

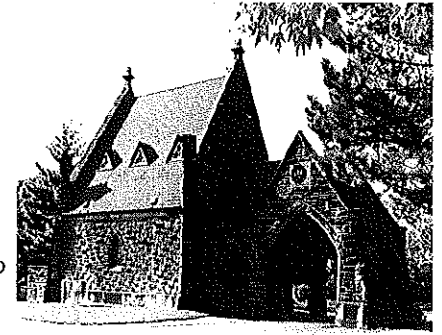
Riverside Cemetery Office  
AD 1896

# THE TRADITION

## WINTER 2011

### RIVERSIDE CEMETERY AND FOUNDATION

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY IS A NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION OF LOT OWNERS  
WHOSE REVENUES FROM SALES & SERVICES ARE USED TO MAINTAIN AND  
ENHANCE OUR GROUNDS.



William R. Halley Chapel  
AD 1876

Phone 216.351.4800

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### JAZZ FESTIVAL

On Sunday, September 18 we held our first ever Jazz Festival. It started shortly after 2:00pm at our Historic Chapel with the Mike Jacobs Quintet, a New Orleans style jazz ensemble playing some tunes. Then we had a horse-drawn carriage carrying Mary Lockwood (widow of Robert Lockwood -one of our honorees) and her daughter along with our former General Manager William R. Halley in a procession down our Centennial Drive to the Circle where the Cemetery was dedicated in 1876 by U. S. President-elect Rutherford B. Hayes. Our General Manager Mark J. Bollinger welcomed everyone and gave a brief synopsis of some of the great Jazz musicians buried in our cemetery including Robert Lockwood, Roberto Ocasio, and Robert "Skeets" Ross. Also present and introduced along with Mary Lockwood was Evelyn Ocasio, Roberto's widow. As the crowd enjoyed the beautiful weather and music, Bill Halley took small groups on carriage rides around part of the cemetery pointing out some of the 'notables' buried in our beloved cemetery. Plan now to attend next year as we look to specifically highlight the Latin Jazz music of Roberto Ocasio. Thanks again to all for making this such a success!

### NEW MASONIC SECTION

We are also pleased to announce the opening of a new area in the cemetery reserved exclusively for Masons and their families. This area is along the Willowdale Ave. border of the cemetery in Section 31. Choice lots can be purchased now. The first burial was completed earlier this season, and we are looking forward to servicing this part of our community with this special area.

### FACEBOOK

Like us now on Facebook to keep track of what's happening here at Riverside!

### CHRISTMAS WREATHS

Well it's that time of year again - time to order your Memorial Wreath to be placed on the graves of your loved ones for the Winter season. We have a very nice selection of wreaths, a Christmas tree and a beautiful bouquet. Order yours today for placement in the beginning of December.

### CEMETERY CLEAN-OFF

It's that time of year. The cemetery-wide clean off will take place on and around October 15. If there is **anything** that you don't want thrown away, then it must be removed before October 15. **Anything** left on any grave will be disposed of. You may keep shepherd's hooks and identification crosses, but all decorations **must** be removed from them. Decorations can be returned after October 20, limiting them to 3 per grave and placed at the headstone area.

### NEW VETERANS SECTION

We are thrilled to announce the opening of a new area in the cemetery reserved specifically for U. S. Veterans and their loved ones. This area is along the Willowdale Ave. border of the cemetery in Section 31. All graves will be companion graves - 2 burials will be permitted in each space, one on top of the other. All of the headstones will be the government provided Veterans Administration headstones. There will also be in-ground burial spaces for cremated remains. Along with all of this, we are providing special pricing for this area only. In essence, the Veteran will not have to pay for his/her grave space with the Companion purchase! Call or stop in for all the details.

### FUTURE EDITIONS OF THE TRADITION

REMINDER: Wherever possible, we would like to e-mail The Tradition so please either send us an e-mail to [riverside\\_cemetery@att.net](mailto:riverside_cemetery@att.net) or call the office at 216-351-4800.

## ROBERT NATHANIEL "SKEETS" ROSS

Robert Nathaniel Ross ("Skeets") was born January 15, 1926, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. As a toddler, he exhibited talents of a musical prodigy. This would ring true in an unnatural progression of time and become his life's calling and destiny.

He acquired the nickname "Skeets" from cousins who mimicked his pronunciation of mosquitos' and the name stuck. Little Skeets had already landed his first job playing for a neighbor's house party at only 8 years of age. He'd only had two piano lessons. His sister, Virginia, was taking classes at 50 cents per lesson (pricy during the Depression era) and in deference to his family's finances, he selflessly and nobly surrendered his music lessons but kept vigilant as his sister was being taught.

Skeets practiced everywhere and at any time he could—anywhere there was a piano. He loved listening to the radio and had an uncanny knack for playing by ear. Young Skeets loved jazz, blues, boogie-woogie, swing, and barrelhouse music, and at an early age was well on his way to developing his own sense of style with flair.

Skeets proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. After his tour of duty and honorable discharge, he moved to Cleveland, Ohio. During one of his first stints as a nightclub singer and pianist, people remarked at his physical and musical resemblance to Nat King Cole. He admired Nat and upon meeting his music idol for the first time, Nat marveled at their similarities as well.

Still predominantly self-taught, through the years his expertise at the piano only became greater. Skeets rose to prominence in the City of Cleveland, which so warmly embraced him. In downtown Cleveland's Terminal Tower walkway tunnel, a mural in caricature form depicts him on piano.

In addition to playing with the Skeets Ross Quartet, he played jazz with many other groups around Northeast Ohio. He enjoyed gigs with the Tri-C Jazz Fest, The Cougar Lounge, The Bop Stop, Cleveland's Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel, The Galleria at Erieview, and Nighttown, just to name a few. Skeets was a long-standing favorite for over 15 years at The Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland's Public Square.

Skeets had a phenomenal memory about almost everything. When people returned to hear him play, he could not only remember their faces, but he also knew their favorite requests. If ever you'd need to refresh his memory for a requested melody, he'd quickly get it in his head, take off with the tune, and soar with his own special style and flavor. Skeets expressed this gift as "putting a little yeast in it and making it rise."

In a news article, he was once described as "a human jukebox." He possessed an endless, timeless, and tireless mental repertoire.

Skeets was called home to glory on February 9, 2011 and chose cremation with his final resting place aside his beloved wife, A. J. in Section 12.

## FOREMAN'S FORUM

A few friendly reminders: Please limit grave decorations to 3 items, but no glass or porcelain items. Check in the office if you have a question. Please do not drive into burial sections or on any grass. The gravel roads are for cemetery vehicles only and the regular roads are wide enough for 2 lanes of traffic. We are having problems with people riding bicycles and bringing in pets. These are not allowed.

## GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE

What a great year this has been! Not necessarily weather-wise, because all the rain and very few drought days have kept us jumping trying to keep up with all the rapid growth. I'm just talking about the exciting things happening here at Riverside. We had a gorgeous day for our first ever Jazz Fest. Seeing a horse-drawn carriage riding through the cemetery stirred up thoughts of the way things must have been years and years ago. We also had a couple of great tours this year and another beautiful Easter Sunrise Service in our Historic Chapel. Additionally, Bethel #55 of the International Order of Job's Daughters held a commemorative 9/11 service in the Chapel on September 11. Again, the Bloetscher Post and local Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts decorated with American flags the graves of as many veterans as they could find for Memorial Day. There were even a couple of groups that held scavenger hunts on our grounds this year! Annually, Case Western Reserve Medical School holds a memorial service here and this year was no exception. The same can be said for University Hospitals and their memorial service.

On the grounds themselves, we continued to beautify our Memorial Patio in the Urn Garden, and we still have some more exciting ideas for future additions there next year. Remember, Memorial Bricks in the patio are available for engraving to commemorate the lives of your loved ones. We were able to open up 2 new specialty sections -one for Veterans and their immediate loved ones, and one for members of the Masonic fraternity and their families. These sections will be specifically ornamented to distinguish them from other sections.