

# CITY OF KEY WEST CEMETERY SAVE-A-GRAVE PROJECT

September 29, 2018

## OVERVIEW

### 1. Project Background and Description

The Key West Cemetery is a special place, where families have buried their loved-ones for more than 170 years. It is a cultural resource reflecting the diversity of the island, and because of its rich and colorful past attracts locals and visitors alike to its park-like setting. Although there are resident scallywags and millionaires, cigar makers and mariners, each of their "marked" graves tell a story. Sadly, it is the many unmarked graves that have been lost to history, abandoned and overlooked. In addition to the many unmarked sites, there are many identified plots which have become orphaned or abandoned over time by the loss of living relatives. The SAVE-A-GRAVE Project will resurrect them from obscurity. It will serve to preserve these plots, encourage community involvement, contribute to restoration, and promote the Key West Cemetery as a cultural resource while safeguarding the many unmarked and abandoned burial sites.

### 2. Project Scope

The SAVE-A-GRAVE Project will allow an individual or group the opportunity to "adopt" one of the many unmarked or abandoned graves, recognizing and acknowledging the occupant while interred, or until they can be identified. This will be a cooperative Project between the Historic Florida Keys Foundation and the City of Key West. Proceeds from the Project will be channeled through the Historic Florida Keys Foundation for ongoing cemetery restoration. There is no obligation on the part of the adoptive guardian however, there is an expectation the site would be visited, cared for and looked after; simple maintenance, flowers or flags as appropriate, allowing the new guardian the opportunity to bring the site "back to life". Who doesn't want to have a personal connection to this wonderful local treasure?

### 3. Deliverables

With each SAVE-A-GRAVE adoption, the new adoptive guardian would be required to sign a Waiver of Liability, and would then receive:

- A Certificate of Adoption
- A photo of the unmarked grave
- A decorative, removable, ceramic marker with their name, location, and adoption date
- A brochure outlining the program and the various ways to participate in ongoing preservation/restoration activities

In addition, an annual fund-raising event can be held in November on All Souls Day (Día de los Muertos), where a community celebration honoring the dead might include donated music, decorations, flowers, and food.

The SAVE-A-GRAVE Project will also blend well with other ongoing Cemetery activities such as the Cemetery Stroll, the Cemetery Fence Restoration Program, and the Geographical Information System Mapping Project, bringing increased awareness to restorative efforts.

#### 4. Affected Parties

City of Key West

City of Key West Cemetery Sexton:      Russell Brittain      [rbrittain@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:rbrittain@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)

Historic Florida Keys Foundation:      Diane Silvia      [hfkf@bellsouth.net](mailto:hfkf@bellsouth.net)

Project Manager:      Mary Ann Matter      [ma@a2zmatter.com](mailto:ma@a2zmatter.com)

#### 5. Implementation Plan

- a. Seek approval from the City of Key West
- b. Identify collaborators and possible grant/funding opportunities
  - Key West Art & Historical Society: Cori Convertito & Adele Williams
  - Monroe County Public Library
  - Frances Street Neighborhood Association
- c. Develop Project brochure
- d. Determine costs
  - Brochure
  - Marker
  - Photo & Certificate
  - Annual Celebration
- e. Identify unmarked & orphaned sites available for adoption
- f. Plan Project roll out

**CONSENT AND  
RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby consent to, understand, acknowledge and agree to assume all risks and hazards incidental to my SAVE-A-GRAVE GUARDIANSHIP (describe volunteer work generally) the City of Key West.

I do further promise and hereby further agree to waive, release, absolve, and covenant not to sue the City of Key West, its mayor, commissioners, employees, officers, volunteers, representatives, attorneys and agents, for any and all claims, including claims for equitable or injunctive relief, damages, loss or injury of any kind resulting from or in any way arising directly or indirectly out of my SAVE-A-GRAVE GUARDIANSHIP (same description as above). **THIS RELEASE INCLUDES A RELEASE FOR ANY AND ALL LOSSES OR INJURIES ARISING OUT OF ANY AND ALL NEGLIGENT OR WRONGFUL ACTS OR OMISSIONS OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, ITS MAYOR, COMMISSIONERS, EMPLOYEES, OFFICERS, VOLUNTEERS, REPRESENTATIVES, ATTORNEYS AND AGENTS.**

I further promise and agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City of Key West, its mayor, commissioners, employees, representatives, officers, volunteers, attorneys and agents from and against all liability, claims and expense, including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, in connection with any and all claims whatsoever for personal or bodily injury or death, including loss of use, or property damage of any kind and character in connection with and arising directly or indirectly out of my SAVE-A-GRAVE GUARDIANSHIP (same description as above). This indemnity agreement encompasses all damages and claims, including claims for equitable or injunctive relief, arising out of my SAVE-A-GRAVE GUARDIANSHIP (same description as above).

**THIS RELEASE IS GIVEN AND SIGNED OF MY OWN FREE ACT AND WILL.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Save-A-Grave Guardian Expectations

We understand not every adoptive guardian resides in Key West and accept that activities aimed at plot restoration or maintenance may be limited. That's OK! We dedicate 100 percent of the Save-A-Grave Project funds to ongoing Cemetery restoration and preservation projects. If you do choose to nurture your adoptive plot, some activities might include the following:

- Weed removal
- Trash removal
- Whitewashing
- Gravel replacement
- Flower/Flag placement
- Hardscape repairs (we will help with this) can be costly and must comply with historic preservation and restoration guidelines.

The following activities are prohibited:

- Additions, modifications or alterations to the site
- In-ground planting of flowers, shrubs or trees (small pots/planters are welcome)
- Be advised; some areas may have fire ants or bees. Please take appropriate precautions. The iguanas and chicken are harmless!

Please keep the Cemetery staff updated annually. If after two years of no contact, your plot may be reassigned.

If, in the unlikely scenario a descendant should reclaim a site, you will have the option of choosing another grave for adoption.