

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



Dedicated to providing information about the people and places involved in the funeral industry

Early Fall, 2011

www.thedead-beat.com

Volume 12 Issue 1

Funeral History Tidbits— Part 3 Small Rural Funeral Home from 1900's to present

By Joanne Howard

Lowell and I presented a historical perspective of the funeral practices in our county to the Historical Society. When we finished we thought it would be relevant to present some of our historical research in a series of articles. Our third and final installment will look at funeral customs in relation to our small rural funeral home from the early 1900's to the present.

Some unique funeral tidbits will now be recalled from the history of Pugh Funeral Home. The current owner, H. Lowell Pugh is a third generation funeral director and embalmer. The business began with his great uncle, Enoch Phillips who started in 1904 and was later joined by Lowell's dad and mom Harold and Hazel Pugh and later Lowell and his wife Betty. These facts come from a small rural community in the Midwest. The initial business that contained the funeral business was a hardware store. As we have mentioned in the past issues funeral establishments were usually connected with other business like hardware, furniture and even a wagon manufacturer. One of the oldest mortuary establishments in Missouri is Farmington Undertaking Company better know now as Cozean Memorial Chapel started as part of a wagon manufacturing firm.



Pugh Family –Early '60
Left side Hazel and Harold Pugh,
center and far right Betty and
Lowell Pugh
Seated far right –Enoch Phillips



John Phillips in his hardware store

The first evidence of funeral activity in Golden City was found in 1882 with an advertisement by A. Morton who offered coffins for sale among other things and another advertisement from Perry Hurlburt having an undertaking business in Golden City. But in 1904 James and John Phillips purchased a furniture and undertaking business from Udell & Finney next to their hardware business. This particular undertaking business had records from 1903 but their business could have been earlier. The two brothers were Lowell's paternal grandmother's siblings. They convinced their younger brother Enoch (E.A.) to take over the undertaking business, so he went to a three-day course in Springfield on embalming from August Lohmeyer, a Springfield undertaker and state board member.

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Other Articles in this Issue



**Left—Right Joe Sigler, Dwight Boesiger,
of Bartlesville, Oklahoma**
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**Heckert Funeral Home—
Sedalia, Missouri**
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Ken Moore
Suhor Industries
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Amy Howard Art Gallery



The editor's daughter Amy, who was mentioned in our previous issues, was quite the artist and we've decided to display some of her artwork every issue in her memory.



Amy Howard

Compromise?????

In divorce court, the couple was asked to state the reasons they wanted to separate. The husband said, "Judge, my wife keeps her pet goat in the bedroom all night long and the smell is awful." The judge replied, "Did you ever try opening the window for fresh air?" The man replied, "What? And let all my pigeons get out?"



From: "Oh, for the life of a preacher."
Rev. Leon Hill



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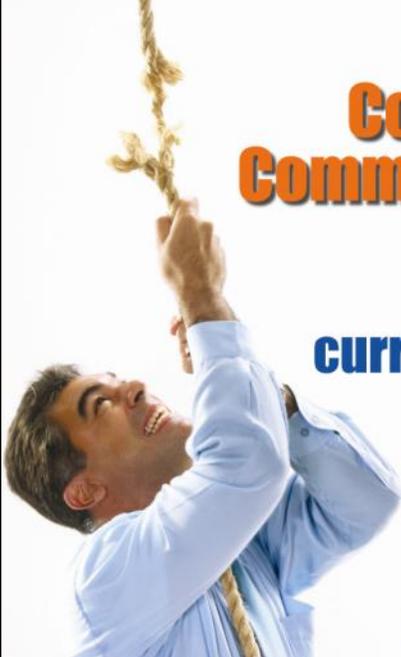
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- ◆ I used to have a handle on life, but it broke. 
- ◆ Don't take life seriously; No one gets out alive.
- ◆ Out of my mind. Back in five minutes.
- ◆ Consciousness: That annoying time between naps.
- ◆ Ever stop to think, and forget to start again?
- ◆ Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up. 
- ◆ A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
- ◆ He who dies with the most toys is nonetheless dead.
- ◆ The trouble with life is there's no background music. 



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Mortuary Muse *

*to think or consider deeply; meditate

By Lowell Pugh

Previously I fantasized about the perfect funeral home with studios and chapels that have all the things in a facility to personalize funerals even the memorial golf tournament.

But the future may lie in thoughtful care and efficient service. Our own experience has been that people have an idea of how they want to personalize their services and don't really need to be coached.

Possibly a downscaled funeral home with limited or no fleets, lower prices and other aspects would show more understanding to the customers.

Current funeral homes seem to have difficulty understanding why the customers don't want some of the amenities that funeral homes have provided in the past. Times change and we need to change with them.

If someone wants to build a new place, they may want to consider a state-of-art trade facility that can serve not only as a trade service but could easily serve

30% of the clients in a medium-sized city. With an addition of a viewing area a memorial service could be held before or after a cremation. It could possibly serve some other body-present services due to the low attendance and video streaming on the internet. If large attendance is needed, you could move to a church or memorial hall.

The place could be easily identified by a coffin-shaped sign of "Mortuary Express. - Thoughtful care combined with simpler services."

A modern trade service that we are familiar with could handle 30% of the services in his area based on the construction of his facilities. The needs of a trade service for parking and having enough space for small services may be a consideration.

Something to think about.....

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Heckert Funeral Home—Sedalia, Missouri



Heckert Funeral Home in Sedalia, MO, opened a new facility, the Heckert Family Center, in January 2011. The Heckert Family Center is home to Harmony Crematory and People and Animal Lover's Service.

The Heckert Family Center is a community reception center where families can host a funeral dinner, and is also available for visitations, memorial services, community meetings, seminars, birthday and anniversary parties, pet memorial services, etc.

Harmony Crematory is Sedalia's only human

crematory. The crematory is equipped with a state-of-the-art retort which completes most cremations within three hours. On-site refrigeration is also offered.

People and Animal Lover's Service (PALS), is also Sedalia's only pet crematory and memorialization service. PALS serves individual families and veterinary offices, providing return of the cremated remains within 24 hours in most cases.

Sue Heckert, a 63-year veteran of the funeral business, is the owner of these new ventures as well as Heckert Funeral Home, formerly Gillespie Funeral Home, which has been serving the Sedalia area since 1918.





Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Brand Brand Brand

Building your own brand to set yourself apart from your competition is the right thing to do. Funeral service consultants preach that message continually.

The makers of most of the products and services we use daily have been promoted by their manufacturers. Marketers try to establish their product in our minds as the one that will fulfill our needs even if we didn't know we needed it in the first place. You name it from autos to soda pop—drugs—to Zebco fishing reels, we are bombarded with messages designed to create our desire for the product or the benefits it will bring to us.

With the exception of the insurance industry, the makers of funeral and memorialization products have been noticeably silent in addressing messages directly to consumers. They have left it up to funeral directors to promote their brand to the consumer. Since there is now a gathering landslide to disposition without ceremony, I think it is time the manufacturers of funeral and

memorial products joined the fray in promoting the benefits to the emotional well-being derived from end of life ceremonies.

I discussed with a spokesperson associated with a major funeral industry vendor about this matter. She was quick to explain that they had always refrained from direct consumer advertising out of respect for the licensed funeral home.

I agree that funeral directors get a little upset when they think their brand is being sold direct in a casket store or black market or even the internet. However it seems to me that there needs to be a concentrated effort by everyone in the industry to sell the value of funeral personalization and memorialization.

The spokesperson did point out that their delivery vehicles do carry the company logo as they travel down the highways. I mentioned websites and social media as a venue to the consumer now. She was way ahead of me. By the time you read this her company will

have announced, in conjunction with the NFDA convention, a website designed to attract those people who want information about planning funerals and explaining the value in meaningful final services.

At this moment I have no clue as to whether their website will feature any specific products, but I see no harm in that. I still maintain that there should be a time for the general public to view all the products that are available for personalization whenever we have a convention. Other industries have done so and it generates favorable responses.

During the sixty years I have been working in the profession I think I can recall seeing magazine ads about the benefits of a burial vault and frequent ads about granite memorials. I think it is about time the other funeral suppliers started their own brand awareness instead of relying strictly on the funeral director to do it for them.

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

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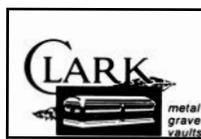
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(If you would like to find someone in the funeral industry, let us know- editor@the-dead-beat.com)

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

The exclusive club of people who have lost children sometimes find it really hard to help friends who lose children. My husband and I recently attended a visitation for an almost two-month-old baby. The mother of the baby was a church family's daughter and also had been a friend of our oldest daughter Amy.

The pregnancy was a challenging one due to the health issues of the mother and the baby was brought into the world early for both of them. He weighed in around three or four pounds and had made progress enough to go home. According to family he had been to the doctor on Friday and they had a baby shower on Saturday. Then Sunday evening things changed and he passed away. The sad fact was that it was near his due date that he had passed on.



Due to the mother's health issues she had previously miscarried several times and was not going to have any future babies. This is making it especially hard on all concerned.

It's hard to face a family involved with a tragedy like this because we know how hard it is. And also there is really nothing that will help except to be there for them. There are no words to answer with "Why did this happen?" There is no magical salve for anyone because people have to deal with it in their own way.

It hurts. It feels so unfair. It's just hard to understand. And it's so final. But for me I could only turn to God. That's hard to tell someone to do. When I heard of the baby's dire situation at the hospital, I prayed that the family would be able to turn to God, but it's a hard road. You never know where people are in their walk with

God. It's a difficult thing to suggest they turn to God, so you just pray silently for their comfort and understanding.

Everyone feels sad and helpless. Our friend, the grandmother, was having a hard time. I remembered what my mom had told me. She mentioned that it was hard enough dealing with the loss of a grandchild, but to watch me, her daughter, have to deal with it made it even worse for her. You want to help your children no matter how old they are. But it is so hard when you really can't do anything to help. You can't bring the children back and at that time that's all that is wanted.

So how can this story help funeral directors? Since we deal with this situation frequently, I don't really know if this insight will help except to remind ourselves of how hard this situation is. We need to try not to go in our automatic mode of completing all the details and forgetting the people you are dealing with. With establishments that deal with many cases, it's so hard to remember each unique situation. It's especially hard on funeral directors who have personally experienced this kind of loss.



On the same day we had planned to go to the visitation, I had my own realization of the losses in my life. Checking the safe deposit box for a car title, I decided to write down everything in my box for future reference. I had recorded the social security cards, insurance policies, wills, etc. But I also noted the birth certificates and the death certifi-



cates in the box. It just seemed so sad to have to deal with our daughters' birth and death certificates at the same time. This just didn't seem like a great thing for a parent to have to do.

Of course, I thought about the parents that had just lost the baby and empathized with them that they might experience the same situation in the future. It just made me more depressed, if that's possible. Even with your great losses, life goes on and it is so hard to express how these instances hurt. After awhile you aren't having the tremendous crying bouts, but tears sneak out of your eyes.

The next day as I was driving to work and thinking about the visitation and that baby casket, I immediately saw one of my daughters in her casket and then the other one in her casket. I thought to myself, "it just shouldn't have been like that, but it was." Life is still going on almost fourteen years later for one daughter and eight years later for the other one, but down deep it still hurts and always will.



I pray for that young couple and for their whole family because there is a little hole now that will never be filled even if people think it gets covered up.



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email Joanne@thedead-beat.com.

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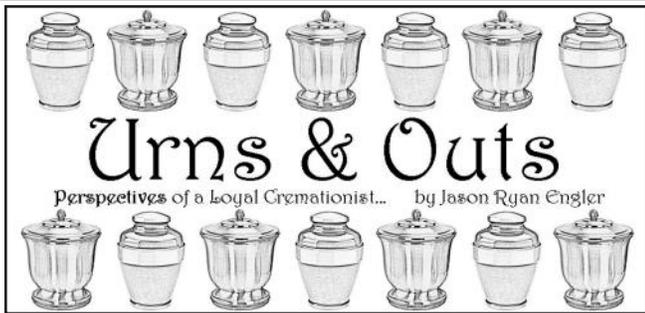
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“Nobody wants to be forgotten.” In my extensive research in Cremation’s history I have found that this was a common phrase during a period of time when the “Memorial Idea” was in its prime. The ideal stated that Cremation is not final disposition, but a means to a beautiful memorial. In numerous places in the Midwest and Western states, this ideal gave way to beautiful columbaria where “imperishable bronze urns” were at rest in their respective niches. A beautiful idea; but there was then the same issue that funeral homes in all places face at some point: unclaimed cremated remains.

I was recently looking through some German Cremation Urn catalogs, and in the offerings of a number of colorful metal Urns by different suppliers, there was one Urn in each catalog that drew my attention – a single word engraved on the Urn’s surface. “Unvergessen.” Unforgotten. A powerful statement made by those who want their loved ones always remembered.

I remember as a young man, the first funeral home by which I was employed had a room off the garage where funeral equipment was stored. The back shelf of this space was used to store unclaimed cremated remains – the oldest dating back to the 1940’s and 1950’s. I couldn’t imagine then, as I can’t now, how people could go without knowing that their loved one was at rest. Somehow, though, they had gotten through the grief of losing their loved one – and it seems had gone beyond to leaving their loved one.

I would guess that every funeral home in the country, and in other parts of the world, has their own way of storing or disposing of these cremated remains. Perhaps it is a “memorial closet” or a space created for that purpose. Maybe it is a file cabinet in your garage or a shelf in your preparation room. Could it be that your establishment does something more permanent, like placing them in Ziegler cases and purchasing a crypt in a nearby mausoleum for the purpose?

Each time I walk by the filing cabinet with cremated remains from recent families we’ve served, I realize that I am walking by a sacred place, a place that, for all intents and purposes has become a “final” resting place for some who lie in repose in that space – waiting for the time when their loved one, maybe sometime in the future, comes to take them to their true final resting place. Until then, may we regard their memory, so they too may be “Unvergessen.”

At least, that’s my perspective.

Jason Ryan Engler is a Funeral Director in Northwest Arkansas. He has studied cremation and its history throughout most of his life. He can be reached at: acremationist@hotmail.com.



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Mark Twain Quotes

The author known as Mark Twain was born Samuel L. Clemens in Florida, Missouri on November 30, 1835, as Halley’s comet was passing by. He was one of the greats of American literature. He commented late in life, “I came in with Halley’s comet. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it. The Almighty has no doubt said, ‘Here are these two unaccountable freaks—they came in together and must go out together.’” He died in New York City on April 21, 1910, one day after the passing of Halley’s comet.

Some of his comments on life and people are listed below:

- ◆ “I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it ceased to be one.”
- ◆ “My memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges.”
- ◆ “Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.”
- ◆ “Be careless in your dress if you must, but keep a tidy soul.”
- ◆ “Man (is) a creature made at the end of the week’s work when God was tired.”
- ◆ “Let us endeavor to live so that when we die, even the undertaker will be sorry.”
- ◆ “The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated.”
- ◆ “It is better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.”
- ◆ “The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter.”

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When A Friend Dies

By Ken Doka

When I picked up my four-year-old grandson from preschool, Kenny was proud to introduce me to his new friend. Even at a young age, we begin the lifelong process of making friends. If he's lucky, he may even keep some of the friends he makes in these early years. I still have a friend that goes way back to third grade.

Friends are an important part of our life. We share so much-laughter and contemplation, people and places, active and quiet moments. Friends keep us grounded and shape our identities. They may help us find jobs, homes, or even spouses. Moreover, our friends are not thrust upon us; we choose them. Some of our favorite films, from *Thelma and Louise* to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, or TV shows such as *Friends* or *Will and Grace*, celebrate friendship.

Despite the role of friends in our lives, they are oft neglected in times of death. Rarely are friends mentioned in the eulogy or obituary. Little support is extended to them. Sympathy cards are rarely sent to friends. At best, they are expected to stifle their own grief and, as an act of sacrifice, attend to the family of the deceased. The loss of a friend then is another example of disenfranchised grief, the grief that results when others do not recognize our loss. In effect, we have no socially acknowledged "right to grieve" when we lose a friend. For example, few businesses extend time

off to mourn a friend.

Yet, as friends, we too grieve. Grief is not a function of family ties or lines of descent. Rather, grief follows attachment. When we love someone—as a parent, child, spouse, or friend—and that person dies, we grieve.

It is important, much as we strive to support family members, that we acknowledge our own loss. We need to understand as well that each loss is different. We have distinct connections and meanings attached to every friendship. We interact with our friends differently. Some friends are part of our weekly or daily routine. We regularly speak and spend time together. The death of these friends leaves an obvious void.

We have other friendships that are less intense but no less vital. While we may see them irregularly at best, they remain important in our lives. Lynn is one such friend. We talk only a few times a year, but she remains a critical connection in my life. She befriended me in high school, in what was then a large unfriendly place.

Understanding the unique quality of our friendships helps us to appreciate the inimitable loss. We can then recognize the singular nature of our grief.

We may find it essential to attend funerals and memorial services. The very best of these may be inclusive—bringing

friends to the center of the circle of mourning. When my dear colleague Catherine Sanders died, I appreciated that the family chose three people to eulogize—her daughter, a colleague, and a friend. I felt very included to hear a colleague speak of the Catherine that I knew even as I was delighted that other eulogies touched on different aspects of her. I felt very included in that ceremony.

Because all rituals are not that inclusive, we may need to find our own special ways to mourn a friend. Tom did that when his friend, Mark died. He decided to go back to the ball field in the old neighborhood—a place where he and Mark shared so many good moments. There he offered a silent prayer for his friend, and quietly grieved over the loss of his longtime buddy.

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at www.hospicefoundation.org or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009. Annual subscription-\$12.00.

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children.** In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal *Omega* and editor of *Journeys*, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the Association for Death Education and Counseling honored him by presenting him an Award for Outstanding Contributions to the field of death education. In March 1993, he was elected President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. Dr. Doka was elected in 1995 to the Board of the International Work Group on Dying, Death and Bereavement and elected Chair in 1997. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran Clergyman. *(And a heck of a nice guy—Editor & Publisher)*



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Chuckles

Editor Note: My apologies if anyone has been offended by jokes in this column

Some "Jokes that can be told in Church"
Sent by Arlen Brown,

The Springs Funeral Service, Colorado Springs

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!" While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!"

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."



A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem... A small child replied, "They couldn't get a baby-sitter."

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "Honor thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters? Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Two boys were walking home from Sunday school after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?" The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your Dad."

A mangy looking guy goes into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender says, "No way, I don't think you can pay for it." The guy says, "You're right. I don't have any money, but if I show you something you haven't seen before, will you give me a drink?" The bartender says, "Only if what you show me ain't risque." "Deal!"



says the guy and reaches in his coat pocket and pulls out a hamster. He puts the hamster on the bar, and it runs to the end of the bar, down off the bar, across the room, up the piano, jumps on the keyboard and starts playing Gershwin songs. And the hamster is really good. The bartender says, "You're right. I've never seen anything like that before. That hamster is truly good on the pi-



ano." The guy downs the drink and asks for another. "Money or another miracle, else no drink," says the bartender. The guy reaches

Comments

I discovered your publication "The Dead Beat" in 1999(?) when I was employed by the Graves Funeral Home, Caney, Kansas, I LOVED IT! I don't recall the jokes back then, but DO enjoy them, and the articles, now. LEAD ON!

.....David Fuqua (Semper Fi), Potts Chapel, Caney, KS

into his coat again and pulls out a frog. He puts the frog on the bar, and the frog starts to sing. He has a marvelous voice and great pitch. A fine singer. A stranger from the other end of the bar runs over and offers him \$300 for the frog. The guy says, "It's a deal." He takes the three hundred and gives the stranger the frog. The stranger runs out of the bar. The bartender says to the guy, "Are you some kind of nut? You sold a singing frog for \$300? It must have been worth millions." "Not so," says the guy, "The hamster is also a ventriloquist."



A man is feeling poorly so he goes to his doctor. After numerous tests the doc says, "I'm sorry, but you have an incurable condition and there is nothing I can do for you." The man pleads with the doctor to suggest anything he might do to improve his condition, and the doctor then suggests that he go to the spa and take a daily mud bath. "Is there any hope of a cure?" the man asks. "No," says the doctor, "but it will help you get used to dirt."

A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans. St. Peter addresses this guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?" The guy replies, "I am Joe Choen, taxi driver of Las Vegas." St. Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the taxi driver, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The taxi driver goes into Heaven with his robe and staff, and it is the minister's turn. He stands erect and booms out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of St. Mary's for the last forty-five years." St. Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a taxi driver, and he gets a silken robe and golden staff. How can this be?" "Up here, we work by results," says St. Peter. "While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."





A man wanted to fit in with the golfing crowd at work, so he bought a new set of clubs and asked one of his friends to show him how to use his clubs at the local driving range. They bought a couple of buckets of balls and headed out to the tees. Over and over again the guy tried to get a solid hit but kept flubbing the ball, sending it only a few yards in front of the tees. The guy was getting angrier and angrier with each shot. On the last ball he declared, "Stand back. I'm going to knock the damn cover off this ball." He reared back and with all his might hit the ball, sending it flying wildly off the tee. About that time a pigeon happened to fly into the

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

ball's path and was killed instantly. The guy's friend said, "Hey, look, your first birdie!"

When Grandma Goes to Court

Lawyers should never ask a Mississippi grandma a question if they aren't prepared for the answer.

In a trial, a Southern small-town prosecuting attorney called his first witness, a grandmotherly, elderly woman to the stand. He approached her and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know me?" She responded, "Why, yes, I do know you, Mr. Williams. I've known you since you were a boy, and frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, and you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you're a big shot when you haven't the brains to realize you'll never amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you." The lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?" She again replied, "Why yes, I do. I've know Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship with anyone, and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Not to mention he cheated on his wife with three different women. One of them was your wife. Yes, I know him." The defense attorney nearly died. The judge asked both counselors to approach the bench and, in a very quiet voice, said, "If either of you idiots asks her if she knows me, I'll send you both to the electric chair."



Contributed by reader who had researched the old "Burma Shave" signs, many of which referred to automobile speed, and some referred to unsafe passing.

- ◆ Hardly a driver / Is now alive / Who Passed / On Hills / At 75 / Burma Shave
- ◆ Don't / Try Passing / On a Slope / Unless you have / A periscope / Burma Shave
- ◆ The place to pass / on curves you know / is only at / a beauty show / Burma Shave

In Memory of Larry Stroud, who sent us this joke. –

The Irish Funeral

A man was leaving a convenience store with his morning coffee when he noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery. A black hearse was followed by a second black

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hearse about 50 feet behind the first one. Behind the second hearse was a solitary man walking a dog on a leash. Behind him, a short distance back, were about 200 men walking single file. The man couldn't stand the curiosity. He respectfully approached the man walking the dog and said, "I am so sorry for your loss, and this may be a bad time to disturb you, but I've never seen a funeral like this. Whose funeral is it?" "My wife's" "What happened to her?" She yelled at me and my dog attached and killed her." He inquired further, "But who is in the second hearse?" The man answered, "My mother-in-law. She was trying to help my wife when the dog turned on her." A very poignant and touching moment of brotherhood and silence passed between the two men. "Can I borrow the dog?" The man replied, "Get in line."



Ole died. So Lena went to the local paper to put a notice in the obituaries. The gentleman at the counter, after offering condolences, asked Lena what she would like to say about Ole. Lena replied, "Yew yust put, 'Ole died'." The gentleman, somewhat perplexed, said, "That's it? Just 'Ole died'?" Surely, there must be something more you'd like to say about Ole. If it's money you're concerned about, the first five words are free. We must say something more." So Lena pondered for a few minutes and finally said, "Okay, Yew put 'Ole died. Boat for sale.'"

Sven and Ole worked together and both were laid off work, so they went to the unemployment office. Asked his occupation, Ole said, "Panty stitcher. I sew da elastic onto ladies cotton panties." The clerk looked up panty stitcher and found it classified as unskilled labor, so she gave him \$300 a week unemployment pay. Then Sven was asked his occupation. "Diesel fitter," he replied. Since diesel fitter was a skilled job, the clerk gave Sven \$600 a week. When Ole found out he was furious. He stormed back into the office to find out why his friend and coworker was collecting double his pay. The clerk explained, "Panty stitchers are unskilled and diesel fitters are skilled labor." "Vhat skill?" yelled Ole. "I sew da elastic on da pant-



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“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

With the bad economy, more of our families are experiencing difficulties in paying for funeral expenses within 30 days of the service. Is there a way to require a credit card to be supplied as an alternative form of payment when the funeral bill is not paid in full within a specified number of days?

Yes, but the funeral home will need an agreement with one of the credit processing companies and documents that are signed by the family when the statement of goods and services is executed. There are a number of credit card processing companies, and the business is very competitive. There are several websites that review these companies, including <http://credit-card-processing-review.toptenreviews.com/>. Your state funeral directors association may also have a preferred company that provides members a discount.

You will also want an agreement or authorization form that sets out the terms and conditions when the claim will be submitted to the family’s credit card. The typical credit card transaction involves an authorization and a settlement. A merchant initiates the authorization by ‘swiping’ the credit card. A ‘hold’ is placed against the cardholder’s available credit until the transaction is settled.

If the credit card is used strictly as a “back up” payment source, the authorization can’t be made until the primary payment period expires. If the family has made additional payments, but not paid the funeral bill in full, the credit authorization will be for the balance owed. You may want to consider providing the family notice of the amount of the requested authorization, and the date it was made. If the family pays the funeral bill in full before the primary payment period expires, it would be good practice to void the authorization form and return the original to the family.



Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is *The Dead Beat’s* intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading *The Dead Beat* should not be used as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. When Bill provides legal advice he does so for Stalter Legal Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Bill also provides consulting services through Preneed Resource Consultants, which can be found at www.prenneedresource.com.

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Arlington Cemetery Remains Identified by Picture in Urn

(Information found on [Connecting Directors.com](http://ConnectingDirectors.com))

Arlington Cemetery has passed legislation requiring the cemetery to fully account for each of its 320,000 graves. In 2005, an urn with a photograph was found in a pile of excess dirt at Arlington by a contractor working there. In October, as investigators continued to probe burial problems, they discovered that a grave where only one person was supposed to be buried instead held eight sets of cremated remains– including the urn with the photograph.

In order to utilize their only lead and determine who the ashes were, they published the picture on the front page of *The Washington Post*, along with an Army phone number for those with information to call.

Rachel Stecher’s father saw the newspaper and commented, “Wow! Rachel’s on the front page.” His wife Kate thought it may have had something to do with Air Force Academy, where Rachel is in her second year, but it was a photo of her as a young figure skater.



The identity of Rachel as the young figure skater has enabled the investigators to positively identify the remains as Gwyn Stecher, Rachel’s grandmother. According to the family Gwyn Stecher, who died in August 2001, was buried at Arlington, her husband Adolph Stecher, a retired Army chief warrant officer, died in 2003. Spouses are usually buried in the same graves. Urns are typically buried three feet deep and coffins at seven feet. Generally if an urn is already in the plot, crews carefully remove it, then dig the deep hole for the coffin. The urn is reburied at three feet, over the coffin. Since new leadership took over at Arlington, urns have been encased in concrete liners, which prevents them from being dug up unintentionally. Obviously something didn’t go right.

Due to Rachel’s close relationship with her grandmother and her early career of a figure skating prodigy, the photo was when she had won a competition, being a special photo was why it was in the urn.

Now Gwyn is back where she belongs thanks to her precious granddaughter.

We need some questions for the “Dear Counselor....” column.

Please send your questions to Bill’s e-mail or The Dead Beat’s and we will get some answers in future issues.

Email: wastal@swbell.net or bill@stalterlegal.com

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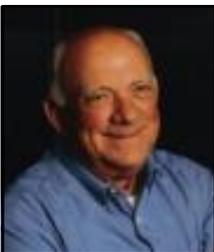
Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

IOWA



LBanks Wilson, 88, of Mt. Ayr,  passed away August 3, 2011. He served in the US Navy during World War II. He owned and operated Rhodes-Wilson Funeral Home and later Wilson-Watson Funeral Home from 1971 to 1992. He was a licensed funeral director for 60 years and recognized by the Iowa Funeral Director Association in 2008. His services were directed by Watson-Armstrong Funeral

MISSOURI



Dale Meadors, 74, of Republic passed away on October 16, 2011. He purchased Cantrell Funeral Homes in Republic, Billings and Clever, which became Meadors Funeral Homes and added an ambulance service, Triangle Ambulance Service. Services were handled by Meadors Funeral Home in Republic.



Larry Gene Stroud, 65, of Springfield passed away October 18, 2011. He was a funeral director and mortician for 39 years and graduated from the Kentucky School of Mortuary Science in 1972. He served on Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association for many years and was elected board president in 2008. His arrangements were handled by Adams Funeral Home.

TEXAS

Donald J. Bierschwale, of San Antonio, died Nov. 6, 2011. He was a 50-year licensee and father of Eddie Bierschwale with SI Funeral Services and father of Kim Schroeder and Dottie Saenz. Services were under the direction of Southside Funeral Home in San Antonio.

Burt Loring Biggers, 84, of Ft. Worth, died Oct. 26, 2011. He was founder and former owner-operator of the Biggers Funeral Home from 1957-1969. He was founder and operator of Metroplex Mortuary Service from 1984-2007. He also was a 50 year licensee. Arrangements were under the direction of Baum-Carlock-Bumgardner Funeral Home in Mineral Wells.



Lt. Gen John Quill Taylor King, Sr., PhD., 89, of Austin, passed away on August 3, 2011. He was former Texas Funeral Service Commissioner, and owner and president of King-Tears Mortuary, Inc. He began his military service during WWII and retired from the Army of the United States as a Major General in August 22, 1983. Services were under the direction of King-Tears Mortuary, Inc. 

TEXAS (Cont.)



Elton Neel, 85, of Crockett, passed away on Sept. 6, 2011. He was the father of Belinda Allee, co-owner of the Callaway-Allee Funeral Home in Crockett, who directed the funeral arrangements.



George A. Rohrer, Jr., 66, of San Anrtonio, died on October 21, 2011. He received an Associate's Degree from the Commonwealth Institute of Mortuary Science. He was in funeral service for 27 years. He was licensed in New Mexico and Texas. He had served as National Mortuary Trainer for the nation's largest acquisition company. He most recently worked with Porter Loring Mortuary in San Antonio. Arrangement were under the direction of Moore Funeral Home in Arlington.



Louis M. Williams, Jr., 81, of Beaumont  passed away on September 12, 2011. He was a graduate of Lamar Institute of Technology and Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science. He was a U.S. Navy veteran. He was a partner in the L.M. Williams and Sons Funeral Directors and Williams Ambulance Service. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Broussard's Mortuary

If you know of a fellow funeral service colleague that has died that we have not included, please send the information and picture if available (The Dead Beat, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748) or fax it to us (417-537-4797) or E-Mail to Joanne@thedead-beat.com

Tribute to Larry Stroud by Editor/Publisher

A champion has fallen-and all the knights of the profession dip their lances in honor and respect to the memory of Larry Stroud. The empty space at the round table will be hard to fill and sadness will be felt when we remember his quick wit, and kindness to friends and family. We salute Larry for all of his contributions to his profession, to his colleagues, to his family and to the world.



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Farm Now a “Natural” Cemetery

From Farm Show Paper
 By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Dick Gallien is looking forward to being buried on his own farm someday. Nearly 80, the wiry, creative farmer isn't in a hurry to die, but when he does, he knows his body won't be going far. He has designated a three-acre field as “The Meadow,” a natural cemetery. It sits on the 175-acre farm Gallien bought in 1954.



The idea of natural burial is to place the body in a shallow grave, wrapped or enclosed only in a biodegradable material like cotton cloth, cardboard or even a wood box. As the materials break down and get absorbed into the soil, so does the body.

When Gallien approached his local town board with the idea, they asked his neighbors. Two supported him, saying they would like to be buried there. Only one had any concern and that was that the site not be near his property. Since “The Meadow” is surrounded by woods, a stream and fields, that neighbor's concern was satisfied.

“I did it all without a lawyer and with the township board's full support,” says Gallien. “It had to be surveyed for \$2,500. Total cost was only \$3,000.

For Gallien and the township board, the burial site also represents a protection against the nearby city of Winona, Minnesota annexing the farm and the township.

“One board member said, ‘I wish we could have one of these on every farm in the township,’” recalls Gallien. “My farm was already protected because I signed up for a conservation easement with the Minn. Land Trust, but they can trade properties they want. The natural burial will give it double protection.”

Because the easement prohibits operating any non-farm business on the land, Gallien won't charge for burial in his cemetery. However, he can and will accept donations.

Gallien plans to build a gazebo overlooking a nearby stream and share it and nearby trails with families. Body placement will be in rows. Each burial site will be marked by GPS coordinates and magnetized nails that surveyors use. The Meadow” has full approval, but is waiting for its first burial.

“I only received approval in late May, so the word is just getting out,” he says. “I've already had a number of people tell me they want to be buried here.”

Gallien's wife Susan, raises Gypsy horses and has ordered a carriage to transport family members to “The Meadow” and back after the burial. There will also be a horse-drawn wagon for transport of the body.

No markers will be allowed; however native wildflower and grass plantings about each burial site will be encouraged.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Meadow, 22501 East Burns Valley Rd., Winona, Minn 55987- (phone 507-454-3126; themeadow@winona-mn.usl www.themeadow.winona-mn.uws)

Editor Note: Another green cemetery idea????

Poem for the Piedmont, Oklahoma Tornado Victims (Praying for the Hamil Family)

I can picture a little boy
 Holding his baby brother tight
 Whispering and giggling
 As they plan to make their flight

And when I see their faces
 I do not see any pain
 Only Joy and Love reflecting
 From the heaven they are soon to gain

Although I don't understand it
 I know God has a plan
 Through these boys we're uniting
 Every woman, child, and man

Without debate or differences
 We are all joining hands
 Praying together for miracles
 Globally we stand

And even if just for this moment
 We joined together as one
 I'm thankful to these sweet little boys
 Who through a miracle WAS DONE



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If Mike, Dave and John go out, they will affectionately refer to each other as Bubba, Fat Boy and Wildman .

EATING OUT

When the bill arrives, Mike, Dave and John will each throw in \$20, even though it's only for \$32.50. None of them will have anything smaller and none will actually admit they want change back.

When the girls get their bill, out come the pocket calculators.

MONEY

A man will pay \$2 for a \$1 item he needs.

A woman will pay \$1 for a \$2 item that she doesn't need but it's on sale.

BATHROOMS

A man has six items in his bathroom: toothbrush and tooth paste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel.

The average number of items in the typical woman's bath room is 337. A man would not be able to identify more than 20 of these items.

ARGUMENTS

A woman has the last word in any argument.

Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

FUTURE

A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.

A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

MARRIAGE

A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't.

A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change, but she does.

DRESSING UP

A woman will dress up to go shopping, water the plants, empty the trash, answer the phone, read a book, and get the mail.

A man will dress up for weddings and funerals.

NATURAL

Men wake up as good-looking as they went to bed.

Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

OFFSPRING

Ah, children A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favorite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams.

A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

A married man should forget his mistakes. There's no use in two people remembering the same thing! What do you expect from such simple creatures?

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Heavenly Burial Ash Dispersal

By Charlie Shipman



Left—Right Joe Sigler, Dwight Boesiger, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Two northeast Oklahoma pilots have teamed up to provide a special service to grieving families. Dwight Boesiger and Joe Sigler of Bartlesville have known each other for years. But in the past few years, they've worked together to fulfill the last wishes of the families

of the deceased. Dwight and Joe scatter cremains from an airplane. Dwight said, "I've been a pilot since 1976, and from time to time people would ask me if I'd scatter the ashes of their loved one up in the sky. Finally in a weak moment he agreed to give it a try. What sounded like a straight forward procedure turned out to be a major challenge.

The obvious simple approach was to open the



Loading cremains before flight



RV Slide Valve connected to the rope, which is opened to create air flow

plane's window and dump the ashes out of a bag. Unfortunately, a significant amount of the cremains clung to the fuselage and tail; and worse, another portion of the ashes flew back into the cabin of the plane getting on everything. After landing and washing the remainder of John Doe off the fuselage, Dwight vowed to find a

better, more respectful method. The possibility of having family members view their loved one caked to the airplane fuselage was a strong incentive to find a better way.

That incident lead to the building of a better mouse trap. The challenge was to find a cleaner technique to disperse the ashes while flying 90 miles per hour, and release them into the airstream. Dwight's contraption requires two people to scatter



Closer view of RV Slide Valve



Wooden Door (in closed position) which is also connected by rope and is at the other end of the RV Slide Valve which is opened first in the dispersal.

the ashes from the sky. Thus enters Joe Sigler who has been a pilot since 1966. They use a single engine two seat tail wheel airplane, an American Champion Adventure Citabria. Dwight says the plane has wing struts perfect to mount the scattering device. They allow the device to be mounted away from the fuselage of the airplane. The main component

is a three inch PVC pipe five feet in length. This is strapped to the wing strut using hose clamps. On the front of the device, there is a recreational vehicle "slide valve." On the back of the device is a wooden door on a hinge with a magnet at the bottom to help keep the door closed until it's time to release the ashes. An arrangement of pulleys and ropes is led from the valves to the airplane rear seat and is used for opening.



Wooden door in open position

Dwight pilots the plane sitting in the front seat, with Joe sitting directly behind Dwight in the second seat holding the draw cord to open the device. Joe opens the rear door of the tube first. He then opens the front valve allowing an onrush of air to pass through the tube emptying the device of ashes which stream out over a period of 10 – 20 seconds. In 12 years, he and Joe have performed this service a half dozen times. Dwight says, "I'm not in business! I do this only as a community service to family, relatives and close friends. And I don't charge for it."



Rope attachment for door releases

There are no rules or regulations concerning the release of ashes in the air. Usually the family request a favorite haunt of the deceased out in the country and where the family can gather at a designated site on the ground and view the scattering. When the ashes have been dispersed, Dwight climbs his plane up in a spiral, and then flies west into the sunset.

About the author: Charlie Shipman, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, is a funeral home public relations consultant and certified mediator and sometimes contributor to **The Dead Beat**.

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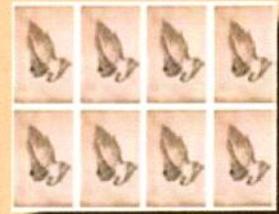
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ASD Designs Unique Floral Rewards Program to Help Directors With After Hour Flower Orders

MEDIA, PA—For years, Funeral Homes have dealt with issues involving unsightly or late floral arrangements as a consequence of the public turning to anonymous “web” florists found through search engines when the local retail flower shop is closed or unavailable. To help resolve this embarrassing problem, ASD – Answering Service for Directors has created a solution so floral orders can be taken 24/7 and are always arranged and delivered by the funeral homes’ trusted local florist.

Known as the “**Floral Rewards Program**”, callers are never inconvenienced by having to write down a number and hope the florist is open. Directors benefit from added peace of mind knowing that floral arrangements will never arrive in a box five minutes before a service begins. By working in conjunction with the firm’s recommended florist, ASD’s Floral Rewards Program ensures funeral homes can help to keep business local instead of receiving questionable arrangements from outside the area.

“I had an out-of-state family member personally thank me for ASD’s ability to assist him with a flower order. He called after hours when our local florists were closed. If it weren’t for ASD’s Floral Program, who knows where he would have eventually ordered his flowers from, or what they may have looked like upon arrival,” says Funeral Director Paul Cavanagh of Cavanagh Funeral Home in Norwood, PA. “ASD took a potentially bad situation and turned it into a positive for our Funeral Home.”

ASD clients who participate in the Floral Rewards Program will also receive a generous discount on their answering service bill every time an order is processed. Callers who contact the funeral home are connected by ASD to a Flower Bereavement Specialist who diligently tracks the order from inception to delivery through the funeral home’s preferred florist. All orders are backed by a 100 percent quality and satisfaction guarantee.

According to owner Kevin Czachor, “We’ve received nothing but wonderful feedback from clients who are currently participating in the Floral Rewards Program and more are signing up every day. What really sets this program apart is that it can work in conjunction with any florist in the country, so directors have complete control over where flowers are being arranged.”

The Floral Rewards Program went through an extensive planning process, including several years of research and carefully engineered testing to ensure complete functionality. ASD wanted to help eliminate the headaches associated with funeral flower deliveries by providing directors with added control over where their firm’s flower orders come from. Directors who take part in the program

have an opportunity to improve the consistency in quality of their firm’s flower arrangements while reducing their funeral home’s monthly expenses.

About ASD

ASD is the leading answering service and call support center for funeral home professionals. As a full service provider, ASD empowers directors and staff of funeral homes to offer the highest caliber of service, particularly while away from the office. ASD’s innovative technology and call support expertise have made it a national leader in the death care space. Headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania the firm offers comprehensive call support for funeral homes and related businesses of all sizes. For more information on ASD’s Floral Rewards Program, call 800-868-9950 or visit www.myasd.com.

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Cherokee Child Caskets and ASD Offer New Discount to Funeral Director Clients

Griffin, GA—Cherokee Child Caskets is a leading provider of youth and child caskets. Founded in 1941, Cherokee Child Caskets provides handcrafted, high-quality caskets for infants, children and youths. Families may choose from a selection of over 10,000 different child caskets, with a variety of sizes, styles, colors and other options. Cherokee's longstanding tradition of striving for "Excellence without Exception" guarantees every casket maintains the highest level of craftsmanship.

This summer, Cherokee Child Caskets began a partnership with ASD – Answering Service for Directors, under which ASD clients can benefit from incentives by working with Cherokee. This partnership will ensure funeral directors are rewarded for working with two of the most trusted names in the funeral business.

ASD is the largest funeral exclusive answering service supporting funeral professionals with comprehensive call support and state-of-the-art technology. Both companies have a long history in the business and their reputations are unrivaled in the funeral profession.

Mike Mims, President of Cherokee Child Casket Company expressed his enthusiasm, "Cherokee is excited to partner with ASD in offering our clients quality service and products for those difficult but important calls."

Funeral professionals who serve a family suffering the loss of a child can offer Cherokee's large selection of handcrafted, top quality caskets and receive a discount offered only to ASD clients. This incentive can be used for each Cherokee order and applies to memorialization products, memory books, urns and keepsakes, in addition to child caskets.

Cherokee Child Caskets and ASD are confident this partnership will help funeral professionals better serve families experiencing such a heart breaking loss. Both companies are enthusiastic about helping funeral professionals save using companies highly regarded for their exceptional service.

About Cherokee Child Caskets:

Since 1941, Cherokee Child Casket Company has been dedicated to funeral homes and the families they serve in providing quality child funeral products. Cherokee's founding principal is based on quality craftsmanship and good service. Because of this founding principal, Cherokee remains the leader in children's caskets.

Contact: Michael Mims, President 800-535-8667

Mike@cherokeechildcaskets.com

About ASD:

ASD is the leader in answering services and call support for funeral professionals. As a full service provider, ASD empowers directors and staff of funeral to offer the highest caliber of service, both at and away from the office. ASD's innovative technology and call support expertise that have made it a national leader in the death care space. No other answering service can rival the state-of-the-art technology, customizable systems and extensive training provided by ASD. Headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania the firm offers comprehensive answering services for funeral homes and funeral related businesses of all sizes. For more information, visit www.myasd.com or call 1-800-868-9950. Contact: Kevin Czachor, Vice President Kevin@myasd.com

Funeral Source One Supply Company offers New Products, Mortuary Coolers

Sevierville, Tennessee, Funeral Source One is one of the fastest growing funeral supply and equipment companies in the U.S. & Canada. It was started in 2009 by industry professional, 24-year-old T.R. Ward while in mortuary school. "I have developed good friendships with most of my clients and am always here to assist 24 Hours a day." In the last months FS1 has added a National Sales Manager, Becca Cox. She is a great asset and great fit for the company. Becca is very knowledgeable about the industry. At Funeral Source One you're not just an account number, you talk direct with the owner or sales manager. You get the answers to your questions fast.

Still the most popular item available with Funeral Source One, is the Hydraulic Embalming Table. The fully hydraulic, foot-operated table (like others on the market), features a thick all stainless top, available at \$2,985. The FS1 087 Church Truck is available in three colors, still at \$519.99. The FS1 334 Folding Dressing Tables features a durable gray top, ID Card Holder, foot brakes, and EZ Fold Mechanism. The tables are currently available at \$989.99. We have references in almost every state for our equipment line. As always the equipment is IN STOCK, and always ready to ship same day on confirmed orders.

A new product being offered by FS1 this year currently, the stacking, connectable chapel chair, available in numerous colors! The chairs are priced to move at \$29.05 each (any size order welcome). The chairs are always in stock, and ship out within 72 hours of the confirmed order.

A specialty at Funeral Source One is the new funeral home start ups, and or funeral homes expanding to new locations. We offer a complete package that has everything from A to Z that you would need to start your new funeral home or mortuary service. On average we save clients up to \$8,000, and as much as \$10,000 to Canadian firms. We offer onsite equipment funding for your new funeral home or equipment needed. Call us today to ask about FS1 Equipment Finance Services. We now have over 5000 funeral-related items available and most are in stock for same day shipping.

Our phones are answered 24 hours a day by calling [1-888-792-9315](tel:1-888-792-9315). Also you can email anytime attr@funeralsourceone.com. Our normal office hours are Monday- Friday 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and Saturday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, feel free to give us a call with any questions or concerns

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Tiger Puzzle



A blonde calls her boyfriend and says, "Please come over here and help me... I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get it started."

Her boyfriend asks, "What is it suppose to be when it's finished?"

The blonde says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a tiger."

Her boyfriend decides to go over and help with the puzzle. She shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table.

He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a tiger."

He took her hand and said, "Second, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of coffee, and then..." he sighed, "Let's put all these Frosted Flakes back in the box."

Brief History of Wearing Black for Mourning

From EHow by Linda Marie

Long before the little black dress was stealing the after-5 scene, black was the color of mourning, dating as far back as ancient Greece and Rome. The Victorian Era (1837-1901) set the social mores for mourning wear. Standards and customs for mourning attire were established by royalty and the upper class, and then followed by the middle and lower classes.

Western civilization has responded most to black as the color of mourning. Perhaps no individual more impacted mourning customs than Queen Victoria. Upon the death of Prince Albert in 1861, Queen Victoria donned full mourning dress and continued wearing her "widow's weeds" until her death in 1901.

Mourning dress was the realm of women. Men were already in black and gray business attire. Not any black fabric was acceptable for mourning. It could have no shine. Crape, a lack-luster, black silk gauze was the predominant fabric. During the 1890's, due to its demand, the Courtaulds used black as the foundation of their textile empire.

The natural grieving time for one deeply loved is two years or more. Mourning dress customs coincided with this timing. In the United Kingdom, during the 1800's, a widow or mother who lost a child wore full mourning for the first one year and one day. Dresses had no adornment, hair was covered with severe bonnets and faces were shielded by crape veils. At times mothers' dresses had a white lace jabot to symbolize the loss of an innocent child. Mourning was an expression of grief; personal appearance was unimportant.

After one year and one day, the next nine months of mourning showed subtle dress changes. Black jet buttons and jewelry, cameos with photos of the lost love, jewelry made from dull coal, and more elaborate black trims and some ruffles were introduced in mourning wardrobes. Hats replaced bonnets. The final months of mourning dress were spent in subdued colors like gray, purple, lilac and steel blue.

During the Civil War, as casualties rose

(Continued on page 27)

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Funeral Tidbits (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

E.A. was granted Missouri embalmer license No. 802 in 1904. Caskets and coffins (coffins are larger at the shoulders and narrower at the foot versus the caskets) were kept upstairs in the hardware building and a matched grey team of horses were in the barn behind the store. Embalming was done in the home of the client. Most of the finished caskets were bought from Kriegle Casket Company in St. Louis and Abernathy Furniture and Casket Company in Kansas City. The Phillips Funeral Home's first sale in 1904 was a five-foot, nine-inch, black crepe Kriegle casket for \$25.00, slippers for \$1.17 and an \$8.00 hearse charge.



Grey team of horses

An interesting fact was that many of bodies were received by trains. This mode of transfer discontinued when passenger service stopped in the 1960's. The bodies traveled in the railway express cars (those that were attached to passenger trains). Most bodies were received on the 3:30 a.m. Express from the west. They were all embalmed bodies, casketed



Train Depot

and in heavy wooden shipping boxes that were used to bury them in. It took several days of rail travel to reach the depot for pick-up. Funeral home personnel took the bodies directly to the grave or storage (when the bodies were received in the early morning) until services. Now it's a challenge to get cremains through the mail. Wonder if they lost any bodies on the trains?

In 1919, E.A. took a train to St. Louis and returned with a Dodge chassis motor hearse. The matched grey horses were relegated to dray duty. The Dodge hearse was an instant success even though a country funeral in muddy weather took all day and several stops to refill the radiator with water from a ditch.



1919 Dodge Chassis Motor Hearse

Besides the embalming taking place at the homes, during some of the past epidemics the funeral home provided fumigating of the houses to rid it of the contamination. One instance when every window was closed and doors plugged up to keep the fumes inside to do the germ killing, it almost killed the family cat who had not made it out before the process began. Uncle Enoch kept looking for what was making the noise in-

(Continued on page 25)

Funeral Tidbits (Cont.)



side just as the cat came crashing out of the bay window glass to survive.

Also noted on early cost of goods records was the cost of telegraphs sent to notify people of death notices and ordering of flowers. The ways to communicate

about deaths have changed over the years like everything else.

Lowell's dad Harold F. Pugh started working for his uncle in 1922 at the age of sixteen, graduating from the Williams Institute of Embalming in Kansas City in 1928. At this time funeral homes had become involved



Enoch Phillips and Harold Pugh

with providing ambulance service. The Phillips Funeral Home began their ambulance in 1928 with a 1928 Meteor combination funeral coach/ambulance.

In the 1920's they had purchased a store front building and they had a viewing area and embalming was done there. Caskets were also displayed in the building. The actual funeral home was purchased in 1931 as a residence and business. After renovations of the house included converting



a bathroom to a preparation room and putting in an elevator shaft, they moved the funeral operations out of the store front.

An interesting aspect in the 1930's and 1940's was how the accounts receivable are littered with entries describing unusual payments. These include pay by produce, animals and labor for wallpapering to gathering corn or sowing seed. At this time the casket selection dwindled to an assortment of cloth-covered, one hardwood and one 20-gauge half couch due to the economic times.

Some difficulties in World War II came with the tire and gas rationing. Initially the funeral home's low priority sticker for fuel had to be appealed because of the various needs. Then with tires scarce and in poor condition, they didn't even last one trip for a pick-up. This was a different challenge.

These shortages also had an effect on the products used in funerals for example steel vaults. E.A. had always buried his family in steel vaults which were not available for purchase during the war because all steel went for war efforts and so he held one back for himself. Interesting, considering E.A. didn't die until 1965.



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Up to the time vault companies started providing the cemetery equipment, the funeral homes had their own supplies and provided a rough box that the casket was lowered into and a lid put on and the grave filled. Funeral homes provided the tent, chairs and covering over grave liner and mounds. In small country cemeteries, community people opened the graves. They liked the funeral home to put the tent up the day before so they had cover from the weather when they opened the grave. One instance in a rocky cemetery the community grave openers forgot to take the tent down before dynamiting the area. This left many holes to be repaired in the tent which was not appreciated by the funeral home.

Lowell began his career with the funeral home at the age of 12 as an ambulance attendant. This led to first calls, yard work, helping with funerals and setting up cemetery equipment. Many individuals began their careers in similar ways. He officially started his



St. Louis College of Mortuary Science
Enrollment picture –1952

(Continued on page 27)

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**Wearing Black for Mourning
(Cont.)**

(Continued from page 23)

between the North and South, mourning wear became the first ready-to wear fashion. While most clothing was custom or sewn at home during this time, women could not wait to have mourning dresses made. As times worsened during the Civil War, many women began dying their wardrobes black in large, outdoor cauldrons, since the smell of the black dye was too offensive to use indoors.

World War I brought an abrupt end to the length of mourning. Every family was suffering the loss of loved ones. World War II further diminished mourning dress periods. By the 1950's, a half year to one year became the acceptable timetable for mourning wear in the United Kingdom. Today, many Western women believe it is disrespectful and unacceptable to wear any color other than black to funerals and memorial services.

Resource: USA Today: Early History of Memorial Day Closely Tied to Mourning Rituals.

Editor's Note: I think things have changed even more and at most funeral and memorial services black is not always the predominant color of clothing.

Funeral Tidbits (Cont.)

apprenticeship in 1951 and graduated from St. Louis College of Mortuary Science in 1952. After a small detour in the U.S. Army, he took his oral exam on furlough and received his embalming license after shipping out to Germany in 1954. Upon his return from service his began his funeral service career fulltime at home and at another local funeral home in another town.

Throughout the years he continued his hardware business with the funeral home until the 80's when he sold the hardware business, but he saw many changes in the funeral profession: from the variety of products now offered, to the beginnings and continuing problems of providing preneed arrangements for his customers, to the continual changes in the field of technology. Technology has changed how products such as memorial folders are produced, how services are presented from actual people to now sending them over the internet. Other factors in our business that have



changed include the rise of cremation and the emphasis on memorialization and personalization.

So the funeral tidbits about the funeral profession are still constantly happening. What will be interesting to the funeral directors of the future?

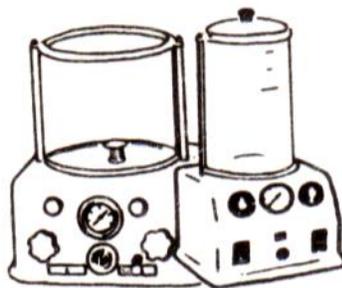


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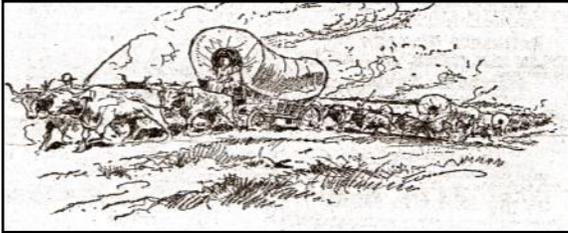
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The Kansas Pioneers

By L.B. Pruitt
Found in Kansas City Times,
Thursday, January 29, 1925



Behold! They come! The long white train of wagons
Comes creeping slowly o'er the sandy plain,
With oxen pulling steady, wan and weary,
And wagons creaking 'neath their heavy loaded strain.
Behold! They come! The pioneers of Kansas!
The offspring of their early Eastern sires,
Who shaped the destiny of this great nation
Within the heat of Revolutionary fires.

They come to live a life of toil and hardship,
Surrounded by the desert and the sky;
To give themselves for liberty and freedom,
And rear their children for such noble deeds to die;
To blaze the trails where no one e'er has blazed them,
To stake the claims and break the virgin sod;
Content to wear the homespun; praise their Maker,
And render daily adorations up to God.

They are a noble band with eager faces,
And eyes that pierce the desert's misty haze;
Amid the dangers, hardships, and privations,
They hope to live their lives and end their future days.
They have no thought of boundless wealth or treasure,
And for themselves they seek not fame nor ease;
But for their children and their children's children,
They dream of brighter days and better times than these.

The crying of a child, the moan of anguish,
The flicker of a candle in the night,
An open grave, the farewell and the parting,
And silently the train moves onward out of sight.
Night comes and prayers are said to Him who pities
The empty arms, the anguish and the tears;
But in the furnace which with fires thus heated
God shades their lives for what must come in future years.

For they must pay the price of pioneering,
Must part with loved ones; win and lose again,
Must somehow get along through drought and famine,
And build their humble homes where homes have never been.
Behold them, as they move across the desert!
To these conditions mark them as they come!
O Kansas! Mighty Kansas! These your builders,
Receive with open arms and shout their welcome home!

Blush not at their simplicity of manners!
Be not amazed to see their trust in God!
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Will rise triumphantly where they have fought and died.

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These pioneers, so aged, stooped and gray!
Who came and won you from your desert fastness
To heights of fame and honor which are yours today!
The pit from whence they digged you e'er is open,
Your early days of hardship are repaid;
And we, your sons and daughters, crave to love you,
And share the blessings of the Kansas they have made.



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Suhor Industries, Inc. Announces Signet Supply® Officers

OVERLAND PARK, KS (August 31, 2011) Suhor Industries, Inc. announced that its newest division, Signet Supply, has named Donald R. Robinson as President. In addition, Curt Shannon was appointed as Vice President of Sales and Ken Moore as Vice President of Marketing.

Signet Supply launched operations 18 months ago in response to the need for lower cost, high quality funeral products delivered with uncompromised service. Initially Signet Supply's offering has been a targeted selection of high-volume, eye-appealing caskets. Signet Supply strives to fill the gap between cost and quality; creating value for funeral home customers and ultimately the families they serve.

The Signet Supply team continues to focus on accelerating the growth and success they have experienced to-date. According to Robinson, "the successful launch, expansion and achievements thus far are the combined result of the excellent efforts of our entire team and most importantly because of the support and encouragement from our funeral home customers. Our business model enables us to find the best product value for our customers resulting in our offering a mix of products from domestic and international manufacturing facilities. Our pricing strategy is a straightforward approach – no minimums, no contracted obligations, no discount to calculate and no rebate to hope for or wait on".

Signet Supply has quickly established a network of 25 same-day / next-day full-service distribution locations throughout the USA. Current states with at least one Signet Supply distribution location include: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Going forward the Signet Supply network will expand into other select markets while offering new lines of funeral merchandise.



Donald R. Robinson

Robinson joined Suhor Industries in July 2009 and has been in charge of Signet Supply since its inception. Robinson will continue with his duties as the Senior Vice President of Supply Chain Management for Suhor Industries. Most recently Robinson spent 14 years with Service Corporation International, serving since 2005 as Vice President of Supply Chain Management.



Curt Shannon

Shannon has worked for Suhor Industries since 1998. In addition to his role as Vice President of Sales for Signet Supply, Shannon continues as the Vice President of North Texas Operations for SI Funeral Services.

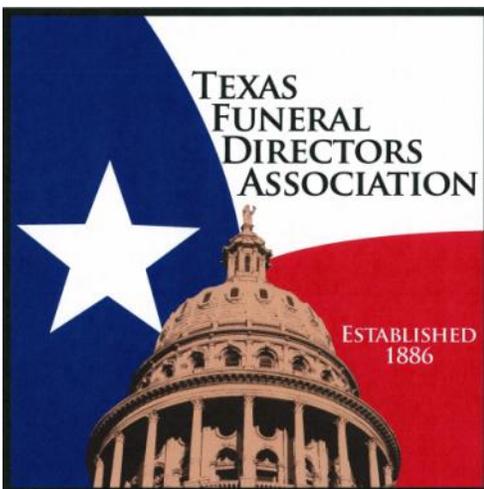


Ken Moore

Moore joined Suhor Industries in 2008. In addition to his new duties as Vice President of Marketing for Signet Supply, he continues in his role as Director of Sales and Marketing for Suhor Industries.

About Suhor Industries

Suhor Industries, Inc., a privately held company, has been in the burial vault business since 1933 starting in Kansas City, Missouri. Today Suhor's primary business remains as a burial vault manufacturer operating in Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington. Along with a select group of independent distributors, the majority of Suhor locations offer Signet Supply caskets and cremation containers. In 2010, Suhor Industries touched over 100,000 families with our services. You may visit Signet Supply and Suhor Industries on-line at www.SignetSupply.com and www.SuhorIndustries.com.

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Some services and products may not be available in your area. Please check with your local plant or visit our website.

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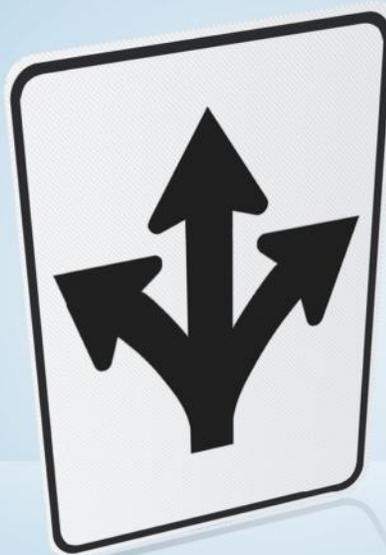
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