



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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Dear Lee President's Award Contest Judges:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter recognizing the effort and impact of Times Editor Marc Chase's Civil War headstone replacement initiative.

My interest in the American Civil War started in the late 1980's. Powerful stories of brother against brother and son against father fighting to preserve the Union and eventually crush slavery caused me to consider the sacrifice of not only men and women, but children, too.

Marc's tenacious drive to honor these individuals resurrected local heroes, resting in obscurity beneath indiscriminant graves. Marc's stories highlight the sacrifice and achievement of individuals that shaped our local community and a national destiny. His commitment to preserving and retelling their stories has aided descendants of Civil War veterans in piecing together details of their colorful lineage. It has honored a group of distinguished individuals that as residents we were in danger of never knowing.

The impact of the project has not only preserved local history but improved our cemeteries' aesthetics. Restored headstones, decorated with US flags and GAR medallions are visually striking, catching the gaze of visitors in search of loved ones. These, now legible grave markers, make a dramatic statement connecting us with the rich history of our city. As we honor them, others are driven to consider their sacrifice and feel the rush of patriotic pride for our great nation.

On behalf of the entire City of Valparaiso, I thank Marc for investing his time and passion into preserving the history of our local community.

Sincerely,

Matthew L. Evans
Director