THE MEMORIAL SALESMA N

AUGUST, 1941

Douglas Fairbanks' Memorial, Hollywood Cemetery
designed and erected by Howard Seidell.
Tribute Paid to Fairbanks

New $40,000 Memorial to Former Film Star Dedicated Before 1500

"To the youth of a decade ago he was the epitome of knightly courage and romance . . .

"And as he worshiped heroes, so too did he worship those qualities a hero should possess."

In these words Charles Chaplin, a fellow pioneer in motion pictures, eulogized the late Douglas Fairbanks yesterday at the dedication and unveiling of a $40,000 marble memorial in Hollywood Memorial Park.

As he spoke, Fairbanks' widow, the former Lady Sylvia Ashley, wept behind the sarcophagus on which, a few moments before, she placed a bouquet.

ATTENDED BY 1500

The ceremony, attended by 1500 persons, including many of Fairbanks' friends of filmdom, was simple. It marked the transfer of the screen athlete's body from a temporary vault in Forest Lawn Memorial Park. Following funeral services in the Wee Kirk of the Weather in December, 1939, Fairbanks' body was placed next to that of Will Rogers, which still awaits permanent entombment in Claremore, Okla.

Wednesday, when Fairbanks' casket was brought to Hollywood Memorial Park, it was placed temporarily beside that of another of filmdom's great, Rudolph Valentino, in the Cathedral Mausoleum.

WIDOW ACCOMPANIED

Mrs. Fairbanks, in white dress and veil, arrived at the ceremony with Chaplin, Robert Fairbanks, Douglas' brother; Mrs Fred Astaire and her sister, Mrs. Basil Black.

During the opening choir numbers and prayers by Rev. Neal Dodd, pastor of the St. Mary's of the Angels Episcopal Church, she sat with the group in the first row of seats near the sarcophagus. Behind her were Norma Shearer and Kay Francis.

After the words by the clergyman, who also officiated at the funeral, Mrs. Fairbanks placed her bouquet in the as yet unsealed end of the marble sarcophagus. Then, with trembling hands, she drew the cord which unveiled a bas relief bust of her husband with the inscription, Douglas Fairbanks. 1883-1939.

HAMLET QUOTED

Chaplin concluded with the inscription from "Hamlet" chiseled on the casket: "Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."
Fairbanks' Memorial

A highly artistic and original memorial and a very interesting one, has recently been completed in Hollywood Memorial Park, California, from plans and models by Howard Seidell, of San Francisco.

This memorial demonstrates what can be done by a designer with imagination, one possessed of an understanding of the selection and proper handling of a suitable material. Every detail of this memorial has merit; the decorative scheme is most effective.

The platform, steps, columns, and sarcophagus are of White Georgia Marble, and was executed in Tate, Georgia, the main plant of The Georgia Marble Company. A striking feature is in the large center panel of the main structure, a bronze plaque of Mr. Fairbanks surrounded by a bronze laurel wreath. The model of same was made by a young sculptress, Miss Catherine Steubergh, of Hollywood, California. The bronze castings were furnished by the Nelli Art Bronze Works, in Los Angeles (last wax process).

The designer’s problem was to create an unusual and artistic memorial befitting the life and character of this truly great artist, Douglas Fairbanks. Mrs. Fairbanks and members of the family expected something outstanding. Many architects and designers from motion picture studios, as well as those in private practice, failed to produce anything to the liking and expectation of the Fairbanks family.

Howard Seidell's design and model was selected unhesitatingly as the best, and he has added to his reputation as a designer of versatility, by creating an original of rare beauty.

In good taste and artistry, the Fairbanks Memorial, commemorating the great actor, who amused the people of the world for many years and brought fame and fortune to himself, rivals anything of its kind in the country. For him the best was none too good. To achieve this took many hours of study and consultation with Mrs. Fairbanks, whose understanding of architecture was most helpful. And so a new note in modern classic memorial art is sounded in the now completed Fairbanks Memorial.

Memorial designers and architects seeking inspiration for their creative work will find the answer for new unlimited possibilities in this masterpiece.

One is impressed upon viewing the Fairbanks Memorial with the fine detailed carvings, the massive but graceful pilasters, the beautiful lines of the sarcophagus, each detail fitting harmoniously with the other.

The large platform upon which the whole structure rests, resembles an open-air stage, a Greek Amphitheater, with the actor in the center, bidding farewell to his beloved audience.

The very appropriate inscription engraved in the center panel of the sarcophagus, reads

“Good Night, sweet prince;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!”

was selected by Mrs. Fairbanks, from Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”.

The whole theme of the carvings in the memorial and the sarcophagus is expressed in laurel decorations.

The memorial is built in an ideal background in perfect accord with the beautiful California landscape, in a modern expression of an old theme, not following any historical style, but illustrating the pleasing qualities of a distinctive type of Oriental landscape architecture. The Fairbanks Memorial admirably illustrates how beautiful an effect can be obtained in bringing memorial architecture and landscape architecture into close relationship.

A sunken garden with a reflection pool 125-0 feet long, and about 18-0 feet wide, has been created, planted with five large beds of Oriental water lilies and lotus flowers. At the end of the pool a circular retaining wall furnishes a natural background for this most unique treatment.

Cedars of Lebanon and Eugenia trees frame the reflection pool, and Golden Anerida trees are planted to fill the open windows of the memorial, creating a most attractive setting.

We all know of beautiful cemeteries or beautiful spots or sections in our leading memorial parks, but truly the site in Hollywood Cemetery created for the Fairbanks Memorial has no equal anywhere.

And so again, Howard Seidell, the designer and builder, and The Georgia Marble Company, the manufacturers, have added another beautiful example of memorial art to the many outstanding creations built in the past in the Western States, and one of which they are both justly proud.
“GOOD NIGHT, SWEET PRINCE, and Flights of Angels
Sing Thee to Thy Rest”

By

MAUD HOWELL

Beneath cloudless skies, amid towering palm trees, in the sanctity and peaceful seclusion of Hollywood Memorial Park, California, I was a witness to one of the most beautiful and impressive dedicatory ceremonies ever held in the far West, and for that matter anywhere.

The declining rays of a Sabbath afternoon sun on this 25th day of May, 1941, are falling on the bowed heads of a vast throng, assembled to dedicate to the memory of Douglas Fairbanks, internationally known and beloved actor of stage and screen, a stately marble shrine, majestic and colossal in its proportions.

As one gazes in admiration upon this beautiful memorial of white Georgia Marble with its graceful columns, its widespread platform upon which stands the command ing sarcophagus, the lifelike bronze plaque of Mr. Fairbanks, all mirrored in the fairylike reflection pool below, it seems to the observer too lovely to be real.

Many are come today out of curiosity to view the celebrities of filmdom, scores of whom are here to pay their last tribute to a comrade of the screen. But their curiosity is soon satisfied, and they turn their attention to the grandeur of the memorial standing in all its glory before them. It seems to proclaim a gospel of everlasting strength and beauty, for those who know the history of this marble, are aware of the undeniable fact that when all else may have crumbled into dust and decay, this marble will be bright and beautiful and will gleam with pride until the end of time.

On the day preceding, a corps of electricians, motion- tone men and radio broadcasting engineers, installed in the tree tops and other hidden places their sound equipment, in order that all listeners, far and near, might hear the service in comfort.

Only those of us who saw this equipment installed could know of its location, for now it had seemingly disappeared, and naught but the graceful overhanging branches of the trees were in evidence. Two microphones were placed directly in front of the sarcophagus, one for the proper distribution of sound, the other to record the entire service for transcription purposes, to be broadcast from Los Angeles the following afternoon.

In a few moments the service will begin. All eyes are focused on a slender figure dressed in white and heavily veiled, who falteringly makes her way down the long walk which follows the reflection pool on either side to the memorial. This is Mrs. Fairbanks, who so thoughtfully and capably planned and directed the service which we are about to witness. By her side walks Charles Chaplin, not the Chaplin of black derby, moustache, baggy pants and cane, but a man of dignity, poise, and personality. The part he plays today is in marked contrast to the mirth provoking roles in which you and I have seen him, as shortly he will deliver a solemn and sincere eulogy of his comrade of bygone years.

Following comes Robert Fairbanks, brother of the actor, Mrs. Basil Bleck, sister of Mrs. Fairbanks, and Miss Norma Shearer (who not so long ago passed through a like ordeal with the passing of her young husband, a talented composer and director). Among a large group of close friends are such prominent movie stars as Miss Kay Francis, Fred Astaire, Richard Barthelmess, Randolph Scott, Daryl Zanuck (Director), and many others whom we have all enjoyed on the silver screen in hours of relaxation.

Now, come the first sweet notes of the organ, which is placed in the rear of the memorial, and out of the stillness we hear the angelic voice of the chorister, singing, “Oh, For The Wings of a Dove”. The face of the singer is not visible, and the notes of the beautiful melody is wafted on wings of song to every corner of the cemetery through sound amplifiers. Then, a vested male choir takes up the theme, and together they chant the refrain until even the wild birds in the trees join the chorus adding their obligato to the anthem.

The Rev. Neal Dodd, in vestments of white, prays and reads from the Scripture. I would like to mention that this clergyman is known in Hollywood as the movie

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View of Reflection Pool before Fairbanks' Memorial. Distance from the steps to the Memorial is about 350 feet.

Group at dedication ceremonies. Front row (left to right)—Mrs. Fred Astaire, Robert Fairbanks, Charles Chaplin. Back row—Norma Shearer, Kay Francis and Mrs. Basil Bleck, sister of Fairbanks' widow.

(Photo by Los Angeles Times)
Visitors to Dedication Ceremonies pass by the sarcophagus in silent tribute to a famous actor of stage and screen.

View of ceremonies from road. Note that only the upper part of the memorial is visible. The lower part is in sunken garden seven feet below lawn.
Stairway leading down from level of the lawn to sunken garden, reflection pool and the memorial. A beautiful setting for a beautiful memorial.
preacher, as he is called upon to enact the role of minister in pictures of wedding scenes, or other ministerial atmosphere.

After a moment's pause, Mrs. Fairbanks rises and aided by the Rev. Mr. Dodd, steps up to the unsealed opening of the sarcophagus, and pushing aside the silken curtain, places a huge cluster of orchids tenderly upon the casket. Then, passing to the rear she, with trembling hands draws the cord which unveils a bas relief profile of her husband, with the inscription - DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, 1883-1939. Her grief at this point is overwhelming, and she sinks to rest a moment before returning to her place beside Mr. Fairbanks, the actor's brother.

Mr. Chaplin now ascends the memorial platform, and in measured tones eulogizes with sincerity his fellow pioneer in motion pictures, and in part said: "To the youth of a decade ago, he was the epitome of knightly courage and romance . . . And as he worshipped heroes, so too did he worship those qualities a hero should possess . . . He so admired and respected honor and chivalry, so hated sham and insincerity, and he retained these ideals in a world of shifting values."

In conclusion, Mr. Chaplin stepped closer to the sarcophagus, and in a deep and solemn voice repeated the inscription which appears upon its face:

"Good night, Sweet Prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

After the benediction, the audience is dismissed, and the relatives and close friends pass from the scene, while the public is given an opportunity to admire the memorial at closer range. During the remainder of the day

A distinguished memorial to a very distinguished artist. The reflection pool intensifies the pristine whiteness of the Georgia Marble of which it is carved.
At night, a special guard of honor is stationed at each corner of the platform.

The only discordant note in the whole beautiful and impressive ceremony, was caused by the absence of the creator of this memorial, Howard Seidell, from the dedication. Mr. Seidell, who not only conceived this beautiful shrine, but personally directed the placing of one stone upon another until its final completion, was stricken with a serious illness. However, he refused to be taken to his bed until, as a last act of service and devotion to the widow and family of the deceased he placed the body of Mr. Fairbanks in his final resting place on the morning of the dedication service. Then, with his mind at rest, he collapsed. As this article goes to press, the writer is advised that he has passed the crisis, and hopes for a speedy recovery.

It may interest our readers, particularly those living in the Eastern and Middle Western States, to learn that Hollywood Memorial Park, the site of the Fairbanks Memorial, is located in the very heart of Hollywood, the mecca of the movie colony, as well as the home of many celebrities of filmdom. To the rear of the Fairbanks plot, a distance of about 600 feet, is the Paramount Studios, also the R. K. O. production plant. It will be remembered that our hero of the silent days of motion pictures as well as sound films, loved activity, believing that life had everything to offer if only a man would seek it. Therefore, let it be said that if Mr. Fairbanks had chosen his last resting place, it would be reasonable to assume that he would again prefer to be near men and women of his profession working daily in such close proximity, reproducing the great romances of life in pictures.

And now the time has come to say farewell to a scene which only those who witnessed it could truly appreciate, a ceremony beautiful in simplicity, deep in emotion—the last act of a beautiful play, in which Douglas Fairbanks held the center of the stage he loved so well.
The Story of the Fairbanks Memorial Commission

Last September, I was told by a well known theatrical man, that a memorial was planned to the memory of the late famous actor and producer, Douglas Fairbanks, and that many designers and architects had already submitted designs and plans.

He asked, "Why don't you enter into competition? I will arrange an appointment for you through Mr. Kenneth Davenport, a lifelong friend and companion of Mr. Fairbanks, to whom Mrs. Fairbanks looks for advice on the proposed memorial."

An appointment was made, and I met Mr. Davenport, a very fine gentleman, who in days gone by and before Mr. Fairbanks entered motion pictures, acted with him on the stage. In later years he was a constant companion and traveled with Mr. Fairbanks all over the world.

Mr. Davenport told me that the matter had been dragging along for a considerable time, and that many designs had been submitted. He further stated that he thought that the Fairbanks family had come to a definite decision. But, after displaying photographs of my work, he became interested and arranged an appointment for me to meet Mrs. Fairbanks at her beach home in Santa Monica. I felt highly honored, especially when I was told that I was the first and only one so far to meet Mrs. Fairbanks personally in connection with the proposed memorial.

I found Mrs. Fairbanks to be a very charming lady, with a sound knowledge of art and architecture, but open to suggestions. After a two-hour interview, I asked for about three days' time to build a memorial on paper. I felt confident that I knew what she had in mind, and I did not fail. When I submitted my design, Mrs. Fairbanks was so pleased that she asked me to prepare a scale model, and submit same for approval within one week's time. This, of course, was a big order, but "where there is a will there is a way."

Back I went to my studio in San Francisco, and with the help of everyone around, the model was produced. The plaster of paris had to dry in the car on my trip back to Hollywood, but I got it there on time, and on display at the home of Miss Constance Bennett, the movie star, in Beverly Hills, where it was admired by Mrs. Fairbanks and her many friends in the motion picture industry.

A thing must be beautiful if one expects to please artists, whose minds and eyes are trained to beauty, and I naturally felt very proud to hear the many complimentary remarks. I knew then and there that all competition was eliminated. The next request was to furnish full size details of the whole job, and again on short order. This was not an easy job; due to the large dimensions, it was necessary to detail in sections and then paste same together.

Again off for Beverly Hills, but there was no wall or floor space large enough in the Bennett residence to display the full sizes, and again I had to cut and show in sections. Among the many compliments uttered, I especially appreciated Miss Bennett's "Heavenly!"

Then the sample of the material, White Georgia Marble, made the rounds from hand to hand, and was greatly admired for its beautiful qualities.

And here Mrs. Fairbanks said to go ahead with the work, and submit contract and specifications to the trustees of the Estate, and for the approval of the Court, as a matter of form.

It is needless to say that I felt greatly pleased in receiving the commission to build a beautiful memorial for one of the world's greatest actors, and now, since the work is completed, to know that my efforts were highly appreciated by all concerned.
1388 Schuyler Road  
Beauly Hills

Dear Mr. Seidell,

I was so sorry to hear of your illness or inability to attend the dedication ceremonies. I knew how keen your disappointment must have been. The memorial is indeed exquisite, with all the classic dignity & perfect symmetry that my husband loved so well, I want to thank you for your continuing efforts in producing it as well as for your splendid cooperation & unfailing consideration of my wishes. I do so very much appreciate it. Nothing but the return to San Francisco by my own doctors will bring a speedy recovery of your health & that I should have the pleasure of meeting again soon.

Yours very sincerely,

Lydia Fairbanks

Reproduction of letter from Mrs. Fairbanks to Howard Seidell, complimenting him for his work on her husband's memorial.

For the many congratulations received, I say, "Thank you, all—from the bottom of my heart." I want to extend special thanks to Mr. Jules Roth, General Manager of Hollywood Cemetery, and to everyone connected with his organization. All cooperated with us to the fullest extent during the construction of the Fairbanks Memorial, and Mr. Roth greatly contributed to its success in beautifying the grounds, landscaping, the installation of the drainage system in the sunken garden, and many other improvements.

To Miss Catherine Steubergh, the young and talented sculptress, who made the model of the Fairbanks plaque and laurel wreath, I want to say, "Thank you, and best wishes for your continued success. I know the difficulties which handicapped you in your work. In all the thousands of photographs of Mr. Fairbanks, not one showing a profile view could be found, only some showing him in his makeup, in costume or beard. I think you did a splendid job—Congratulations."

My sincere thanks to The Georgia Marble Company, in Tate, Georgia, for furnishing this beautiful memorial. I feel that it is as much a credit to you as it is to me.

Last, but not least, my thanks goes to Mrs. Fairbanks and family, and to Mr. Davenport for the trust placed in me, and the honor in giving my design your preference over the many others submitted.

I am proud to know that you are so highly pleased, and that I was able to finish the job, able to direct the finishing touches until a few hours before the dedication ceremonies, when a severe illness finally got the best of me, and made hospitalization imperative. However, I feel that I am now on the road to recovery. I will always regret that I had to miss the beautiful and impressive service.

In conclusion, allow me to say that I hope and wish that the Fairbanks Memorial will help to stimulate the memorial industry all over the country.

Howard Seidell

AUGUST, 1941
THE Fairbanks' Memorial is located but a few hundred yards from another very beautiful Georgia Marble memorial in Hollywood Cemetery.

This is the William A. Clark mausoleum, situated on a small island in the Memorial Park section of Hollywood Cemetery. A picture of the Clark Mausoleum is shown on the back cover of this issue of "The Memorial Salesman."

Some twenty-five years ago, the late William A. Clark decided to build a family mausoleum. He wanted a setting of great natural beauty, a building of classic dignity and impressiveness, and a material of permanent beauty. Price was no object.

He secured an incomparable setting through the purchase of a small island on the exquisite little lake in Hollywood. Before deciding on which material to use in the construction of his mausoleum, he came East and made a tour of the various marble and granite quarries. He spent several days at Tate. On his way back to Los Angeles, he stopped off at various points to see the condition of Georgia Marble mausoleums and memorials that had been erected many years ago.

When he got home, he wrote us that he had decided to use Georgia Marble because he thought that of all the materials available it had the greatest natural beauty, and that he was convinced, after investigation, that it would retain this natural beauty, undimmed by time.

The Clark Mausoleum, an architectural gem in pure Grecian style, was completed in 1921. The wisdom of Mr. Clark's selection of Georgia Marble is reflected in the present beauty of the Clark Mausoleum—as gleaming white and beautiful twenty years later, as the day it was erected.

(Photo by Los Angeles Times)
Mr. Howard Seidell, Western Representative,  
Georgia Marble Company,  
San Francisco, California.

My dear Mr. Seidell:

It gives us great pleasure to address this letter to you and the Georgia Marble Company, expressing our reaction and thoughts, as well as the reaction of the public, regarding the fine Memorial which was erected for the late Douglas Fairbanks in the Hollywood Memorial Park Cemetery. We were well satisfied that the Fairbanks Memorial would not only be correct in every detail, but would be a beautiful structure as well, when it was decided to use Georgia marble.

It was indeed surprising that within such a short period of time after you viewed the site and talked with those concerned, you prepared sketches which were immediately approved. It was an inspiration to note the speed and perfect artistry displayed in accomplishing this first step which resulted in the magnificent sarcophagus. We well realize that you and your entire staff thereafter spent long and diligent hours drafting the working plans and specifications. As our engineers studied the specifications it was noted with interest that your plans called for a foundation which structurally should last for all time.

We were amazed at the efficiency with which the entire construction was carried forth under your capable direction. From the moment the three car loads of marble arrived, there was never a lost motion—your crew worked together as a complete unit.

Since the completion and dedication on May 25th, 1941, there have been thousands of visitors to this Tomb, coming from all parts of the United States, Mexico, Alaska, and even Hawaii, according to the automobile license plates on their cars. We have received hundreds of letters of praise, requesting photographs of the Memorial. A fact that may surprise you is that many of the people viewing the Fairbanks Memorial are fully aware of the desirability of the Georgia marble for use in erecting memorials and other buildings.

We cannot commend you and your very efficient staff too highly—the workmanship, the materials used, the artistry displayed, and your own directing force and leadership, all combined to produce, in our opinion, one of the most beautiful and most lasting memorials on this continent. We want you and your Company to know that we shall always welcome the opportunity of erecting a Georgia Marble Memorial within our sacred grounds.

Most Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

BILLY ROYAL, General Manager.

THE HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY ASSOCIATION.
The artistic standards of many cemeteries are low, and in some instances where nature has provided a beautiful and verdant setting, this natural setting has been defaced.

One of the outstanding contradictions of this, however, is the Hollywood Cemetery, two views of which are shown on this page. Great natural beauty is achieved, not by a triumph over nature, but by working in harmony with the laws of nature. This policy has made Hollywood one of the most beautiful cemeteries in America. Blessed with a climate that makes it possible and quite appropriate to combine the tropical splendor with the Douglas Fir, this cemetery is truly a masterpiece of man's ingenuity in landscape architecture.

Right, above—A section in beautiful Hollywood Cemetery's Memorial Park, showing a corner of the W. A. Clark Georgia Marble mausoleum. Below—The entrance to beautiful Hollywood Cemetery.
Prize-winning photo by Sam Little of the Wm. A. Clark, Jr., Mausoleum, Hollywood Cemetery. Erected in 1921, of White Georgia Marble.

"Naught Treads So Silent As the Foot of Time"

. . . nor so lightly either, on a stone whose original, natural beauty is as permanent as that of Georgia Marble.

The Clark Mausoleum in Hollywood Cemetery is as beautiful today as when it was erected twenty years ago. It is still a show place in a cemetery that is itself one of the show places of Southern California.

It is now joined by the Fairbanks Memorial, but a few yards away—two gems in a perfect setting.

THE GEORGIA MARBLE COMPANY

Tate, Georgia

GEORGIA MARBLE