



# DALLAS COUNTY PIONEER ASSOCIATION

FOUNDED 1875, REORGANIZED 1979

P O Box 12496 DALLAS TX 75225

972-260-9334

## Fall 2019

## Help!



Dear Members,

Your **ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU**. Your officers are tired and if we want to continue to have an Association others are going to have to step up and help. None of the jobs are difficult and they do not take much time. Some of the current officers have served for years and no longer want to. They need a break! PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE step up and help by serving on our Board. It takes everybody together for us to survive. An old saying comes to mind "Together Everyone Achieves More".

I have agreed to run for another term as President and look forward to serving with you. That being said I have appointed a Nominating Committee for the upcoming elections in December.

The Nominating Committee members are:

Sally Veazzey--972-317-6595

Jane Beaver--469-387-5853

Bradley Sue Howell--214-821-5871

Please contact any of these ladies if you are willing to serve in any capacity. ***If we are to continue we must have folks willing to serve!***

Our condolences go out to the family of Frances James. She proudly served our Association for years as Cemetery Chair. She will be greatly missed. Kathy Ann Reid has accepted the position for the remainder of the year (and hopefully will accept the nomination for the next term) and was approved by the Board.

Tim Durrett has resigned as Historian. Our new member Kay Moore has graciously accepted the position of Historian and the Board has voted her in.

My sincere gratitude goes out to Kay and Kathy Ann for stepping up and being willing to serve. They have our thanks and grateful appreciation!

Included with this newsletter are the proposed By-laws by your Board. They will be submitted for approval at the December meeting. Highlighted are additions and strike through are deletions.

One way to help is by bringing in new members. It is not hard it just requires asking and a small amount of effort. **Please bring a guest with you.**

Best Regards,

Jim Bookhout, President

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**Quarterly Meeting**  
**Thursday September 5, 2019**  
**Speaker John Slate**

**Archivist for the City of Dallas**  
**The Point, Center for Arts and Education**  
**Campus of C. C. Young**  
**4847 W. Lawther Dr.**  
**Dallas, Texas**

**Dinner at 6 PM**  
**Program Begins At 7 PM**

**Dinner \$15.00 per person**  
**DINNER RESERVATION REQUIRED**  
**call by the Monday before the meeting.**

**972-260-9334**



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## Guest Speaker



John H. Slate is city archivist for the City of Dallas, where he has been responsible for historic city government records in the Dallas Municipal Archives since 2000. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists and a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. He possesses a BS from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in Library and Information Science, specializing in archival enterprise, from the same institution.

He's written numerous articles on archives, photography, music, and Texas history and is the author/co-author of four Arcadia Images of America series books: Historic Dallas Parks, Lost Austin, Dealey Plaza, and John F. Kennedy Sites in Dallas-Fort Worth. He is co-author of *Managing Local Government Archives* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).

## Welcome Our New Historian

Kay Moore is a Pulitzer Prize nominee, a veteran newspaper journalist, and the author of eight books. After their careers took them to a variety of U.S. cities, she and her husband, Louis, returned to her hometown of Garland in 2000 and now live on her growing-up street, where they led efforts to have their vintage neighborhood, Travis College Hill, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2019 her musical drama, "Becoming Garland Avenue", for which she wrote eight songs and an original script about their town in the early days of the last century, was performed at Garland's Plaza Theatre to sell-out audience. The Moores are community leaders in Garland and are active in historic preservation and other civic involvements.



## CEMETERY REPORT

Ann Atterberry of the Dallas Morning News wrote an article (published 6/20/1976) entitled, "DALLAS PIONEER GRAVESITE JUST LAND FOR SALE." She wrote of the Warren Ferris Cemetery: "The only indication there was ever a cemetery at the corner of San Leandro and St. Francis streets in the expensive Forest Heights Addition is an old-fashioned pink rose gone wild and a few random chunks of marble...In 1970 the Dallas City Council declared the community cemetery to be a 'nuisance.'" In the Spring of 2018, our Cemetery Committee placed it on our Endangered List.

At the June quarterly meeting, Susanne Starling spoke about the work being done there by neighbors and others interested. A group has been formed and is called, The Friends of the Warren Ferris Cemetery. A paragraph in their Mission Statement says that they are "restoring the neglected landscape of the historical cemetery. After remediation, a plaque naming many of the approximately 100 people buried at the site, including Warren Ferris himself will be located to replace original tombstones vandalized or stolen over the past century." Since in the 1850s, pioneers enjoyed native vegetation and wild flowers, the restoration includes removing invasive plants and encouraging native plants to grow. This should gain the attention and partnering of members of groups such as Texas Master Naturalists, members of the Native Plant Society of Texas, educators and appreciative

### Update on the Durrett Cemetery in Lancaster

by Tim Durrett

All court proceedings have been completed to move the three graves. The baby is being buried in the Hutchins Cemetery with her mother that is already buried there. Both the Durrett's will be moved to the Old Edgewood Cemetery in Lancaster. Their tombstones will be moved and restored. Their GG Grandson, Jim Watson will go and pick out their lots. Tim has been heavily involved in all aspects of the move. No date has been set yet. But all is ready to go.

neighbors.

The section of their Mission Statement entitled "Final Goal" states, "Cemeteries are important keys to Texas' past. They are tangible reminders of settlement patterns and reveal information about historic events, religion, lifestyle, and genealogy. By tying together the historical, educational and native wild life elements, we envision this as a template to be adopted by other neighborhoods across the state to revitalize their own fallen cemeteries."

The DCPA joins Texas Urban Forestry Council and Society of Professional Surveyors in commending the efforts and plans of the Friends of the Warren Ferris Cemetery.

Kathy Ann Reid



## Farewell to the Cemetery Lady Francis James, who knew where all of Dallas' bodies are buried

By Robert Wilonsky, City Columnist, Dallas Morning News



Dallas' Cemetery Lady has died.

Frances James, who watched over the city's famous and forgotten dead when no one else would, went suddenly Saturday evening at age 96. Those of us who tell tales about Dallas' history will need a long time to get over this. Now who will we call to regale us with stories about the long-dead who had built Dallas, then were buried beneath it and erased from its clipped narrative?

She rescued countless cemeteries in this city and throughout Dallas County — [those small neighborhood burial sites overgrown with weeds and trash](#), and the landmarks in plain sight imperiled by

apartment-builders and highway-makers. If ever you needed to know who was buried beneath a headstone rendered rubble by time or vandals, James knew. The Dallas native had the maps and the memory and took every call, answered every question, shared every document.

"Frances spoke about the shadows — the spaces and the people that were out of sight," preservationist and former Dallas City Council member Veletta Lill said Monday. "She wanted you to remember that the people in the cemetery had lived and that the cemetery was a natural extension of our living community."

James traveled and lived all over the country. But for as long as I knew her, more than 20 years, she lived on St. Francis Avenue in East Dallas, not far from where she was born in 1922 as Frances Patrick. Her granddaughter Misti Cook said she would have graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1940 alongside classmate Carroll Shelby, the famed maker of fast cars, had she not gotten married at 15.

"She went to school to get her name changed," Cook said, "and they told her, 'You're married. You can't come back.'"

Cook said James' interest in cemeteries began accidentally, some 40 years ago. Every day James drove from her home in Pleasant Grove past what looked like an empty lot on Military Parkway near Jim Miller Road. It was overgrown with weeds, unkempt, an eyesore.

"Then she realized it was a cemetery," said Cook — [Glover Cemetery](#), to be precise, so named for William Wald Glover, son of an early Dallas settler. Among the 70 bodies buried there is [Richard Lagow](#), a farmer who owned land near what's now Fair Park; hence the street named after him in South Dallas and the elementary school in Pleasant Grove.

"She had retired and was looking for something to do," Cook said. "It was easy to research and find the information if you were persistent and knew where to look in the public library. [She got the historical marker for that cemetery](#), and then someone said, 'Can you help us get one for ours?' And it snowballed from there, because she was good at research, she was organized, and she was good at putting the stories together and connecting the dots."

In the 1970s our beloved deceased, Frances James, was an active in her community. This led her to notice cemeteries that needed her help in the form of going to war against people and city governments who were willing to destroy them for greed or convenience. She often said of various cemeteries, "It was another WAR!" Our fiery Frances went to court in lawsuits, spoke before city councils and the county commissioners court. If they continued toward allowing history to be destroyed, Frances matter-of-factly said, "They are horses' \_\_\_\_\_." I have heard some of them say that Frances and other detractors were "hysterical historicals." Frances made her point and they hardly knew what to do with her.

Frances James, Marsha Leach and I continued to meet on Tuesday afternoons at Frances' house to help organize her cemetery files, historical quarterlies, collections of newspaper articles concerning people, churches, areas of Dallas, and buildings in Dallas. The last Tuesday we met was July 30. On that day Susanne Starling and Julie Fineman came to visit with Frances. She was always so happy to see her special friend, Susanne. Julie sat beside Frances and shared the vision of the Warren Ferris Cemetery Friends' and their plans to care for the Cemetery. On that last day that we were with Frances she was delighted and excited that a few in a younger generation are passionate about historical preservation.

Frances finished her race through time to eternity. I am happy to have spent part of my life-time with her.

Kathy Ann Reid



## Farewell to the Cemetery Lady Francis James, who knew where all of Dallas' bodies are buried continued:

According to the Dallas Historical Society, James wrote more than 50 historical-marker applications. And, she penned three volumes of [Dallas County History: From the Ground Up](#).

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The first time her name appeared in The Dallas Morning News was in 1985, when Laura Miller — yes, that Laura Miller — wrote about how Dallas City Hall allowed a developer to build homes atop Ferris Cemetery near White Rock Lake, so named for Warren Angus Ferris, one of Dallas' best-known early settlers.

In 1993, as president of the Dallas County Pioneer Association, James began to inventory Pioneer Park Cemetery in front of the downtown convention center. Eight years later, she wrote the document that helped secure the cemetery as an official city landmark. In 2010, when the grave site grew shabby — dead trees cluttered the landscape, headstones were knocked over and had gone missing — James called me to complain. She could not understand how City Hall could so mistreat the men and woman who had made this city.

"There are so many wonderful stories buried there," she told me. "We could write book about each one and what they did. These are the founders of Dallas."

James spent years trying to fend off people looking to desecrate burial grounds. In 1994, she helped fend off a race-track that threatened El Camposanto de Cemento Grande de la Compania Trinity Portland in West Dallas, filled with Mexican immigrants who built this city for the Trinity Portland Cement Company. According to the Texas Historic Commission, "It is believed that the first people buried in the cemetery were victims of the 1918 influenza epidemic, including many children."

In 1996, she helped stop developers from paving over part of the 1875 Greenwood Cemetery in Uptown, another burial ground filled with city founders and early-days mayors. That was maybe her most famous fight: Columbus Realty Trust wanted the city to rezone 6 acres of the cemetery for \$22 million worth of apartments, restaurants and shops, because, apparently, its ownership had never seen Poltergeist.

The graves were unmarked; these were paupers, stuck in the ground without ceremony. But Columbus Realty found dozens of coffins, more than 50, and dug them up, moving them with great haste to other parts of the cemetery when the Dallas Observer caught wind of the horror. James and Lill spent years fighting the development, and ultimately had archaeologists brought in for a proper inspection of the burial ground.

James was simply aghast at the disrespect shown those interred there, telling the Observer in November 1996, "Texas is big place. What earthly reason would a developer have to put more apartments over there, and over a paupers cemetery, no less?"

That year, The News ran its first profile of James. That story was the first time this newspaper called her by hard-earned nickname, The Cemetery Lady.

"Cemeteries are sacred places," said James when she was a mere 73. "I just want to see that they are taken care of."

Cook said her grandmother had prepared for her death for a couple of years; her estimable archives, meticulously organized, will be kept at the Dallas Historical Society and, likely, in the city's archives, in digital and physical form.

"She wanted to make sure that when she died, her work does not disappear," Cook said.

A memorial, which will likely take place at Hall of State in Fair Park, has not yet been set. There will be no funeral: The Cemetery Lady will be cremated, her ashes spread off the coast of Carmel, Calif.

Because now that Frances James is gone, her granddaughter said, no one is left to do for Frances James what she did for countless others who died before her.

"So," Cook said, with a bright laugh, "she doesn't want to be in a cemetery."

James is survived by daughter Frances Ann Blackley; grandchildren Cook, Julie Kline, Jennifer Blackley and Steven Reece; five great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren.