

Woodlawn cultural museum of our community

What's going on with Woodlawn Cemetery? I was shocked and deeply upset when I visited my father's grave at Woodlawn before Memorial Day. The grass looks as though it hasn't been cut yet this season. Monuments are leaning and toppled over everywhere you look.

I saw a little old lady whose hands were badly blistered from trying to cut the waist-high grass on her husband's grave with a pair of hand clippers. Seniors everywhere were struggling to

cut their own grass.

It is a sad commentary on our community for this formerly beautiful cemetery, where many prominent former residents of Fairmont are interred, to be allowed to fall into such disgraceful disrepair.

Sometime back, Jack Decker was ousted as president of Woodlawn, and replaced by a court-appointed board. These individuals might be good at their day jobs, but they obviously don't know how to run a cemetery. At least Jack Decker ran a lawn-care company and knew enough to cut the grass!

Whomever the current decision maker, he/she is having a

real challenge trying to set priorities. They've hired a friendly but very disheveled gentleman as a "security director," but they aren't cutting the grass. It's not as though they need some fearless hunter of men to clean up Dodge City. They simply need a presence in order to deter vandalism. If they had groundspeople out working, they wouldn't need a security guy during the day.

I think the families of those buried at Woodlawn deserve some answers. Why was Decker summarily removed? And why has there been appointed a board of directors composed of individuals who have never gotten their

hands dirty in real life?

What's needed is a hands-on director, like the late Curt Toothman. He did a wonderful job at Woodlawn. It seems that the families of those buried at Woodlawn are paying a high price for the hubris of some self-important people who won't admit when they are in over their heads.

The courts need to revisit this situation and do something before a significant chunk of Fairmont's history is lost forever.

Woodlawn is more than a cemetery, it's a cultural museum of our community.

**Pam Harrison
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