

**"Injustice anywhere is a threat  
to justice everywhere."**

**"Money is last. The mission is No. 1."**



**Carolyn Jacobi And Eternal Justice in North Carolina**

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**Another first for Eternal Justice, Inc.**



Brad Jackson, left, and Larry Joyner of Joyner's Memorial place a headstone at a grave site in the Evergreen Memorial Gardens and Mausoleum. (Photo by Keith Barnes)

**Brad Jackson, left, and Larry Joyner of Joyner's Memorials  
place a headstone at a grave site in the Evergreen Memorial Gardens and Mausoleum.  
After Eternal Justice, Inc intervened the memorial company installed the memorial  
without the exorbitant cemetery fee! Another consumer victory!  
Cemetery fees are sometimes outrageous until Carolyn Jacobi and Eternal Justice  
arrive on the scene to stop such injustices!**

# Cemetery fees becoming a 'hassle'

By Laura Keeter

Daily Times Staff Writer

Robert Pearce finally saw the marker set in place at his wife's grave just before Christmas. She had died Oct. 15 and was buried in Evergreen Memorial Gardens & Mausoleum beside her parents.

Pearce bought the graves in the 1950s to keep the families together. His parents are buried there, and he also bought grave sites for his children.

Pearce bought his marker from Joyner's Memorial. However, he had to wait to get it installed because Joyner's Memorial was trying to get the cemetery to take certain fees off the paperwork.

"It was nothing but a hassle," Pearce said. Finally, Dean Joyner, secretary/treasurer of Joyner's Memorials on U.S. 301, agreed to proceed after a consumer advocate couldn't persuade Evergreen to do away with the fee.

The fee, which is determined by a formula, is \$719 for a standard-size double (or "companion") marker, a long markers shared by a couple.

Families only have to pay the fee upon the second death, if they've used an outside monument company, and if the company doesn't return to reset the marker and Evergreen has to do the job.

Such fees on markers is a trend that is cropping up at some of the private, for-profit cemeteries such as Evergreen, which is owned by Stewart Enterprises.

## Consumer concern

The trend is part of a larger concern about some cemeteries taking advantage of consumers who come to them under stress of time constraints and emotional loss.

An article in the Consumers Digest May/June issue focused on the marker fees.

"Many of the most outrageous fees connected with a burial are often hidden in con-

## Shopping for burial site isn't easy

By Laura Keeter

Daily Times Staff Writer

Comparison shopping among cemeteries isn't as easy as researching funeral homes.

Funeral homes are required give out their price lists, even over the telephone. The Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule of 1984 mandates they do this.

But cemeteries aren't required by law to reveal their prices. Things could change.

"The question is currently being considered by the Federal Trade Commission whether to bring cemeteries under the rule," said Larry Stegall, executive director of the North Carolina Funeral Directors Association.

Not all area cemeteries agreed to hand over their price lists for this article, though cemetery managers said they have no problem giving customers prices.

Those who were forthcoming warned that looking solely at price list compar-

isons between cemetery lots is comparing apples to oranges. Unlike funeral homes, which offer similar services, cemeteries sell land. Location and other factors matter.

"Not all cemeteries are the same as far as aesthetics and what the land values are," said Terry Hemeyer, spokesman for SCI, a conglomerate that owns funeral homes and cemeteries.

Special settings can make lot prices jump even higher.

At Oleander Gardens in Wilmington, for instance, people shell out \$3,400 for a grave site that fronts the Intercoastal Waterway.

Not all cemeteries are run the same. Hamilton Burial Gardens, which offers the cheapest ground spaces in Wilson, is a privately-owned registered cemetery. But it is not licensed and is not covered under the North Carolina Cemetery Commission because it does not fill spaces on a pre-

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or price merchandise from a third party," the article said. "Some of the most brazen fees involve installation of markers and memorials by outside contractors."

On behalf of local monument companies, consumer advocate Carolyn Jacobi visited

Memorial Gardens on this fee. Jacobi, executive director of Maryland-based Eternal Justice Inc., which she calls a watchdog organization/company.

Jacobi first came to Wilson last summer. She argued that the monument installation fee Evergreen was charging to third-party monument makers was too high.

Evergreen was charging monument dealers the following permit fees: \$627 for a standard-size bronze companion marker, or \$7 for a government companion marker. Monument companies pass on those fees to families.

However, \$50-\$100 is the norm for per-

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