

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 15

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 5



### *From My Purview- I Wasn't Expecting That* By Rev. Janice Hoffman

While listening to a new artist from Australia, Jamie Lawson, singing his latest hit, *"I Wasn't Expecting That"*, I was moved to tears not only in my eyes, but in my heart.

I realized after listening carefully to the words of his song. It was as if a veil had suddenly lifted, I became aware that some of the most important and cherished moments in my life, I wasn't expecting that. I thought of landmark moments in my life, most importantly having three children. I wasn't expecting that. My husband and I decided before we were married not to have children but after 5 years of marriage, we were surprised and blessed with a beautiful and healthy baby boy. Before we knew it, we had three children and I was filled with more love than I had ever expected or thought possible. Memory after memory came into my awareness. With each remembrance I realized, I wasn't expecting that! I hadn't planned on many of the best things that have ever happened to me. Wow!

If I hadn't planned it and I wasn't expecting it, what did all this mean? Of course, I have planned for some of the events that have come my way but the things that are at the top of my list of my most cherished memories, I wasn't expecting that.

As this light bulb moment unfolded, I realized the vastness of this realization. The best things that ever happened to me by far, I wasn't expecting that. All these years I thought having a mental experience of writing down what I was grateful for was such an inspirational practice, yet discovering something bigger than what I had already believed about God was at work on such a grander scale was beyond what I could have expected.

When I decided to become an ordained minister, I never dreamed I would work in the funeral industry. In 2008, nine years into my ordination an acquaintance of mine sadly took his life. I went to his memorial service and was "divinely irritated" with the minister's mannerisms and speech. I was so divinely irritated that I decided to visit the mortuary and ask to speak to one of their funeral directors. Unfortunately no one was available. I drove home determined to go back and express my feelings.

The next week, I again drove an hour to the mortuary. I asked if I could speak with one of their funeral directors and was ushered into his office. As I explained to the director I had attended a memorial service a couple weeks prior and was so disappointed with the minister's delivery of such a sensitive issue that I was here to offer my services as a non-denominational minister. I explained to the director

(Continued on page 22)

### Other Articles in this Issue



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Velma Sue De Leon—Pg. 4

### 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

## Free Webinar to Focus on Pre-need Marketing Homesteaders Life Co. to Offer Valuable Business Tips



**WALL, N.J.** — Homesteaders Life Co. and Kates-Boylston Publications are teaming up to offer a [free webinar](#) on how funeral professionals can improve their pre-need marketing efforts.

The [webinar](#), scheduled for 2 p.m. Eastern Time Dec. 20, will be presented by Kenn Peterson, regional director for

Homesteaders.

During the webinar, Peterson will offer tips and easy-to-use processes for measuring and managing pre-need marketing efforts. Highlights include:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of traditional outbound marketing like direct mail, group presentations and aftercare.

- Lead generation through inbound marketing like social media, blogs and other digital communication.
- Smart business practices that improve the effectiveness of your pre-need marketing, including cash flow management.
- Managing and measuring your human resources, including your pre-need sales force.

This [one-hour webinar](#) will help you to evaluate marketing efforts from 2016 and equip you to implement sales and marketing goals for a more profitable 2017. Register at <http://bit.ly/2ge6lYE>  
*Kates-Boylston Publications publishes American Funeral Director, American Cemetery & Cremation and Funeral Service Insider. The company has been helping funeral professionals succeed and serve since 1877. Learn more at [www.katesboylston.com](http://www.katesboylston.com).*

### As We Drive By



We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes and interesting places, but we'd welcome pictures, if you send them to us.



Nieburg-Vitt Funeral Home, Inc.  
Washington, MO



**Happy Holidays  
From  
The Dead Beat Staff**



## Mortuary Muse By Lowell

Since the days of the price card in the casket which stated “Complete Funeral Service using this casket....\$XXX.xx” (Do you want fries with that?) Funeral service media advertising has generally been—well— institutional and/or boring....

As government has become involved in dictating what should be said, attempts to inject prices in advertising usually descends into the mire of mindless unprofitability and the ultimate destruction of funeral homes’ reputations. Firms give great service at prices that are reasonable for their clients based on costs the funeral home must pay. But sometimes prices in some markets may be way out of the range that many middle class families could pay.

Unfortunately word of these high dollar funeral services trickle down. Soon some family choosing a direct cremation and a do-it-yourself memorial service—explains their decision was influenced by funerals which cost \$15,000 or more. This surprises the funeral directors that never see this total cost in their funerals. How do you communicate the worth of your services?

With the wonders of websites and social media it is difficult to project the empathy and compassion that may be the

hallmark of your service. FTC-mandated pricing on GPL’s is not conducive to simple service pricing in the media. Though direct cremation or the tearful widow wondering why it was so expensive seems to be how the majority funerals are now marketed.

Most package pricing with names similar to historical traditions “Package A” with allowances and discounts or “Dignified Memorial Service #2” do not really fit well in a 15 or 30 second TV/Radio advertisement or print advertisement. Nor are they likely to appeal to the “Celebration of Life” Consumer who are questioning funerals of the past.

Unless you prefer selling ala-carte off your GPL. Try developing some different sounding packages which are still built around your standard GPL components. The examples we are using likely are not composed with verbage millennial or GenX’s would use, but that’s where your younger staff members can step in.

Keep reading and see some suggestions for ads on page 5.

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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## Donations to the Funeral Service Foundation



The National Funeral Directors Association contributed \$100,000, and four firms each pledged \$25,000 in support of this giving initiative.



## Velma Sue De Leon Honored As BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR By The Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers Of Commerce



Velma Sue De Leon, owner of Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan and Edinburg, was recently presented with the Business Woman of the Year Award by the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC) during their 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention and Expo held in El Paso, Texas.

The number of influential Hispanic women in business and in leadership roles across the country continues to grow. Latinas are firmly established players in this country's economic, political, leadership, and social landscape. This award focuses on the great accomplishments that Latina entrepreneurs are doing in business.

Velma Sue De Leon is also the owner of Memorial Event Center, Floral Designs by Memorial, Memorial Cremation Center and Memorial Pet Passages, all located in Edinburg, Texas.

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# Behind the Back Fence (Continuation of Mortuary Muse)

By Lowell



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#### 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 and [editor@thedead-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedead-beat.com)

## After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

Losses... there are many kinds of loss. We are dealing with the aftermath of the elections and some are having quite the reaction to losses. With loss comes that unknown of what the future will be like. Boy, is that the case after this election. We really don't know what to expect, but the reactions of some seem very familiar to when someone loses a loved one. We have several experiencing grief over the results. But isn't that the case with all elections, why has this one brought what seems like a slightly stronger reaction?

My family is dealing with a kind of loss again as my husband is getting ready to retire. All the decisions that you have to make and you hope that they will be good decisions. Adjusting to the lifestyle that you had when you were working every day versus hopefully only having to work at a different pace or not working at all. All these changes to the loss of a way you have lived for quite awhile is similar to the changes that take place after a loved one has died. So along with some anticipation of good things in retirement there is also a minor bit of loss of security of how things have been. Truthfully I guess it is the same as any change or loss in your job situation.

Illness has a tendency to feel like a loss too. All the things you were able to do or eat are not really available to you now after the illness dictates future opportunities or losses. The unknowns of how the future will be and what life will be like adjusting to the new life style resulting from a medical issue is a loss you grieve.

Of course, anyone who has experienced loss knows that time will help you adjust. But not exactly knowing what adjustments will be required makes it stressful and most of the time a bit frustrating.

As far as the government is concerned, you do your best in the election booth and hope to adjust to the results. Knowing that changes will be in the future and if things don't go well, there will be a chance to vote again.

In relation to retirement, it's just another adjustment to your life similar to when you first got a job or changed jobs. I guess you could look at it as moving up or maybe down in the job chain of life. Hopefully the decisions you've made were good at least until the government changes something else.

Finally with illness, your survival is uppermost in your mind. Limitations to activity and food are not always fun,

but the alternative to adjusting just might leave your loved ones truly grieving your loss.

I'm sure there are many other losses that I have missed, these just seem to be the ones that came to mind (and I am personally dealing with). Now exactly of what relevance is this to the funeral profession I think it's more of putting things in perspective. That grief abounds around us from many things. A loss of a loved one is a great change and we have a tendency to want to fight this change until the realization that this situation is permanent and then we adjust. This is also the pattern with all losses.

I guess I feel the need to wish everyone good luck with any of your losses and hope your adjustment time is short and you enjoy what God has given you while you are here on Earth with the rest of us.

Of course, Happy Holidays too!



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 after-care 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)

### 9 Ways to Encourage Others

- Express love.
- Nurture your relationship.
- Cooperate with each other.
- Observe ways to creatively demonstrate love.
- Understand, don't lecture.
- Remember your blessings.
- Accept each other.
- Grow together.
- Enjoy each other.



Duane Storey and Sanford Kulkin from "Body and Soul" found in "List to Live By"

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## 2017 ICCFA Wide World of Sales Conference Program Announced

**STERLING, VA (November 10, 2016)** – ICCFA has announced their program schedule and lineup for the 2017 Wide World of Sales Conference that will be held January 11-13, 2017, at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix, Arizona.

This educational and motivational program sets to provide the attendees the understanding and motivation to meet their families where they are now and surpass their expectations. It will feature three keynote topics: technology, cremation and people.

On Thursday morning, January 12, keynote speakers **Rich Kizer** and **Georganne Bender** take the stage to present their **“Essential Strategies for a Noisy World.”** Their session will inform you of the game changer in digital marketing – social media. They will provide practical, real-world tools you need to get your business noticed on the social media platform. Kizer and Bender are experts on generational diversity, consumer trends, marketing and promotion and also being known for their intensive consumer research.

Thursday afternoon, keynote speaker **Michael Saletta** presents his interactive session **“Embracing the Changing Consumer.”** Saletta’s goal is to create change that is positive and has the ability for growth and results. His session will talk about “shaking up” the status quo to get on the right path. Saletta is the founder and CEO of Saletta Leadership, LLC, consulting companies dedicated to developing leaders, growing sales and aligning team performance.

Friday morning, January 13, keynote speaker **Dave Brown** will provide his motivational session **“The Answer Lies Behind the Next Door.”** Brown’s session will give your determination strength, encourage the persistence to accomplish your goals and motivate you to engage in a little healthy competition instead of putting yourself in negative comparison. Brown is a senior partner, executive level coach and lead consultant with Southwestern Consulting, an international sales consulting and coaching company.

Also featured in the program, there will be several other general sessions, including:

**“How to Drive Leads on Social Media,”** *Ryan Thogmartin, CEO of DISRUPT Media and creator of ConnectingDirectors.com:* Thogmartin will give you the power that helps funeral companies across the country be the “go to” source for death conversation. He will shed light on who is engaging funeral companies on Facebook and what they are talking about and how this can produce real leads through social media platforms.

**“Grow Your Business Online,”** *Joe DeMike, Head of Global Business Operations for Accelerator:* Want to know how to take advantage of online tools to help run and promote your business? Demike’s session is all about how to get found and attracting customers with cloud-based tools.

**“Don’t Blame Cremation for Ruining Your Business,”** *Robert Boetticher, Jr., Cremation Association of North America:* Learn the facts about cremation and gain the strategies for applying statistics to invent creative sales strategies. When it comes to families choosing cremation for all sorts of reasons, do they really understand the importance of memorialization?

**“Decoding Sales: The Five Reasons to Buy Anything,”** *Chuck Gallagher, VP of American Funeral Financial:* People buy for emotional reasons. If you want to increase your opportunity to making the sale, learning the underlying emotional reasons is critical. Gallagher shares the five buying motives that causes a prospect to say yes.

New at this year at the WWS, **Sales Boot Camp** will feature three inspirational keynotes on topics driving the world of pre-need and at-need sales: prospecting, presenting and referrals. This program is designed to give attendees the inspiration, education and understanding from proven industry professionals, to be successful in presenting to new clients, closing sales and getting referrals. Space is limited to 40 people.

The complete program, scholarship, hotel and registration information is available at [www.wideworldofsales.com](http://www.wideworldofsales.com). Registration fee discounts are available for multiple attendees from the same company, as low as \$425. The Hyatt Regency will be offering our group a discounted room rate of \$179 per night. Register before December 12, 2016 and save!

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## Holidays— Difficult or Diversion?

By Ken Doka

Two bereaved spouses were discussing the coming holidays. To one, the holidays were a source of dread. She feared she would break down repeatedly putting a damper on her family—already saddened by her husband’s death. She even considered staying away from her family during the time, perhaps visiting friends out of state. The other spouse had very different expectations. This widow eagerly anticipated the holidays—welcoming a respite from her grief. She looked forward to the event and the opportunity to reconnect with her family.

Since grief is a very individual roller-coaster, it is not surprising that these women would look at the holidays differently. Each of us grieves in our own unique way. There is no one right way to grieve.

For some of us, the holidays are a welcome diversion to our grief. We welcome the activities and the opportunities to be with empathic others—persons who acknowledge and celebrate our relationship and understand our grief. The activities associated with the holidays provide meaningful activities that turn our attention from our loss.

For others of us though, the holidays are not a welcome diversion but a difficult time as we deal with our grief. There are reasons for this. The holidays are times that are centering moments—packed with memories. There are often reminders of our loss such as cards that still might come addressed to the person who died. All the specials on television reinforce notions of family; reiterating our loss. In many areas, the cold and

shortened days associated with the onset of winter add to our sense of isolation.

It is important to remember that either response—diversion or difficulty—as well as all those responses between normal and natural responses to grief. We need not feel guilty of our reactions—whether it is a guilt that we are not enjoying the holidays or guilt that we are—both are normal reactions to grief.

We need to be honest about our reactions and make choices based on our own feelings. Whatever we do, we need to talk it over with others of our circle—respecting and understanding their choices. Sara needed to do that. While she dreaded the first Thanksgiving since the death of her husband, she knew her children and grandchildren were looking forward to it. She requested that it not be done at her house as she was not prepared to host it but that she would attend it at another place. In the end, the family opted to go to a local restaurant.

Such a choice was not only a good compromise; it was an effective way to handle the holidays. Changing to a restaurant reduced stress at an already stressful time. More than that, the change was symbolically important. After a loss, events will never be what they once were. Sometimes marking that fact by making such a change reaffirms the key messages both that there has been a significant loss—and even still—much remains.

\*\*\*\*\*

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, 1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Annual subscription-\$25.00.

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 man is stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and is asked where he is going at this time of night. The man replies, "I am on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late." The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?" "That would be my wife," the man replies. The cop is still laughing.



"What the heck is going on here?" said an angry man storming into the florist shop. "I just lost one of my main clients and it's your fault!" "Why don't you calm down a bit," said the lady behind the counter, "and let us know what exactly happened." "Well," said the man, "My biggest client moved to a new location, and to be nice I called you guys up and asked you to send him some flowers with a note saying "Congratulations on you new location." He calls me up and says to me, "What's the big deal with sending me a note that says, "Rest in Peace?!" "Oh no!" she sighed, "now I know why I got a nasty message from the funeral parlor!"



Bob and Sue were in a local shopping center just before Christmas. Sue suddenly noticed that Bob was missing, and as they had a lot to do, she called him on his cell phone. Sue asked, "Bob, where are you? You know we have lots to do." Bob said, "Do you remember the jewelry store we went into about 10 years, and you fell in love with a diamond necklace? I could not afford it at the time, and I said that one day I would get it for you." Little tears started to flow down Sue's cheeks, and she got all choked up. "Yes, I do remember that shop," she replied. "Well, I'm at the Hooters next to that."



An old man is on his death bed, and his family has come in from all over the country to be with him in his final hours. He opens his eyes, and says, "Is Ruthie here? My beautiful, loyal wife?" "Oh, yes, my handsome prince! I'm right here!" Ruthie replies. He continues, "...and what of my strapping boy, who always made me proud? Is he here, with that lovely wife of his? "Yeah pops, we're right here." "...and what about those two grandkids of mine? Are my little angels here?" "Of course, grampa!" The old man continues, "So everyone is here in the room with me right now?" "Yes, yes, of course!" The old man lets out a sigh and starts shouting, "THEN WHY ARE ALL THE G\*% \$%# LIGHTS ON IN THE HOUSE?"

## Comments

Feel free to share comments and thoughts to the editor at editor@thedead-beat.com or mail to The Dead Beat, PO Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748.

## Chuckles (Cont.)

Some buddies were sitting in the clubhouse enjoying some beers after a round of golf when the subject of "which club is best" came up. "Well, I've played the game for more than forty years, and I have to vote for the five-wood," said one old duffer. "It's gotten me out of more bad situations than I care to admit," "Nope. It's the three-wood that works the best, especially if your drives aren't as good as they should be," said another. "You're both crazy!" exclaimed a third guy. "The best wood for getting out of serious trouble doesn't even go in your bag." "Oh? What wood is that?" asked the first guy. "My pencil!"



Grandma flies to a wedding. Unfortunately the airline loses her luggage, including her dentures. When she arrives her granddaughter's fiancé says, "Not to worry, my uncle Steve has a briefcase full of dentures." Grandma has her doubts but sure enough Steve shows up in a nice three-piece suit, and a briefcase full of dentures. The first ones she tried were too loose, and the second were too wide. Finally, the third pair fit perfectly. Grandma says, "Thank you so much, you must be a very successful dentist!" Steve looks confused and replies, "You're very welcome, but I'm a mortician."

A group of engineering teachers get on a plane. After everyone settles in their seats, the captain starts speaking, "Hello everyone, this the captain speaking. I want you to all know that this plane was built by your students!" After hearing this, all the teachers started running off the plane and refused to fly, except one. The last teacher staying comfortable in his seat was asked why was he so calm, to which he replies, "I have full confidence in my students, if they really built this plane, then I'm sure the captain won't even manage to start it up."



One afternoon, a wealthy lawyer was riding in the back of his limousine when he saw two men eating grass by the road side. He ordered his driver to stop and he got out to investigate. "Why are you eating grass?" he asked one man. "We don't have any money for food," the



*(Continued on page 11)*

## Chuckles (Cont.)

poor man replied. "Oh, come along with me then." "But sir, I have a wife with two children!" "Bring them along! And you, come with us too!" he said to the other man. "But sir, I have a wife with six children!" the second man answered. "Bring them as well!" They all climbed into the car, which was no easy task, even for a car as large as the limo. Once underway, one of the poor fellows said, "Sir, you are too kind. Thank you for taking all of us with you." The lawyer replied, "No problem, the grass at my home is about two feet tall."

\*\*\*\*\*

Little Ole was asking his father, "Dad, I read in a book dat in some parts ov Africa a man doesn't know his wife until dey get married." "Son, dat's da way it happens in every country," said Ole.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ole and Lena had been married for 25 years. One day, Lena asked Ole, "Vhy don't yew ever till me yew love me, Ole?" Ole replied, "Vell, I told yew 'I love yew' when ve vere married. If anything changes, I'll let you know."

\*\*\*\*\*

Ole was paid by the week and one Friday he approached his boss holding up his last paycheck. "Dis check is less dan we agreed on," he said. "I know that Ole," the employer said. "But last week I accidentally overpaid you \$200 and you never said anything." "Vell," said Ole, "I don't mind da occasional mistake but when it gets to be a habit, I feel I haf to call it to yur attention."

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Magician and the Parrot

A magician worked on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. The audience would be different each week, so the magician did the same tricks each week. However, there was a problem—the captain's parrot saw the shows each week and began to understand how the magician did every trick. Once he understood, he started shouting out the secrets in the middle of the show: "Look, it's not the same hat." "Look, he is hiding the flowers under the table." "Hey, why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?" The magician was furious but couldn't do anything: it was, after all, the captain's parrot.



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One day the ship had an accident and sank. The magician found himself, with the parrot, adrift on a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean. They stared at each other with hatred, but did not utter word. This went on for a day, then another, and another. Finally, after a week the parrot said, "OK, I give up. Where the heck is the boat?"

\*\*\*\*\*

### Painting the Porch

An unemployed guy goes door-to-door looking for work. One homeowner hands him a brush and a tin of paint and offers him \$50 to paint his porch. A few hours later the guy goes to the homeowner and says, "I've finished!! But I reckon you should know your car's a Ferrari, not a Porsche!"



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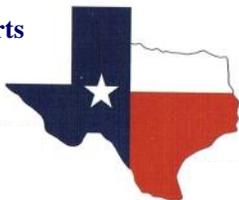
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# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

## ARIZONA



**John J. Berg**, 73, of Green Valley died on August 31, 2016. He graduated from the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science in 1965. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served as a corpsman for the Marines during the Vietnam War. He began working for Allnutt Funeral Service in 1977 in Greenley, Colorado and also operated Cantrell Funeral Home in Kimball, Nebraska, before retiring to Green Valley. He served the Allnutt family for 40 years. He served on many committees for NFDA. He was NFDA past district governor and Heritage Club member. He also served as president of the Colorado Funeral Directors Association in 1986. His services were handled by Allnutt Funeral Service, Greenley, Colorado.

**Ann Long**, 86, died July 28, 2016. She was grandmother of David Long, Resthaven/Carr-Tenney Mortuary & Memorial Gardens, Phoenix.

**Dennis Long**, 83, died July 5, 2016. He was the grandfather of David Long, Resthaven/Carr-Tenney Mortuary & Memorial Gardens, Phoenix.

## COLORADO



**John Lowell Abramson**, 89, of Colorado Springs passed away on Oct. 31, 2016. Formerly of Minnesota, John served proudly as a U.S. Navy medic during both WWII and the Korean War. A graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Mortuary Science, John was a funeral director in the Twin Cities area for over 50 years. Services were held in Minnesota under direction of The Springs Funeral Services –North in Colorado Springs.

## IOWA



**George, "G.A." Arlington Elliott, Jr.**, 84, of New London, died Oct. 27, 2016. He was an honorary member of IFDA. He graduated from the Worsham School of Mortuary in Chicago in 1956. He served as a medic in the United States Army stationed in Crailsheim, Germany in 1957. He joined his father's business, Elliott Chapel which had been established in 1924. His services were directed by Elliott Chapel in New London.

## KANSAS



**Michael L. Burkhart**, 67, of Dodge City, passed away on Oct. 21, 2016. He graduated from Central State University, Edmond, Oklahoma, with a Bachelor's Degree in Mortuary Science. Through the past 45 years he

## KANSAS (Cont.)



owned funeral homes in Dodge City, Cimarron, Jetmore and Sublette. His services were directed by Ziglar Funeral Chapel.



**David Cruise**, 61, passed away on Sept. 18, 2016 in Florida. He graduated from Jefferson State College in Birmingham, Alabama with a degree in Mortuary Science. His services were handled by Williams Thomas Funeral Home-Westarea in Newberry, Florida.



**H. Virginia Derfelt**, 95, of Joplin, MO, passed away on Nov. 5, 2016. She was married to Roy L. Derfelt and helped with the operation of the family business and operated Derfelt Funeral Home and ambulance service for several decades. Her funeral arrangements were directed by Derfelt Funeral Homes.



**JoAnn Edwards**, 92, of Manhattan passed away Oct. 23, 2106. Her husband Ray N. "Buzz" Edwards, Jr. became a funeral director with the Burliew-Cowan Funeral Home and in 1965 they purchased an interest in the funeral home and it became Burliew-Cowan-Edwards Funeral Home and she received her Assistant Funeral Director's license. The funeral home is now Yorgensen-Meloan-Londeen Funeral Home where she had worked at until recently and who handled her funeral arrangements.



**Wendell Hinkson**, 75, of Great Bend, died Aug. 31, 2016. He was a funeral director at Bryant-Christians Funeral Home until his retirement in 2006 after 50 years of service to the profession. He was a United States Army Reserve veteran. His services were directed by Bryant Funeral Homes.



**Elizabeth R. Koster**, 100, of Oakley, died Sept. 21, 2016. She was an assistant funeral director and co-owner of Koster Funeral Home in Oakley. Her services were directed by Kennedy-Koster Funeral Home.

**Lanna Popkess**, 74 of Sabetha, passed away Sept. 6, 2016. She worked alongside her husband at the Popkess Mortuary as a funeral director. Popkess Mortuaries handled the service arrangements.

## MISSOURI

**Larry Earl Breshears**, 58, of Brunswick passed away Oct. 21, 2016. He graduated Valedictorian of the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service in 1986. He was employed from 1986 to 1988 as a Funeral Director and Embalmer at the George C. Carson & Sons Funeral Home in Independence, MO. He then joined the staff of Speaks Memorial Chapels in Independence and worked there as lead director until 1996. He joined Gibson Funeral Homes as a manager in Brunswick and Mendon. In August of 2000 was elected to office of Chariton County Coroner. In April of 2011 Larry and Vicki pur-

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 Editor@thedeat-beat.com



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

chased the funeral homes at Brunswick and Mendon and now operates them as Breshears Memorial Chapels, LLC, who handled his arrangements.



**Greg W. E. Chamberlain**, 87, of Oregon, passed away Oct. 7, 2016. He entered the U.S. Navy in 1948 and was discharged in 1950. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1966, and he and Betty opened Chamberlain Funeral Home & Monuments in Rock Port that year. They purchased the funeral home

in Oregon in 1986 and added Mound City in 1995. Greg took yearly continuing education courses at Iowa Western College and continued to work until age 85. He served as president of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association in 1992-1993 and was a multi-year state officer. He was a long

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time member of the MFDA Board of Directors, and served on their Emergency Preparedness, Educational Foundation and Legislation committees. He also served as chairman of the National Funeral directors Association Program and Education Committee for 1991-1992 and the Missouri representative to the NFDA policy board in 1992-93, 1994-95. He held an active funeral director/embalmer license for 50 years. In the early years in funeral business, he provided ambulance service for the Rock Port community. The Chamberlain Funeral Homes directed the funeral services.



**Chad Klein**, 45, of Gower, MO passed away Dec. 1, 2016. A licensed funeral director that had worked for his family funeral home. He is the son of Jack and Shari Klein owners of Hixson-Klein Funeral Home and brother to Christa Musser, Casey and Corey Klein. His arrangements were under the direction of Hixson-Klein

Funeral Home.

## TEXAS



**Robert Gaylan Duncan**, 82, of Victoria, died on Nov. 13, 2016. At the age of 17, he started working for McCabe Carruth Funeral Home in Victoria, which marked the beginning of his lifelong career of over fifty-five years serving others through the funeral service profession.

He was an honor graduate from the Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science in Houston and a graduate of the National Foundation of Funeral School of Management in Evanston, Illinois. During the Korean Conflict, he was called to serve in the U.S. Army Personnel Division, Field Artillery. here, He was first employed at Heights Funeral Home and later served as manager of Waltrip Funeral Directors. In 1968 he returned to Victoria to build Colonial Funeral Home-the first building in Victoria's history to be designated for funeral service at the time of its construction. Doors opened in 1969, and over the following years he expanded his area of service to various parts of Texas, at one point owning and operating 29 funeral homes and 3 cemeteries. At the age of 81, Mr. Duncan officially retired from his profession. Gaylan was President of the South Texas Funeral Association, President of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, Commissioner of the Texas State Funeral Service Commission, District Governor for the National Funeral Directors Association, and Chairman of the Advisory Board for Curriculum at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston.

*(Continued on page 17)*

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

(Continued from page 15)

In 1984-1985, he was honored with the distinction of Outstanding Funeral Director of the Year by TFDA. The Colonial Funeral Home directed his services.



**Harvey C. Hoffman**, 90, of Waco died June 30, 2016. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. In 2010, he was an honored guest upon the Honor flight to view the WWII monument in Washington D.C. His career was spent in the Savings & Loan Industry for over 40 years until his retirement in 1987 as Vice President of Guaranty Federal Bank, Waco Branch. After his retirement in 1987, he went to work part-time at Wilkirson Hatch Funeral Home in Waco. As a funeral service assistant, he was an excellent gentleman serving families in their time of need by driving them to the cemetery in the family limo or driving their loved one with care to the cemetery in the hearse. Always attentive to the family's needs, he worked serving families at Wilkirson-Hatch-Bailey until 2010. He often referred to his co-workers as "The A-Team." Services were under the direction of Wilkirson-Hatch-Bailey Funeral Home.



**Edna Thompson Markham**, 89, of San Angelo, died Oct. 8, 2016. She was the mother of Darryl Thompson of Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Homes. Her services were under the direction of Shaffer Funeral Home in San Angelo.

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**Charles R. McCoy**, 79, of Waco, died April 17, 2016. He served in the U.S. Army and attended Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in Dallas, TX where he graduated. He went to work for Wilkirson Hatch Funeral Home in 1965. Over the next 51 years he served the families of Central Texas as a funeral director and embalmer. He was a caring and compassionate family man serving thousands of families in their times of grief and loved every minute working at the funeral home. A conference room at the funeral home was named in his honor. Funeral services were under the direction of Wilkirson-Hatch-Bailey Funeral Home.



**Donald Eugene "Gene" Wilson Jr.**, 45, of New Braunfels, died Sept. 28, 2016. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer who taught Japanese funeral personnel modern embalming techniques overseas for 20 years. He graduated from the San Antonio College, Dept. of Mortuary Science in 1991. He was mostly recently employed at Doepenschmidt Funeral Home.



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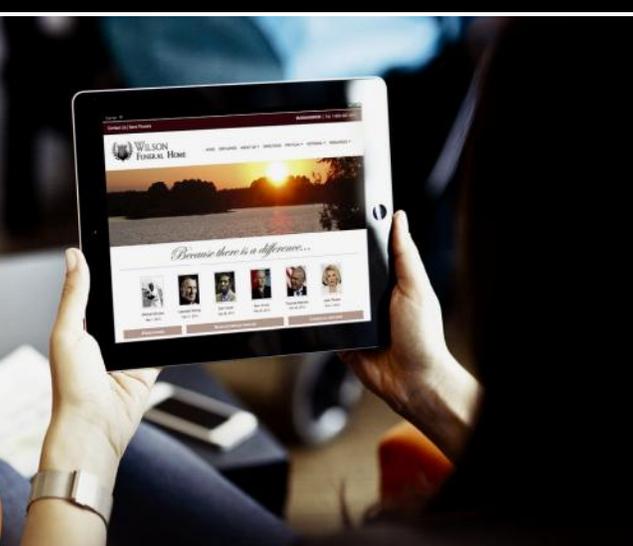


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## Batesville Expands Company Website with Information to Assist Consumers and Funeral Professionals

*New website provides a portal to education and grief information*

BATESVILLE, IN., November 29, 2016 – Batesville, the leading provider of comprehensive products and advanced technology solutions to the death care industry, has transformed its corporate website into an information hub with specialized content that serves the needs of multiple audiences, from consumers and funeral professionals to potential employees and investors. Designed for a mobile society, the new site was built from the ground up with today’s funeral directors and information-seekers in mind.

As a partner to licensed funeral homes, Batesville has made significant investments in research to understand the consumer mindset in relation to funeral planning. The company has a long-standing relationship with noted author and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt and has taken a leading role in promoting the value of meaningful funerals in webinars, conventions and educational events. Now this information is available to an even broader audience on [www.batesville.com](http://www.batesville.com).

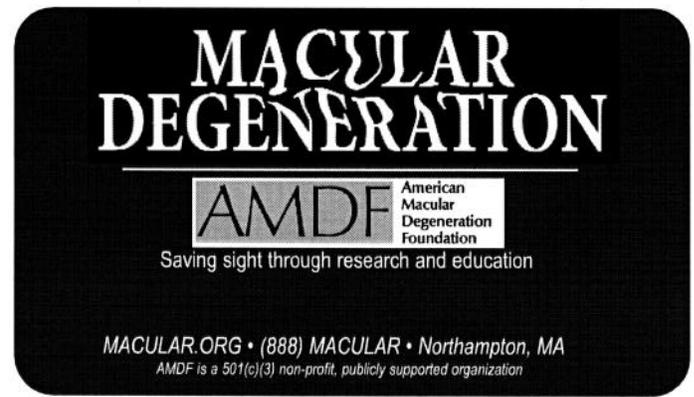
“The path to a meaningful funeral starts with an educated consumer, and technology is a great platform for raising awareness and providing education before, during or after there is a need for funeral products or services,” said Troy Turner, chief marketing and information officer for Batesville. “By allowing consumers and funeral professionals to tap into these vast resources using the website, we can begin to fill that void and create a new generation of more informed funeral planners.”

The new website includes a wide range of information on planning funerals, creating a meaningful service and understanding grief. Content is optimized for SEO, so as consumers search, they will find positive information that supports the funeral industry. One of the new features is an “Ask a Grief Counselor” interactive section that allows consumers to submit questions online anonymously and receive answers from Dr. Wolfelt.

Today’s funeral professionals are busier than ever and need instant access to important information. Batesville has added a host of online resources to expand their knowledge and help support them in working with families. By creating a free online account, funeral professionals can have access to:

- ◆ Training materials and exclusive educational content developed by Dr. Wolfelt
- ◆ Comprehensive product information, photos and catalog downloads
- ◆ Batesville’s convenient 24/7 online ordering system
- ◆ The latest research, articles, webinar recordings, and tip sheets

“We’re proud of our industry and excited to have the opportunity to shine the light on some of the inspiring stories and the incredible work done by funeral professionals across North America,” said Turner. The *Inspiring Stories* section includes videos and personal stories about funeral directors going the



extra mile to help families in their time of greatest need. Funeral directors are invited to share their own stories via the website.

Investors and information seekers can learn about the history of the company, as well as news and events that reflect Batesville’s manufacturing excellence and current position as the industry leader in quality, innovation and service.

Batesville understands the importance of attracting the best talent in the industry to help carry out its mission. The new Careers section provides a window into the company’s culture and values, so prospective associates can learn what it’s like to work at Batesville before they apply for a position. Job seekers can search for positions by functional area and complete their application online.

Links to some of the new content are below:

Consumer Information [www.batesville.com/helping-families/](http://www.batesville.com/helping-families/)

Ask a Grief Counselor

[www.batesville.com/helping-families/ask-grief-counselor/](http://www.batesville.com/helping-families/ask-grief-counselor/)

Funeral Professional Resources

[www.batesville.com/funeral\\_professionals/](http://www.batesville.com/funeral_professionals/)

Inspiring Stories

[www.batesville.com/InspiringStories](http://www.batesville.com/InspiringStories)

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### ABOUT BATESVILLE

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### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Director – Strategic Communications

[Teresa.Gyulafia@batesville.com](mailto:Teresa.Gyulafia@batesville.com)

Phone: 812.931.5084

## From My Purview “I Wasn’t Expecting That” (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

that up until now I had only performed weddings, sermons and baptisms, and never a funeral, BUT I was confident I could do a better job than the minister who officiated the service I attended.

What happened next, I wasn’t expecting but was hoping, a call from the mortuary asking me if I was available to officiate a gravesite service for an elderly gentlemen. I jumped at the opportunity and without hesitation said, “Yes!”.

I called the gentleman’s wife and we put a lovely gravesite service together. I went home and wrote it on my computer, word for word. To be sure I would be the best minister this gentleman’s wife could hope for, I drove to the nearest cemetery, picked out a headstone and read the service from beginning to end, just to make sure everything would go well for my first funeral service.

The next day I drove to the cemetery and met the family and the deceased’s wife. I spoke the words I so carefully wrote about this special man. I read the prayers I wrote just for him and his family. I told the story of who he was, what he stood for and who he loved. After concluding the service, his wife said to me, “I want you to do my service when I die.”. I was moved to tears. I had hoped to please his wife with the service I had written and officiated. I never expected to hear that!

Now, eight years have passed since my first service. I can honestly say I love the funeral industry, I love the mortuaries and funeral directors I work with and the families I have officiated services for their loved ones. Without a doubt, I can tell you that from just going along, doing my life and following my passion, to what my life has now become, definitely I wasn’t expecting that!



### About the Author:

Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, **Reverend Janice Hoffman’s** ministry

has included facilitating a Course In Miracles, leading an Attitudinal Healing support group, and hosting a guided meditation for a group that met weekly for over 13 years. Rev. Hoffman’s work with mortuaries and families began in 2008. After the first funeral service Rev. Janice officiated, she had a deep awareness that honoring the life of a family’s loved one was where she wanted to focus her ministry. Beginning with meeting with the family for an intake, Janice writes a custom service bringing comfort to families in shock and grief. None of us are promised tomorrow and bringing that awareness to others, fosters appreciation for those in our lives and the time we spend with them. Contact her at [Janice@janicehoffman.com](mailto:Janice@janicehoffman.com)

## I’ve Learned...

I’ve learned...

That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.

I’ve learned...

That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

I’ve learned...

That simple walks with my father around the block on summer nights when I was a child did wonders for me as an adult.

I’ve learned...

That we should be glad God doesn’t give us everything we ask for.

I’ve learned...

That money doesn’t buy class.

I’ve learned...

That it’s those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.

I’ve learned...

That under everyone’s hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.

I’ve learned...

That even the Lord didn’t do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?

I’ve learned...

That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.

I’ve learned...

That love, not time, heals all wounds.

I’ve learned...

That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am.

I’ve learned...

That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.

## New Year Financial Checklist

By Richard S. Lee

As the new year approaches, it is always a good idea for an owner to go over a checklist of their business and look at certain items that may need to be addressed.

**Debt Review** - As a business owner, it is always important to periodically review your debt situation to see if it may be advantageous to refinance your existing debt in order to take advantage of lower interest rates. The questions to find out are what are the current interest rates compared to what my current rate is and would it make sense, financially to refinance after factoring in all closing costs, etc.?

**Accounts Receivable issues** – What are my current and long term receivables (90+ days old) and do I need to adopt a better collections policy? Am I having to wait 60-90+ days for reimbursement from insurance companies?

If your answers is yes, then you may want to consider using an Insurance Assignment Funding Company. This allows the owner to get paid quickly on a pre-need policy that becomes at-need. There are several companies that offer this service and the charge is minimal – usually 3.5% - 4% of the policy amount.

**Current FMV of my business** – Having a business valuation performed by an industry expert would be a great idea in order to see if there are any operating concerns or issues that may be affecting the value of your business. Knowledge of these issues gives you time to make any necessary changes so that your business value will be at its highest at the time of a sale.

**Review your current pricing** – Review your current GPL and casket/vault pricing and make any necessary adjustments

in order to account for any higher operating costs and any increases in merchandise costs from your suppliers.



**Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates**, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral business. Since 1987, they have been involved in over 160 transactions all over the United States. The scope of their

work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. He also is President of Capstone Services Group, LLC, an owner and operator of funeral homes. **Richard is always available for questions and can be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Lee-bros@aol.com.**

## Bass-Mollett Acquires Elegante Brass Company

**GREENVILLE, IL (December 5, 2016)** — Bass-Mollett Publishers, Inc., a leading provider of printed funeral stationery, is pleased to announce the acquisition of Elegante Brass Company, a leading provider of cremation urns to the funeral industry. “We have been growing our business organically for the past several years while reviewing a number of acquisition opportunities. The Elegante acquisition was highly attractive because it fit nicely into our growth strategy and immediately generates added-value for the Director,” said John Flowers, Chairman and CEO of Bass-Mollett. “The Elegante Brand is well-respected and well-known throughout the funeral industry, built over the years by Saul Goldstein and Robert DeLauro. When Saul informed us he was seeking an investor/partner/acquirer for his company, we were immediately interested,” Flowers added. “Robert and I worked hard building up Elegante’s growth and reputation to where it is today,” said Saul Goldstein, founder of

Elegante. “And now I am happy to hand the reigns over to the team at Bass-Mollett, whose goal is to elevate Elegante to a level of professionalism that I never could have accomplished on my own.” “With Robert continuing to run the operations out of their Brooklyn facility, and Saul’s agreement to remain on as a product designer and import consultant, this transition should be seamless to our distributors,” said Tadd Flowers, Vice President of Operations. “The only noticeable changes being improved speed to market with both existing product and new product launches; we want all of our clients to feel the positive impact of our infusion of capital.” Dan Sheehan, President of Bass-Mollett, said, “It’s an exciting time to be a part of the Bass-Mollett family and we welcome our new members with open arms. Our plan is to continue to run the two businesses independently from a market-facing

standpoint. Bass-Mollett will continue to sell directly to funeral homes through our network of industry-leading, independent Sales Professionals. Elegante will continue to sell directly to its outstanding network of distributors.” Sheehan went on to say, “After a supplier hiccup several years ago and some more recent cash flow issues at Elegante, our priorities are to quickly rebuild the high confidence level that Elegante’s distributors previously enjoyed. This will be accomplished by: building up inventory levels for steady-state supply; creating new and innovative product launches; and reinstating an Elegante’s product awareness campaigns, through advertising in industry trade publications including a greater presence in local trade shows. In the end, this transaction is a win for Bass-Mollett, a win for Elegante and more importantly, a win for our funeral directors and the families they serve.”

## Understanding the Value of PR?

By Joe Weigel

Public relations (PR) is often misunderstood by many folks and thus funeral directors and cemeterians are confused by what PR can do and what it cannot do. Public relations has changed dramatically since I received my degree in public relations forty years ago, but based on what I have experienced:

- ◆ A high percentage of people in funeral service still see public relations as a bit of an unknown and are not sure that PR will create the results they are looking for.
- ◆ Other folks think PR is very passive and is only about drafting and sending a press release about something that has happened.
- ◆ Still others don't really understand it, but at the same token they know they must do it and pay money for it.

These are three of the biggest misunderstandings about PR and the reason they are misunderstood is because the way PR is typically done today is done incorrectly.

### Good PR vs. Bad PR

Good PR is creating a reputation by highlighting acts of goodwill and other aspects that build respect and confidence with families in the community. This provides the basis on which you can build successful marketing for your firm.

People are interested in how a funeral home or cemetery gives back and what other community work they may be doing that contributes to company's integrity. Once you have built this image through valuable PR only then can you think about a successful return on

investment for your product or service.

A good PR person will assess your needs and then devise a strategy that showcases your acts of goodwill. They will also be consistently looking for a better way to tell a story about you and your business via the press and provide you with fresh ideas on how you can continually obtain favorable publicity.

Good PR is active. This means it is constantly moving forward with a productive PR strategy. If you want to make a sound investment in PR, think ahead. Once you execute a step of your PR strategy it is time to move on to the next step, event or news piece to continue to help build up your reputation, and consequently your business. There is no better investment than this because once your families trust you they will forever pay attention to anything you say or do.

Good PR is all about keeping you known and making families more interested and more comfortable in doing business with you.

Bad PR is simply writing one or two press releases and expecting the calls to come pouring in.

Bad PR is also about the lack of a plan and a vision of what the result should look like. If you have this mindset you will be among the high percentage of people that view PR as a gamble that does not produce the results you expect. This is also how the families commonly misunderstand PR.

Will it be Good PR or Bad PR for your firm – it's your choice.

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Joe Weigel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm focused on the funeral profession that delivers expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications. For more information, you can visit his website at

[weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com](http://weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com).

He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or [weigelstrategicmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:weigelstrategicmarketing@gmail.com).



“Ducks in a Row” by By Robert L. “Robby” Bates, CFSP, CCO

## Celebrating our Helpmates and Honoring Those Who Came a Long Time Before!!!!!!!!!!

The phone numbers used to be "Mable, get me....."; or 130, or 4141. Would the dialer want an ambulance or the funeral director, or just information about a service? Nevertheless, the call would come in to the funeral home for the necessity of responding to an auto accident or the death of a community resident, or the time and location of a funeral service. Okay, there was no answering service, so someone!, somebody! had to be there to answer the funeral home telephone!!!! Had to be! Must be! Critical to be there and ANSWER THE PHONE!!!!!! The business depended on it, whether it was ambulance, death call or information.

Of course, the funeral home usually had someone living above the first floor who could answer the telephone. Usually, it was the owner and wife. Or the hired funeral director/embalmer and his wife and children. Or perhaps it was a local friend that could "sit in" and answer "THE PHONE" while the funeral director/owner and wife went to church, or civic club, or doctors appointment, or whatever the occasion was. The phone had to be attended to by SOMEONE!

Many, many times it fell to the funeral directors' wives! Our woefully unappreciated wives in this regard! You see, in those days marriage to a funeral director included, not only loving him, but supporting him in "the business" in every way that she could. Oh, did I mention babies newly arrived in the family?

Let's see! The wife now gets to add nurturing, changing diapers (the washable kind for every washday) and hanging them out on the clothes line in the backyard or porch.

Let's remind her of "THE PHONE" while she is doing all those housewife duties and keep her close to a wall-wired telephone; or breakaway to come downstairs and sit in the office to greet people and answer "THE PHONE". She needs to do this because her husband must go to the post office or city hall for death certificates. Perhaps she

brought the baby or babies down with her to do this for her husband/ "the business". So many years, so many times of answering "the phone!" And yet, the families and work was served by the funeral director and his spouse "behind the scenes." The babies grew up sometimes having to answer "the phone" as well in their teenage years. Anyway, it all got done!! Husband, wife, and children remember those days, even now! And so, some of those children-babies have grown up and maybe became funeral directors themselves. And their wives have had to accept similar funeral director duties and circumstances. The tradition goes on!

And now to my tribute! To my mother, my wife, and to all the spouses in funeral service, thank you for your love, understanding, and helpful duties around the funeral home and for the business! I hope it has been worth it all, because it surely has been to me! Thank You so much!

Robby Bates



Robert L. "Robby" Bates, CFSP, CCO, owner of Bates Family Funeral Home in De Kalb, Texas, A Certified Funeral Service Professional, Robby graduated from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and received his BS from Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches, Texas, and a BBA and MBA from East Texas State University-Texarkana. A long-time member of the Texas Funeral

Directors Association, Robby has served his state association as president and has been an active chairman and member on many state committees. After serving as the 2002-03 president of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, Robby went on to serve as the Texas state representative to the NFDA Policy Board. Robby has taken on many roles with NFDA, including serving on several committees, such as Spokesperson, Operations, Audit and Budget. He served as an inaugural member of NFDA's Professional Conduct Committee. Robby has served as an at-large representative, secretary, treasurer, president-elect and president on NFDA's Executive Board. You can send questions or comments to his email: Rducks@aol.com.

### Some Things to Ponder...

- ◆ Why is it that no matter what color bubble bath you use, the bubbles are always white?
- ◆ Why do people keep running over a thread a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
- ◆ How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?
- ◆ Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something

that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

- ◆ In winter why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?
- ◆ How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?
- ◆ The statistics on sanity show that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of serious mental illness. Think of your three best friends—if they seem okay, then it's you.

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# “Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

**When my grandmother passed recently, I assumed responsibility for making her burial arrangements. Before my grandfather died decades ago, he purchased two graves at the local cemetery. I thought he had purchased side by side graves, but the cemetery association advises that my grandparents own double depth crypts, and that the cost to open the crypt would be \$1500. My grandmother is to be cremated, and that cost seems too high for burial of her ashes. The cemetery advises that grandma’s ashes can be buried with my grandfather, leaving the other space available for a full body burial or for two cremains. I am confused about the costs and about their explanation.**

The cemetery association is offering two second interment rights in each of the spaces that your grandparents own. And if they are charging only for the services to open and close the crypt, the cemetery may be making a generous offer. With the growing acceptance of cremation, it’s fairly common to see one grandparent buried and the second cremated. Cemeteries have adapted by allowing the second grandparent’s ashes to be buried with the body of their spouse. Cemetery rules and regulations may only allow a single burial per space, and they then allow a second interment right to the space for a separate charge. It does not sound as though the cemetery association is charging you for the right to make a second interment. It is not uncommon for a cemetery to charge hundreds of dollars for a second interment right. Cemeteries may charge different opening and closing service fees based on the type of interment space. For a conventional grave space, the cemetery will have to

use a backhoe to open the grave. That service may, or may not, include the services to install a grave vault (or liner). With a double depth lawn crypt (which is what your grandparents own), the grave spaces are on top of each other, and separated by concrete. The cemetery will have to open both spaces to make available your grandfather’s space for his wife’s ashes. But first, a back hoe will be used to open the grave. Consequently, the opening and closing services will be more than for a conventional grave space. With a mausoleum or cremation niche, the front of the structure will need to be removed to allow for the interment. Accordingly, the cemetery can charge less for opening and closing.

Cemeteries that are owned and operated by an association frequently have annual meetings of their membership. You can inquire to the association regarding who in your family succeeds to your grandparents’ membership rights. The next annual meeting of the membership would be the appropriate setting to inquire how the cemetery sets its charges for interment rights and services.



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](http://www.prenneedresource.com).

**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](mailto:wastal@swbell.net)**

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## Federated Insurance Offers New Distracted Driving Community Outreach Tools to NFDA Members

Brookfield, Wis. - Not only is distracted driving still a serious problem, it is an epidemic. With each new mobile device introduced, the potential for behind-the-wheel distractions increases and so does an individual's exposure to risk.

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) and Federated Insurance have joined forces to help funeral homes address the concerns of distracted driving within their business and community. The new community outreach tool kit enhances Federated Insurance's original "In the Blink of an Eye" campaign through a powerful message to "Please Make it Home Safe Today!"

The complimentary tool kit includes:

- \* "In the Blink of an Eye" and "Please Make it Home Safe Today" videos
- \* PowerPoint presentations including scripts and talking points
- \* A brochure outlining the effect distracted driving has on a community

"NFDA is pleased to partner with Federated Insurance to help bring awareness to the dangerous epidemic of distracted driving on America's roadways," said NFDA President W. Ashley Cozine, CFSP, CPC, CCO. "This ready-to-use program is available to all NFDA members to share in their businesses and communities. I hope you take advantage of this important benefit and request your copy today. You have the power to change behaviors and save lives!"

NFDA members are encouraged to share this important message by presenting to local colleges, high schools, community centers, senior living communities, churches, and other community service organizations. Having two programs to choose from enables funeral directors to use the one that best fits each audience home safely each and every day!"

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About NFDA-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 49 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) <<http://www.nfda.org>>.



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