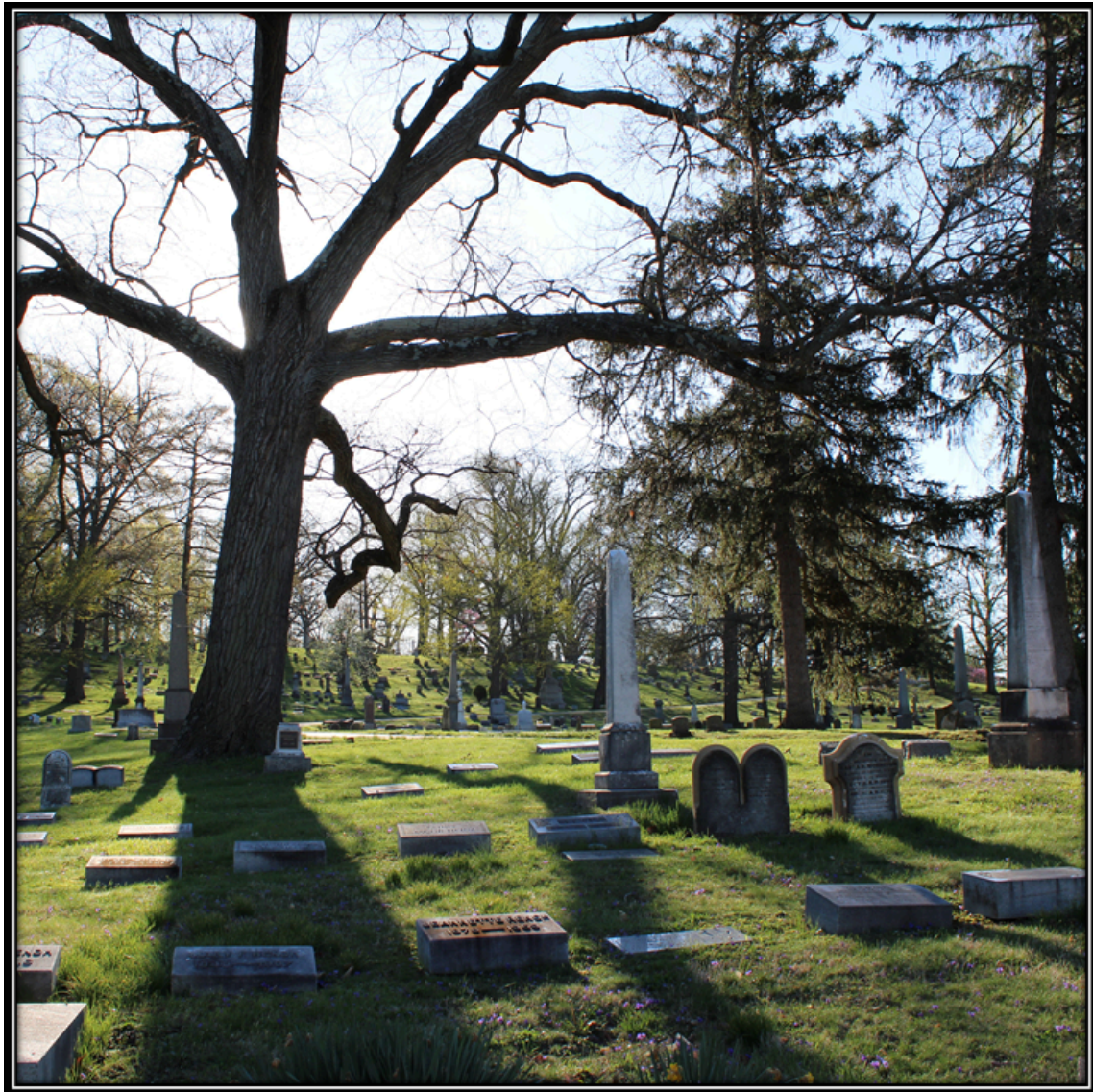




SINCE 1841

# WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



## The Rhythm of Life

Like many other cities throughout the Midwest, Dayton's Black population grew rapidly during the mid-20th century as a result of the decades-long Great Migration. Large corporations, like General Motors & the National Cash Register Co. (or NCR), provided the opportunity for steady work at a good wage. In addition to their families, the new arrivals brought culturally Black music to the city—including James Brown, who was pioneering a whole new genre—funk [1].

Inspired by the rhythm, Dayton musicians Robert Ward, Clarence Satchell, Marshall Jones, Ralph Middlebrooks, and Cornelius Johnson came together to form the Ohio Untouchables. Re-christened the Ohio Players in 1967, the band came into musical prominence in the 1970's as pioneers of street funk and underground R&B.

The Ohio Players' first smash hit, "Funky Worm" reached No. 1 on the Billboard R&B chart in 1973. Two of the band's best-known songs, "Fire" & "Love Rollercoaster", followed shortly after in 1975 & 1976.

Widely regarded as one of the most influential funk bands of all time, songs by the Ohio Players have been sampled and covered by artists like Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Ice Cube, Salt-N-Pepa, Puff Daddy, Sound Garden, Too Short, Aaliyah, and Beyoncé.

In 2013, the Ohio Players were inducted into the inaugural class of the Rhythm and Blues Music Hall of Fame that took place at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Woodland is proud to be the final resting place of three of these groundbreaking musicians. Follow the links to learn more:



[Clarence "Chet" Willis](#)

[1] [How Dayton became the funk capital of the world](#) : By Erin Gottsacker, published by The Ohio Newsroom 2/27/2025.



[Ralph "Pee Wee" Middlebrooks](#)



[Clarence "Satch" Satchell](#)



**Above:** Artistic reconstruction of *Funcusvermis gilmorei* in the subtropical forest of Petrified Forest National Park around 220 million years ago. Artwork by [Andrey Atuchin](#), courtesy of the

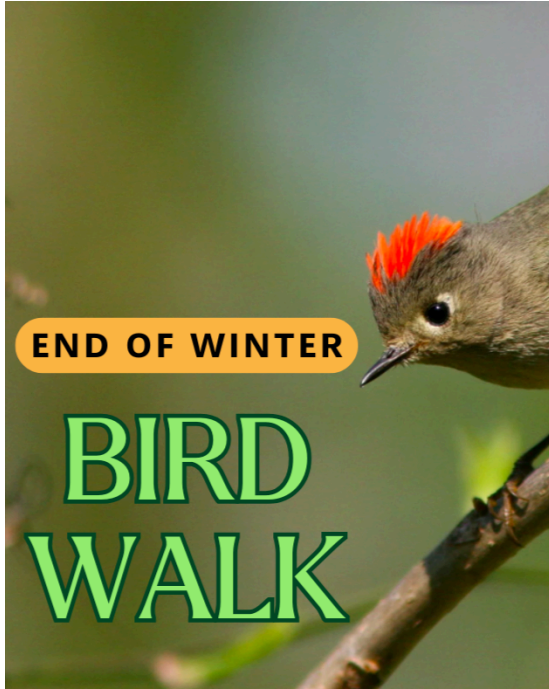
### Funky Fossil:

Discovered in 2019, this new species of fossil amphibian takes its name from the Ohio Players' hit song, "Funky Worm", which was a favorite of paleontologists on the dig site. The Funky Worm they discovered is the oldest caecilian (now-legless amphibians that along with frogs and salamanders make up the modern groups of amphibians) in the world.

The genus name, *Funcusvermis*, roughly translates to "*funcus*", meaning funky, and "*vermis*", meaning worm. The species name, *gilmorei*, honors Ned Gilmore, the



## Upcoming Events!



[End of Winter Bird Walk](#)



[Spring Migration Bird Walk](#)

[Click here to explore our full calendar of events!](#)



### Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 8a - 5p  
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### Contact Us!

For questions about pre-planning, funeral services, or memorial design:

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(Non-urgent) general questions:

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Woodland Arboretum Foundation



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