(Editor’s Note: In the forthcoming issues of the Epitaph in this 25th anniversary year of 2005, I plan to write four articles chronologizing the history of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery from its beginning in 1980 to the present time.)

PART ONE: THE BEGINNING

In 1967, I bought a house at 560 Mount Hope Avenue and began my exploration of Mount Hope Cemetery whose north entrance address was 791 Mount Hope Avenue, just two blocks from my house. At first, I paid attention to the architecture (one of my studies in college) which involved 80 or so mausoleums, the gatehouse, a gazebo, and two chapels. Then I got interested in monument sculpture, primarily the work of Rochester architect, Claude Bragdon. And gradually I came around to the tombstones themselves.

One of the first interesting tombstones I discovered had inscribed on it in large letters: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Below that name, in smaller letters, was the message that this William Shakespeare was the son of a Mr. and Mrs. East and had died at the age of 18 years, hardly time to become a literary giant. But it intrigued me, born of Norwegian parents and raised in a small Norwegian Iowa town, that parents would be bold enough to name a son William Shakespeare and place such a burden on his career path. No Norwegians named their sons Henrik Ibsen where I came from. The sons were expected to become farmers.

Roaming the cemetery frequently, I naturally met others doing the same, and we started an informal group showing each other our discoveries. I met Dr. Rowland Collins, professor of English at the University of Rochester, in Mount Hope one day. By that time, a few of us were even giving tours on Saturdays and Sundays. They were loosely organized events.

Rowland Collins was a member of the Rochester Preservation Board and a trustee of the Landmark Society. He saw Mount Hope Cemetery with different eyes from the rest of us. He was concerned about the cemetery's maintenance, its preservation, its public use. And he proposed a meeting of city officials and cemetery lovers to discuss the formation of a citizen's organization to work with the city of Rochester in promoting public awareness and use of the cemetery as a park.
That meeting was held at the home of Rowland and Sarah Collins on Arnold Park off East Avenue, Rochester, on the evening of December 6, 1979. They invited about 30 people, but to me there seemed to be more than that number in attendance. Here is a partial list of attendees (the ones a few of us recollected after the meeting) with their associations, in those cases where I know them:

- Bill Woodward, Associate Director of Parks
- Marion Whitbeck, Landmark Society trustee
- Joan Hensler, city councilwoman
- Stewart Davis
- Marjorie Ewell, cemetery lover
- Jeffrey Swain, Commissioner, Department of Recreation and Community Services
- Robin Muto, area resident and cemetery lover
- Joseph Rosati
- Paul Holtzman
- Anne Frank
- John C. Clark III, Landmark Society trustee
- John Pagan, architect
- Frank Crego, Landmark Society trustee
- Dick Miller
- Robert Frasch, Rochester Museum and Science Center
- Craig House
- Rowland and Sarah Collins
- Richard Reisem

The group voted to call the new organization, The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. And they adopted a statement of definition: “A Friends group should combine business persons, experts in the history and contents of the cemetery, and a work force such as tour guides and other volunteers.” Jeff Swain said that the city of Rochester would guide the Friends into realistic projects and outline which matters that the city would do and what the Friends could do.

The Rochester Area Foundation (now the Rochester Area Community Foundation) offered its services as a tax-exempt organization to hold funds for the benefit of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. Funds raised by the Friends should be certain to be spent entirely to benefit the cemetery. (The Friends later achieved tax-exempt status as a not-for-profit organization, allowing it to accept contributions that were tax deductible for contributors.)

John Clark, a lawyer with Marine Midland Bank and trustee of the Landmark Society, suggested that the new organization adopt by-laws patterned after those of the Seneca Park Zoological Society. (He later wrote those by-laws for the Friends and also became one of the early presidents of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.)

I recall an animated conversation with many questions and concerns raised by the attendees. But there was a definite positive attitude toward the proposal of the evening. Everyone left Arnold Park ebullient with the prospects for a promising beginning of a new era concerning Mount Hope Cemetery.

The first official meeting of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery didn’t occur until Wednesday, June 4, 1980. By the time of this meeting, the Friends had 19 members. (Six months later, there were 115 members.) At that meeting Rowland Collins, too busy leading a number of other community and University of Rochester obligations to accept the offer of president of the Friends, accepted the title of honorary president. Alma Burner Creek, an archivist at Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester, became president. And Dr. Sarah Collins, an English professor at RIT and wife of Rowland Collins, was elected vice-president. I was unable to attend that historic meeting, but the day after her election, Alma Creek rode her bicycle over to my house to share with me her trepidation at accepting the founding president’s position.

At the June 25, 1980 meeting, the treasurer reported that $305 had been received as membership dues. Also at this meeting, the following committees were established: membership, newsletter, renovation, and special resources.

At the November 12, 1980 meeting, the Friends board agreed to make the restoration of the Moorish gazebo the principal focus for the organization’s efforts in the succeeding months. I will discuss that project, which involved U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in Part Two, Spring Issue.

ROCHESTER ORPHAN ASYLUM FIRE
by Sierra Zacharias

It was a sunny summer day in 1836 when a group of people saw a boy of about 3 1/2 years old wandering down Main Street and pausing at Reynolds Arcade. The strangers asked the boy his name, his address, and the whereabouts of his family, but he said nothing. Worried, they called the Rochester city police department. When the police officer arrived, the only information he could get out of this boy with his tattered clothing and “saucy” attitude was his name, “Bill”. The city was at a loss with what to do with the child. They had no orphanage or placement system for homeless youth, so the city placed him in the almshouse which had previously housed adults only. Realizing the inadequacy of this solution and knowing that, as the city grew, this problem could worsen, a group of benevolent women met in the home of Elizabeth Atkinson on February 28, 1837 and began to plan for the opening of Rochester’s first orphan asylum.

The women decided that the goal of their institution would be to “take unfortunate children and give them everything they needed to grow into good citizens, not criminals or indigent individuals relying on prisons or public aid to survive,” and that they would raise the children in a “Christian atmosphere”. The women also decided that the orphanage would accept orphans from the city, as well as children from families who did not have the means to care for them. Searching the city for a home that would suit their needs, the women encountered large amounts of resistance. No one

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Basic annual membership is $20. Call (585) 461-3494 for a free pocket guide to Mount Hope Cemetery and a membership application. See our colorful and informative web page: www.fomhc.org
wants to discuss a business deal with a group of women. Therefore, the determined women enlisted the help of their husbands, most of whom were well-known businessmen or clergy in Rochester.

Finally, with the aid of their husbands, the women found the perfect house on Adams Street. The house was the right size, in a working-class neighborhood, on the Genesee River, and the rent was only $175 per year. The women could not ask for more. On April 28, 1837, the institution opened its doors to eight children under the name "The Rochester Female Association for Relief of Orphans and Destitute Children." All eight of these children had lost their parents to the cholera epidemic that was sweeping through Rochester causing many changes, including the founding of Mount Hope Cemetery. The organization remained in the house on Adams Street until 1844 when the governing board decided that the children needed more space. They moved to a larger house on the corner of Greig and Exchange streets. This acre and a half of land was donated to the orphanage by John Greig of Canandaigua. Alanzo Frost planted beautiful shade trees for the children while Hiram Sibley enclosed the new location with a beautiful fence. In 1869, the orphanage made the first of many innovative moves, such as admitting children under the age of two years into the orphanage. At that time, only one other orphanage, located in New York City, admitted babies.

Fifty-seven years later, on January 8, 1901, two young men by the names of W. Clark and F. Young were walking down Plymouth Avenue when they saw smoke and flames in the distance. Running to alarm box 25 on the corner of Glasgow and Plymouth, the men called the fire department at 12:55 a.m. Twenty-five minutes earlier, Mrs. Ashdown, who was the night nurse on duty, went to the west wing to check on two sick children. Before she made it to the children's bedside, she smelled smoke in the air and quickly ran to ring the nearest fire alarm. On the way to the fire alarm, Mrs. Ashdown reported hearing a large explosion.

Meanwhile, one floor below, Mrs. Cline, another full-time staff member, also smelled smoke. But instead of ringing the fire alarm as her colleague had done, Mrs. Cline shouted "Fire" down the hall before running to her own bedroom where she quickly dressed, packed her trunk, and jumped out of the window with her belongings. Her actions were later questioned in great detail by the state investigators.

At 1:05 a.m., the thunder of horses hooves could be heard approaching the orphan asylum. Unfortunately, because of the snow, slush, and heavy equipment that they were pulling, the horses could not move any faster than a trot. One fire truck did attempt to increase its speed and quickly turned over in the middle of the road. Luckily, none of the firemen on board or the horses was injured. However, it did take 25 minutes to right the truck before it could continue on its journey to the fire, which was now out of control. As the firemen arrived at the orphan asylum, they were shocked at the sight before them. The Rochester Post Express reported, "Smoke poured out from every window and the screams and frantic cries could be heard coming from persons who could not be seen." Children were perched precariously on the rooftop in their nightclothes, and horrified little faces were seen peering out the windows at the fire trucks below.

The entire west wing of the building was on fire; one explosion had already occurred and another was heard shortly after the firemen's arrival on the scene. The children and orphan asylum workers were trapped in the five-story burning building. The only two fire escapes were impassable. One was built along a wooden wall which had burst into flames. The second was solid metal and glowing red from the extreme heat. The only hope of getting out alive for those surrounded by smoke and flames rested with the firemen and their ladders.

Ladders were thrown up against the building, and the firemen began to climb up into the darkness. The smoke surrounding them was so thick that they were unable to see even inches in front of them. Unable to rely on their sense of sight, they crawled along the floors reaching out and groping with their hands until they felt the softness of a body. One fireman later reported that the smoke billowing out of the windows was so thick that as he began to climb into one of them, he felt a little pair of legs in his way—a little pair of legs that he could not see even as he dragged them out of the window.

Another fireman, Maurice Keeting of Engine Four, had just reached a second-story window and kicked in the glass, when a woman flung herself out of the opening and into his arms. Unfortunately, the force of her flailing body was too much for the rickety ladder, and he lost his balance. The two tumbled off the top rung landing in a heap 20 feet below. Mr. Keeting landed on the bottom of the pile and sustained several broken bones. After he regained consciousness, he attempted to climb the ladder again to continue rescuing more fire victims. Even when his chief told him that he needed to go to the hospital, he refused saying that his fellow firemen still needed his help. Finally, the chief gave in, but put him in charge of directing the fire ladders, since Keeting was unable to do much else with his broken wrist and ankle.

The firemen were not the only people who were heroes on that cold January night. When neighbors saw the flames before the firemen arrived, men of the neighborhood began running into the burning building to rescue children. Even after the firemen arrived, the neighborhood men worked side by side with firemen throughout the night. The women, too, were performing heroic acts in the face of the tragedy. As victims were carried out of the building, many of them unconscious, women opened the doors of their homes to make their dining rooms into hospitals and their parlors into morgues. Herman Behn's wife took a total of 30 injured children into her home on Hubbell Park, caring and nursing them until early morning hours.

Ambulances made constant trips to and from hospitals carrying five victims on each trip, but the dead and injured could not be taken away fast enough. At the hospitals, the Post Express reported "groans of the injured, the hurry and bustle, the outgoing empty stretchers and incoming burdened ones, made a scene that once beheld will never be forgotten while many of the little bodies being taken from the vehicles at the hospital doors were already cold in death." At 3:00 a.m., the firefighters believed that all of the victims were out of the building, and they switched their efforts from rescue to putting out the fire.

The fire consumed 31 people that night, 28 children and 3 adults. Many children fell victim to smoke inhalation and mercifully never had a realization of their fate. Still others had burns covering the majority of their bodies and laid in the hospital for several days before death took them. After the fire was extinguished, the remains of three children were found underneath a single bed with their arms wrapped around one another. It was speculated that they had crawled under the bed because they were frightened and had wrapped their arms around each other in order to draw comfort during the scary night. On January 24, the
Rochester Herald deemed the event a "terrible holocaust," and the largest tragedy the city had ever faced.

In the morning following the fire, an estimated 20,000 people lined up outside the morgue to view the bodies of the dead. The Rochester Daily Union reported that "the majority were impelled merely by curiosity." Inside the morgue, four children's bodies were placed on a single cot. Each body faced the opposite direction to the one next to it, so that they went head feet, head, feet. Many of the little bodies were so badly burned that it was nearly impossible to identify them. In some cases, the only way for identification was by the color of any remaining scraps of their nightclothes.

Burial arrangements for the children were left to the matrons committee, who decided that there would be no public funeral service because it would be, according to Utica's Saturday Globe, "attended with too great distress." However, despite the decision not to hold funerals, many churches and various organizations did deliver memorial services. On Saturday, January 13, the Rev Dr. Stebbins, minister at the orphan's church, held a special service in memory of all of the young victims. The pews in which the children normally sat were all draped in black and left empty. One reporter summarized the atmosphere when he said, "Not an available seat was vacant; there were many moist eyes in the building."

Between January 16 and 21, a special investigation into the fire occurred, and an official fire report was issued by the New York State Board of Charities. The investigation revealed that the fire was caused by a gas jet in the laundry room that had been left fully open. So, when the gas filled the room, it leaked under the door into contact with a burning gas jet in the next room, causing the two explosions that were heard that night.

A New York State investigation board also found several reasons why so many deaths occurred on that cold winter night. First, they believed that having only two fire escapes, both of which were impassable, was a principal cause for the large number of deaths. Second, they declared that the lack of a male watchman was also a cause, since, they reported, "women are emotional and quick to hysterics." The board went on to say that this feminine tendency made women unable to handle a situation like a fire with the same success as males could have. Finally, the state board declared that the lack of practice fire drills also contributed to the deaths and injuries.

Along with the many memorial services held in remembrance of these young victims, a monument was erected in the new section of Mount Hope Cemetery. The simple monument is a large stone approximately four feet tall. The front of the stone is engraved "In Memoriam" with the words "Rochester Orphan Asylum" inscribed at the bottom. The back of the monument reads "R.O.A." at the top and the year "1837" at the base, indicating the year that the orphanage was founded. This simple monument is built in a step-pyramid with four levels. The top level stands out because it is roughly formed and natural looking, while the other three sections are smooth, polished granite. This memorial stands in remembrance of all the children who died while in the care of the orphanage—especially the victims of the 1901 fire.

After the fire, Mrs. George C. Hollister, one of the board members of the orphanage, stated, "There is a silver lining to every cloud. This has once more been proved true when up from the smoke and ashes of that truly tragic calamity rose the fair vision of Hillside, the new home of the Rochester Orphan Asylum." When trying to decide whether to rebuild or start over, the board members came to the conclusion that the old version of housing all children together was not the best idea. Instead, they thought a new innovative way in which individual cottages, each with its own house mother, would serve as a family unit, allowing children in their care to grow and prosper. In the spring of 1905, the orphanage moved from Hubbell Park to Hillside at Monroe and Highland avenues with its fresh air and open fields. In 1921, the Rochester Orphan Asylum officially changed its name to Hillside Home for Children and was reputed to be the most modern home for children to be found anywhere.

Today, Hillside Children's Center is composed of a number of different organizations, including Crestwood Children's Center, Hillside Children's Foundation, and several others. Together, these organizations serve 24 counties in New York State and over 6,000 families annually with services including child welfare, youth development, juvenile justice, and special education programs. They regard their organization to be a leader and preferred provider of integrated service to at-risk youth and their families. Indeed, out of the ashes rose a new beginning.

(Editor's Note: The author, Sierra Zacharias, is a student at the University of Rochester and prepared this essay as part of the course work for Religion 167, Speaking Stones, taught by Professor Emil Homerin, who is also a trustee of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. The Rochester Orphan Asylum lot in Mount Hope Cemetery is located in Section O at the corner of First and Cedar avenues.)

HENRY S. HEBARD, MONUMENT MAKER

by Steven Cybulski

Given the abundance of notable plots in Mount Hope Cemetery, a visitor might be tempted to linger at only the most prominent. Unfortunately, a visitor who focuses on only the monuments that dominate the landscape or are referred to by the guide books misses Mount Hope's many unheralded treasures. One such treasure, the family plot of Henry S. Hebard, is especially worthy of attention. Not only is the monument itself exquisite, but some investigation reveals that Hebard's life and work eternally linked him to both the city of Rochester and to Mount Hope Cemetery itself.

Hebard's monument demonstrates a good deal of restraint. The memorial is neither tall nor excessively ostentatious. The sculpture at the top was fashioned out of marble and depicts a girl dropping roses. The roses can be interpreted to symbolize unfailing love, beauty, hope, or heavenly joy and happiness. A small stone wreath can be seen on both the front and rear of the base of the monument. These wreaths can be interpreted to symbolize victory, honor, and memory. Considering the way in which Hebard lived his life, these symbols turn out to be quite appropriate.

According to his obituaries in the March 12, 1890 issues of the Democrat and Chronicle and the Union and Advertiser, Henry Shipman Hebard was born in Saugerties, Ulster County, New York on March 10, 1827. At the age of four years, he moved to Rochester with his father, Zebulon Hebard. He was educated in Rochester's public schools and the old Collegiate Institute. When he was 21 years old,
The Hartwell Carver monument, second highest in Mount Hope Cemetery, was created by Henry Hebard at his Steam Marble Works. Photo by Frank A. Gillespie.
The Firemen’s monument is designed in Egyptian style with winged orbs, symbolizing divine protection and blessing.

Photo by Frank A. Gillespie.
the gold fever in California incited in Hebard a desire to move across the country. However, to keep his son at home, Hebard's father offered his son an interest in the marble business. Steam Marble Works, the elder Hebard's company, was among the most prosperous in New York State. An 1868 article in Rochester's Union and Advertiser had the highest praise for the company after it came under Henry's control: "The works are a regular hive of industry—a large number of the most skillful workmen being employed there. The main building is a nice structure and an ornament to the street. The ware rooms are elegant and filled with the finest Italian, Lisbon, and American marble mantels, manufactured at the works in the very highest style."

In addition to running Steam Marble Works, Henry Hebard was a highly-regarded sculptor. The Union and Advertiser noted that "in the manufacturing of monuments, tombstones, and tablets for the designation of the resting places of the dead, Mr. H. is not excelled by any artist in his business in the country." Given his renown, the fact that Hebard sculpted the two tallest monuments in Mount Hope Cemetery should not be surprising. The shorter of these two monuments was commissioned by the Union Pacific Railroad and fabricated by Peter Pitkin & Son from elements created by Hebard in honor of Dr. Hartwell Carver, a physician and early proponent of a transcontinental railroad, after Carver's death in 1875. Carver's monument, which cost $11,000, consists of a tiered base and Corinthian column supporting a classical, robed female figure with her right hand pointing toward heaven. The figure is a symbol of hope.

The tallest monument in the cemetery was fabricated by Hebard's Steam Marble Works in 1880 for the Firemen's plot at a cost of $8,000. According to an address given by James H. Kelly at the monument's dedication, "The memorial is of St. Johnsbury granite and is without a flaw or blemish. It is of the Egyptian Doric style." A relief of a winged orb, symbolizing time and eternity, decorates each side of the monument's shaft. Hebard's 15 years of service in Rochester's volunteer fire department indicate a strong attachment to the organization, and the effects of this attachment are evident in the excellent execution of the monument.

Henry S. Hebard married Harriet M. Hazen in 1853. Hazen's uncle Benjamin Shipman, who was at that time the treasurer of Geneseo College, is now buried in the Hebard family plot. Henry's and Harriet's children are also buried with them in the family plot.

The Hebards were quite popular in Rochester's social circles. An 1877 article in the Union and Advertiser describes an impromptu masquerade party held at Hebard's house. "A number of the friends of H. S. Hebard sent out invitations to their friends to gather at the residence of Dr. Luckey, South Street, each provided with a sheet, pillowcase, and white mask. There was a general response to the invitation, and at about 8 o'clock the ladies and gentlemen sallied forth for Mr. Hebard's residence on Howell Street." The surprise party for Henry Hebard went on late into the night with music from the Hyland Brothers and dancing. According to the newspaper article, "No one was more delighted with the party than Mr. Hebard himself."

Henry S. Hebard served as president of the East Side Savings Bank and the New York Mutual Aid Society. He was a resolute Republican and ran for mayor of Rochester twice on the party's ticket. He served as police commissioner from 1865 to 1872. In 1880, Hebard received perhaps the highest indication of good standing within his political party when he was chosen as a presidential elector for James A. Garfield. He was in Washington, D.C. on March 5, 1890 to get his commission as postmaster of Rochester. While in Washington, Hebard caught a bad cold. The cold quickly developed into pneumonia, and Hebard died in his home at No. 16 Howell Street at 6:50 p.m. on March 11, 1890, just one day after his sixty-third birthday.

Hebard's funeral was held in his home on March 14. According to an article in the Democrat and Chronicle, "Long before the hour appointed for the service, the street was filled with people, many of whom had known Mr. Hebard in life and who had gathered to pay a last tribute to his memory." During the service, the Rev. Dr. Walker of First Methodist Church, where Hebard worshipped, gave a fine eulogy, which read, in part: "Probably no man could appreciate his dear home more than Mr. Hebard. Surrounded by his devoted family, he was a crowned prince. An indulgent father, a devoted husband, Rochester, his own city, loved him. She adopted him when he was a boy of four years. For many years, he had been her faithful citizen and wise counselor. His name will long live in her breast and shine with increasing beauty and luster down the coming years."

After the service, the mourners moved to Mount Hope Cemetery where Henry S. Hebard was laid to rest. The monument that graces his plot is an exceptionally fitting tribute. Unlike the grandiose monuments that mark the plots of most of Rochester's famous and wealthy late citizens, the reserved dignity of the girl drooping roses reflects the full, upright, but unpretentious way in which Henry Hebard lived his life.

In his book, The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life, Robert Jay Lifton describes the ability of people to transcend death. Henry Hebard was able to do so in a variety of ways. He lived on through his family, through the loving children and wife he left behind. He lived on through religion, through his devotion to his Methodist faith and the hope for life after death it provided. Most important, however, Hebard lived on through his creative works. Hebard was a fine public servant, businessman, and artist. He competently carried out the duties of the many offices he held and earned a great deal of respect as a sculptor. The portion of his legacy that stands in Mount Hope Cemetery inspires awe: walking past the Firemen's plot and Dr. Hartwell Carver's monument, one can't help but be convinced that the man who produced memorials of such tremendous size and beauty deserves to be remembered.

(Editor's Note: Steven Cybulski is a student at the University of Rochester and prepared this essay as part of the course work for Religion 167, Speaking Stones, taught by Prof. Emil Homerlin, who is also a trustee of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. The Hartwell Carter monument, designed and built by Henry Hebard, is, at 50 feet, the second highest monument in Mount Hope. It is located in Range 2, Lot 104, at Evergreen and Woodland avenues. The Firemen's monument, also designed and built by Hebard, is the highest memorial in Mount Hope at 55 feet. It is located in Section BB, Lot 249, at Grove and Firemens avenues.)
REPORT FROM THE HOWARD HUGHES GRAVESITE

by Richard O. Reisert

Since *The Aviator*, a motion picture about the life of Howard Hughes, is on the minds of a lot of moviegoers these days, I thought it might be interesting to check in on the real Howard Hughes, the reclusive, eccentric billionaire, at his gravesite in Glenwood Cemetery in Houston, Texas.

It is nearly three decades since Howard Hughes died at age 72 years of kidney disease as he was being transported by airplane from Acapulco, Mexico to his native Houston. He is buried in the family plot of his father, Howard Robard Hughes, who died in 1924 and whose company, which manufactured oilfield drilling equipment, made him Texas wealthy. Howard Hughes’ mother, who died in 1922, is also buried in the 30’ by 50’ lot. The gravesite is surrounded by a wrought iron fence and has a padlocked gate. Along the back of the lot is a six-foot-high semicircular wall of concrete with niches that hold a half-dozen bronze vases.

Howard Hughes’ granite tombstone was commissioned by Hughes himself and was, according to legend, fashioned after a key fob that his father carried. The billionaire was buried in 1976 in an $8,100 casket inside a $2,100 vault. The burial site is definitely distinctive, but it is eclipsed by far grander memorials in Glenwood Cemetery, which was founded in 1872 and has a current permanent population of 22,000.

In Hughes’ later years, which are not included in the *Aviator* version with Leonardo DiCaprio as the younger Hughes, the eccentric magnate was a recluse with shaggy hair, long fingernails, and a morbid fear of germs. His estate was estimated at $1.13 billion and took 14 years to settle because he left no verifiable will and dozens of purported wills surfaced after his death.