**For Immediate Release**

***Exploring Eternity***

**Using 21st-century technology to showcase the region’s history**

**at Albany Rural Cemetery**

**Saturday 1st June 2019, from 2:00-4:00 pm**

The 467-acre Albany Rural Cemetery (ARC), listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the historical and environmental treasures of the Capital Region. Founded in 1841 and designed by Major David Bates Douglass, the ARC was one of the earliest and largest rural cemeteries in the United States. The rural cemetery movement, expressed through romantically landscaped terrain, sought to integrate monuments with nature and to create a distinctly American vision of civilization and environment. The ARC is a treasure-trove for genealogists, historians and environmentalists. Over 135,000 people are buried there, including 21st U.S. President Chester A. Arthur and Revolutionary War hero General Philip Schuyler, five New York State Governors, 34 members of Congress, 55 Mayors, and numerous business and educational leaders. The ARC also includes thousands of family graves and plots, and 44 major group burial sites, ranging from firefighters to civil war soldiers and sailors, and to the mass burials of the Albany Almshouse.

“Exploring Eternity” is a first public demonstration of new cell-phone based technologies, using Geographic Information Science (GIS) and innovative databases to enable visitors to walk from grave to grave within the ARC, linking sites to portraits, biographies and burial records of the deceased. The app has been developed by faculty and students of the University at Albany’s Geography and Planning Department, with financial support from the Bender Family Foundation. It currently covers 90 leading figures and will be expanded in future years to embrace the entire cemetery.

The “Exploring Eternity” afternoon will begin in the ARC Chapel at 2:00 pm and will include brief talks by Paula Lemire, the ARC Historian, and by Professors Rui Li, Kurt Swartz and John S. Pipkin, followed by guided demonstration walkabouts following different routes. Bring your smartphone and plan to stay for a couple of hours! All are welcome, and there is no charge, but please reserve through *Eventbrite* (see below).

Location: ARC Chapel, Cemetery Avenue, Albany, NY 12204 (enter from Route 32, Broadway)

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