Western Kentucky University

From the SelectedWorks of Sue Lynn McDaniel

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Cemeteries: WKU Professor has Info, Seeks Info

Sue Lynn McDaniel, interviewed for an article, Western Kentucky University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sue_lynn_mcdaniel/27/
Memorial Day: Vet Makes Sure “Banner Yet Waves”

or see something besides Scottsville,” Norman recalls of his decision to enlist early. He laughs. “And the first place they sent me was Fort Knox, right here in Kentucky! I was like, ‘Thanks a lot!’”

He became a military policeman, and did eventually get to travel. After serving at Fort Rucker, Ala., Norman was stationed for about a year and a half in Germany at an American nuclear base. He had a very high security clearance. In all, Norman served a six-year enlistment—three years of active duty and three inactive, but eligible to be called back.

After his military career, Norman worked for an auto parts business in Bowling Green, then at the General Motors Corvette plant.

“They had the ‘best bet, hire a vet,’ going at the time,” he recalls. “That sort of thing.

From year to year with new veterans’ burials. Norman said Diana Goad tips him off to new veteran burials in either cemetery, which helps.

But in many cases, it’s a matter of literally walking each section of the cemeteries, looking for veteran gravesites—a time-consuming process. Some are well-marked—for example, veterans of both world wars, often have bronze footstones denoting their service branch, rank and the war they served in.

Others aren’t as well-marked, and Norman said that’s caused him to occasionally miss a grave. That bothers him, he says, because he doesn’t want any veteran’s family to feel left out.

“I’m sorry for anyone I’ve missed,” he said. “If I do miss a flag, people can call me (270-622-9404) and I’ll be back down within the week.”
Cemeteries: WKU Professor has Info, Seeks Info

By Rachel Herrington
C-T Staff Writer

"The woman who does death."

That's how Western Kentucky University historian Sue Lynn McDaniel has been described. She loves spending time in cemeteries, but not for the creepy reasons many might assume.

McDaniel earned her nickname because she is passionate about preserving Kentucky's historic cemeteries. And she wants land owners who may have a historic cemetery on their property to understand the importance of protecting them and creating a sense of pride among property owners.

"As an associate professor in Library Special Collections, I tend to tell the students I'm an 'ephemeral librarian,'" McDaniel said.

Prior to that, she served as the university archivist for 10 years.

"I take care of all the paper items that were intended for a temporary use but have a more permanent use, like greeting cards, social and funeral invitations, invoices, statements," she explained.

"There are a few of us who keep, and those who keep often keep history without realizing it."

McDaniel has a special interest in 19th century etiquette, customs and Victorian symbolism involved with early cemeteries.

"I'm interested in more than names on stones or birth and death years," McDaniel said.

Her fascination with the 19th century revolves around how burial and graveyards became cemeteries, doing away with the skull and crossbones ideas of death.

"That was the time when people quit building those foot squeezer coffins and started using rectangular caskets instead, because a casket is a box in which you keep something that is precious to you," she explained.

By working as a research assistant at WKU, many researchers would come in to use local history items and locate ancestors and their graves. As a result, McDaniel formed a partnership with Warren County's Planning and Zoning office.

McDaniel estimates Warren County has at least 480 cemeteries although not all of them are located, much less documented.

"A specific number for Allen County is uncertain, though the most recent Allen County Historical Society map has at least 190 documented cemeteries," McDaniel said.

Her inspiration is to first encourage land owners to locate these cemeteries and get them documented.

She added that state laws are in place that govern the upkeep of cemeteries and prohibit destroying historic headstones, although they are seldom enforced.

"For instance, if you own a piece of property that has a cemetery on it, you are expected to provide a way to and from it for family members or interested parties to visit, whether it's a gravel road or even a bush-hogged path."

In the case of farmers who have cattle that graze near a cemetery, a fence is required to be placed around the stones so the animals don't trample or knock over the markers.

"Upkeep of the area is another requirement. Weeds and other vines can wreak havoc on the old stones."

"Over time, if too much undergrowth occurs, some stones even end up underground," McDaniel said.

"Many property owners are interested and kind because if it were their family, they would want the right to see and clean the cemetery," she added.

McDaniel's long-term mission is trying to get more people in all counties involved in caring for endangered cemeteries. "Most of these are sitting on people's farms, way off the road where nobody knows that they are."

A cemetery database maintained by the Kentucky Historical Society exists so cemeteries can be reported to them. McDaniel and other volunteer members of the Warren County Cemetery Board are lobbying for Kentucky to look at their qualifications for pioneer cemeteries to make it possible for all counties to qualify for this, not just those in the eastern region of the state.

For a current project she's working on, McDaniel wants to find out where the most beautiful or unusual tombstones are located in (See Cemeteries, page 22.

That would be a good project, he said, to teach responsibility and reverence for the brave and future dreams possible.

The kind of reverence keeps Norman going his time to assess the land of the fox Star-Spangled Banner waves—over the finding place of the brave.

Book Sale
Library

Friends of the Libr hold their annual book sale at the public library on day and Saturday, on from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. can buy a bag of books for $1. Please support thy project.

Service at Turner Re

Harmony M. Baptist Church will have service at Cal Tabhab and Specialty Thursday, June 2. Bro. Kevin Ransor will be preaching. Everyone is welcome.
Shades down and eyes on the road, AC-S graduate Simon Moore concentrates on his tricycle driving skills while classmate Cheyanne Funnell holds on for dear life. Bradley Reynolds tags along behind in case his assistance is needed.

Class of 2016 girls whipped around by the mad morning last Saturday night after graduation. This year, 179 seniors be locked in for six ties such as the机械 games, free snacks and giveaways, made possible by the business and community.

Decorating Services

Decoration Services will be held Sunday, June 11th at Oak Forrest No. 1 Missionary Baptist Church in Adolphus. Preaching begins at 10:30 a.m., with singing in the afternoon. The Turner Family Bowling Green. Steve cent is the pastor.

Car Wash Service

The Lady Patriot basketball team will have a car wash on Saturday, June 11th from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. at St. Charles. Donations will be accepted.

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