Hill School closely tied to Edgewood

The Hill School has a long-established connection with Edgewood Cemetery. Matthew Meigs, the founding headmaster of The Hill School, was buried there in 1889. His grandson, Dwight, the last Meigs to be headmaster, was buried there in 1930.

James Wendell, headmaster of The Hill School from 1928 to 1952, is buried there, as is his wife, Marjorie Potts Wendell, a direct descendant of John Potts. Mrs. Wendell acquired the historic but deteriorated home of John Potts in the early 1940s and persuaded the state to take possession and restore it. (Pottsgrove Manor is now a county historic site.) Prominent Hill faculty are buried at Edgewood.

As The Hill School has expanded eastward across Green Street (now partially vacated), only one row of private homes on Edgewood Street separate the school campus from the 12-acre cemetery.

In the 1990s, a new campus plan moved the school's main entrance from High Street to Beech Street just west of Edgewood Cemetery. Since then, Edgewood has served as an informal gateway to the school.

In the Victorian era, when Edgewood was founded, cemeteries often served as passive parks and arboretums as well as memorials. Some historic cemeteries still do, such as Laurel Hill in Philadelphia, which allows joggers, bicyclists, and roller bladers and provides benches for contemplation.

Randal Doaty, head of security for The Hill School, hired a crew to begin maintenance of the cemetery as a public service and now seeks volunteers to help operate the cemetery in the future.

Returning Edgewood to its roots as a passive park would be a significant service to the community and help in its revitalization. No one would benefit more than The Hill School.

Commentary by Tom Hylton

As the Hill School has steadily expanded its campus eastward, only one row of privately owned houses on Edgewood Street, top, separates the campus from the cemetery. Visitors to the Hill School pass by the cemetery to reach the school’s entrance off Beech Street.

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