

## **Greenwood Remarks**

### *Rededication Ceremony for Greenwood Cemetery*

It is my honor to welcome all of you to this rededication. If you are visiting from out of town, then I extend a special welcome to you to Centralia. We are glad you are here. And if you have a loved one buried here, a very special welcome to you. It is our honor to you have here today and to care for your loved one.

One of my earliest memories is as a child. I grew up in the military and my father was stationed in Germany. We had the honor of placing flags at the graves of American service members at the National Cemetery in France. That experience taught me the importance of remembering – memorializing – the lives of those who came before us.

Cemeteries are the keepers of history for a community. They house our love, our grief, our stories. They are places to remember and to honor – there is a sacredness to these spaces. This cemetery holds the stories of Centralia – leaders who came and made their mark. Our own “Rosie the Riveter” who’s legacy is to ensure we keep Greenwood beautiful. Babies who’s lives were only a few breaths. And ordinary people who lived their lives here and are cherished by their family members. And on this Memorial Day weekend, we also honor the veterans. Veterans of every American war are here, and also those who never had the opportunity to become veterans, but gave the ultimate sacrifice and died in service to our country. Today we will honor the gold star families who lived with such losses. We remember them all.

A project such as this has many, many people to thank. While my heart thanks each person who contributed to restoring this sacred space, I want to mention two – Marveen Rohr and Representative Ed Orcutt. The two of you were instrumental in making this possible and Centralia is indebted to you. The City is committed to maintaining this cemetery that you have given back to us.

Thank you all.