

SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

Thomas B. Fordham

April 11, 1891 - December 18, 1944



THOMAS B. FORDHAM

Thomas B. Fordham came to Dayton in 1920 and immediately became one of the industrial leaders in the city. He was a superintendent at the Delco Light Company and later became a manager at the Frigidaire Corporation staying there for 11 years. In 1937, he became president of Leland Electric Co. and was in that position at the time of his death.

Mr. Fordham was born in New York City on April 11, 1891. He graduated from New York University in 1912 and attended Columbia University and New York Law School. He was trained as an industrial engineer. During WWI, he served in the U.S. Army in the Ordinance Department.

In 1922, Thomas was the superintendent at Delco Light. He and educational committee members of the Dayton Foremen's Club partnered with the YMCA to conduct a series of classes on the subject of Foremanship. The class was geared towards foreman, sub-foremen, and shop and job executives. In that first series of sessions, the class moderators included: John C. Haswell of Dayton Malleable Iron Company; William Chryst of Delco, C.H. Spiehler of Dayton Power and Light, E.H. Kramer of General Motors Research Corporation, S.C. Allyn of NCR and Louis Ruthenberg of Associated Motors Corporation to name a few. In 1923, Thomas led another series of courses at the YMCA, this time geared towards "factory executive work." There was an increasing demand for constructive leadership and management in the local factories. Once again, leadership from area manufacturing companies led the sessions.

Thomas became a well-known and often requested speaker for many organizations seeking programs about modern industry and personnel issues. Civically, Mr. Fordham was involved in Dayton's society serving with several organizations. He held the position of trustee with Denison University and Shawen Acres and served many years as general chairman raising funds for Community Chest, now known as United Way.

Thomas Fordham was the founder of the Ohio Federation of Foremen and was instrumental in forming the National Association of Foreman where he was elected to the office of president. He was a member of the Dayton Masonic Temple, the Engineer's Club, National Association of Manufacturers, Moraine Country Club, Bicycle Club of Dayton and the First Baptist Church of Dayton.

Thomas Baxter Fordham married Thelma M. Sauer in 1923. They had just one son, Thomas B. Fordham, Jr.

During the first commencement of graduating physicians from Wright State University School of Medicine in 1980, Mrs. Thelma Fordham Pruett, a Special Friend of the School of Medicine, received an honorary doctor of law degree. Mrs. Pruett was a member of the WSU School of Medicine Foundation and was a driving force in the development of the school's Fordham Health Sciences Library.



Thomas Baxter Fordham died in Dayton from a heart attack on December 18, 1944 at the age of 53. Thomas B. Ford, Jr. died on May 17, 1967 at the age of 41 in Hubbard, Minnesota. Thelma married for a second time to Abner Pruett who died in 1983. Thelma Fordham Pruett died at the age of 93 on October 11, 1995. The Fordham family with Abner Pruett are all located in Section 121 Lot 3 at Woodland Cemetery.





Woodland is extremely grateful to have received a legacy gift of \$10,000 in honor of the late Thomas B. Fordham from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. This gift will assist us in the restoration and preservation of the historic Chapel.

"We appreciate and value the Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum's role in the preservation of Dayton history, and in educating the community and public on how significantly Daytonians have impacted the world," stated Thomas Holton, Board of Trustees, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and Foundation.



WOODLAND
ARBORETUM FOUNDATION

If you, your company, organization or foundation would like to make a legacy gift in honor or memory of an important Daytonian resting peacefully at Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum, contact Angie Hoschouer, Manager of Development at 937-228-3221 or ahoschouer@woodlandcemetery.org.

Your gift to the [Woodland Arboretum Foundation](#) will support the restoration and preservation of the Historic Chapel and Gateway as well as projects within the cemetery and arboretum.

Your gift is greatly appreciated and we thank you in advance for your support!

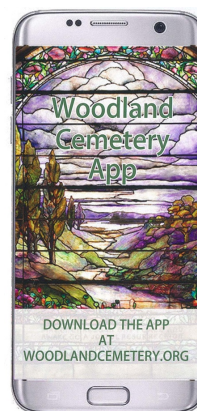
Join us for a guided tour!

Join us for a [Sunset Tour at the Cemetery](#) before they go away! We have plenty of openings in October for guided tours to see the fall colors in the arboretum. Our Arboretum Tour is perfect for the tree enthusiast. Reservations are required and you can sign up by clicking [here](#).

You can take your own walking tour at the cemetery or a virtual tour from the comfort of your couch by visiting our website at: woodlandcemetery.org/tours.

From your phone you will be prompted to download our app. Take one of 12 walking tours we have available for your enjoyment at the cemetery. If you are on your desktop, laptop or tablet, you can take the tour right from the tour page. We will be adding more tours so come back often to learn about the men and women who made it Great in Dayton.

[Download the mobile app for your phone by clicking here.](#)



Memories of a loved one should last for generations.

Using our app, you can:

- Navigate to your relative or friend's grave using our GPS-based system
- Share stories about your family
- Upload photos and video
- Share memories with your family on Facebook

Your loved one's memorial page is automatically created when you make cemetery arrangements with our office. You may also share and upload information by using our burial database via our website (woodlandcemetery.org). (please contact our office if you need assistance)

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A Woodland Milestone

To help us celebrate our 180th Anniversary, make a donation of \$180 or more to the Arboretum Foundation now through December 31, 2021 and you will receive a set of Woodland ceramic coasters. Limit one set per household.

Donate on our secure website by clicking below or click on the check to receive a donation form to mail in.



**Click Here
Donate Now**



Did you receive our 12-page 180th Anniversary newsletter issue? If not, you can request a paper copy of the May 2021 issue of the Woodland Wire by [clicking here](#). In the message box, please request a "180 Newsletter" and give us your full name and mailing address.

This anniversary issue covers the history of Woodland from our beginning in 1841 to the building of the Mausoleum in 1969. A profile of the Cline Family, cemetery superintendents for 100 years, is the main feature. Updates on current cemetery activities are also included.