

Cemetery Commission

My name is Janet Merrill, and I am running for re-election to the Cemetery Commission. Cemeteries matter to me. My mother's family has been in Marblehead since 1629 and many are buried in the Old Burial Hill, Green Street and Waterside cemeteries. I am a lawyer in state government.

The biggest hurdle we face at the commission is the lack of funding. The Cemetery Department has been level-funded for decades and I do not expect that to change. This is why the involvement of community groups and non-profit organizations can be helpful with special projects. One such project I would support, if we had the resources, would be to try to locate the graves of African enslaved and formerly enslaved persons whom we believe to be buried in a privately-owned property and in a publicly owned lot in town. With the landowners' permission and with the use of ground-penetrating radar, we could scan these areas outside of our cemeteries. If graves were found, I would support the placing of educational signs or markers to honor the dead, with the property owners' and the town's approval.

I would like to thank the Marblehead Equal Justice Team for providing the energy and gathering the financial resources to replace the missing stone for the grave of the servant /formerly enslaved Agnes (she died in 1718) on the Old Burial Hill. It could not have been done without them.

Please cast your vote for me as Cemetery Commissioner. Thank you.

Janet S. Merrill