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## **Laurel Hill Cemetery to Light Up Landscape along Kelly Drive**

*Illumination of the monuments and trees inspires a new way of experiencing the historic site*

**PHILADELPHIA** (January 2020) – One of the most beautiful gateways into the city will have an exciting new dimension beginning in February: the nighttime illumination of the historic monuments and natural landscape of Laurel Hill Cemetery on Kelly Drive.

**The inaugural lighting will be held Thursday, February 13 at 5:30 pm, with a press conference and reception at the cemetery’s Receiving Vault on West Hunting Park Drive near Kelly Drive. Special guests will include descendants of Laurel Hill’s illustrious “residents.”**

“We chose this date for the initial lighting as our ‘Valentine’ to the City of Philadelphia,” said Nancy Goldenberg, President and CEO of Laurel Hill and West Laurel Hill Cemeteries. “This is our way of reinforcing our connection with the city and community, while strengthening our visibility and honoring our past.”

Laurel Hill will join the procession of lighted iconic buildings and landmarks extending from City Hall down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway to Boathouse Row to the Falls Bridge, sites which offer educational, cultural, recreational and civic contributions to Philadelphia residents and visitors. “We fulfill all these purposes,” Goldenberg explains. “Now we are casting a light on the beauty of our architecture and landscape and paying tribute to those who helped build our city and nation.”

Established in 1836 and the first cemetery in the United States to be designated a National Historic Landmark, Laurel Hill is the final resting place of Civil War heroes, titans of industry, artists, architects, scientists, and civic leaders. The cemetery has been honored for the preservation of its historic monuments and gardens, and Laurel Hill, in combination with its sister cemetery West Laurel Hill, has been certified a 265-acre Level II arboretum.

The Laurel Hill lighting project – which grew from initial visioning in 2004 and the lighting of a single mausoleum – will illuminate 11 monuments and surrounding trees along Kelly Drive and Hunting Park Drive. This \$600,000 first phase of a larger lighting plan for the entire cemetery property was made possible through the support of the William Penn Foundation, the McLean Contributionship, and the Laurel Hill Cemetery Company.

More than 31,000 cars and 650 bikers, rowers, and walkers pass by Laurel Hill each day. The lighting will offer visual gateways into the grounds after sunset, providing a new way of seeing and experiencing the landscape. The lighting design will also bring a heightened sense of place and safety to the site and the surrounding neighborhoods, while increasing opportunities and options on the cemetery grounds for evening programs, from walking tours to artistic performances. Laurel Hill currently offers a year-round array of educational and recreational activities, including 5K fun runs, family events, and its renowned Halloween celebrations. These programs are coordinated with the assistance of the Friends of Laurel Hill & West Laurel Hill Cemeteries, the nonprofit organization that supports the cemeteries in preserving and promoting their historic character.

The nighttime illumination was designed by The Lighting Practice, whose previous projects include the Avenue of the Arts, the Parkway's facades and sculptures, and the Rail Park. Installation of the lighting was by Miller Bros. of Conshohocken. The fixtures at Laurel Hill utilize long-life, low-energy LED sources with precise optics that eliminate glare and lighting trespass and illuminate the cemetery monuments in a respectful manner. The lights will be turned off nightly at 1 a.m. to preserve normal day/night cycles for wildlife and provide minimal disturbance to trees and plants. The lights will be uniformly white in color but have color-changing capacity so that Laurel Hill can participate in seasonal and special civic celebrations.

“By lighting Laurel Hill, we are sharing the message that we’re more than a cemetery – that this is a place for living as much as a place of eternal rest,” Goldenberg said. “When we turn on the lights, we are saying: We’re here. Come visit. And discover what a treasure we have.”

### **About Laurel Hill & West Laurel Hill Cemeteries**

Laurel Hill Cemetery and West Laurel Hill Cemetery & Funeral Home are privately owned, non-denominational organizations located in Philadelphia and Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. Together, the organizations are dedicated to three pillars – Eternal Rest, Recreation and Civic Value – that sustain the cemeteries and serve the community. Year-round programs, including educational tours, recreational opportunities, special performances and seasonal events, are held on the grounds of the cemeteries, which form a 265-acre arboretum. The Friends of Laurel Hill & West Laurel Hill Cemeteries is a nonprofit membership organization that assists the cemeteries in preserving, protecting, and promoting their historic character. To learn more about the cemeteries and the Friends, visit [www.thelaurelhillcemetery.org](http://www.thelaurelhillcemetery.org) and [www.westlaurelhill.com](http://www.westlaurelhill.com).