



Green Burials Latest of Many Options Offered by Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Centers Kessler Woods at Washington Park North Cemetery Open in Spring

INDIANAPOLIS – Preparations are now underway for the offering of yet another burial option from Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Centers and Washington Park Cemetery Association: The first Indianapolis area natural burial ground certified by the National Green Burial Council.

In the spring of 2009, green burials will begin to take place at Kessler Woods, a secluded five-acre space located on the northern side of Washington Park North Cemetery, 2702 Kessler Boulevard, West Drive. Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Centers, as well as the Washington Park Cemetery Association, are now both certified by the Green Burial Council. The Council, a national organization dedicated to the advancement of green burials across the U.S., certifies funeral centers and cemeteries that meet its standards. Also in the spring, Barb Milton, Vice President, Community Relations, Buchanan Group, will present a public seminar on green burials.

Situated as it is, nestled in a secluded part of the cemetery, Kessler Woods is positioned to grow, as the demand for green burials increases, according to Ted Mau, President, Washington Park Cemetery Association. "At Kessler Woods, we are offering either a wooded area or one with prairie grasses and flowers native to Indiana," added Mau.

"Green burial preferences do not exclude traditional funeral service options such as a chapel service or visitation. It simply requires different alternatives, products, and time sensitivity," said Milton. "All Flanner and Buchanan Funeral Centers are Green Burial Council-certified and fully equipped to meet these specific needs for Kessler Woods," she added. "With a facility located adjacent to Kessler Woods, a family funeral procession would find it a comfortable walk to the burial site."

"These are premium burial options," Mau said. "Respect and dignity are a key role in green burials, just as they are in any other kind. Kessler Woods will be considered a natural place for burials that are dignified and offer earth-friendly options, all at the same time. Green burial is not viewed as a disposal method for the deceased."

With 14 funeral centers and seven cemeteries, Flanner and Buchanan and Washington Park are the largest privately held cemetery and funeral complex with a natural burial site in Indiana, according to Joe Sehee, Executive Director of the Green Burial Council.

"Flanner and Buchanan is one of the most well regarded firms in this industry," Sehee added. "They have connected this idea to the fact that they are known for always standing for serving families in the manner they choose. This embracing of eco-friendly death care is yet another example of the options they offer families."

Location types for green burials can vary. The Green Burial Council certifies three – low impact, natural, and conservation. "We are offering our families a natural burial ground," Mau said. "The acreage that will be available, starting next spring, will have both a wooded area and one that is blanketed with prairie grasses and flowers native to Indiana."

To qualify for natural burial in Kessler Woods, some basic stipulations must be met. These include the use of a biodegradable burial container such as a wood casket or shroud and the preservation of the body without formaldehyde-based embalming.

Kessler Woods will not have a formal, manicured appearance, but will be maintained in its natural rustic state.

Kessler Woods, on land that had been farmland many generations ago, is in a rustic setting, accessed by a gravel road that leads from the main part of the cemetery.

"This new green burial site goes along with the conservation and natural preservation efforts we have been involved in for years with such groups as Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Indianapolis Downtown Inc., in the tree-planting efforts of the city and state, as well as our own Gift of Life program, where Flanner and Buchanan plants a seedling in the Hoosier National Forest in memory of every person whose funeral is handled by the firm," Milton said.

"We have already planted hundreds of trees in our cemeteries," she added. "Our motto for a long time has been 'Community, Commitment, and Compassion.' The natural burials embrace our belief in conservation and preservation. Much like we facilitated cremation for our Indiana consumers in 1904, Flanner and Buchanan is poised to facilitate natural burial for our environmentally committed Indiana families from today forward."

"We anticipate the number of green burials to grow each year," Mau said. "It's interesting that, in one sense, it's a very old-fashioned way to bury someone, yet it's now become one of the most recent trends." According to the Green Burial Council, green burials are a growing trend across the country.

For further information, visit www.flannerbuchanan.org or www.greenburialcouncil.org.