic.

Trumpeter Jim Vaux heralded the program portion of the morning, Harlington Cemetery was placed on the Waverly Historic Register and will receive a bronze plaque commemorating this honor.

The Register recognizes properties or sites in the community that are significant in terms of history or architecture. Waverly's cemetery is a natural choice for this designation, as it is associated with historic events that have made a noteworthy contribution to broad

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**Jim and Jana Hinders, 216 Third Street NW receive their Waverly Historic Preservation Award. COURTESY PHOTO**

patterns of local and state history, as well as being a place associated with the lives of persons who are significant in Waverly's past. Accepting the award were city employees Garret Riordan, leisure services director, Paul Cheville, public ground superintendent, and Cole Staudt, cemetery maintenance.

### Waverly Historic Preservation Award recipients

Two local homeowners received Waverly Historic Preservation Awards. To be eligible, a property must be at least 50 years old and within Waverly's city limits. The award may be given in recognition of recent work or for a long-standing commitment to preservation and is selected on the basis of exterior appearance only. The 2024 recipients are Jim and Jana Hinders, 216 Third Street NW, and Beth Hesla, 421 First Avenue NE. Upcoming articles will profile both properties.

Craig Mehmen, retired cemetery superintendent, presented a short program highlighting stories about his many years working in Harlington Cemetery. He shared anecdotes about changes and improvements that he helped implement during his 35-year career, and answered questions about some notable features, such as the crypt and Babyland.

Two new informational signs about the history of Harlington Cemetery were installed in time for the celebration. An arched sidewalk was poured around the entrance flagpole in front of the office, and now features these signs and a soon-to-be-planted flowerbed. These additions are part of a corridor of historic signage found along First Street SW, including signs by 4 Queens, near the Farmers Exchange Office, by the Sturdevant House, and in South Riverside Park near the playground.

The concluding event was an optional tour around



**Bard and Beth Hesla, 421 First Avenue NE, receive their Waverly Historic Preservation Award.**  
COURTESY PHOTO

the cemetery grounds past some of its unique monuments and headstones. The tour was led by Dr. Terry Lindell, a local historian and longtime professor at Wartburg College's History Department. Thirty-five participants followed Dr. Lindell as he highlighted stories about some of Waverly's early famous and infamous pioneers, military veterans, and movers and shakers.

Mark Nagle of 4 Queens Dairy Cream, provided ice cream treat tickets to attendees. Waverly's Leisure Service staff were thanked for their hard work and pride in maintaining beautiful and historic Harlington Cemetery.

WHPC commission co-chairs Kris Brunkhorst and Darius Robinson, along with commissioners Addy Kaune, Karen Lehmann, Mary Meyer, Bard Mackie, and Michael Pinegar, would like to thank everyone who helped to make this event a success.