



SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Jeraldyne Blunden



In 1948, Jeraldyne Blunden's mother was raising two daughters who were itching to dance.

"Back in those days it was hard," said Jeraldyne's sister, Carol Ann. "The only dance studios were white. And everybody [the studios] said the typical: 'There's no room, our classes are closed.'"

Undeterred, a group of Dayton mothers went to see the Schwarz

sisters. Founders of the second oldest ballet company in the United States, the sisters

had operated a studio in Dayton for several decades.

“Miss Jo [Schwarz] told them, ‘We’d love to teach your children. But I’m sorry to say they can’t come to our school. If they do, we’ll lose business. We can’t afford to lose business. You find the place, and we’ll come there.’”

Photo: ‘Miss Jo,’ Josephine Schwarz (back, 4th from L) with her students at the Linden Center Dance School ca. 1940s, including Jeraldyn Blunden (back, R), and her sister, Carol Ann Shockley (front, 4th from L). Published by *The Dayton Jewish Observer*, 8/23/2018.

The Schwarz sisters saw that Jeraldyn had the talent and dedication to become a professional dancer. They encouraged the young Jeraldyn and helped to secure scholarships for her to attend summer programs hosted by the American Dance Festival in Connecticut. Jeraldyn's experiences outside of Dayton helped to shape her vision and dreams for the future.

While still a high school student, the Schwarz sisters asked Jeraldyn to assume the role of director of the Linden Center dance classes. With Jeraldyn at the helm, the student population grew too large for the Linden Center space, so the classes relocated to the basement of St. Margaret's church.



Photo: [Dayton Daily News Archives](#).



In 1968, Jeraldyn Blunden founded the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), so that her students would have more opportunities to perform. Although Jeraldyn knew the obstacles of being a second dance company in a city as small as Dayton, she tenaciously pursued her dream.

“She planted her feet here, the roots here, and she saw no reason why a company of this caliber could not exist in [Dayton],” Debbie Blunden-Diggs, Jeraldyn’s daughter says.

Jeraldyn Blunden died on November 22, 1999 at the age of 58. Jennifer Dunning from the New York Times described Blunden's legacy as a beloved leader in the dance world, stating, “That no-nonsense approach to life was mixed with steely determination, a great personal warmth

and humor and an unsentimental humanity that made her a much-loved figure on the national dance scene.”

Her legacy is still carried on today by her daughter Debbie Blunden-Diggs and granddaughters Alexis and Lyndsey Diggs.

Photo: [Dayton Daily News Archives](#).



Centenarian Club:



Dr. Pilar de la Aguilera

(3/17/1917 - 8/29/2021)

1942 was a busy year for Dr. Pilar de la Aguilera. She married Tomas de la Aguilera and earned PhD's in both physics and chemistry from the University of Habana. While working as a physics professor and raising her family, Dr. de la Aguilera continued her education in pharmacology—using her PhD in that subject to open a drugstore with her husband.

In 1961, Dr. de la Aguilera escaped Cuba. During that troubled time, she served as a houseparent to dozens of unaccompanied minors, many of whom kept in contact with Dr. de la Aguilera for the next 60 years.

An expert Sudoku enthusiast, Pilar traveled extensively. Here in Ohio, Dr. de la Aguilera became a professor of chemistry at Wilberforce University. In 22 years she never missed a single day of work. Over the course of her career, Dr. de la Aguilera spent nearly 40 years as a professor of science and was a life member of the American Association of University Women.

Described as an astute pragmatist with a generous heart, strict discipline and strong work ethics, Pilar de la Aguilera died in 2021 at the age of 104.

Symbols of the Season:

Palm Fronds

Awarded to winning athletes by the ancient Greeks, the palm frond became so culturally representative of triumph that it was used to identify Victoria or Nike; the Roman goddess of victory.

Later on, Christians adapted the palm to symbolize a martyr's triumph over death—and by extension, any believer's triumph over death.

Because a victory means that a conflict



or competition is at an end, the palm frond also became a symbol of peace. In Islamic tradition, the palm is a symbol of peace often associated with paradise.

Upcoming Events!



End of Winter Bird Walk:

This is a great time see year-round residents, winter visitors, and possibly some early spring migrants like the Eastern Phoebe and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. The walk is slow-paced, and mostly stays on the road surface, but sometimes does venture “off-trail” into the grass.

Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear a good pair of walking shoes! The tour will meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery.

Your nature guide will be Amanda Lawson, an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist.



Woof Walk:

Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum and SCSA Pet Adoption and Wellness Center invite you to one of our most unique events: Woof Walk!

Dogs, you can take your human on a guided tour through Woodland Cemetery!

Tours will depart at 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Bring your sociable dog to the cemetery for a historic tour through the beautiful grounds of Woodland.

SICSA will be on site with information about their organization, how you can get involved and make a difference in a pet's life!

Make a donation to SICSA (cash only) and receive a raffle ticket for a fabulous pet prize!

Upcoming Tours:

3/15 @ 9 am

Click [here](#) to register!

Annual Event:

4/26 @ 8:30 am

Click [here](#) to find out more & register for this event!

2025 Adornment Removal Calendar

| March | | | | | | |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

Don't get caught by surprise! Check this space for Woodland's adornment removal calendar each month to stay on schedule.

Key:

- Dark Green** = Weekly Clean Off
- Orange** = Do Not Clean Off
- Soft Grey** = At Woodland's Discretion

Support Woodland:

Woodland is proud to remain an active part of the Dayton community as a popular place to walk, relax and enjoy.

We invite you to contribute to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation to ensure that what's meaningful to you today, continues tomorrow! Your gift makes an immediate impact on the horticulture, arboriculture, and restoration efforts needed to maintain one of Dayton's most historic and beautiful outdoor museums.

Thank you for your generous support of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum.

[DONATE ONLINE!](#)

Come Visit Us!

Volunteer opportunities

Woodland is seeking volunteers to give presentations to community groups on subjects such as local history, notable biographies, and trees.

Not into public speaking? Consider



Office Hours:

Monday-Friday
8am-5pm

If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

getting involved with our horticulture team, or assisting with special events & research projects.

*If there is something you'd like to see here at Woodland please reach out to us & suggest it!


Tours & More:

We welcome walkers, runners, and wanderers -- leashed dogs & school groups.

Register for a guided tour: visit the Woodland Cemetery website! Learn about fascinating Daytonians resting peacefully in one of America's oldest rural garden cemeteries!

Or check out our **virtual tours!** (if you really don't want to go outside)




SINCE 1841
WOODLAND
HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

Committed to providing dignified and caring funeral services and burial options to families of all faiths since 1841.

Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum
118 Woodland Ave.
Dayton, OH 45409
woodlandcemetery.org

Beautiful. Timeless. Still Available...



Discover the men and women who made it great in Dayton on a guided walking or bus tour. Self-guided tours are available on our mobile app.

For information call 937-228-3221 or e-mail info@woodlandcemetery.org

Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | [Visit our website!](#)

Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | 118 Woodland Ave. | Dayton, OH 45409 US

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