

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 13

[www.thedead-beat.com](http://www.thedead-beat.com)

Issue 1

### You Are Important!!!

By Unknown Writer

#### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!!!

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. She called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First, she told each of them how they had made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters, which read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference!"

Afterwards the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honored whom and report back to the class in a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. The he gave him two extra ribbons and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out, find somebody to honor, give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened."

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted, by the way, as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat this boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius.

The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said, "Well, sure." The junior executive took the blue ribbon and placed it right on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine. He thinks I'm a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon that says 'Who I Am Makes A Difference!' on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started

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Scattering Remains can now be a Family Affair! With something for every family member.

## Amy Howard Art Gallery



Amy Howard

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.

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# Opportunity

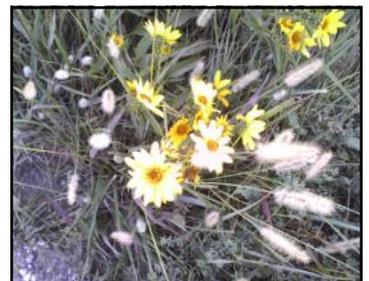
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**Think Spring!!**





# Mortuary Muse

By Lowell

At a medical clinic doing a follow-up from some of my recent medical issues, the nurse handling the paperwork asked me "if I was an organ donor?" I said no and I likely never would be. Because, I feel that the donor organizations are not completely straightforward with the families they are approaching for the donated organs. I agreed it was a wonderful humanitarian endeavor. But as funeral directors we are often greatly challenged to receive and prepare the body with the family desires for the service. And they often do not explain how evasive the procedures to retrieve the parts will be.

The nurse seemed to be aware that there were some-time delays getting the teams together for the harvesting. But she hadn't thought about it in relation to the problems for the funeral directors.

I also raised the point that donors and/or families are not permitted to sell or receive any money for body parts. Colleague Steve Palmer had recently written in his column "Observations" in **Funeral**

**Homes and Cemetery News** that technicians that harvest or prepare the organs often are paid \$80,000-\$100,000. Who pays for it? The nurse commented she hadn't thought about that.

\*\*\*\*\*

Should there be cremation licenses with training requirements just like the embalming license and training through the mortuary schools and the national boards? Considering the amount of cremations taking place, who is training those that are doing the cremations? What certifications are required? What are the different states' requirements? Or do we need any licensing or requirements at all? Is cremation execution a trade or profession?

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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## Wreaths Across America Ceremony



On Saturday, December 15, Hubbard Funeral Home, Weimar, Texas, along with the Weimar High School and Junior High School student councils sponsored a Wreaths Across America ceremony honoring all military personnel, both past and present. This ceremony was held in conjunction, and simultaneously, with the national Wreaths Across America ceremony.

Participating in the ceremony were members of both student councils, Weimar American Legion and VFW members and their auxiliaries, the Weimar High School band, Pastor Jeana Martin of First United Methodist Church, Weimar, and David, Carol & Jennifer McCoskey of Hubbard Funeral Home.



### Funeral Director Running for Missouri's 8th Congressional District

Jan 20, 2013: Jefferson County, MO. In response to Congresswoman JoAnn Emerson's announcement that she will change the effective date of her resignation, Democratic candidate Todd Mahn said, "The people of the 8th district deserve immediate representation, I would rather have a sprint as opposed to a marathon, bring it on!"

Mahn is the only registered Democratic candidate to seek the nomination of the 8th Congressional Democratic Committee to replace Congresswoman Emerson in the upcoming special election.

You can learn more about Todd Mahn and his campaign by visiting [www.MahnforCongress.com](http://www.MahnforCongress.com).

## Crime Scene Cleaners, Inc.

Death and traumatic injury are events that few people ever plan to experience firsthand. Unfortunately, these circumstances are a reality and the unpleasant events can be difficult to cope with. Most people never think about what will happen after such an event, but one such company has made it its business to specialize in the cleaning and remediation of such occurrences.

Crime Scene Cleaners, Inc. was formed in 2003 in order to be Colorado's only company specializing specifically in cleaning trauma scenes, methlabs, and 'garbage houses.' Crime Scene Cleaners, Inc. is here to assist families and property owners/managers in restoring property contaminated as a result of homicide, suicide, unattended/natural death or accident with compassion and dignity.

They also work with several police departments in making sure their vehicles are cleaned properly as well.

They are ready to respond 24/7, 365 days a year throughout Colorado and surrounding states. Crime Scene Cleaners separates itself from imitators by being the only company to specialize in cleaning the scene. Unlike restoration companies that will tear down all four walls and replace the entire house, CSC gets the job done quickly, discretely and professionally.

They are continuing to to keep Colorado a clean and safe place to live.

As Nick Hodgdon, owner and operator, likes to quip, "I hope you never have to call me, but my number is a good one to have on file, just in case."

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# Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell & Joanne



Our associate over in Bartlesville, Oklahoma told us this story. He recently attended a class reunion in another state. And after greeting one of his classmates, he asked how things were going. She immediately told him that her father had died a few months earlier. And then, visibly upset related this story.

Her parents were both college professors and the mother had died a few years earlier. When the father died he had requested no services, to just be buried. The arrangements she made were not in person. She and her brother arrived at the graveside with the casket in place. The younger woman who had been caring for her father was weeping on the casket.

They stood there in silence for several minutes and she felt like somebody should be saying something about her father. But she looked at her brother who just shrugged his shoulders and after a few minutes they walked away. At this point the funeral director caught up with her and presented her with the bill. She indicated to our colleague that she was upset that it was at that moment she received the bill. The timing really was the problem.

Our associate tried to explain that he dealt with funeral homes and it probably happened this way because it was the only time and opportunity that the funeral home would have personal contact with

her to present it. So she really shouldn't think that the funeral director was trying to take advantage of her.

But the real heart of the matter was that she was grieving and the lack of services was leaving her feelings of loss unsatisfied. Months later she was still upset. Even though her parents were atheists, she was an Episcopalian. So the honoring of the parents' request really didn't meet her family's needs at the time.

In this case would a celebrant have been an alternative between a religious person and nothing? But does the situation remind us again about how the deceased dictate the service. Then the people who are left dealing with the loss don't really get what they need.

But maybe some hostility came from the family when they had to rent a car and the father's caregiver drove off in the father's Mercedes????????

\*\*\*\*\*

As we try to solve some of the problems of the funeral world in this column, we were thinking about:

1. Should there be the uniform recognition of funeral service professionalism as proposed by Dr. Jacqueline Taylor in the MFDEA Magazine. Though this is an idealistic proposal it is long overdue, but when will it happen? Well, until it does, we all consider ourselves professionals

2. Preneed funding???? We should know we are in trouble when spell-check rejects it. Preneed is to ensure market share and simplicity of the arrangement process. It guarantees income growth with solid **non-failing** trusts and **reliable** insurance companies. Of course, all third-party sellers will have that professional funeral director's license. Just make sure their casket price list is yours and their car has the same state license plate on both ends. (Preneed is a double-edge sword with a loose handle).
3. For at least 15 years funeral service consultants have been telling us to gear up for the Baby Boomer trade. Apparently it is going to be better than I thought. A café comment this week alluded to the boomer surge and all of those gold-plated caskets we would sell. I commented that the only one that I had heard about didn't get paid for.
4. A breakfast table mate proudly told of his daughter receiving her Doctorate. He then said that on his tombstone the letters FDS would be inscribed behind his name. FDS—Feed Service Driver.

Perhaps I'm getting too cynical in my old age. (Lowell says).

About the Authors:

**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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## Colleagues Lost or Found!!!

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

# After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

Well, I have been going through a challenging time lately. First, there was Christmas, being sick and a bunch of funerals right at Christmas. Now I have total sympathy for those families since my youngest daughter's funeral was the week before the holiday, but it definitely didn't help my frame of mind.

I finally got past the cough that seemed to want to be with me permanently, but a wonderful aunt passed away and recently my youngest daughter's birthday (she would have been 26) occurred. It just makes me feel sad and missing them.



Of course, I miss my other daughter too, especially with a notable birthday of mine approaching. I wanted to have a birthday party, but it just loses something when you do the planning for your own party. I tried to think what the girls would have done, probably have a totally black color scheme (over the hill), but being a funeral director that really wouldn't be anything out of the ordinary for me. But after awhile I just sort of dropped the whole party idea.

Regretfully I've just been feeling like I don't have much to show for my life. I know I must be in some kind of depressed state, but I'm just stating how I feel. Many changes seem to be on the horizon and I guess I'm apprehensive about the future and contemplating the past. Change is in the air...

So what am I going to do to perk myself up? Don't know.

\*\*\*\*\*

Let's get back to the aunt that passed away. It was my husband's aunt, but she was a great lady. We went to her funeral in a different city and as a funeral director I had expectations. I was so distraught how a few things were done. I

told my husband as we left the church what I wanted done for sure if I died before him.

First, I want an obituary read so people know what I was up to while here on this earth. At his aunt's funeral several accomplishments had been hinted at but much of what she did during her life wasn't mentioned. She had spent 94 years with us and you do a lot of things in that many years. I'm really not sure if she didn't want the information shared or her daughters couldn't do it, but I'm pretty sure I could have come up with something to give the essence of this great lady.

Next, I want people to have a last look at me. Regardless of my looks, I think it helps with adjusting to the loss. If nothing else it gives them the chance to say a more personal "goodbye."



I know you are thinking everybody is different and we need to honor their wishes. But that's what I am trying to do—express my wishes. Having spent many years seeing many funerals and participating in many arrangements, I feel that certain things need to be considered and even encouraged.

So exactly what am I getting at in this discourse about my husband's aunt, everybody has ups and downs and everyone has their own opinions about what should be done at a funeral. Discounting regions or local preferences, try to do your best to make sure you cover all the bases and let them make the decisions the family feel best about.

\*\*\*\*\*

By the way, one of the last funerals we had, we moved a graveside to the funeral home due to weather. Boy, did we have a challenge with electronics. Considering they weren't going to have a visitation except right before the service, we had an elaborate PowerPoint presenta-

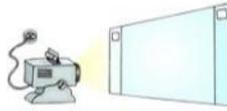
tion during the visitation and at the end of the service. This is a great thing if you are equipped for it, but in an old house converted to a funeral

home, don't bank on having a blank wall in the appropriate place to show your presentation. A

screen is a good idea, and a white sheet works well—not necessarily over the exit door or not when half of the people can't see the screen. But I love this kind of thing at churches or facilities that are equipped..

If we had more services expecting these kinds of presentations, we would make the appropriate changes, but at this time we can't justify the expense.

But it should be something to think about when creating or buying a funeral home. Having electronic presentations in your funeral home for the attendees or having to stream it on the internet will be expected in the near future if not already. These technological needs will be expected by our future customers because this is the way things in their lives happen. We need to be ready to meet those requirements. Let's be prepared for the future, just another change in our celebrations of life.



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: [jfhoward53@yahoo.com](mailto:jfhoward53@yahoo.com)

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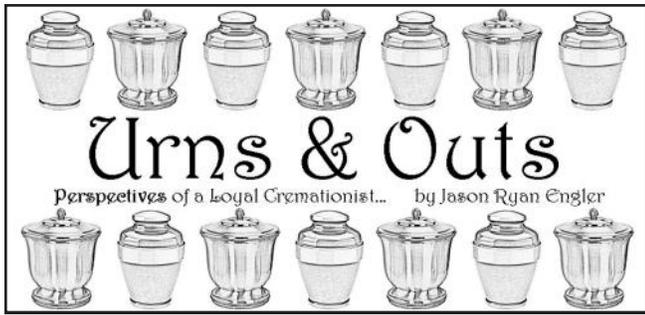


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Happy New Year, friends! We have begun the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the new millennium – and it truly amazes me that time has flown so quickly. The year 2013 marks the 21st year of my interest and involvement in the funeral profession, and marks 10 years since I received my license to practice funeral directing. That may not sound like a lot to those who have been involved in the profession for much longer – but considering that I will be 33 years old this year, you can see that a majority of my life has been spent pursuing the funeral and cremation profession.

In those years, I have often reflected on those who have directly and indirectly influenced my views of cremation and funeral service. The first funeral home I ever visited was Thomason Funeral Home in San Marcos, Texas. Dwayne Thomason spent the better part of a day allowing me to ask questions and explore his funeral home. Shortly after, Rene Ferrer, the other director at Thomason, adopted me as a friend and spent many hours on the phone with me – mentoring me for a future in funeral service – a friendship which I still enjoy and will cherish my entire life. Those two individuals, along with Bob and David Powell of Powell Funeral Home in Bald Knob, Arkansas, and William Moody, better-known as Paul Bearer (of professional wrestling fame) were and have remained my heroes in funeral service. Later, individuals like John

Goodnight, Tyler Hyatt, Walter Beck, Kenny Lux, Tess Stiner, David Neumann, Tom Cornelison, Kim Nester-Atiee, Rory Comerio, Lanelle Peavy, Brad Sheppard, Bobbie Lance, (and the list goes on) have all educated, influenced and inspired my pursuit of being the best I can be in my chosen profession.

In my interest in cremation, I am most inspired by Dr. Hugo Erichsen, whose heroic attributes and accomplishments constantly encourage me to explore and study the history of cremation. Additionally, I remember my first visit to a crematory – I was about 14 and my step-mom took me to see Chapel Hill Crematory in San Antonio, Texas. The manager, Marie Cull, gave me a tour and patiently answered the many questions I asked. I have also been inspired by other cremationists of yesteryear – including Lawrence Moore, Herb Hargrave, Paul Bryan, the Zell Family of St. Louis, all of whose writings and exemplary dedication to cremation and inurnment encourage me. In urn sales and creation, I have studied and been inspired by teachings of and conversations with Mike Kubasak, Steve Jones of Meierjohan-Wengler, Garry Lea of Old Saybrook Metals, and Lori Simmons of Kap-Lind/Old Saybrook.

Along with all whose names I have included here, I am especially buoyed by all of you who indulge my joy in writing my perspectives of cremation by reading Urns & Outs. I have been amazed over the last three years by those who have sent me feedback and kudos for my writings. It is my heroes, mentors and those who have given their influence, past and present, and for those who read Urns & Outs and the Dead Beat, that I dedicate my perspectives, and for whom I am so very thankful.

That's my perspective...



Jason Ryan Engler is a funeral director and cremation historian in Northwest Arkansas. He is the unofficial historian for the Cremation Association of North America and is a frequent contributor of cremation information to trade journals and organizations.

Read his blog at <http://urnsandouts.blogspot.com>. He can be reached at [cremationhistorian@hotmail.com](mailto:cremationhistorian@hotmail.com),

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## Re-Entry

By Ken Doka

I feel like an astronaut coming back to earth, “ Marge, a young widow, told me. “I’m in re-entry.” I thought about it for awhile and decided that her analogy was a sensible description of how we often feel in grief. When astronauts return from prolonged spaceflight, they need a period of time to readjust to gravity. They need to reacclimatize themselves to living once again on earth.

Marge was right. Whenever we experience a major loss, we have to prepare for re-entry into our lives.

A significant loss, such as the loss of a spouse, changes us in many ways. All of our small habits, our daily activities, may change. For many people, like Marge, this really happened twice. When her husband Tony first became ill, they no longer went for their daily walks. Weekends at a small country cottage ceased. Their daily routines ended.

But Marge began a new set of daily activities. Life took on a new pattern— regular rituals and activities based on her new care-giving responsibilities. Then, with Tony’s death, this too ended.

Our perspectives and priorities may change. Things that were once important may now seem less so. Behaviors we once tolerated may seem less acceptable as we struggle with the strains and stresses of grief. We may have to assume new stances and new attitudes just to survive.

Our identities may change. Marge’s did. She was no longer wife, but widow. She was no longer married, but single. As she adjusted to single life after a twenty-three year marriage, she used an even more telling analogy once a few years had passed. “I feel like Rip Van Winkle, coming in to a dating system very different from the one I remember.”

Relationships change, as well. We may find that relations with one’s family or in-laws become modified. For Marge, her father became very protective, “almost like I was still that girl fresh out of high school, that girl he escorted down the aisle.” Friendships change, as some friends may find it difficult to adjust to the changed circumstances in our life or to who we are becoming. In other cases, relationships may deepen as we find that certain friends, perhaps even surprisingly, become pillars of strength and support. They may accept our need to find new roles and even encourage us to try new activities and make new friends.

Even our own goals and aspirations may change. For Marge, her job was a source of discretionary income before her husband became ill. She worked so that she could pay for extras and provide a financial cushion. After Tony became ill, she realized she might not always be able to count on his support. She became more focused on her job and eventually

turned the job into a career.

We need to recognize, then, that a significant loss, the death of someone we love, someone deeply involved in our lives, dramatically changes our lives as well. Not only are our situations and our lives different, we are different, too. We are no longer the people we were. Significant losses change us significantly.

We are now in the process of becoming. That will take time. And we need to give ourselves that gift. We need to avoid dramatic changes until we are sure of who we are and where we are going. We need to reenter just like an astronaut—slowly, carefully.

\*\*\*\*\*

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](http://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*

A burglar broke into a house one night. He shined his flashlight around, looking for valuables when a voice in the dark said, "Jesus knows you're here." He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his flashlight off, and froze. When he heard nothing more, he shook his head and continued. Just as he pulled the stereo out so he could disconnect the wires, clear as a bell he heard, "Jesus is watching you." Startled, he shined his light around frantically, looking for the source of the voice. Finally, in the corner of the room, his flashlight beam came to rest on a parrot. "Did you say that?" he hissed at the parrot. "Yes," the parrot confessed, then squawked, "I'm just trying to warn you that he's watching you." The burglar relaxed. "Warn me, huh" Who in the world are you?" "Moses," replied the bird. "Moses?" the burglar laughed. "What kind of people would name a bird Moses?" "The kind of people who would name a Rottweiler Jesus."



\*\*\*\*\*

### Forgetter Be Forgotten

My forgetter's getting better,  
But my rememberer is broke.  
To you that may seem funny  
But, to me, that is no joke  
Or when I'm 'here' I'm wondering  
If I really should be 'there'  
And, when I try to think it through,  
I haven't got a prayer!

Oft time I walk into a room,  
Say 'what am I here for?'  
I wrack my brain, but all in vain!  
A zero, is my score.

At times I put something away  
Where it is safe, but, Gee!  
The person it is safest from  
Is, generally, me!

When shopping I may see someone,  
Say 'Hi' and have a chat  
Then, when the person walks away  
I ask myself, 'who the heck was that?'

Yes, my forgetter's getting better  
While my rememberer is broke,  
And it's driving me plumb crazy  
And that isn't any joke.

I don't remember who I sent this to!

Sent by txphenson

## Comments

See response to the last Mortuary Muse on page 22.

### The Yellow Light

The light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman was furious and honked her horn, screaming in frustration, as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up.. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal affects. He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the "What Would Jesus Do" bumper sticker, the "Choose Life" license plate holder, the "Follow Me to Sunday School" bumper sticker and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, so naturally....I assumed you had stolen the car.



\*\*\*\*\*

### British Humour

**These are classified ads, which were actually placed in U.K. Newspapers**

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WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE  
Worn once, by mistake. Call Stephanie.



FOR SALE BY OWNER. Complete set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 45 volumes.  
Excellent condition, £200 or best offer.  
No longer needed, got married, wife knows everything.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Chuckles (Cont.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### Children Are Quick

TEACHER: Why are you late?

STUDENT: Class started before I got here.

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glen, how do you spell 'crocodile'?

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L

TEACHER: No, that's wrong.

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O

TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago?

WINNIE: Me!

TEACHER: Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

GLEN: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

TEACHER: Millie, give me a sentence starting with 'I.'

MILLIE: I is....

TEACHER: No, Millie.... Always say, 'I am.'

MILLIE: All right... 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?



LOUIS: Because George still had the axe in his hand.

TEACHER: Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?

SIMON: No, sir, I don't have to, my Mom is a good cook.

TEACHER: Clyde, your composition on 'My Dog' is ex-

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actly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

CLYDE: No, sir. It's the same dog.

TEACHER: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

HAROLD: A teacher.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ole and Lars were on their very first train ride. They had brought along bananas for lunch. Just as they began to peel them, the train entered a long, dark tunnel. "Have you eaten your banana yet?" Ole asked excitedly. "No," replied Lars. "Vell, don't touch it den," Ole exclaimed. "I just took vun bite and vent blind!"

Ole was stopped by a game warden in Northern Wisconsin recently leaving a lake well-known for its Walleyes. He had two buckets of fish. As it was during spawning season, the game warden asked, "Do you have a license to catch those fish?" Ole replied, "No, sir! Dese here are my pet fish." "Pet fish?" the warden replied. "Ya sure, you betcha," answered Ole. "Every night I take dese fish here down to da lake and let dem svim around for a while. Den I vhistle and dey yump back into der buckets and I take dem home." "That's a bunch of hooey. Fish can't do that," said the warden. Ole looked at the game warden with an expression of great hurt, and then said, "Yumpin Yimminy! Vell den, I'll just show you den. It really does vork, don'tcha know?" "O.K. I've got to see this!" The game warden was really curious now. So Ole poured the fish into the lake and stood waiting. After several minutes, the game warden turned to Ole and said, "Well?" "Vell what" responded Ole. "When are you going to call them back?" "Call who back?" asked Ole. "The fish!" "What fish?"



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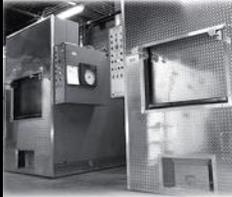
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**“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter**

**Dear Counselor,**

*My funeral home is too small to maintain a preneed trust and I do not have an insurance license. Accordingly, we participate in the state association master trust. What can we do to determine how safe our association trust is?*

\*\*\*\*\*

State association trusts are crucial to small funeral homes, but starting with Minnesota in 2005, the industry has witnessed four state associations sued over the administration of their master trusts. As the NFDA can attest to, it is difficult to devise evaluation guidelines that will work for every state association trust. The structure of a master trust will reflect the applicable state preneed law, and each state has a different law. But, the industry needs to take note of the common factors that contributed to the downfall of these four state trusts:

- ◆ the lack of transparency to regulators and member funeral homes
- ◆ the lack of oversight by a qualified corporate fiduciary
- ◆ high administration and investment costs
- ◆ the lack of an investment policy specifically structured for preneed
- ◆ the lack of a qualified compliance officer

The Minnesota trust utilized a fund manager that also provided individual account administration. The fund manager then assisted the association in negotiations with banks for a custodial arrangement to minimize the trustee’s fees. But, the Minnesota master trust could not keep up with its administrative and investment costs. The master trust was relatively small, and the fund manager did not provide much investment direction to funeral homes. The association was forced by regulators to disclose the situation to participating funeral homes. Eventually, the Minnesota regulators forced the dissolution of the trust.

The Illinois association acted as its own trustee for decades, and during that time, made investments in key man insurance policies that were never a suitable investment for a preneed trust. The IFDA battled the Comptroller’s office over the trust’s deficiencies, and refused to disclose the situation to participating funeral homes. Eventually, we learned high commissions were paid to the fund manager.

The California master trust relied upon a fund manager that specialized in a bond portfolio. The lack of diversification resulted in substantial investment losses during the 2001 market correction. Rather than make the appropriate adjustments to individual accounts, the association ‘propped’ the trust value with a promissory note. The trustee permitted that action, and distributions and fees (including the association’s) were based on the inflated value. The actions were disclosed through accounting footnotes that were not understood by the state regulators until years later.

The Wisconsin association also negotiated a directed trustee relationship with its fiduciary. The association relied on fund managers that helped structure the master trust. The master trust invested in a number of products that paid high commissions. The master trust also paid high fees to the association and to an

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

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independent administration firm. Participating funeral homes were promised a fixed return and were not aware the trust was losing money.

To evaluate your master trust, start with a review of the master trust agreement and the association marketing materials. How well does the association explain the fees and investment guidelines? Who supervises the master trust’s fund manager? What precautions are taken against hidden investment fees? Does the master trust provide a reconciliation that ‘marks to market’? Is there a breakdown of the trustee/administration expenses by custodial services, fund management, sub-account administration, audit and tax return preparation and reporting? If the master trust utilizes insurance products, request a written explanation of the product’s taxation.



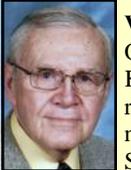
Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is *The Dead Beat’s* intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading *The Dead Beat* should not be used as a substitute 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.preneedresource.com](http://www.preneedresource.com).

# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

## KANSAS



**Alan Kent Christians**, 57, of Lindsborg died November 16, 2012. He earned his degree in Mortuary Science at the University of Central Oklahoma. He served as a funeral director in Oklahoma City, OK, Great Bend and Lindsborg, KS. His arrangements were under the direction of Christians Funeral Home in Lindsborg.



**Virgil T. "Grandpa Silly" Sillin**, 84, of Sterling died October 19, 2012. He graduated from Sterling College and Kansas City Mortuary Arts School. He was a funeral director, and had owned and operated Porter and Sillin Funeral Home, Sterling, Sillin Funeral Home, Lyons, and Sillin Funeral Home Ordway, Colorado. Arrangements handled by Buhler Mortuary.



**Elvera R. Kufahl**, 87, of Wheaton, passed away on November 25, 2012. She and her husband owned Kufahl Funeral Home in Wheaton for many years working together in the Kufahl Hardware Company and Kufahl Funeral Home. The Campanella Funeral Home handled the services.

**Gerald D. "Jerry" Harp**, 88, of Newton, passed away November 30, 2012. He was a retired mortician and former owner of Thompson-Harp Funeral Home. He was a graduate of the St. Louis College of Mortuary Science. He worked for Schubert Funeral Home in Lawrence and later for Downing Mortuary of Wichita for 24 years prior to purchasing the funeral home in Marion in 1969. He retired in 1987. His arrangements were directed by Zeiner Funeral Home in Marion.

## MISSOURI



**Merle Glendon "Glen" Shepard**, of St. Charles, passed away on November 27, 2012. He was a 3rd general owner of Shepard Funeral Chapel founded in 1906. He graduated from Washington University in 1958. His services were handled by the Shepard Funeral Chapel.



**Leon Dale Toedtman**, 73, of Hermann passed away January 8, 2013. He went to Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science, Dallas, Texas. Leon served his apprenticeship in Fulton. After he received his funeral directors and embalmers license, he moved to Hermann in 1963. Leon then established Toedtman Funeral Home. In 1965 Landon Grosse joined him and together they co-owned the Toedtman-Grosse Funeral Home until 2000. Toedtman-Grosse Funeral Home handled his funeral services.

**Linnie Lorraine Whitaker**, 87, of Trenton passed away January 1, 2012. She helped her husband at the Gipson Funeral Home before buying it and changing the name to Gipson-Whitaker funeral Home on Jan. 1, 1961. They consolidated with Gordon Blackmore at the Davis-Blackmore Funeral home on Oct. 1, 1965 to form Blackmore-Whitaker Funeral Home. They bought Gordon's interest in 1981 and operated to 1989 before selling their interest to their son Tim and wife Patty. Arrangements were handled by Whitaker Eads Funeral Home in Trenton.

## TEXAS



**John Artero**, 82, of Victoria passed away on November 4, 2012. He joined U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict. He was an Airman First Class and was honorably discharged in 1953. He graduated from Commonwealth College of Science in Houston with a degree in Mortuary Science in 1954. By 1959 he and his wife Mamie were the sole proprietors of the Artero Memorial Chapels and committed their lives in service to countless families in the area. He was a member of the Texas Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association and was appointed to the State Board of Morticians. His services were under the direction of Artero Memorial Chapels, Victoria

**Lucy Vavra Brandt**, 101, of Portland, died December 15, 2012. She is the grandmother of Ron Limbaugh who owns Limbaugh funeral Home. Ric Brown Family Funeral Home in Mission handled her service arrangements,



**Patricia "Pat" Edwards**, 75, of Strawn passed away on November 28, 2012. She and Jerry T. Edwards owned and operated Edwards Funeral Homes in Strawn, Ranger and Eastland. She is the mother of Terry Edwards, Heather Edwards Goad, Suzanne Edwards Hunter & Michelle Edwards Henson. Her services were handled by Edwards Funeral Home in Strawn.



**Kelcey Denise Elkins**, 20, of Lubbock passed away from an automobile accident on January 25, 2013. She is the daughter of Sheri Elkins, general manager of LaGrone Funeral Home & Ballard Funeral Home in Roswell, New Mexico. The Resthaven Funeral Home in Lubbock handled her services.



**Richard C. "Rick" Hawkins**, 64, of Weslaco/Donna died on December 14, 2012. He attended Commonwealth College of Sciences in Houston, Texas and graduated in 1969 with a diploma in Funeral Directing and the Science of Embalming. He began to pursue his career in Funeral Directing at Shannon's Funeral Home in Fort Worth, Texas in 1970. In 1982, Mr. Hawkins relocated to Weslaco, Texas and bought his first funeral home. The first Garza-Hawkins Funeral Home was located on S. Illinois Ave. across from the Weslaco City Cemetery where he served families until 1992. It was at this time that Rick & Irma Hawkins decided to build the current facility which is located at 2222 E. Business Hwy 83 in Weslaco. In 2004 Rick & Irma Hawkins decided to continue the tradition of excellence by adding a second facility at 501 North D. Salinas Blvd., in Donna, Texas. His services were directed by the Hawkins Funeral Home in Weslaco.

**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**



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## Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

### TEXAS

**Ruby Kathryn McMickle**, 84, of Gonzales passed away January 8, 2013. She was the mother of Dianne Trent and husband Jackie who are funeral directors and owners of the Cate-Spencer & Trent Funeral Homes in Sweetwater, Texas. Her arrangements were directed by the Seydler-Hill Funeral Home in Gonzales, Texas.



**Ruth Pritchard**, 93 of Meadville, Mississippi, died November 20, 2012. She was the mother of Carol Shotwell and mother-in-law of Ray Shotwell of Humble, Texas. Her arrangements were handled by Franklin Funeral Home in Meadville, MS.

**Mary Elinor Redmond**, 88 of Aransas Pass, died on November 10, 2012. She is the mother of Eddie Redmond, funeral director at Charlie Marshal Funeral Home in Aransas Pass who handled the services.



**David A. Stinson**, 70 of Sulphur Springs passed away on November 20, 2012. He was retired after 47 years as a funeral director. He was a 1984 graduate of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and president of the 1984 class. He was past president of East Texas Funeral Directors and also Funeral Director of the Year. His services were handled by the Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs.



## Things to Remember....

Unknown author sent from friend

- ◆ There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you just want to pick them from your dreams and hug them for real!
- ◆ When the door of happiness closes, another opens; but often times we look so long at the closed door that we don't see the one which has been opened for us.
- ◆ Don't go for looks; they can deceive.
- ◆ Don't go for wealth; even that fades away.
- ◆ Go for someone who makes you smile.
- ◆ Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be who you want to be, because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.
- ◆ May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.
- ◆ The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.
- ◆ The brightest future will ALWAYS be based on a forgotten past; you CAN'T go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.
- ◆ "Life is not measured by the number of breaths that we take, but by the moments that take our breath away!"



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# TIME THEN AND NOW by Al Walden



The picture shown is of an Ansonia key wind clock from the 1880's, restored by my wife's brother Bill Ebbinghaus. It was in the family for many years and the repairs included remaking some parts, done by Gary Wilson. Gary also sent along the poem -"Winding of the Clock" by Edgar A. Guest.

This incident was food for thought in many ways. Are we aware of the constant erosion of our lives on earth? Do we keep up traditions and rituals because of value or habit? Which of our activities and beliefs do we pass on to those who come after us? Do we take time and energy to "wind the clock" each day by doing what we can, where we are, with what we have? Does time pass us, or do we pass through time? Some ideas to ponder.

## WINDING THE CLOCK

When I was but a little lad, my old Grandfather said  
That none should wind the clock but he, and so, at time for bed,  
He'd fumble for the curious key kept high upon the shelf  
And set aside that little task entirely for himself.

In time Grandfather passed away, and so that duty fell  
Unto my Father, who performed the weekly custom well;  
He held that clocks were not to be by careless persons wound,  
And he alone should turn the key or move the hands around.

I envied him that little task, and wished that I might be  
The one to be entrusted with the turning of the key;  
But year by year the clock was his exclusive bit of care  
Until the day the angels came and smoothed his silver hair.

Today the task is mine to do, like those who've gone before  
I am a jealous guardian of that round and glassy door,  
And 'til at my chamber door God's messenger shall knock  
To me alone shall be reserved the right to wind the clock.

Edgar A. Guest

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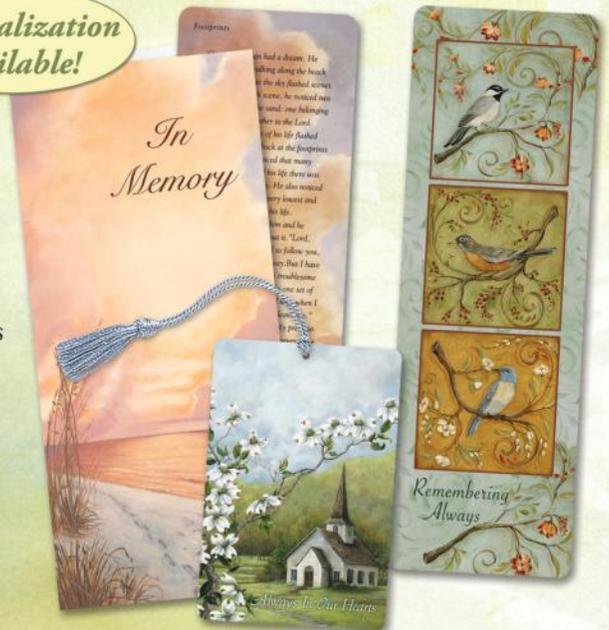
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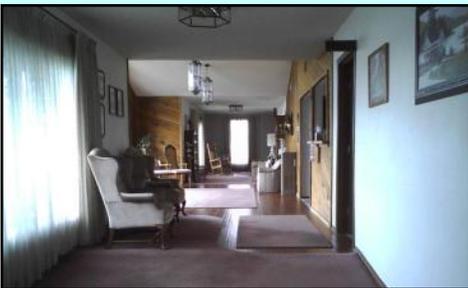
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Information taken from website:  
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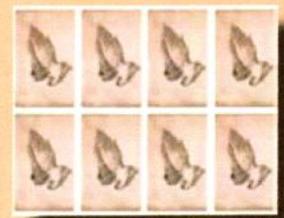
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## ASD's Virtual Tour Allows Funeral Directors to "Visit" from Anywhere

Media, PA—ASD – Answering Service for Directors, the leading funeral home answering service in North America, is pleased to offer the funeral service community an opportunity to visit their facility from the comfort of home. The company teamed up with **Google Trusted Photographers-MD** to create a high-definition, panoramic photo tour of ASD's building in Media, PA. Funeral professionals can now see ASD's operations center, conference room, data center and more in sharp detail from ASD's Google pages.

ASD's 360° Virtual Tour gives viewers a sense of walking through the building. Google technology allows visitors to use the arrow keys to move from room to room or zoom in or anything they would like to see in further detail. ASD wanted to offer funeral directors a magnified view of the company's infrastructure and technological resources. Funeral Directors can virtually walk through the company's doors and get a sense of an average day at ASD.

"ASD's Virtual Tour is a true representation of our business. Funeral Directors want to know where their calls are being answered and want to feel confident that their answering service will protect their calls 24/7," said ASD Vice President and Family-Member Owner Kevin Czachor. "Our Virtual Tour is another example of how ASD has redefined the role of an answering service for funeral homes by offering unmatched transparency. Directors have added peace of mind because they can see that the redundancies we have in place here are second to none."

Google Trusted Photo MD is a group of contractors that work exclusively for Google to capture 360° virtual tours. This represents part of **Google's Business View program**, which includes over 400 Google Trusted Photographers throughout the United States and Canada. The Google Business View program allows business owners to select their own "Trusted Photographer" and set up an appointment to capture images of the inside of the building. The photographer then publishes the tour on Google Search, Google Maps and the company's Google+ page.

"ASD is a special business. They come in contact with thousands of funeral homes each day, and yet many of their clients haven't seen their office. Investing in a Google virtual tour allowed them to invite their clients inside and foster a new type of relationship and trust," said Jessica Clark, Marketing and Booking Specialist at Google Trusted Photography. "The funeral profession is an interesting one, in that many people never really take the time to find a funeral home until it's too late, and by that point they don't want to go out and look through multiple funeral homes. The Google Virtual Tour offers businesses like ASD, and any funeral home, the opportunity to invite clients into their facilities from the comfort of their homes."

With ASD's Virtual Tour, funeral professionals can see ASD up close while previewing this new interactive technology. To help spread the word about the Google Business View pro-

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gram, ASD teamed up with the Google Trusted Photographers-MD Team to provide ASD clients with an exclusive discount on their funeral home's Virtual Tour. To learn more, contact Elizabeth Durrant at 410-800-0788 or [Elizabeth@TrustedPhotoMD.com](mailto:Elizabeth@TrustedPhotoMD.com). To view ASD's Virtual Tour, visit: <http://goo.gl/PRtyo>

### About ASD

ASD – Answering Service for Directors has created a new class of answering service exclusively for funeral professionals. Family Owned and Operated, ASD has been helping funeral homes manage their calls and their lives since 1972. With a visionary approach to business, ASD has redefined the way Funeral Directors serve families through combining unparalleled levels of training and advanced technology. The company's custom-built funeral communication systems and extensive, 6-month training program have made ASD the answering service trusted by more than one quarter of all funeral homes in the United States. For more information, visit [www.myASD.com](http://www.myASD.com) or call 1-800-868-9950.

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### About Google Trusted Photographer-MD

Google Trusted Photographer-MD is a team of contractors that works exclusively for the Google View Program to capture 360° virtual tours for businesses. Photographers are certified by Google and are trained to make every job perfect. Google Trusted Photographer-MD is one of the few companies working for Google with the ability to deliver a local certified Google Trusted Photographer to every state and province in the United States and Canada. The team's sophisticated equipment and strong support staff allows them to handle every aspect of the job including scheduling photo shoots, processing venue images, arranging the final product, and even integrating tours on customers' websites and social media. To learn more, visit [www.trustedphotomd.com](http://www.trustedphotomd.com) or call 410-800-0788.

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## Response to Mortuary Muse In Last Issue

I just read the article in issue 6 title, Mortuary Muse. I have to say that I'm so glad that someone has enough sense to realize that we as Funeral Professionals (at least some or most of them) are losing their minds around the offering of discounted cremation services!

I grew up in a family-owned business and have been licensed in the Funeral Business since 1976. I understand that cremation is growing across the country and in a recent article, I read that it is about 48 percent now....well 48 percent in some parts of the country would be high...but in the west and mountains where my business is, we are at 85 to 95 percent cremations over a traditional burial service. Traditional services are becoming or already are Cremation now!

Maybe some will argue that I've lost my mind by charging what I do for cremations but the truth is everyone in this business some day will raise their prices or go out of business when they reach the higher percent of cremations like we have now.

I have always felt my number one job as a professional funeral provider was to take care of the families we serve by doing the best we can and offering them the comfort while caring for their loved one. I've always felt that what I say jokingly is really the truth! "I treat the deceased with the same respect as I do the living because when I die and walk through the pearly gates of Heaven I don't want those that I have served to say there is the SOB that did that to me..go get him!"

With that said...WHY would I discount my services for cremation? Well, I don't! I may be considered crazy or outrageous as far as what we charge...but to offer the families the dignity and level of service I always have, I have to! Or go out of business! My biggest obstacle is what other Funeral Professionals charge for cremation! I only hope they get on the right track soon and realize before it is too late that it was their own fault that they charge so little and made cremation seem like a lesser value to the families loved one.

Our cremation prices have and will continue to increase. Presently our charges for Cremation range from \$3195.00 to over \$4000.00. We have about 70 percent of our families use us for a memorial in addition to the basic cremation. When you look at a traditional burial service price and compare it to our cremation prices...we are still way too low! I heard that Australia has a 74% cremation rate and that they charge \$9000.00, which is in line with the traditional service prices...if this is true maybe it is time we follow our friends from down under!

**Mark H. Shearon, Funeral Director**  
*"Serving families for over 28 years"*  
**Grand County Mortuary and Crematory**  
*Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado*

## You Are Important! (Cont)

*(Continued from page 1)*

thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought about you. I want to honor you. My days are really hectic and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and, well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you!"

The startled boy stared to sob and sob, and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tonight, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me. Now I know you care. This is the happiest day I've known."

The boss went back to work a changed man. He was no longer a grouch but made sure to let all his employees know that they made a difference. The junior executive helped several other young people with career planning and never forgot to let them know that they made a difference in his life..one being the boss's son.

And the young boy and his classmates learned a valuable lesson. Who you are DOES make a difference.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Editor Note:

*Since this was an e-mail sent about 13 years ago, there was the typical ending about sending it to others, but I thought it had a different slant and wanted to share it with you, but I think we all need to hear the last line.*

\*\*\*\*\*

You are under no obligation to send this on to anyone..not to two people or to two hundred. As far as I am concerned, you can delete it and move on to the next message.

But if you have anyone who means a lot to you, I encourage you to send him or her this message and let them know. You never know what kind of difference a little encouragement can make to a person. Send it to all of the people who mean anything important to you, or send it to the one, two, or three people who mean the most. Or just smile and know that someone thinks that you are important, or you wouldn't have received this in the first place. Remember that!

**I give you a blue ribbon. Who you are makes a difference, and I wanted you to know that.**



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## Custom Air Trays Partners with ShipOut.com, an Online Funeral Shipping Directory

High Point, NC—Custom Air Trays is proud to announce it has partnered with ShipOut.com, an online funeral shipping directory. ShipOut.com is a nationwide directory of mortuary shippers designed to help funeral directors quickly and easily find a provider when they have an out of town death.

“We are extremely excited about our new partnership with ShipOut.com,” says Jim Hardy, General Manager of Custom Air Trays. “It’s a great way for both of us to promote our valuable products and services to funeral directors across the nation.”

On ShipOut.com, users can search more than 23,000 funeral homes and trade services to help them make arrangements after an out-of-town death. This cutting-edge online solution allows users to locate providers quickly and easily instead of searching

through traditional printed trade directories.

“ShipOut.com is incredibly easy to use,” adds Hardy. “There’s a built-in tool that allows you to enter the city and state and see all the firms in that area that can provide shipping services. It also shows the closest airport, hometown newspapers and local hospitals.” Users can also view firm profiles and photos, search by association membership and much more.

ShipOut.com is free to use and mortuary shippers and funeral homes can add their firm to the directory at no charge. Firms only pay if they want to become a Preferred Shipper in their area. For more information about ShipOut.com, call 910-590-2534 or email support@shipout.com.

### About Custom Air Trays

Custom Air Trays is a leading manufacturer and provider of shipping containers and cremation products. Since its inception in 1992, the company has built a reputation for providing swift service and first-rate products for the funeral industry. As an American manufacturer that sells direct to the funeral homes, Custom Air Trays offers consistent high quality products and competitive pricing.

Offering same day shipping on most orders, the company’s unparalleled products have been performance tested and certified by the Atlanta Testing & Engineering Laboratory, a third party independent organization.

After 20 years of serving the funeral industry, Custom Air Trays continually strives to expand and improve their unique product line. Look for the company’s brand new introduction to the cremation industry: the CrossOver, a brilliant state-of-the-art cremation tray that works triple-duty as a viewer, casket rental insert and cremation tray. The company also recently added transportation and cremation containers for the pet funeral industry to its extensive product line.

For more information, call Custom Air Trays toll free at 800-992-1925 or visit CustomAirTrays.com

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## The Funeral Director: The Heart of a Family's Experience

by Cal Wilkerson, U.S. Cremation Equipment

Technology continues to change our industry. The equipment and processes we use are more advanced. Options we can offer our families—from web-based viewings to QR codes on headstone—were unheard of just a handful of years ago.

Yet one fundamental service we provide to families is what they will most remember. Our caring, sympathetic, wise support is something technology will never replace. It is the reason the funeral director is the pulse of a family's experience when faced with the death of a loved one.

"People believe funeral directors care for the dead. We know that we are caring for the living," observes licensed funeral director and embalmer June Ludlow of Thomas-Justin funeral Home in Cincinnati, Ohio. It's a message she lives every day—and one she shares with those new to the profession, as she did recently as the commencement speaker at her alma mater, Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. She urged the graduates to keep in mind that choosing how they deal with families should be as important as choosing the right fluids for embalming. "For us, the fear and mystery of death have subsided, but not for client families who have seen their children, parents, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters die."

Ludlow points out that families need a funeral "director" who will direct them with knowledge, understanding and a calm confidence. "We must show them how to take one step. Then show them how to take one more," she reminds. "Before they realize it, we will have started them on their way. We will have directed them toward their healing and we will have lived up to our oath."

Marsha Chance, funeral director and family service advisor at Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery in Memphis, Tennessee, agrees. "I think of myself as a shepherd, taking families from where they are to where they need to be, and being a shoulder they can lean on throughout the process."

Her experience of suddenly losing her young husband gives her a 360-degree perspective. "Although I was in the industry, when my husband died I was like every other grieving person, uncertain which steps to take next," Chance explained. "It's amazing how you go back to zero when something rocks your world." Today, many families find comfort and a special bond when she says, "I sat where you're sitting. I really do understand what you're going through." It took a while for her to reach the point where she could share her story and now she sees it as a way to bond with people genuinely and honestly. "People want to make a human connection, to recognize that we are comrades on the same battlefield. I was always sympathetic. Now I'm empathetic."

Norman Berry, a licensed funeral director and founder of Berry

*(Continued on page 27)*

## Funeral Home Resource Launches Free Online Memorials Site

Austin, Texas--January 17, 2013--Funeral Home Resource launches the beta version of its free online memorial site, [memorials.funeralhomeresource.com](http://memorials.funeralhomeresource.com). These online memorials offer a superior experience with full-page images and special features as seen in the online memorial for [Abraham Lincoln](#). Every visitor can create and share a professional looking memorial with this easy to use setup.

Funeral Home Resource's Online Memorials was developed for use by individuals and funeral homes, with both able to create multiple memorials from a single account. This free obituary site joins Funeral Home Resource's family of funeral information sites, including

- ◆ Comprehensive [funeral home directory](#)
- ◆ General funeral information
- ◆ [Cremation information](#)
- ◆ Funeral pre-planning
- ◆ And mausoleums.

Not only is the new site beautiful and easy to navigate, it includes a number of special features to make it an exceptional tribute or obituary site

- ◆ FREE
- ◆ Advanced browsing capabilities
- ◆ Ability to track local obituaries
- ◆ Guided instruction to create memorials
- ◆ Dozens of custom themes
- ◆ Ability to light a candle
- ◆ Gallery and Memory Book features
- ◆ Ability to accept and reject photos and comments
- ◆ Grief resources.

Ron Browning, CEO and President of Funeral Home Resource announces, "At a time when legacy.com charges \$50 per year to host a memorial, we take great pleasure in offering beautiful memorials with better functionality at no cost at all. We invite those remembering someone they have lost, to visit our beta site <http://memorials.funeralhomeresource.com/> and see the possibilities for themselves. We create a memorial structure that celebrates those we love who have passed."

Online obituary sites draw millions of visitors each month, having the power to both celebrate a life and mourn its passing. With the beta launch of its Online Memorials site, Funeral Home Resource is on its way to becoming the most complete funeral resource on the

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### About Funeral Home Resource

[Funeral Home Resource](#), the outsourced online marketing department for funeral homes, grows market share for funeral homes through on-line marketing to families in need of funeral home and cremation services. Funeral Home Resource operates [FuneralHomeResource.com](http://FuneralHomeResource.com), the premier on-line directory of funeral homes. FHR is trusted by the most established, most respected names in the funeral industry, handling all their online marketing efforts and overseeing the creation, capture, delivery, and conversion of thousands of online inquiries for them each month. Funeral Home Resource specializes in no-risk performance marketing arrangements.

Contact: Ron Browning, CEO and President

Phone: 866.468.7968 x801

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## The Funeral Director: The Heart of a Family's Experience (Cont.)

(Continued from page 24)

Funeral Home and Crematory in Elberton, Georgia, recognizes that due to his small-town location he often extends his support in different ways than his colleagues in larger markets. "As a family-owned funeral home and crematory, we answer all of our calls personally, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year," comments Berry. "Our client families aren't comfortable getting a recorded message—they want to connect with someone immediately. We can be ready within 30 minutes." and sometimes those middle-of-the-night calls are responses to families located several towns away, some as far as Atlanta.

"Our families have been hit hard by the economy and their funds are limited. We keep our profit margins slim, so we are almost always significantly less expensive than our competitors. And that's important to us," says Berry. If people say they don't have the money, he works with them, delaying the disposition until funds are available. Berry added a crematory to his business a year-and-a-half ago and many families are selecting direct cremation as a cost-effective option. And no matter what the circumstances, he buries children under 12 at his cost, often supplying extra touches at his own expense, like bouquets of colorful balloons in the child's favorite colors.

I make a point of avoiding words that are sometimes harsh for families to hear, like embalming, and I personally prepare all of the

bodies for viewing," he says. When first entering the business, Berry went to beauty college to learn makeup techniques that result in a natural look. And if he has to, he'll even style the hair, but recommends using the deceased's regular beautician. He chuckles remembering how his male friends laughed when he enrolled, but the knowledge has paid off.

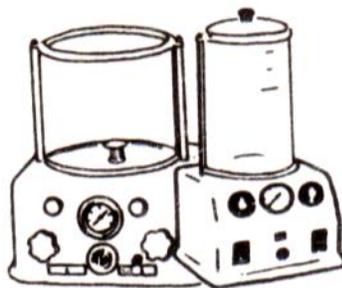
While recognizing that they have helped families through a most difficult time with support, assistance and guidance is satisfying, funeral directors can be faced with challenges when offering their help, too. Some families and individuals come with preformed attitudes about the death-care profession. "People sometimes are surprised that we are sympathetic, living, breathing people with normal emotions," says Chance. Others who are bereaved come with anger and frustration. "I understand that they are angry to be in the situation, particularly when it's a difficult case, like a violent or accidental death, the death of a child or other tragedy, so I don't take it personally."

"Everyone deserves to be remembered." That's Chance's message as she guides her families through the difficult process of making choices. It's a message that comes from her heart. While technology continues to provide innovative ways to do business, the heart of our industry is, literally, our heart. How we support and guide families on the road to healing will always be our most necessary—and appreciated service.



Cal Wilkerson is V.P. of Sales and Marketing for U.S. Cremation Equipment, based in Lakeland, Florida, manufacturers of the Classic line of high-performance human cremators. He has worked in the cremation equipment industry for 35 years.

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## “The Green Thing”

From Larry Dablemont's Lightning' Ridge  
Nov/Dec '11

In the line at the store, the cashier told the older woman that she should bring her own grocery bag because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologized to him and explained, “We didn't have the green thing back in my day.”



The clerk responded, “That's our problem today. The former generation did not care enough to save our environment.”

He was right...that generation didn't have the green thing in its day. Back then, they returned their milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled.



But they didn't have the green thing back in the customer's day.

In her day, they walked up stairs, because they didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time they had to go two blocks.



But she was right. They didn't have the green thing in her day.

Back then, they washed the baby's diapers because they didn't have the throwaway kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts... wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing.

But that old lady is right, they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then, they had one TV, or radio, in the house—not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of the state of Montana. In the kitchen they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't have electric machines to do everything for you. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then, they didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. They used a push mower that ran on



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human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right, they didn't have the green thing back then.

They drank from a fountain when they were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water. They refilled their writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull.



But they didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service.



They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And they didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful the old folks were just because they didn't have the green thing back then?

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## NFDA Announces March 2013 Meet the Mentors Attendees

Brookfield, Wis. - Last week, the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) announced the names of the 50 funeral professionals who will have an opportunity to learn from three leading funeral directors and network with like-minded peers during the Association's third Meet the Mentors Program on March 18 and 19 at the Emory Conference Center Hotel on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta, Ga. Meet the Mentors is being held in cooperation with the Funeral Service Foundation.

NFDA-member licensed funeral directors and embalmers under the age of 40 had an opportunity to enter a drawing for a chance to participate in this exclusive program. The names of the 50 participants were announced the week of July 16 through video drawings posted on the NFDA website and social media sites. The attendees are:

- \* Michelle Anthony, College Place, Wash.
- \* Brian Bartlett, Salt Lake City, Utah
- \* David Bell, Owensboro, Ky.
- \* Jonathan Bender, Clifton, N.J.
- \* Shawn Brown, Gainesville, Fla.
- \* Brandon Burkhead, Blairsville, Ga.
- \* Joshua Cioci, Alliance, Ohio
- \* Brett Eidson, Lebanon, Mo.
- \* Benjamin Eldridge, Primghar, Iowa
- \* Daniel Enea, CPC, Ocoee, Fla.
- \* Thomas Fletcher III, Westminster, Md.
- \* Anne Geib, New Philadelphia, Ohio
- \* Mario Gethers, CFSP, Moncks Corner, S.C.
- \* Brantley Gurley, Goldsboro, N.C.
- \* Brian Hahn, Parkersburg, W.Va.
- \* Jana Haldenwang, CFSP, Oneida, N.Y.
- \* Tommy Harris, CFSP, Chesnee, S.C.
- \* Cheri Jefferson, Covington, Ga.
- \* Sabrina Joynes, CFSP, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- \* Amanda Keith, Louisville, Ky.
- \* Christopher Keyes, Cassopolis, Mich.
- \* Meghan King, Danville, Va.
- \* Leah Kucera, Schenectady, N.Y.
- \* Mitchell Kyker, Harriman, Tenn.
- \* Kyle LeMieur, Little Falls, Minn.
- \* Christopher McCord, CFSP, New Market, Ala.
- \* John McHugh, Chevy Chase, Md.
- \* Mark Mier, Manchester, Iowa
- \* Amy Miller, Greenwood, Ind.
- \* Curtis Mills, Clinton, Mo.

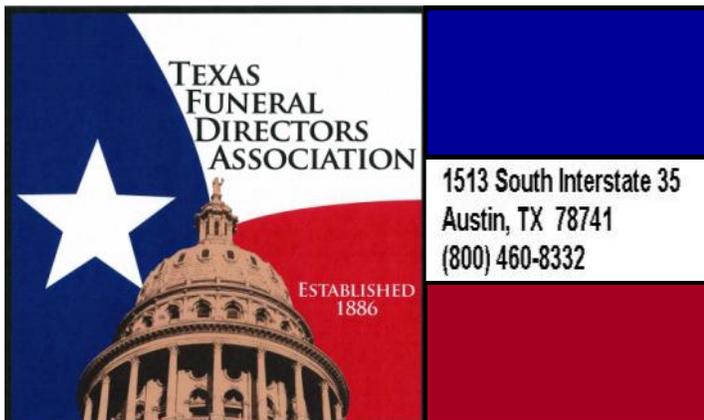
- \* Kenneth Morgan, Corbin, Ky.
- \* David Neal, Danville, Va.
- \* Victoria Ordoyne Thomas, Houma, La.
- \* Lauren Polanski, Hamburg, N.Y.
- \* Jamie Ricci, Ottawa, Ill.
- \* Daniel Jon Rush, Philip, S.D.
- \* Melanie Scheid, CPC, Lancaster, Penn.
- \* Aaron Scott, Jeffersonville, Ind.
- \* William Skidd, Associate CPC, Norwalk, Conn.
- \* Robert Smith III, Chicago, Ill.
- \* Evans St. Forts, North Miami Beach, Fla.
- \* Veronica Thomas, Brunswick, Ohio
- \* Martha Thompson, Hammond, La.
- \* Nicholas Tomasello, Runnemede, N.J.
- \* Bodi Topham, Tooele, Utah
- \* Edward Torres, Swanquarter, N.C.
- \* Ryan Tucker, Denver, Iowa
- \* Marty White, Strasburg, Va.
- \* Jessica Williams, Houma, La.
- \* Eric Wilsey, Saugerties, N.Y.

### About Meet the Mentors

The 50 selected attendees will have an opportunity to meet and learn from three of the country's leading funeral directors: Lisa Baue, a third-generation funeral director and president/CEO of Baue Funeral Homes, which operates four funeral homes in St. Charles, Mo.; Michael Schoedinger, CFSP, CPC, the president of Schoedinger Funeral & Cremation Service in Columbus, Ohio, a funeral home with 15 locations that has been owned by his family for six generations; and Richard Tetrick, CFSP, the president and CEO of Heritage Family Funeral Services, which includes 21 funeral homes in four states, six cemeteries in two states and several other funeral-related businesses.

There is no cost to participate in the program itself; the 50 selected attendees only pay for their transportation to and from the program. The cost of the registration fee, access to the mentors, one night of lodging, a reception and dinner the night before the program, and continental breakfast and lunch the day of the program - a \$599 value - has been generously covered through a grant from the Funeral Service Foundation.

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving 19,700 individual members who represent more than 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and 39 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit [www.nfda.org](http://www.nfda.org).





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