

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 17

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

Issue 3



### Chaput-Buoy Funeral Home & Cremation Services History Concordia, Clyde & Jamestown, Kansas

From several pieces of information sent to us, including a personal account from one of the descendents of the Chaput family, I have tried to compile a historical profile with a few anecdotes of this century old funeral establishment.

It all started with George Chaput in September, 1909, he purchased the Sidney Domoney Furniture and Undertaking business. George was a gentleman farmer southwest of Aurora, Kansas. George had a family of twelve children and he had to have several odd jobs. He walked most of the time from farm to his furniture store a distance of nearly a mile. The local undertaker, Sidney often hired George and his well-groomed horses to pull his hearse. George took possession on a Thursday and on Sunday a fire completely destroyed his business. It was thought it burned down due to a careless smoker in a barn in the back of the store. George rebuilt and remodeled the store which became know as the George Chaput Furniture and Undertaking.

The main part of the store was used for furniture, paint and wallpaper, etc. In a room in the back of the store was the casket room, according to Alex Chaput's account. Continuing with his account, this was back in the horse and buggy days when the horse drawn hearse was the only means of transporting the dead from their home to church to cemetery. After ten years he bought a Moon motor hearse and was one of the first to use motor equipment to transport the dead.

Out of George and Lucy's twelve children he taught six sons, Med, Paul, Alex, Joe, John and Leon the furniture and undertaking business. Med, Paul, Alex and Joe attended the William Institute of Embalming in Kansas City and became licensed embalmers. Until Med finished embalming school, George hired Burt Thomas to do his embalming. Leon and John became licensed funeral directors like their father.

Alex shared some other facts about the early funeral practices that were used at their facilities. In the beginning of their business there were no funeral homes, all deaths were cared for in their homes. Not all the deceased were embalmed unless they had to be shipped away or held over a period of time.

When a death occurred George would take what equipment he had namely what they called then "a cooling board." It was a folding table about two feet

*(Continued on page 20)*

### In this Issue



### Prairie Post Pg 16



### Laurel Funeral Home Pg 27

*All Faithful Readers-  
Anyone wishing to subscribe to  
our magazine would be very  
welcome. After 18 years of  
providing it at no cost to over  
3,900 businesses and  
individuals, some financial  
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*See page 26 for order blank.*

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## Amy Howard Art Gallery



### Secret for Inner Peace

- \* If you can start the day without caffeine,
- \* If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
- \* If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
- \* If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,
- \* If you can understand your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,
- \* If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
- \* If you can conquer tension without medical help,
- \* If you can relax without alcohol,
- \* If you can sleep without the aid of drugs

*Then you are probably the Family Dog—*

*Handle every stressful situation like a dog—*

*If you can't eat it or play with it,*

*Pee on it and walk away.....*

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

### Civilization in 2018

- \* Our phones—Wireless
- \* Cooking—Fireless
- \* Cars—Keyless
- \* Food—Fatless
- \* Tires—Tubeless
- \* Dress—Sleeveless
- \* Youth—Jobless
- \* Leaders—Shameless
- \* Relationships—Meaningless
- \* Attitudes—Careless
- \* Babies—Fatherless
- \* Feelings—Heartless
- \* Education—Valueless
- \* Children—Mannerless

We are—SPEECHLESS

Government—CLUELESS

And our Politicians—are WORTHLESS

*(I'm scared S###less!!!)*



Low-

# Mortuary Muse By ell

## CHANGE

A common and overused headline,

“YOU MUST EMBRACE CHANGE”

I am 86 years old—I’m tired of embracing change. As a family we have almost always at least adapted to change if not embracing it.

My grandfather changed occupations rather than sell motor driven farm machinery. His brother Lem was also his business partner and the delivery truck driver. The hired hand always rode in the truck with one foot on the running board if Lem was driving. Lem had a tendency to pull back on the steering wheel and shout whoa rather than applying the brake.

On the other hand Uncle E.A. bought a 1919 Dodge Chassis Motor Hearse and never looked back. The ‘28 Meteor Combination brought ambulance service to the community and was the first vehicle in town with hydraulic brakes. In 1968 I put the area’s first multi-patient van ambulance in service.

I was also the first to quit ambulance service in 1969. The two colleagues over at the county seat chickened out at the last minute, but eventually they quit also. A neighbor in another county continued for awhile but did not pick up any

of our funeral business. The business model that brought funeral homes into the ambulance service era was certainly flawed.

COMPUTERS!! We had the first desktop in town. It was used in both our retail and funeral businesses. We may have been the first in our region to print our own memorial folders and first to print the obituary on the folder. I know we had the first holiday memorial service. It was well received initially. Our funeral service demographic had been eroding after WWII as we got better roads, more services provided at the county seat and migration to the big city.

The family retail business was impacted by these changes and hurt even more by corporate mergers and acquisitions as favorite brands were changed or eliminated. Long time relationships with factory reps were lost when management changed.

And then there were the Big Box stores. Their impact on our business community gained ground in the ‘70’s followed by the savings and loan problems, high interest rates, drought and the recession.

We reformatted our retail business and it did fairly well, but in 1988 I decided the long term profitability did not look good. We liquidated the store in December of 1988. Many people expressed regrets over the store’s closing.

*Continued in “The Back Fence” - page 5*

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. 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)

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## NFDA Convention Preview of Some of the Happenings

Earlier this year, NFDA launched the Remembering a Life Film Contest<<http://www.nfda.org/news/media-center/nfda-news-releases/id/3037>>, a competition to inspire filmmakers to create films that commemorate the life of someone who has died, or pay tribute to someone who is still alive. NFDA worked with the Milwaukee Filmmaker Alliance to promote the contest worldwide.

During the convention, the winning films will be screened in the interactive Remembering a Life area in the convention center.

Remembering a Life is a new NFDA initiative that educates and empowers consumers to make informed decisions about funerals and memorialization. Remembering a Life also highlights the unique expertise of funeral directors in planning a meaningful service. It is a multi-faceted approach that includes, not only the newly-introduced RememberingALife.com <<http://www.rememberingalife.com>> website, but also printed materials, social media and a comprehensive public relations strategy.

In the Remembering a Life area in the convention center, attendees can learn all about this new consumer initiative and how they can use Remembering a Life tools and resources to educate families about planning and preplanning meaningful funerals and grief.

### Unmatched Education Sessions Tackle Key Issues

The education funeral professionals need to build thriving businesses that help families honor and celebrate the life stories of their loved ones can only be found at the 2018 NFDA Convention. Engaging workshops<<http://convention.nfda.org/Agenda/Full-Agenda>> will address technical skills, business management, the value of ceremony, marketing and community outreach, and grief and bereavement.

#### Education sessions include:

- \* Preconvention seminars<<http://convention.nfda.org/Agenda/Full-Agenda/Preconvention-Seminars>>:

- \* NFDA Arranger Training Seminar
- \* NFDA Cremation Certification Program
- \* NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultant seminar
- \* Celebrant Training (hosted by NFDA and presented by InSight Institute)
- \* The Vernie Fountain Files: Embalming, Restoration and Death Investigation presented by Vernie Fountain.
- \* Creating Lasting Memories: Perfecting the Final Touches presented by Wallace Hooker, MBIE, CFSP, owner, Family & Friends Funeral Home
- \* Why Youth and Funerals Matter presented by Carrie Bauer, youth coordinator, HopeWest Hospice
- \* Cremation Success in a Small to Medium Market presented by William C. Wappner, co-owner, Wappner Funeral Directors
- \* Serving the Family of a Perpetrator presented by Martha Thayer, department chair, Arapahoe Community College Mortuary Science Program
- \* Community Outreach and the Opioid Epidemic: How to Reverse an Overdose with NARCAN presented by Peter Sadler, Utah Naloxone
- \* Google It! Making the Most of Your Online Presence presented by Lynn Elliott, owner, Media Demographics
- \* And much more

#### Innovation Flourishes in the Expo Hall

Experience intimate, 20-minute speaker-led sessions in a relaxed

atmosphere in the Campfire Exchange area. Campfire Sessions will take place during Expo Hall hours.

#### \*\*Creating Lifelong Memories in the Beehive State

Celebrate the shining stars of funeral service during the All-Star Recognition Ceremony on Monday, October 15. NFDA will recognize funeral professionals who are NFDA Certified Crematory Operators, NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultants; recipients of the NFDA International Professional Achievement Certificate; recipients of a Funeral Service Foundation award or scholarship; and APFSP Certified Funeral Service Practitioners. NFDA will also celebrate funeral homes that have earned an NFDA Green Funeral Practice Certificate or a 2018 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award.

\*\*The power of music is undeniable. It can invoke the deepest feelings or instantly whisk you away to the fondest moments of the past preserved in sweet memories of the people and places that mean the most. Attendees will want to make time to attend the Service of Remembrance, taking place on Tuesday, October 16, during which NFDA will explore the importance of music at funerals and honor the memory of funeral service family members who have died during the last year.

#### About Salt Lake City

There is so much waiting for attendees to discover at the 2018 NFDA International Convention & Expo. Find the latest information, including information on how to register<<http://convention.nfda.org/Registration>> and make hotel reservations<<http://convention.nfda.org/Hotel-Travel/Hotel-Reservations>> through the NFDA housing bureau, is available at [www.nfda.org/saltlake2018](http://www.nfda.org/saltlake2018)<<http://convention.nfda.org/>>.NFDA thanks its 2018 International Convention & Expo sponsors for their continued support:

- \* Platinum: Federated Insurance
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- \* Silver: ASD - Answering Service for Directors, Bass-Mollet Publishers, Frontrunner Professional, Global Atlantic Financial Group, Implant Recycling, LiveOak Bank, LoveUrns, Madelyn Company, NGL, Nomis Publications Inc., Physicians Mutual, Tukios
- \* Bronze: Doric, Inman Shipping, Kelco Supply Co, Sich, Wilbert Funeral Services

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, more than 20,000 individual members who represent more nearly 11,000 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>>.

**Have you had an OPEN HOUSE, built a NEW ADDITION to your funeral home, developed a new PROGRAM FOR GRIEVING CLIENTS, RECEIVED AN HONOR from your community, have an interesting HOBBY or DONE SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST PLAIN FUN? If so, tell us about it. We want to tell your story (WE LOVE PICTURES, TOO) call us 800-575-2611, fax us 417-537-4797 or e-mail us: [editor@thedeat-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedeat-beat.com).**



# Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

*Continued from Mortuary Muse—Pg 2*

Oh, by the way, did I mention the “local” banking situation? Well, the first 25 years of my business owner life things were pretty good. In fact when the bank ownership changed for the second time in my lifetime—the new guys were great. The new bank president visited most business owners asking how he could help them. The bank leadership took an active roll in industrial development and matched money by an effort by the Chamber of Commerce to help small businesses pay the interest on building improvement loans.

But, alas, things changed. The next owner bought our bank so they could expand to the county seat and then our bank became a branch bank. Came a change in Federal law and we were merged into the owner’s other bank group. A couple of years ago they sold to a large group in Arkansas.,

So we ultimately went from a time when the president came to my door and asked how they could help to the point a couple of years ago when the person in the loan office stopped coming in daily and the person filling the absence could not even speculate when I might get an appointment to discuss a loan for a major roof repair.

A new day has arrived! A few months ago the bank outfit sold again. This time to an even larger and prestigious chain. Press releases promised seamless transition and continued “great” service. The actual new sign would come along shortly. Last month they notified us they are closing this branch and we can travel to neighboring town for same great service. This resulting in no bank in town at all.

For this tirade I’ll not discuss FTC, state boards or preened and I must digress before closing. It is said that Henry Ford did not care what you said about him as long as you spelled his name right. The daily news is full of stories about businesses and people who are getting FREE advertising as their names are repeated over and over again. For that reason I

seldom speak or write the names of the offenders. However for this exercise, I will offer three names as representatives of their categories. I do have some limitations on my expression because we really aren’t supposed to hate people.

So let it merely be stated that I DESPISE the policies of Walmart, Arvest Bank and Donald Trump!!

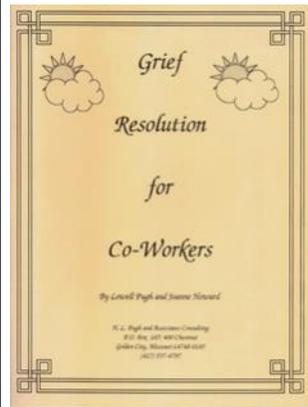
And by the way—in retrospect life without change would be pretty boring.

About the Author:

**Lowell Pugh** has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. 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)

# Grief Resolution for Co-Workers

By Lowell Pugh & Joanne Howard



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# After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

I just finished typing Ken Doka's column for the magazine. It was talking about memories and one method to remember good times was to go through your photos and make a photo album of good times. I found this quite a coincidence since I had just gone through all of our photo albums to make a collage for our 40th Wedding Anniversary.

I had commented to someone that it was hard to go through all the good times with the girls, yet it also was comforting that we had had all of those good times.



It's remarkable how the hurt and joy can come from the same experience. It's also good to remember all

the great times you spent with your loved ones. Considering we lost one child at 10 and another at 19, it was good to see how much we had accomplished in those few years with them. I felt a sense that we had done a good job by having all those fun experiences in addition to a few challenging ones. In the big picture, I guess that we should remember that it's not always good to put things off until later, sometimes later never comes.

Another thing I don't understand in relation to pictures, videos, or even mementos, is why do people want to hide them or try not to speak about their loved ones who are no longer with us? They might not be here physically now, but

they have been here and are still in our memories, so why would you want to forget them?

I realize it's hard at the beginning, but in time it's a joy to see them in print or videos.



Losing was hard, but I am awfully happy that they were in my life, even for a short time.

\*\*\*\*\*

Well, progress on the art/event center has been slow. I finally have a few art displays and am planning for a kind-of open house art show.

I had a tour for ladies that were seeing what could happen to a past funeral home. Tour was short, so



I'm not sure how impressed they were. The only good thing is that it had been the impetus to get some

of my art and Lowell's prairie photos displayed.

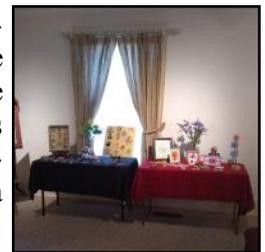
Our tiny community isn't really a hot bed of art interest, so I'm anticipating a lot of marketing to actually get ourselves known. I am hoping to get a few more artists to display their work, if nothing else a lot of family members may come to support the artist. Also



I've got to offer some type of refreshments. Food and drink always gets people interested. Now to figure out what to offer that won't ruin the place when dropped or spilled.

The whole concept in changing the business venue to art/event center was to get away

from any stigma the facility might have had from being a funeral home. I'm not really sure I have achieved the mind set change yet. In fact, Lowell commented yesterday if it was still available he wanted his visitation among the artwork. So if he is still thinking visitations in the building, I don't think that would help what people were thinking about the place. Though I have not really started my public relations yet, I am thinking it will be quite the battle to get ourselves known as something besides a funeral home.



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email: [joanne@the-dead-beat.com](mailto:joanne@the-dead-beat.com) or [jfhoward53@yahoo.com](mailto:jfhoward53@yahoo.com)

# The Accidental Celebrant

## A Tale of Two Songs – Part One

### The Best of Songs

By Michael K. Jones

When I meet with clients to plan a service one of the things we discuss is music. What songs are going to be played during the service? Is there going to be a song playing as the family enters the service area prior to the start of the funeral? Are there going to be any solos or other pieces played during the funeral? Is there going to be a special piece at the end of the service?

On one occasion a family asked me what they could play during a slideshow presentation they had prepared for the service. The deceased was obsessed with golf so I suggested Kenny Loggins' "I'm Alright", which is the theme song of the movie *Caddyshack*. It was a real gamble on my part but it was based on what I was hearing from the family.

I was a little nervous when we reached the part of the service when the slideshow would be played. I was

seated in a spot where I could see both the screen at the front and the faces of the family and friends. When the eulogy was done and I had introduced the slideshow the lights went down and the screen lit up. The first photo was of the deceased on the course lining up a shot and we could hear the sound of the sprinklers at the beginning of "I'm Alright".

I must admit that for those first few seconds I was watching the congregation more than I was watching the screen. It was one of those make or break moments where the funeral's effectiveness hung in the balance. I was quickly relieved when I saw those early smiles and nods in the first few rows.

Not every gamble pays off. Some ideas work and many land with a thud. Listening to "I'm Alright" and experiencing the response in this particular situation was definitely worth taking the chance.

Next time I'll talk about an idea that went down in flames.



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#### About the Author:

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, **Michael K. Jones** was born and raised in Atlantic Canada. A former minister in the United Church of Canada he has ministered to a variety of congregations for over twenty years. *Dead Reckoning* is his second book. His previous release is *Empty Houses: A Pastoral Response to Congregational Closure*. When Mike is not writing he is enjoying walking and reading. He resides with his wife Trish in Calgary, Alberta.

*Dead Reckoning* is now available online through Amazon.ca.

## Still There

By Joseph J. Mazzella—  
From sunny skyz website.

I don't like to dust and only do so when it is absolutely necessary. Yet, with the summer fans blowing and the dogs shedding I found myself working my duster the other day wiping dog hair and dust off the pictures hanging on my wall. I was going as quickly as possible trying to get it over with. In my haste, however, I knocked one of the pictures down. I managed to catch it before it hit the floor. Carefully, I started to hang it back on the wall when I saw him. He had thick, wavy, brown hair that was parted in the middle. His cheeks were full and his face unlined. He seemed to be staring off in the distance with his brown eyes and had a serious expression on his face. It was a picture of me at twenty. I finished hanging him back up and wondered vaguely where he had gone.

That evening when I was brushing my teeth and looking in the mirror I wondered again where that guy was. The hair was thin and mostly silver now. The cheekbones had lost their fat

and the face was full of wrinkles. The brown eyes were now staring through a pair of bifocals. But when I looked deeper I could see that he was still there. In fact, I think he may have grown a bit younger on the inside. His serious expression and worries for the future had been replaced by a smile and a trust in God's love. His body wasn't as strong and fit as it once was but his soul was stronger and in better shape than ever. His life on this Earth might be closer to its end but his life in Heaven was closer to its beginning.

The truth is these bodies are just the temporary vehicles that carry around our essential and eternal souls. We should take good care of them but not identify with them. The real us is forever young. The real us is God's love personified. The real us is the shining spirit within. Live from the real you then. Let your soul lead and your body will follow.



## More Chuckles

### “Show and Tell”

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a “show and tell” assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object that represented their religion to share with the class.

The first student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David.”



The second student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Mary. I'm a Catholic and this is a Rosary.”



The third student got up in front of the class and said, “My name is Tommy. I am a Methodist, and this is a casserole.”



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## Just Listen!

By Judith Maduhu • July 9, 2018  
From sunny skyz website

After long hours of waiting for my friend at the bus station, I got tired and was tempted to just leave and plan another meeting. As I was still deciding, there came a man selling culture shoes and started showing them off to me so as I could buy or something, I just smiled and said thank you.

I don't know if it was the smile or what but the young-man stepped closer and stood beside me and started talking to me. "You know I didn't just end up like this, selling shoes, I had a life...had a family but one day life just turned up side down and all was gone just like that," he said. Those were his words, in short, his wife stole all his money, sold his car and house, it was really a hard time for him and he was psychologically tortured.

A lot happened and then he decided to pick up the pieces of his life and try to make ends meet, that's when he started making culture shoes and selling them to earn a living. As I stood there listening to him pour out his heart and story of his life, I was still surprised how in the world can someone be so open to a total stranger like that and it dawned on me that some people get relieved that way.

You see, a lot of times we meet people and most of them have burdens in their hearts, some of them don't even have a person to listen to them, so I've learned to be good to all people and always give them my time to listen to what they have to say. By doing this it will not only help that particular person but also the one listening since you get to learn something from them and see the other side of life.

This will make the world a better place to live in for all of us.



## Can Books Help?

By Ken Doka

Nadia, a mother whose adult child recently died, came to her counseling session with a book on grief that a good friend had given her. Nadia was appreciative, but skeptical. Can books really help, she wondered? The answer is, if well-chosen, they can.

Books can be a useful tool that can help us as we grieve. First of all, they offer validation. As they describe the ways that people react to loss, we frequently see our own reactions mirrored—reassuring us that our reactions are valid. A number of years ago, I counseled a young adolescent, Ray, whose mother had just died. Ray has his normal conflicts with his mom. She wanted to monitor Ray more carefully just as he was seeking more independence, which was complicated by the fact that they were dealing with her illness. We talked about that in counseling but made little progress. What did help Ray was reading a book on adolescent grief. When I asked Ray what he found helpful in the book, he told me he had learned that conflict and guilt were normal. I said, “We have been talking about that for a while.” His response was, “I know but you are a nice guy and I thought you were just saying that.” Seeing it in print gave new validity.

Grief books also can suggest ways to cope with loss. For example, they may recommend ways to deal with difficult times or difficult people. Remember though that grief is a very individual experience, we need to decide whether the suggestions will work for us. The best books will reinforce that concept of individuality and offer a variety of suggestions.

Finally, books can offer hope. They remind us that others have journeyed with grief, offering hope that we can as well.

Books can even offer an advantage over other forms of support—we can “dose” with them, placing the book aside when we need time to think or cope with our loss. Of course books cannot offer the personal support we can gain from counselors or support groups.

We may encounter two types of books as we seek help with our grief. Some books are written by counselors. These may deal with grief generally or focus on a particular loss such as the loss of a spouse, child or parent. Others may be personal accounts from individuals recounting their own losses. In each case, it is important to assure that any book recognizes the many individual ways that we experience and cope with grief.

It is also important to choose books carefully. We need to be conscious of what we are seeking in a book. Reviews, librarians, and book store clerks can help us select the book that best meet our needs.

That, of course, is the key to any book. Grief is a highly individual experience. Books can help us navigate our journey but we need to find the map that works best for us.

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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*)

## Chuckles

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

1. The hardness of butter is directly proportional to the softness of the bread.
2. The last thing on earth you want to do will be the last thing you do.
3. Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else get your way.
4. If ignorance is bliss, then tourists are in a constant state of euphoria.
5. If at first you don't succeed, don't try skydiving.
6. Save the whales. Collect the whole set.
7. I intend to live forever. So far so good.
8. Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?
9. A day without sunshine is like, night.
10. The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
11. We are all part of the ultimate statistic -- ten out of ten die.
12. They told me I was gullible...and I believed them.
13. According to my best recollection, I don't remember.
14. I don't find it hard to meet expenses. They're everywhere.
15. Don't steal. The government hates competition .

\*\*\*\*\*



A Martian went hunting one day in Ontario and bagged three ducks. He put them in the bed of his pickup truck and was about to drive home when he was confronted by a game warden who didn't like Martians. The game warden ordered the Martian to show his hunting license, and the Martian pulled out a valid Ontario hunting license. The game warden looked at the license, then reached over and picked up one of the ducks, sniffed its butt, and said, "This duck ain't from Ontario. This is a Quebec duck. You got a Quebec huntin' license, boy?" The Martian reached into his wallet and produced a Quebec hunting license. The game warden looked at it, then reached over and grabbed the second duck, sniffed its butt, and said "This ain't no Quebec duck. This duck's from Manitoba. You got a Manitoba license?" The Martian reached into his wallet and produced a Manitoba hunting license. The warden then reached over and picked up the third duck, sniffed its butt, and said, "This ain't no Manitoba duck. This here duck's from Nova Scotia. You got a Nova Scotia huntin' license?" Again the Martian reached into his wallet and brought out a Nova Scotia hunting license. The game warden was extremely frustrated at this point, and he yelled at the Martian "Just where the hell are you from?" The Martian smiled turned around, bent over, dropped his pants, and said, " You tell me, you're the expert."

\*\*\*\*\*

For decades, two heroic statues, one male and one female, faced each other in a city park, until one day an angel came down from heaven. "You've been such exemplary statues," he

## Comments

"Dad really enjoyed The Dead Beat and would share a lot of the Chuckles with me and send the magazines home with me to read after he was finished :).

Janet Arnold ( Floyd Greenwood's daughter) Wichita, KS

Dear Lowell & Joanne,

I want to thank you for continuing the publication. I look forward to getting this and share with my team. I was sad to learn you closed your funeral business but totally understand with the way things are going with cremation.

I am still in business but it is hard to compete against China when they dump all the caskets and their government will not allow burials so they sell NONE over there but flood our market over here. Few people know about that law in China. You think the funeral homes would want to support American-made products. I am still peddling and still hope that things will change and folks will return to real burials maybe using coffins rather than Chinese caskets!

Blessings to you and keep sharing your wisdom, knowledge and understanding. ...

Elvy Bryan, EXODUS Coffinworks, Inc.

Further comments from Elvy: You can Google that Chinese law as well as see it in an article I believe in February, American Funeral Director, interview with the SICH founder. I was aware of it through some friend of mine and then to think they buy all of our lumber and due to Communist backing, cut the prices and return the products here well below what we can compete. I guess our Funeral Industry has not thought that through very well. Even when I attended a convention, I noticed with the urns— how they pushed their products over ours....

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

## Chuckles (Cont.)



announced to them, "That I'm going to give you a special gift. I'm going to bring you both to life for thirty minutes, in which you can do anything you want." And with a clap of his hands, the angel brought the statues to life. The two approached each other a bit shyly, but soon dashed for the bushes, from which shortly emerged a good deal of giggling, laughter, and shaking of branches. Fifteen minutes later, the two statues emerged from the bushes, wide grins on their faces. "You still have fifteen more minutes," said the angel, winking at

*(Continued on page 11)*

**Chuckles (Cont.)**

them. Grinning even more widely the female statue turned to the male statue and said, "Great! Only this time you hold the pigeon down and I'll crap on it's head."

\*\*\*\*\*

A lady is throwing a party for her granddaughter, and had gone all out...a caterer, band and a hired clown. Just before the party started, two bums showed up looking for a handout. Feeling sorry for the bums, the woman told them that she would give them a meal if they will help chop some wood for her out



back. Gratefully, they headed to the rear of the house. The guests arrived, and all was going well with the children having a wonderful time. But the clown hadn't shown up. After a half hour, the clown finally called to report that he was stuck in traffic, and would probably not make the party at all. The woman was very disappointed and unsuccessfully tried to entertain the children herself. She happened to look out the window and saw one of the bums doing cartwheels across the lawn. She watched in awe as he swung from tree branches, did mid-air flips and leaped high in the air. She spoke to the other bum and said, "What your friend is doing is absolutely marvelous. I have never seen such a thing. Do you think your friend would consider repeating this performance for the children at the party? I would pay him \$50!" the other bum says, "Well, I dunno. Let me ask him. "HEY WILLIE, FOR \$50, WOULD YOU CHOP OFF ANOTHER TOE?"

\*\*\*\*\*

A Cowboy, sitting in a saloon one Saturday night, recognized an elderly man standing at the bar who, in his day, had the reputation of being the fastest gun in the West.



The young cowboy took a place next to the old-timer, bought him a drink and told him the story of his great ambition. "Do you think you could give me some tips?" he asked. The old man looked him up and down and said, "Well, for one thing, you're wearing your gun too high. Tie the holster a little down on your leg." "Will that make me a better gunfighter?" asked the young man. "Sure will," replied the old timer. The young man did as he was told, stood up, whipped out his

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44 and shot the bowtie off the piano player. "That's terrific!" said the hot shot. "Got any more tips for me" "Yep," said the old man, "cut a notch out of your holster where the hammer hits it. That'll give you a smoother draw." "Will that make me a better gunfighter?" asked the young man. "You bet it will," said the old-timer. The young man took out his knife, cut the notch, stood up, drew his gun in a blur and then shot a cufflink off the piano player. "Wow!" exclaimed the cowboy. "I'm learnin' somethin' here. Got any more tips?" The old man point to a large can in a corner. "See that axle grease over there? Coat your gun with it." The young man went over to the can and smeared some of the grease on the barrel of his gun. "No," said the old timer, "I mean smear it all over the gun, handle and all." "Will that make me a better gunfighter?" asked the young man. "No," said the old timer, "but when Wyatt Earp gets done playing the piano, he's gonna shove that gun up you're a##, and it won't hurt near as much."

\*\*\*\*\*

**Why Go to Church?**

One Sunday morning, a mother went in to wake her son and tell him it was time to get ready for church, to which he replied, "I'm not going." "Why not?" she asked. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said, "(1) they don't like me, and (2) I don't like them." His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why you SHOULD go to church: (1) You're 59 uears old, and (2) you're the pastor!"



An elderly woman walked into the local country church. The friendly usher greeted her at the door and helped her up the flight of steps. "Where would you like to sit?" he asked politely. "The front row, please," she answered. "You really don't want to do that," the usher said. "The pastor is really boring." "Do you happen to know who I am?" the woman inquired. "No," he said. "I'm the pastor's mother," she replied indignantly. "Do you know who I am?" he asked. "No," she said. "Good," he answered.



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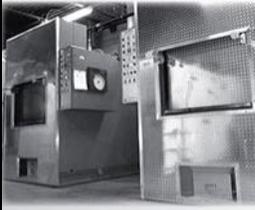
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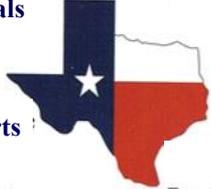
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# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATE



**Thomas (Tom) M. Flynn, Sr**, 79, of Hermitage, Pennsylvania died June 18, 2018. He purchased Homewood Memorial Gardens, Illinois in 1974, purchased Hillcrest Memorial Park, Hermitage, in 1977, after the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran was taken hostage in 1979, he raised an American flag each

day of the crisis creating the Avenue of 444 Flags, led a march from Hermitage, Pa. to the White House in support of the resolution to the hostage crisis, made the cover of Time Magazine for his efforts in the Hostage Crisis in 1981, built the John Flynn Funeral Home in 1995, built the War on Terror Memorial in 2005 and opened the Hillcrest-Flynn Pet Funeral Home 2006. He was the proud recipient of the Lasting Impact Award from the ICCFA in April of this year. In 2000 Tom introduced Derek, a golden retriever from Canine Companions for Independence to the Flynn Family and the Flynn Funeral Home. Derek became the first grief therapy dog from C.C.I. in a funeral home. His services were directed by the John Flynn Funeral Home and Crematory Inc.

## ARIZONA



**James Kevin Hassett**, 70, of Fort Mohave, AZ, died May 20, 2018. He was the owner and operator of Desert Lawn Memorial Gardens in Bullhead City, which he purchased in 1984. He retired in 2015 as a licensed funeral director and embalmer. He received his degree in mortuary science in Los Angeles. His arrangements were under the direction of Desert Lawn.

## KANSAS



**Floyd L. Greenwood**, 88, of Overbrook, KS passed away March 27, 2018. He was a U.S. Army veteran and proudly served his country in the Korean War. He graduated as Class Salutatorian of Dallas Institute – Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in 1964. He was Funeral Director and Embalmer for Scott-Brantley Funeral Home in Norton, KS and Jones Funeral Home in Waverly, KS until 1971. He then moved his family to Overbrook, KS where he operated his funeral home, Greenwood-Roberts Funeral Home, until his retirement at the age of 80 in 2010. He also assisted as a funeral director in Baldwin City and Ottawa for Lamb-Roberts Funeral Home. His visitation was in his home, Greenwood-Roberts Funeral Home, and his services were under the direction of his past co-workers and friends of Lamb-Roberts Funeral Home. He especially enjoyed the Chuckles section of The Dead Beat, and was quite elated when a favorite joke he submitted a few years ago was published. Greenwood-Roberts Funeral Home handled his services.

## MISSOURI



**Marvin D. Preston**, 84, of Smithville, passed away on June 2, 2018. He graduated from Forrest Park College of Mortuary Science in St. Louis. He enlisted in the U.S. Army after learning he would soon be drafted. Marvin served at Ft. Riley, KS until his Honorable Discharge in 1957. He then began a 41-year career at D.W. Newcomer's Sons Funeral Homes when it was owned by the Newcomer family. Marvin was promoted to funeral home manager at their North Kansas City location, while also managing the funeral home at White Chapel in Gladstone from its construction until his retirement. Arrangements by the Meyers Northland Chapel in Parkville.

## TEXAS



**Peter Joseph Boutross**, 78, of Comanche, passed away on Aug. 1, 2018. He was the managing director of Comanche Funeral Home. In 1968 he graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science as a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer, and in 1972 he moved to Comanche where he worked at Comanche Funeral Home until his death. He was a member of West Texas Funeral Directors Association and served as President in 2006-2007, and also a member of Texas Funeral Directors Association. His services were under the direction of Comanche Funeral Home.



**Alberta McCullough Dukes**, 81, of Texarkana passed away July 31, 2018. She was the mother of Michael L. Dukes, past East TFDA President. Her arrangements were under the direction of Bates Family Funeral Home in DeKalb.



**Danny L. Gary**, 69, of Pittsburg passed away on June 23, 2018. Danny served in the Army as a member of the 101st Airborne during the Vietnam War. He worked in the funeral industry at Texarkana Funeral Home in his early years and then in 1976 started working for Erman Smith Funeral Home in Pittsburg where he became co-owner before his retirement and who handled his funeral services.

**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@thedead-beat.com**



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**TEXAS (Cont.)**



**Mary "Rusty" Hartung, 85**, of Louisville, KY, died June 12, 2018. she was the mother of Jim Hartung, a Batesville representative. Evergreen Dignity Memorial Chapel handled her services.



**Frank McMillian, 81**, of Mexia, died March 13, 2018. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Kentucky and Texas. Through out his career he worked at Lotts Mortuary in Dallas, Dorsey & Keatts Funeral Home in Mexia, Community Funeral Home and Emanuel Funeral Home both in Teague. He was the first funeral director in charge of Moore's Angelic Funeral Home in Teague who directed his services.. He graduated from the Kentucky School of Embalming.



**Charles Richard "Dick" McNeil, 83**, of Fort Worth, died June 18, 2018. He became a licensed funeral director in August 1955 after serving an apprenticeship; formal schooling was not required at that time. He has served hundreds of families in the area during his years at

**TEXAS (Cont.)**

Owens-Brumley and Greenwood Funeral Homes. In 1995, then Governor George W. Bush appointed him to the Texas Funeral Service Commission where he served as Chairman during his tenure. He retired after 38 1/2 years from Greenwood in 2001, as Vice-President in charge of Greenwood Mount Olivet and Arlington Funeral Homes. Military time was spent in the U.S. Army in Germany His services were directed by Greenwood Funeral Home.



**John Munson Myers, 89**, of Haltom City, passed away June 9, 2018. He served in the Illinois Army National Guard and as First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army (44th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.) during the Korean War as an artillery instructor. He was employed by Greenwood Funeral Homes in Fort Worth for 46 years, retiring in 2001. His services were handled by the Greenwood Funeral Home.



**Larry Payne, 64**, of Woodway, died June 17, 2018. He joined the family business, Aderhold Funeral Home in West in 1991. He served as Chairman of the Board and was a licensed Funeral Director of Aderhold Funeral Home, Inc. He was recently elected to the Texas Funeral Directors Association Services, Inc. Board of Directors, as well as the North Texas Association Board of Directors. Aderhold Funeral Home directed his services.



**Ruth Ann "Meme" Peterson, 71**, of Lamasa, died June 14, 2018. She was the mother of Sparky Clark, location manager at Sunset Funeral Home in Odessa, who handled her services.



**Bill B. Reneau, ,** of Wolfe City, passed away June 29, 2018. He was a funeral director assistant and the uncle of Dick Owens of R.W. Owens & Sons Funeral Home who handled his services.



**Linda Grant Rose, 75**, of Arlington, formerly of Deport, died July 16, 2018. She was daughter of the late James Grant, former owner of Grant Funeral Home in Deport and mother of E. Casey Rose, general manager of Moore Funeral Homes and Memorial Gardens, at Arlington. Services were under the direction of Fry-Gibbs Funeral Home.





## Prairie Post

In case I haven't reminded you lately like most funeral directors I have had hobbies and also a passion. Most of my life I have had a passion for the tall grass prairie.

This passion for the prairies resulted in many memorable prairie treks with D.M. (Don) Christisen, co-founder of the Missouri Prairie Foundation. Don was a game biologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

In the fall of 1967 I read a classified ad Don placed in the Lockwood, Missouri newspaper. An organization had been formed to preserve prairies!! A possible solution for MY dilemma!! At the time I was managing our family's

320 acre prairie known as "Phillips Meadow."



It had been in a recently expired family trust that involved 3 cousins and myself. Our great uncle E.A. Phillips had combined the tract from 3 different landowners in the 1920's. He wished for it to never be plowed fearing the day when no prairies would be left. I called Don immediately.

It took about 4 years and two separate stages for MPF to secure the funding to complete the entire purchase. Meanwhile neighboring land was selling for twice the price, but we had accomplished Uncle E.A.'s preservation goal.

From the day of that first walk on the now, "Golden Prairie," Don and I became friends for life and he was my prairie mentor until his death.

Shortly after newspaper stories about the first part of our land sale to MPF, the owners of what became "Pennsylvania Prairie" contacted me. I took Don to meet them and that was the start of another great prairie complex. However, what would be our most fortuitous and unique adventure was about to happen.

One October day in 1973 Don called me from his office at MDC in Columbia, Missouri. Someone with the New York Natural Areas Council had contacted him about

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a potential donor to MPF. Arrangements had been made for the donor and a traveling companion to fly to Springfield, Missouri where Don would meet and transport them here to check out our endangered landscape.

They arrived at our retail store in late afternoon and after introductions were made we moved across the street for pie and coffee at Cooky's Café.

Our visitors were Richard Pough of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Kathryn Ordway. Ms. Ordway was a major benefactor to TNC. After refreshments we drove to "Golden Prairie" which by now was mostly attired in it's fall wardrobe of rich browns, orange and crimson. Don then drove them to Lamar and settled them in the Blue Top Inn.

Our plan was dinner at the Blue Top Restaurant return to the Motel and give our presentation and slide show. We hoped to stress the importance of preserving our remnant prairies and secure funding for future prairie purchases by MPF. Did I say plan???

Well, you know that old saying about the



best made plans of mice and men.....

I arrived at the motel on time and we

all settled into a booth at the Blue Top Restaurant. As the waitress appeared at our booth—Ms. Ordway reached into her handbag and set a bottle of Southern Comfort on the table!! The waitress was dumbfounded and then started stammering something about the bottle. Ms. Ordway looked puzzled. I explained that "the girl will lose her job if you don't put the bottle away." Ms. Ordway said, "Oh, the owner is prejudiced." Ms. Ordway put the bottle back in her bag, but we returned to the motel



room for her before dinner drink after which we returned to the restaurant for dinner.

Don and I finally got to start our presentation. We had to convince them that the smaller tracts of virgin prairie were just as important as the larger tracts of mid and short grass prairies in the Western states. We, however, did not have any specific purchases in mind at the moment. Ms. Ordway excused herself momentarily and we asked Pough for guidance. He said, "She has a million dollars to give away every year. Her daddy bailed out 3M."

The next day Don took our visitors to Western Barton County and toured several magnificent prairies that we still

## Prairie Post (Cont.)

owned by families that had been early settlers. Ms. Ordway and Pough returned to the east coast and would return to Missouri in 7 months with TNC staff members for a repeat tour. The timing for the spring tour was perfect to see the prairies in the peak of its number of flowering plants.



The Golden City Chamber of Commerce hosted a luncheon for the TNC and MPF members. MPF members continued their efforts to encourage TNC to see the value in saving our smaller units of prairie. Previously Don had been told that before last year's visit, Ms. Ordway with TNC had intended to purchase 5,000 acres of Kansas prairie but the deal fell through or could not be completed. It was after that when they began to look at our Tallgrass prairies.

The entourage was relaxing after the luncheon and Ms. Ordway reached into her purse and withdrew a cigarette. Before it touched her lips about 12 staff members had lighters flared around her face to be of assistance.

In the end MPF did not get any money directly because we had no professional staff. TNC however, jumped in with enthusiasm and began acquiring and preserving en-



dangered prairies. Among the first were those visited on that first tour. In a few years these tracts were rolled over to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and became "Prairie State Park."

Sometimes I like to imagine that the beautiful "Prairie State Park" would not exist had it not been for the dedication to our environment by Donald M. Christisen with a little help from me.

If there is a moral to this story it surely must be, "Don't take the potential donor of a gift horse to a DRYWATER hole."



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## Chaput-Buoy Funeral Home & Cremation Services (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

wide by six feet six inches long. The body was placed on this cooling board to be bathed, dressed, all but burial dress or suit. The body was positioned with folding the hands together and covered over with a drape of some kind. When not embalmed (most bodies were buried within a day or so) a bottle of some type of preservative was taken to the home, and a face cloth was saturated and kept on the face until the time the body was fully dressed and placed in the casket.

In those early days people kept a 24-hour vigil or wake and stayed up with the dead until burial time. There was always somebody, friend or neighbor there to keep the cloth damp on the face to keep it from drying out too much.

The body was left in the bedroom where the death occurred most of the time. If there was a dresser with a mirror in the room, the first thing done was to put a sheet or white cloth over the glass. They thought it was bad luck to see yourself during the time of sorrow or death.

In 1923 George opened a furniture store and funeral parlor in Clyde, Kansas which today is know the “Chaput Mortuary.” Med, one of his sons, operated that business until his death in 1966, then his wife Alexine managed the business until her death.

In 1926, George purchased the Sutcliffe Furniture and Undertaking business in Concordia, Kansas. This first location was at 106 W6th St and the family lived upstairs over the furniture store. The back of the upstairs room was used to display caskets with a small room closed off for embalming. They had a hand elevator to transport bodies and caskets

from one floor to another. From 1909 to late 1940’s most of the embalming was done in the home where the death occurred. He employed Paul, Alex, Joe and John at his newest business, leaving Leon to “mind the store” at Aurora.

George moved his business to its present location at 325 W 6th St in 1939 and in 1940 changed the name to Chaput & Sons Funeral Home. The downstairs kitchen was converted to an embalming room and the balance of the downstairs was used as funeral chapel and viewing rooms. Most of the funerals were still being held in the different churches at that time, but this was Concordia’s first complete funeral home.

After George (died in 1952) and Paul’s deaths, the lack of manpower closed the furniture store in 1973.

A new funeral home was built in 1975 and renamed Chaput-Buoy funeral Home, when James Buoy joined the staff in Concordia relocating from Jamestown, Kansas.

Alex shared a few more details about the business. The Chaputs also served the community with a 24-hour Ambulance Service from 1926– the late 60’s. A city call day or night was \$2.50 for our clients.

Another interesting aspect was the method of removal in the early days. Before the removal cot came into use for transporting patients to and from home and hospital, a wicker basket with open top was used, with removal of a deceased body a sheet and later top cover was used. A casket carriage was used to convey the basket from place of death to the hearse.

Alex also shared some facts about the early embalming at the home. There was really only one method to embalm in the home because there was someone wanting to see. No privacy. Sometimes they did not stay in the room during the whole operation because of the embalming fluid smell. This was not an easy process but it is

*(Continued on page 21)*

## A Student's Perspective

By Brianna Uffman

The Funeral Science field educates students in every phase of funeral service and it provides the skills necessary for the profession.

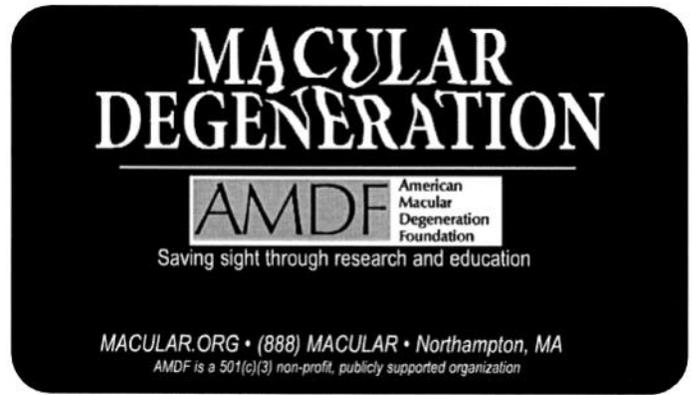
I graduated from the Funeral Science program of Arkansas State University Mountain Home in the Spring of 2018. To me, I obtained more than just an Associate of Arts in Funeral Science and a Technical Certificate in Funeral Directing. In college, I learned many definitions, examples, and ideas that have benefitted me immensely. My teachers were very helpful to my classmates and I.

During this time, I attended a Training Camp that has taken place every year for the Funeral Science students to learn different areas of the field. I enjoyed having the chance to speak to many funeral service professionals. My classmates and I helped each other by working together.

I began working at a Funeral Home during the middle of my college career. This gave me the ability to work under a licensed professional to become a person who people can rely on. By working at a Funeral Home, I am able to assist the people in my community. It gives me a sense of peace that I can help someone cope with grief.

I believe this field has brought many good things in my life and it is a very rewarding career to be apart of. I also believe the Funeral Science field is full of caring, respectful, and helpful individuals. I have met some amazing people that have and will continue to do great things.

I am open to speaking to anyone who may be interested in this field. This field has brought a light to my life that makes me feel useful. I respect and cherish those who have helped me along the way. I hope to do the same for others.



## Chaput-Buoy Funeral Home & Cremation Services (Cont.)

*(Continued from page 20)*

surprising how little trouble they had mainly because they did a lot of praying.

Another challenge came with an accident victim in the 30's. Alex had embalmed and repaired an accident victim with moulding wax to fill and repair damaged areas. "The family was very pleased, but our small back room was not air-conditioned and on the eve of the funeral it got rather warm, next morning I went upstairs to check, well, the wax had gotten soft and melted somewhat, so was the shape of the face. Rebuilding the features was renewed somewhat. The funeral services were held in the afternoon before the sun got too warm."

In 1979 they acquired the Smith Funeral Home and consolidated it with Chaput-Buoy Funeral Home.

Dean R. Frazier joined the staff in 1978 and was employed full time until his semi-retirement in 2003, continuing to assist the funeral home until his retirement in 2011.

In 2001 Joshua Meyer joined the staff after relocating from Wichita, Kansas. He is licensed Funeral Director, Embalmer, Pre-Need Counselor and the current manager.

In 2014 Kenton R. LeBanc joined the staff. He is a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer in Kansas and Nebraska.

Some concluding remarks from Alex's history include, "It is OK to save for a rainy day, but enough is enough. I've found out you can't take it with you. Maybe a good shave and a clean shirt for your final journey is all that is necessary. And some kind of cover over your head to keep the dirt from getting in your eyes."

## Don't Toss Your Trusted Tools

By Joe Weigel

It's that time of year when I find myself drawn to the big box home improvement stores to wander down the lawn and garden section looking for the latest gadget. You see, I am what's termed a "gentleman gardener" and I love to putter around the yard doing whatever to "improve" the landscaping.

Of course, when I bring that shiny new toy -- er, tool -- home, I don't toss all my older tools in the trash. While that new dual powered blower vacuum may be great for cleaning flower beds, there are many times when the trusty leaf rake I've had or years is the perfect choice for the job.

That's why I'm puzzled when I see how some funeral companies and funeral homes react to new marketing opportunities and channels. Presented with a shiny new toy -- er, tool -- they're quick to devote most of their resources to it, and to discard the time-honored tactics they've been using.

Even in these days of YouTube and Facebook, what many funeral home owners and managers see as old-fashioned strategies and tactics still work quite well. In fact, as your competitors make those moves to abandon or dramatically reduce their presence in those other channels, sticking with "traditional" tactics may be even more powerful.

The key is to look at each new tool as an enhancement to your toolbox, not as a replacement for something you've already been using. That Facebook fan page may be a great way to connect with families on an informal basis, but you may still need a presence in local newspaper that reaches the community at large. A posting may create a buzz that drives people to your website in a single week, but the majority of your calls still happen because of traditional media like newspaper and radio as well as word of mouth.

By adding those new tools, you broaden your reach, and may actually connect with the same audiences in more ways. That's a lesson that bankers have learned. Way back when ATMs first emerged on the scene, many bankers saw them as a way to reduce the number of tellers. But they discovered that customers who used ATMs still liked to come to teller windows at times. The same is true for online banking and the ability to check transactions with smart phones. The smart bankers in the crowd recognize that customers appreciate those multiple avenues of contact, and that very few customers limit themselves to just one.

"All-or-nothing" approaches rarely work well in marketing. Instead, the most successful mar-

keters employ multiple channels to present their messages, tailoring their messages and tactics to the nature of each channel, and connecting them effectively. By weaving those channels together, they allow each individual contact to lead to others, and ensure that every touch point supports the message and overall objectives.

Don't make the mistake of discarding strategies that performed five, ten or twenty years ago as obsolete or useless. Instead, consider them as familiar tools that have a place in your marketing efforts. After all, there's a big difference between making a one-time splash and delivering successful long-term performance.



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. You can visit his website at [weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com](http://weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com). He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or [joseph.weigel@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.weigel@gmail.com).

## The Fate of the 50-Call Funeral Home

By Richard Lee

If you are an owner of a small (100 calls or less) funeral home these days, you need to ask yourself the question – **What is the fate of my business?** The reason I pose this question is because a lot of small funeral businesses might not be viable 5, 7 or 10 years from now.

With revenues expected to decrease over time, families spending less on funerals and most operating expenses rising year over year, the profitability and viability of a small, single location funeral home could be less and less.

As an owner of a small funeral home, what should you do? Well if you are still relatively young and truly enjoy the business, then reaching out and buying another funeral home or two in your immediate area would be a good move for the future. By doing

this and being able to utilize the same personnel spread over multiple locations, this strategy would be perfect for businesses with multiple family members who are actively involved in the day to day operations. This also allows everyone to be able to make a great income.

If you are close to retirement within the next 5 years, then seriously considering a sale soon would be your best option in order to realize the most value. If there is a neighboring funeral home or even a competitor that would be interested in purchasing your business, this could be a great option as this should yield the best price to you as a Seller. Also, the structuring of the sale and possible tax implications should be addressed early on.

Just in the last few years, I

have handled several of these types of transactions involving small funeral homes and having a business valuation performed early on by an industry expert will allow you to determine which direction may be the best for you.

I am always available for any questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or you may email me at [Leebros@aol.com](mailto:Leebros@aol.com).

\*\*\*\*\*



*Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral businesses. Since 1987, they have been involved in over 170 transactions all over the United*

*States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at [Leebros@aol.com](mailto:Leebros@aol.com)*

### TV Remote



“Cash, check or charge?” I asked, after folding items the woman wished to purchase. As she fumbled for her wallet, I noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse. “So, do you always carry your TV remote?” I asked. “No,” she replied, “but my husband refused to come shopping with me and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally.”

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## “Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

### Dear Counselor

*We have been contacted by a family that wants to transfer their mother’s preneed contract to our funeral home. The mother is in a nursing home that has confirmed she cannot make her own decisions. A daughter has power of attorney and the original funeral home is challenging her authority to transfer the preneed contract.*

If the funeral home is challenging the power of attorney rather than the consumer’s rights under state law, I am assuming applicable law allows the contract and its funding to be transferred. If that assumption is accurate, the daughter’s authority to transfer the preneed contract will depend upon whether the power of attorney is durable and grants general powers to the daughter.

A power of attorney is either durable or non-durable. A non-durable power of attorney remains effective only for so long as the principal is legally competent. A durable power of attorney remains effective after the principal is deemed legally incompetent. State laws determine what a power of attorney form must include so that it will be treated as durable. A durable POA is intended to allow the agent to conduct the principal’s financial affairs when such assistance is needed most.

Applicable state law also sets out the general powers that can be given through a POA. But, an individual can restrict or limit the authorities given the agent. Consequently, every third party, such as the original funeral

home, must review the POA for purposes of determining what authorities were given the agent. A third party should never assume a power of attorney provides the agent the authority to transaction all financial matters on behalf of the principal. POA forms intended to grant general financial powers will typically mimic the applicable state law provision.

Accordingly, you will need to review the mother’s POA and applicable state law to determine that the POA is 1) durable, and 2) grants the daughter general financial powers.



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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**A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Grave.....  
I Became an Undertaker  
\*\*Part 5\*\*  
By Lowell Pugh**

My teenage years were pretty much split between my maternal grandfather's farm and my father's uncle's hardware store and funeral home. Both activities were tempered by the unrealistic whims of a teenager. My career path was leaning towards the farm.

Unobserved by me however was the fact that my father's health was slipping. The too often scourge of funeral home/ambulance and a bad back was treated with too much alcohol and Camel cigarettes.

I would start my apprenticeship while still helping on the farm as needed. That too changed when my grandfather was killed by the dairy herd bull and my uncle and I operated the farm until operations were liquidated the summer of 1951.

One evening at home while cleaning up from the day's farming I heard our ambulance siren heading out of town. Darn, I missed a call! A few days later I was observing my father present the casket inventory and each unit's relative benefits to the brother and family friend of the aforementioned ambulance pa-

tient who died a short time later. There were 8 or 10 cloth-covered wood caskets, octogan, state, and variations of each and one 12 ga. non-gasketed in copper-tone color. All were priced as a "complete service with casket." Vault sales were infrequent, so the complete service included an unfinished wooden grave liner or "rough box."

Casket descriptions and values seemed to be based primarily on the wood which was cloth covered—pine, fir, poplar, California redwood. I had seen a few polished wood caskets, but we had none at the time.

The brother remarked that the lumber in some of the caskets may have come from the west coast lumber mills that his friend owned. The widow who was a paraplegic left all of the arrangements up to her brother-in-law and the friend. They settled on unit #3, a square state half couch.

The "Complete" service with that casket was \$300.00. A concrete air-seal vault was \$125.00, funeral notices (about 50 leaflets distributed in the business district) were \$2.50 and grave opening \$20.00 (The

sexton of the I.O.O.F. Lodge which owned the cemetery, also owned a grocery store. He applied the grave digger's fee to their grocery bill.) I suspect that this particular casket was selected because the lumber used in it's construction could have come from the friend's California timber interests.

Eight months later I was at the College of Mortuary Science in St. Louis. A visit to my first St. Louis funeral home selection room left me in culture shock. The firm's two lowest priced units were displayed in an open closet and priced higher than our top of the line.

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*Dylan's Directives*  
Does It Matter???  
 By Dylan Stopher

Mortuary Science has become quite the field... and it's interesting to see some of the people who come through the various programs. As a vendor in a city with a Mortuary College, I have the pleasure and privilege to present to their senior class twice a year. This allows me the freedom to meet and speak with these men and women who have chosen to attend the school, go through with the board exams, and accept the responsibilities of an apprenticeship and eventual licensure.

But then there's the statistics about how many people enroll and don't finish (happened to about a third of my class), and the numbers on how many people complete the education and don't ever go through and get their license. And I'm forced to wonder whether or not it matters if they have a job in funeral service prior to enrollment or graduation.

So all I can really do here is tell the story of my class and a few people I know, names all withheld, of course. But I'll start with me, because that one's easy. I started at a funeral home before I went to school, and was able to complete a portion of my apprenticeship. When I arrived at Commonwealth in Houston, I was already capable of the practices of both embalming and funeral directing, and most of my apprenticeship casework for my home state of Louisiana was complete. I transferred to a funeral home in the city of Houston, and I worked in that firm and a sister firm the entire time I was in school. There was never a thought in my head of working anywhere other than a funeral home, given that practical experience would help to fill in gaps and aid in my education. I don't believe I was wrong to make that choice.

I was ready for the discussions, and I had licensed professionals who attended the same school looking over my work and helping me to think critically about everything. I studied, but I also worked. And it was no surprise to me that I had a grasp on certain concepts, because of real-time service in the field with families and funeral directors, waiting on families and embalming.

Then we transition to a few others like me who either were born into a family of funeral professionals or had fallen into the profession as I had, and found a home within it. What's most interesting to me as I ponder on this is that all of those people are still in the business.



They are still serving, still working, still striving to go above and beyond for every family they have the privilege to serve. We, were always in class, always on time, always ready to go, and we stuck together and finished strong. We took the boards together, we all passed them, we all got our licenses at about the same time, and most of us kept in touch. I see and speak to several of these peers and colleagues on a regular basis within the TFDA even now.

Of course, there's also those like a young lady in our class who decided she'd come and get a "quick and easy degree," until she realized that there were actual dead people in the caskets in a funeral home. That brought about an episode of fainting, and she withdrew from the school the next day. I still have no idea how that all happened, given that we were in school to work with the families of the dead, and serve them directly through embalming and funeral directing. But oh well, it happened. She had no clue about the reality of death, and that we would face it directly as professionals. I'm certain, to this day, that she probably found where she needed to be... and as we have all heard, our chosen profession isn't for everyone.

Given that small sample size, I'm going to assert my own personal feeling that it absolutely makes a huge difference in your career and education if you're working in a funeral home, actively serving, applying book knowledge that you're receiving to the practical experiences you're enduring. There's things you learn in the funeral home that school cannot prepare you for, given that we deal with living, breathing, grieving family members who are going to run the gambit from being kind to being impossible to please. We're going to have cases that are far harder to treat in the prep room, and face situations of extreme difficulty that no clinical can possibly prepare you for. And we're going to do all of that while studying for finals and comps.

*(Continued on page 29)*

*Dylan's Directives- (Cont.)*

*(Continued from page 28)*

Now, you've got to then shift to the young man in our class who had never worked in a funeral home, but after graduation took a job with a prestigious firm and has remained and been promoted more than once. He, along with another young lady who was fresh to the idea of funeral service and has never left it, are most certainly the exceptions to the rule. They had no clue what they were getting into, and they are still in it today. Both of them are exceptionally talented, and they have a keen sense of how to serve a family. I'm honored to have learned with them, and from them, and I know that their firms are far better off for having them as teammates.

So we now return to my original thought... does it matter if you're working while you go to school? My initial response is always going to be that it does. And if you're a mortuary student, or someone who wishes to be one, and you're reading this while you ponder going to work in a funeral home while you're in school, then my advice is to quit pondering and go get a position with a firm immediately! Education matters, and it will certainly be evident in your career whether you're all book smart or work experience, or a marriage of the two. Trust me, you want to be the combination of both.

However, when you look at the few who succeed with-

out having ever started in a funeral home, and you see that it is possible to do it that way... well, then I'm still stuck with my original answer. Because the number of people who succeed without knowing exactly what they're getting into is so unbelievably small. Those of us that are still around can all probably name multiple folks who came and left due to a lack of practical experience in conjunction with the knowledge and education needed to thrive and grow to the point of being able to competently and confidently serve families in their time of need.

So now, if you're a funeral professional who has access to a student and you want them to be successful, I would suggest you push them to find a position and enroll in higher education... today. Their families will thank them for it down the road. I promise.



**About the author:** - Dylan Stopher is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, and currently serves with Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC. He is an active member of the SETFDA and the TFDA, and a regular contributor to both the Texas Director Magazine and the Millennial Director blog.

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Could be a two way  
street??  
By Lowell**

My Back Fence lament about the looming closure of our bank did not include possible concerns for the day to day staff.

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She replied, "We've actually discussed that!"

**Art by JFH**



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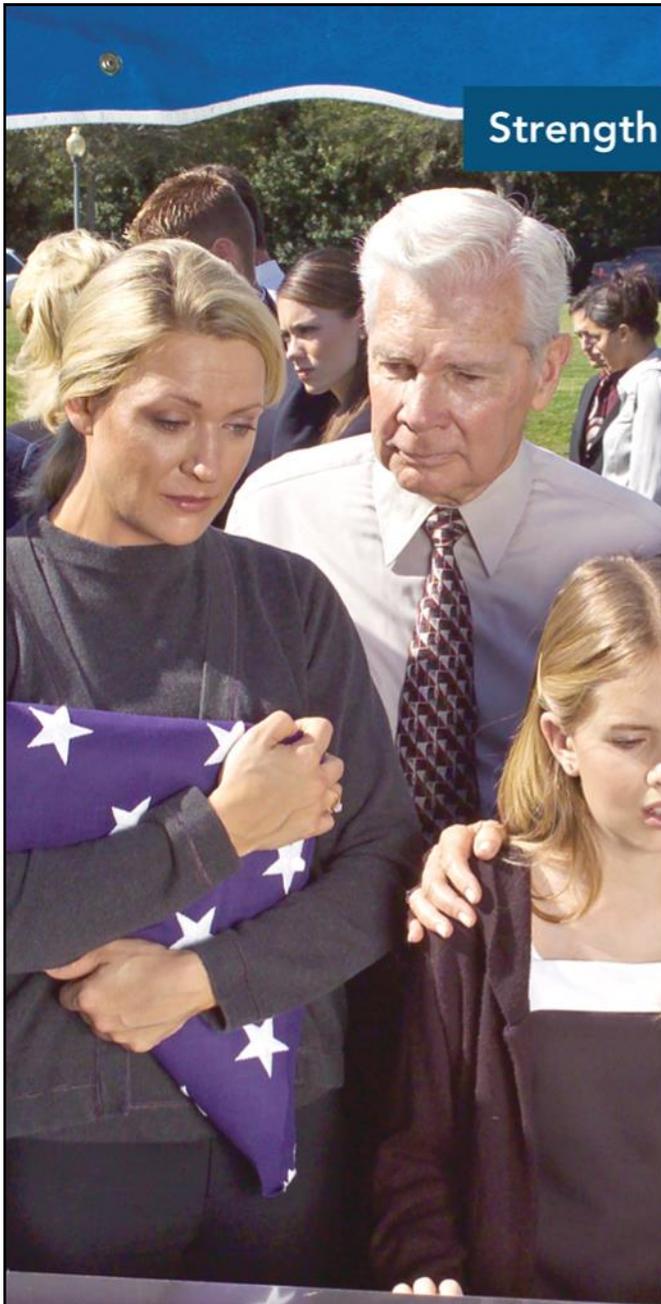
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