



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2014 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
BROOKFIELD CEMETERY ARCH & GATE**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Brookfield Cemetery Arch and Gate, Brookfield, to receive a 2014 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. Through this preservation project, the town of Brookfield has not only restored a significant historic feature, but also created a visually prominent, tangible representation of the community’s dedication to preserving its public burial place.”

The Brookfield Cemetery, in continuous use as the town’s only public place of interment since 1714, contains approximately 10,000 grave markers, and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The cemetery reflects distinctive characteristics of 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century burial practices in Massachusetts. Several of the markers represent the work of known 18th-century regional stone carvers, including William Young and the Soule family.

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In 1873, local businessmen William A. Bannister and Otis Hayden donated a granite arch with cast-iron gates to the town to mark the cemetery's main entrance. The arch is the cemetery's most prominent and visible feature. Since 2002, the Brookfield Cemetery Commission has been raising funds and engaging the community in a number of preservation activities at the cemetery, including the creation of a preservation management plan, a tree inventory, and conservation of the cemetery's fifteen most-endangered headstones. A preservation restriction was placed on the cemetery and its gates in 2008.

As part of the preservation management plan, from 2011 to 2013 and with the assistance of two Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant awards, the archway and gates underwent a comprehensive, two-phase restoration to preserve the entire entrance structure. While the cemetery commission has long maintained the burial place with care, aging and settling had degraded the arch prior to the project's inception. Preservation concerns included soiling, cracked and missing mortar, and expanded mortar joints. Additionally, the cast-iron carriage and pedestrian gates had decayed and were in need of total restoration.

Phase I of the project addressed the iron gates, and included removing existing paint, straightening disfigured pickets, replacing missing finials with new casings, and priming and repainting. Phase II required extensive masonry work. Repointing of the granite arch utilized materials matching the original historic mortar and a mortar joint profile obtained from historic photographs of the cemetery. Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the work did not cause any ground disturbance in the historic cemetery. The project was completed in 2013.

Today, the restored gates and arch are a focal point along the Boston Post Road. Inspired by the gateway's restoration, for the past three holiday seasons the cemetery and community members have come together to pay tribute to the dead with candle luminaries along the cemetery's stone wall up to the granite arch.

This is the 36th year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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Secretary Galvin presented the awards this afternoon, May 16, in a ceremony at the Massachusetts Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Brookfield Cemetery Arch and Gate, Brookfield, is one of 10 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

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