

## Designed for the FUTURE

Since its founding in 1853, the nonsectarian Flushing Cemetery has been meeting the needs of families in the Queens, New York, area.

Covering 75 acres, it is the final resting place of more than 89,000 individuals, including such notables as Louis Armstrong, Bernard Baruch, Dizzy Gillespie and Adam Clayton Powell Sr.

An iconic piece of New York's past and present, Flushing is embracing the challenges that face a metropolitan cemetery in the 21st century by investing in the future – its recently opened Memorial Chapel Mausoleum.

“As a vital part of our community, our new mausoleum better equips the cemetery to serve the burial needs of both our new and existing families,” said John Helly, Flushing Cemetery's general manager, of the cemetery's first mausoleum.

Opened in late 2019, the Memorial Chapel Mausoleum is the culmination of a multi-year and multimillion-dollar process that is extending the life of the cemetery.

The mausoleum will diversify the memorialization options by adding nearly 1,600 glass-front niches and about 1,800 granite and marble niches

along with 99 crypt sales holding 168 caskets, Helly said.

“With cremation rates expected to be over 50% by 2022 in New York, we are hoping to meet the needs of our community,” Helly said. “And with a finite amount of ground burial space remaining, we are looking forward to seeing how our families respond to mausoleum entombments.”

Connecticut-based Mullen Construction Co. Inc. was retained by the cemetery to complete the design and construction of the mausoleum. To complement the 100-year-old office located in close proximity to the new building, Mullen conducted a search to match the sandstone ashlar veneer, red-framed arched windows and Ludowici clay roof tiles.

The north and south stained-glass windows were each handmade by the Conrad Pickel Studio using an age-old process and incorporating sparkling mouth-blown stained glass. Founded in 1947, the Conrad Pickel Studio has made windows for thousands of churches and cemeteries throughout North America.

Every piece of the stained glass incorporated into the Flushing windows came from a hand-blown bubble of glass created by glass masters in France and Germany. While the mass of colorless glass is still in its molten state, various metallic ingredients such as cobalt, chromium and even gold are added to produce an endless number of colors.

Artist Lyn Durham prepared designs based on the themes of flowering dogwood and cherry trees. After her initial designs were approved by cemetery officials, Durham proceeded to make a full-size drawing; patterns were then made of each piece and the glass selected from an inventory of hundreds of colors was then precisely cut. The glass was then hand painted with a special paint that fuses to the glass when placed in the kiln at 1,250 degrees. After cooling, the individual pieces were leaded together and the joints soldered. The panels were then cemented with a special waterproofing material. Once carefully cleaned, the panels were delivered to the site and installed into special glazing frames.

## THE WORK

**1 | MEETING A NEED.** With cremation representing a growing choice for families in the Queens, New York area, Flushing Cemetery recently constructed its first mausoleum.

**2 | A VARIETY OF CHOICES.** Among the interment offerings in the Memorial Chapel Mausoleum are exterior granite niches. The exterior also features granite benches allowing for a place of quiet reflection.

**3 | THE LAST HOME.** The mausoleum includes nearly 1,600 glass-front niches from Biondan. The company's modular, adaptable, innovative Last Home system allows the cemetery to provide the perfect, home-like environment for its cremation customers.

**4 | BEAUTY IN GLASS.** The stained glass in the north and south windows of the mausoleum were handcrafted by the Conrad Pickel Studio and are based on the themes of flowering dogwood and cherry trees.

*(Photos courtesy of Abigail Press)*

