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◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆

MAGAZINE

February & March 2014

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ICCFA Expo and Memorialization/Aftercare

ICCFA All-Star Pre Convention & Expo Agenda
Five Things Every Funeral Director Should Know
About Suicide by Joanne L. Harpel, M.Phil., J.D.
Mourning Cross Bereavement - The Funeral Ladies
by Kate Hamilton
Aftercare is More Important Than You May Know
by Robert L. Pierce
Casket & Funeral Supply Association Celebrates
100th Anniversary
Georgia Funeral Supply Sales Club Meeting
Wilbert/Pierce Annual Sale Meeting Awards



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“Our Mission is to provide funeral, cremation and cemetery professionals with the most comprehensive articles, education and other pertinent information in order to advance the interests of the Death Care Industry and its professionals, educators and providers.”

New website is live!
www.sfdmagazine.com

February & March 2014

Southern Funeral Director Magazine®
Vol. 169 No.2

The National Funeral Service Journal
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POSTMASTER:

Notify us of address changes by form 3579 to:

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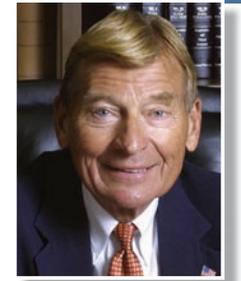
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Blair Nelsen, Former Owner – Nelsen Family Funeral Services, Inc.

”



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notes from the editor

*Guest Editor, Nancy R. Lohman, CCFE
ICCFA President
StoneMor Partners LP
Lohman Funeral Homes, Cemeteries & Cremation
Ormond Beach, Florida*



Dear fellow Southern Funeral Director subscriber;

As leaders within our profession, we must continue to take personal responsibility of our own professional development. And, as leaders we must collaborate, as it is a critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance.. The ICCFA convention April 8-11th in Las Vegas is the ultimate opportunity to be challenged as well as inspired. Recharge yourself and move up your game. It is an atmosphere that will reward you with newfound stimulations and innovation.

Our annual convention and expo will be illuminating, not only because of the All Star speakers including Archie Griffin, Stedman Graham and Scott Deming but because we have forums and compelling programs that will generate a spirited exchange of ideas. These ideas include market assistance, best practices, and relevant business strategies. Get the most out of the convention! Attend the sessions, use your time wisely and be on the exhibit floor - up and down each aisle every minute they are opened. Become a master mingler, make valuable connections, and collaborate with other professionals; men and women who span our industry as well as the globe. Keep your energy up as you will find it to be an exciting environment and the best national convention and expo in our profession.

I find that so much of the preparation necessary in order to stay relevant to the consumers of tomorrow and their changing preferences takes place here within ICCFA. It is a critical part of your business strategy – it is here where we share ideas, share best practices and business benchmarks, and openly exchange information relating to our profession and our specific businesses. It is here that we advance ourselves.

By engaging in this convention, engaging with your suppliers and sharing your experiences with your peers, your shared knowledge will prepare you. You are a better person and a better professional by being here.

I congratulate you, welcome you, and look forward to seeing and sharing with you.

Nancy Lohman, ICCFA President



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IT'S ABOUT

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



2X HEISMAN
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**ARCHIE
GRIFFIN**

Being a Lifelong Champion

A leader both on the field and off, the only two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin said that his career reflects the high standards instilled in him by his family: hard work, devotion to excellence and passion. Funeral professionals will recognize these traits as being imperative to their own work as well.

The gridiron is very similar to the business world. It's about out-smarting your opponents, practice and preparation, and constantly stepping up your game. Griffin will share his thoughts on what it means to be a leader, the similarities between triumphs on the football field and in business, how to maintain the "hunger" for exceeding expectations and being the best at what you do, and the importance of lifelong personal development.

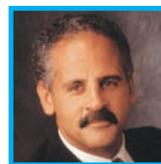


EMOTIONAL
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**SCOTT
DEMING**

Creating the Ultimate Customer Experience

Some see "branding" as a logo and a tagline. In reality, your brand is defined by your customers. Learn from customer service and emotional brand-building guru Scott Deming how to create the ultimate customer experience to attract loyal customers and the most powerful brand in the industry. In his presentation, Deming will explain how to break the boundaries of typical customer service or brand-building processes and dispel the popular, yet incorrect, thinking that advertising and marketing lead to powerful, emotional brands. He will take you on a fast-paced, high energy journey through the six critical steps in creating the ultimate customer experience. This process consists of a probing analysis of your business model, including:

- Who you are, what you do and what you sell
- What people think of when they see/hear your name
- Whether or not you provide an uncommon, innovative and emotional experience
- Are relying on products or service to drive your sales?
- How you are emphasizing value, not price
- The outcome of each interaction your employees have



DIVERSITY COACH,
AUTHOR &
ENTREPRENEUR
**STEDMAN
GRAHAM**

Leaders Without Labels: A New Plan for the 21st Century

Diversity is changing the face of business today. The world is different than it was 5, 10 or 20 years ago—or even one year ago. The demographics of all areas are changing at a pace quicker than you probably realize, and in this global environment, diversity has become a permanent business characteristic. Opportunities will be plentiful for companies who lead the way in widening their workforce and customer base to include ALL members of the community. Are you?

Author, educator and entrepreneur Stedman Graham (aka Mr. Oprah Winfrey) will discuss how some giants of business have navigated these paradigm shifts, how they've flourished, share some of their secrets to success and how you can too. Furthermore, he will present the findings of research he's conducted on companies of various sizes in our profession, offer suggestions of how they may expand their offerings to reflect the customs and practices of burgeoning submarkets, and provide a strategy for how they may further their reach and grow their marketshare. Use these examples as a template for your business of how to prosper and serve families in need without labels.



Starks **Guerra** **Mooney** **Varner**

Attracting & Serving Diverse Demographics

To piggyback on Stedman Graham's presentation, diversity can help your business grow and prosper. The populations of our hometowns are changing faster than they ever have before. This presents unique opportunities to broaden your customer base, gain market share and develop niche markets. Come hear from these industry experts how to serve all members of your community. **Eleanor Davis Starks, CFSP-CCA**, will talk about her decades of experience owning and operating funeral homes that serve African-American communities. **Anthony Guerra**, will detail how his firm has become the go-to funeral home for the Mexican-American population in Los Angeles. **Gwen Mooney, CCFE**, has seen a strong relationship develop between her company and the gay and lesbian community. **Kenneth Varner, CCFE**, will discuss his cemetery's connection and geographic centrality to his community's Chinese population.

For more information and to register, visit www.iccfaconvention.com

EXPO HOURS

Tuesday, April 8

3 to 7 p.m.

Grand Opening Reception
(open bar and heavy hors
d'oeuvres)

Wednesday, April 9

Noon to 4 p.m.

Lunch and
IMSA Happy Hour

Thursday, April 10

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch at the Expo

**11 hours of
exhibiting with
FREE food and
drinks throughout**



WHAT PAST ATTENDEES HAVE TO SAY

"It was a great convention. The educational sessions were very good. I have been coming to ICCFA conventions for 40 years and you still manage to hit home runs! See you next year."

– Gregory Easley, CCE, Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Omaha, Nebraska

"Great job in providing both a social and learning environment. It was a meaningful and memorable experience."

– Mark Ivey, Gibraltar Remembrance Services, Hamilton, Ohio

Session Recordings

Stop by the ICCFA Registration Desk to order recordings of 2014 ICCFA Annual Convention breakout sessions.

NON-MEMBERS:

Register at the non-member rate and receive one FREE year of ICCFA membership!

LODGING

The ICCFA room block at Mandalay Bay is sold out. However, there are numerous hotels very close to Mandalay Bay (some connected to the resort) and offering very economical rates, including the Luxor, Excalibur, Tropicana, MGM Grand and Bellagio.

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- 550+ booth exhibit hall
- Free food and drinks in the Expo
- 35 educational sessions on topics that most affect your business
- Earn up 17.5 CE hours
- Lowest registration fee of any industry convention
- 5th Annual Pet Loss Professionals Alliance Conference
- Jewish Funeral Directors of America meetings and breakout sessions
- Green Burial Council meeting, open house and breakout sessions
- International Memorialization Supply Association meetings
- Networking luncheons, receptions and dinners
- ICCFA Educational Foundation Reception and Award Presentations to Gary O'Sullivan and Todd Van Beck
- ICCFA Hall of Fame Induction of David Shipper
- 2013 Keeping It Personal (KIP) Awards presentation
- ICCFA Annual Meeting of Members and Memorial Service
- Win cash & prizes

35+ BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BREAKOUT SESSIONS INCLUDE:

Building a Preneed Program That Supports Your Business:

How can you build or perfect your preneed program? Bill Williams will discuss how to select a model that supports your business. He will break down the complex preneed funding process into easily digestible information highlighting methods and tools that will help you position your preneed program to help you grow your business. Learn best practice guidelines for ensuring transparency, proper recordkeeping and regulatory compliance.



Women in Leadership in the Profession:

Facilitated by Jennifer Frew, hear from panelists about each woman's journey to where she is today, how she achieved her success, her professional role models and motivators, and what she would consider her recipe for success. Panelists include:



- Christine Hunsaker, senior vice president of cremation services, Stewart Enterprises
- Caressa Hughes, managing director of governmental affairs, Service Corporation International
- Nicole Wiedeman, director of internal sales support, Forethought Financial Group
- Eleanor Davis Starks, CFSP-CCA, founder and executive director, 100 Black Women of Funeral Service, Inc.

Proven Events That Increase Case Count:

Many funeral homes and cemeteries host events with the hope that public exposure will increase business, only to discover they are expensive and produce few discernible results. In this session, Robert Quist will teach attendees how Memorial Cemeteries and Mortuaries has developed a winning combination of targeted events that have increased profit and market share.



Revive Your Aftercare Program:

This presentation will give you the tools to breathe new life into the way you serve your clients after the funeral is over. Presenter Denise Hall Brown Rollins will inspire you to replace labor-intensive and impersonal aftercare programs with unique, beneficial and



simple outreach. You will walk away with tools for helping clients regain control and reclaim their lives via relationships, resources and release.

The New 70/30 Formula: From 70 Percent Burials to 70 Percent Cremation in Less Than a Decade:

Current cremation trends offer plenty of opportunities, as well as new financial and business issues to consider. In this session, Jodi Clock will reveal proven methods for changing the way you do business to accommodate and profit from booming cremation demands. She'll discuss how her business went from 70 percent funerals to 70 percent cremations in a decade and what steps she took to ensure its success.



Hire, Train and Lead a Progressive Preneed Sales Team: Staying Relevant & Connected as a Preneed Sales Leader:

Whether you lead a team of 20 or a team of one, this session will energize you and renew your focus on creating significant increases in your preneed and at-need production. Dan Kientzel will help attendees discover best practices for building and maintaining a progressive sales team, give an inside look at SCI's National Sales Manager Development Program, and provide proven strategies for remaining relevant and progressive.



Digital Marketing Domination:

There is no denying we live in a digital world and our consumers are spending an increasing amount of time online. Yet the majority of funeral homes and cemeteries have no strategy for taking their brand and marketing message straight to customers via these online channels. In this session, Zachary Garbow will aid you in developing and implementing an efficient and effective digital marketing strategy and will explain why it is critical to winning market share in today's digital environment.



50 Ideas in 50 Minutes: Changing the Perception of Cemetery Grounds Crew:

Today's customers expect more from their overall cemetery experience. In this session, Gino Merendino will cover 50 best practice ideas in 50 minutes that will help cemeteries convert wasted operational resources into an exceptional customer experience. Attendees will discover how cemeteries are able to make the most of their equipment and procedures.



Candidate Screening Techniques: Taking Time & Money Out of Your Hiring Process:

As candidates move from resumé submission to a screening interview, it's important for hiring managers to get to the heart of the matter quickly. Mark Jorgensen will share what he calls "R & B" work that can be done early in a screening phase, taking time out of your process and reducing cost.



Embalming Challenges: Managing Swelling and Edematous Cases:

Embalmers are seeing more swollen decedents due to advanced medical treatments, extended use of life support and trauma. In Shun Newbern's session, he will examine various methods and techniques for reduction and removal of excess fluid in the tissues, as well as management of the types of leakage associated with these cases.



10 Steps to a Successful Construction Project:

A successful construction project must be managed thoroughly from the first stages of planning through post-construction. In this informative session, Kelly TerWisscha will guide you through the 10 best practices anyone should employ when considering a new construction project.



The dynamics surrounding the massive increase in procurement cases has made the embalmer's job far more difficult than it was years ago. In Karl Wenzel's session, you will see actual procurement harvesting video and analyze the proper handling, new techniques and materials that should be used by the modern embalmer to eliminate leaks and worries when such cases come to your funeral home. Learn tricks and tips to handle minor problems, even on major cases.



Join moderator Irwin Shipper, CCE, and his panel of legal and regulatory specialists for this session. Panelists will provide the latest updates on changing regulations and recommend strategies to make compliance work for you.



Historic Cemetery Master Planning: Historic cemeteries are facing the undeniable fact

that they are running out of developable land and need to create an actionable plan to address this issue. In this session, Ron Gjerde, Craig Halvorson and Joan Sorrano will demonstrate that through collaborative master plans, historic cemeteries can secure their future without compromising the past. Successful master plans provide a refined collection of actionable design principles that address a broad range of issues, all the while providing ongoing revenue generation. Hear about a case study on the ways thoughtful planning, combined with a collaborative design effort, can result in a space with 21st century aesthetic and burial trends, while integrating seamlessly into the historic lawn plan cemetery setting.



RIP: Relocation in Pieces:

Does perpetuity mean forever? The relocation of a cemetery evokes varied emotions and is typically immersed with controversy. Unfortunately, cemetery relocation is occurring more and more frequently as cemeteries in the United States may be relocated if the land is required for transportation structures, public buildings, or even private development. So how does one take this unpleasant situation and turn it into a celebration of life and heritage? Melody Carvajal and Susan Grzybowski will detail the “puzzle” pieces of cemetery relocation and illustrate the importance of strategically and carefully interlocking the pieces to reveal the overall image. Throughout this presentation, you’ll be provided with thought provoking topics and best practices for putting cemetery relocation puzzle pieces together.



The Mausoleum Checklist: Smarter Planning and Care:

Cremations are on the increase, which means mausoleum care and preventative planning has never been more important or essential. David Yearsley will guide you through establishing best practices for mausoleum care in order to be prepared for every possible scenario. He’ll cover topics such as legal concerns, warranties, cemetery rules and regulations, differing construction styles, maintenance concerns and best practices for working with customers.



TWO FILM SCREENINGS

Each film will be followed by discussions with the filmmakers and people featured in the documentaries



A Will for the Woods

Wednesday, April 9, 4 to 6 p.m.

A Will for the Woods features musician, folk dancer and psychiatrist Clark Wang as he battles lymphoma while facing a potentially imminent need for funeral plans. Determined that his last act will not harm the environment and may even help protect it, Wang has discovered the movement to further sustainable funerals that conserve natural areas.

Enabling Wang’s wish is green burial pioneer Joe Sehee, who aims to realize this concept’s vast potential by helping define its goals and standards and endeavoring to open the world’s largest conservation burial ground.

Moved by Wang’s persistence and relying on Sehee’s guidance, local cemeterian Dyanne Matzkevich, though avowedly “not a greenie,” establishes the first natural burial ground in North Carolina. Together she and Wang endeavor to protect the tract of forest adjacent to her conventional cemetery, developing a close bond. While Wang continues the battle to overcome his illness, he and his partner Jane find great comfort in the thought that his death—whenever it happens—will be a force for regeneration.

Remain with us after the film for a discussion and Q&A session, featuring the film’s producers; Brian Flowers, president of the Green Burial Council; and Dyanne Matzkevich, manager and planning specialist with Pine Forest Memorial Gardens in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

This movie presentation is brought to you by Citadel Management and Dyanne Matzkevich.

Learn more at www.awillforthewoods.com



Furever

Thursday, April 10, 4 to 6 p.m.

Furever explores the dimensions of grief experienced over the loss of a pet. It examines the sociological evolution of pets in the U.S. today, particularly their position in a family unit, and how this evolution is affecting those in the veterinary profession and death care industry.

The documentary involves interviews with grieving pet owners, veterinarians, psychologists, sociologists, religious scholars, neuroscientists and the professionals who preserve a pet’s body for their devastated clientele (or re-purpose a pet’s remains in unique ways, i.e. taxidermy, cloning, mummification, freeze-drying and many more options).

Furever confronts contemporary trends, perspectives and relevant cultural assumptions regarding attachment, religion, ritual, grief and death, and studies the bonds that form between humans and animals, both psychological and physiological.

After the film, join us for a discussion and Q&A session featuring the film’s director/producer Amy Finkel; Nick Savage, owner/artist of Memory Glass; PLPA Co-Chairs Coleen Ellis, CPLP, and Bill Remkus, CPLP; Poul Lemasters, Esq.; and Robert Fells, Esq., ICCFA executive director and general counsel.

Learn more at www.fureverfilm.com

A fun way to earn continuing education credit!

NEXT GENERATION

SESSIONS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE ICCFA NEXT GENERATION COMMITTEE

It's not about age... it's a state of mind.

Recruit, Engage and Retain the Next Generation of Your Workforce:

With more millennials entering the workforce each year, it is more important than ever for business owners and managers to understand who millennials are and how best to incorporate them into your business strategy. During this session, Tim Hoff, CFSP, and Kyle Nikola will discuss best practices for recruiting, engaging and retaining millennials, and offer concrete examples of their success in regards to working with millennials. You will walk away with a better understanding of how to engage millennials and how to best utilize this next generation of employees to benefit your business.

Tim Hoff, CFSP, has more than 30 years of experience in the funeral industry. He manages his family's five funeral home locations, which serve more than 250 families annually. He serves on ICCFA's Board of Directors, Sales & Marketing Committee and is a past Wide World of Sales Conference co-chair. He is a past president of the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association.

Kyle Nikola is president of Families First Funeral Care & Cremation Center, Coastal Empire Preplanning Services, Inc., Bonaventure Funeral Home and the Savannah Family of Cemeteries, all in Savannah, Georgia.



A Focus Group with the Next Generation of Consumers:

Our industry is well aware that the baby boomer generation will be the next great wave of customers, but it's their children and grandchildren who will be making their arrangements and memorialization decisions more often than not. Come observe this focus group to learn what the next generation of customers is looking for when it makes memorialization decisions and engage in an active discussion based on the following topics:

- Recognizing future consumer trends
- How to adapt to differing generational needs
- Engaging millennials in the arrangement room

Facilitators:

- Andrés Aguilar, vice president, Los Parques, Guatemala City, Guatemala
- Abigail Brammer Quiocho, director of business development, Gibraltar Remembrance Services, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana
- Christie Toson Hentges, CCE, president, The Tribute Companies, Inc., Hartland, Wisconsin



NextGen Raffle

Find a member of the Next Generation Committee throughout the convention to participate in a raffle to **win CASH PRIZES!** You'll also find them near the entrance of the Expo on **Tuesday, April 8, from 3 to 7 p.m.**, where they'll be coordinating some fun games in which you may **win FREE RAFFLE TICKETS.** Proceeds from the raffle will benefit the Next Generation Scholarship Fund to provide financial assistance to those who wish to attend ICCFA University or the Wide World of Sales Conference.



GREEN BURIAL TRACK

IN CONCERT WITH THE GREEN BURIAL COUNCIL

The following sessions are presented in concert with the Green Burial Council. The group will hold its annual Board meeting and an "open house" on Tuesday, April 8.

I'm Excited to Die: Green Burial and the Preneed Conversation:

As a funeral director and cemeterian, Brian Flowers has helped hundreds of families with traditional funerals, cremations and green burials, both at-need and preneed. Time and again, after finishing pre-arrangements for a green burial, Flowers has heard people express excitement about the choices they have made. In this presentation, he will define green burial and its technical aspects while exploring why people get excited about facing their mortality with this option.



History and Use of Shrouds:

The use of shrouds is a fast-growing trend, based partly on the rise of green burial needs. This discussion will focus on the history and usage of the shrouds in various cultures, as well as its use in modern green burials. Attend to discover useful best practices that can be implemented immediately. Esmerelda Kent will cover directions for wrapping a shroud, transporting a shroud and lowering a shroud, as well as the various applications for shrouds in funeral service.



Capture "Greener" Consumers: "Going green" is becoming mainstream in nearly every aspect

of our daily lives, so it's only natural that consumers are actively seeking out greener funeral services and products. Funeral businesses that have stepped outside their comfort zone are now realizing that by providing more options, their business is being positively influenced. Customer satisfaction has increased and sales are up. Darren Crouch will survey available green products and discuss how to display them, along with how incorporating green options into your offerings can boost your sales, attract new customers and take your business to a new progressive and prosperous level.



PLPA 5th Anniversary Reception Tuesday, April 8, 2 to 3 p.m.

Honoring Fallen K-9 Heroes: Your Role in This Important Task:

When a police K-9 is killed in the line of duty, there are many elements that go into honoring this officer and the extended police family. In this session, you will learn the proper protocols that have been compiled by the Indiana State Police task force team that have been made available to police departments nationwide. Sergeant Tony Knox will enlighten you as to the benefits and importance of having a memorial service protocol preplanned for the handler, their family and fellow police officers. From the community outreach and goodwill that is created from a K-9 memorial, to the benefits of fundraising to obtain another K-9 team member, this session will surely give you another message to deliver to your market on the benefits of working with a pet loss professional.



Pet Crematory Due Diligence: Educating your veterinary partners and the community on the proper process for choosing a reputable pet crematory is a procedure that has been laden with complications and a lack of standardization. The PLPA Standards and Ethics Committee, under the advisement of legal counsel Poul Lemasters, Esq., has finalized a due diligence method that will now allow our veterinary partners the ability to look at their crematory providers in a much more objective manner. From a due diligence check list to a standardized presentation, attendees of this session will walk away with yet another resource to assist in educating professionals on proper pet crematory practices. Lemasters will lead the interactive presentation on this very important subject. Panelists include: Jon Remkus, CPLP, Hinsdale Animal Cemetery and Crematory, Willowbrook, IL; Skye Stevens, CPLP, Homeward Bound Pet Cremation Services, Colorado Springs, CO; and Kevin Woronchak, CPLP, Until We Meet Again Pet Memorial Services, Vancouver, Canada.

Zoonotic Disease Concerns for Pet Loss Professionals:

Many of us are now working with pet loss cases associated with zoonotic diseases. In this informative session, Dr. Richard Hobart will present an overview of what a zoonotic disease is and discuss the most common



diseases, as well as other well-known and less common diseases. He will also discuss when and why pet loss professionals should exercise extra caution to ensure their employees are not at risk. Participants will leave the session more aware of zoonotic diseases and how to make zoonotic disease prevention a simple, affordable habit for your business.

Furever: Lessons Learned and Takeaways for Your Business:

Join Amy Finkel, producer/director of "Furever," an award-winning, feature-length documentary (being distributed by PBS and FilmBuff) that explores the dimensions of grief people experience over the loss of a pet. Furever examines the sociological evolution of pets in the U.S. today, particularly their position in a family unit, and how this evolution is affecting those in the veterinary profession and death care industry. Finkel, along with an exceptional group of pet loss industry insiders featured in the film, will discuss takeaways and discoveries about the pet death/grieving industry from the filmmaking process. The conversation will include findings about the history and legal status of pets as they relate to contemporary life, as well as their influence on the ideology of mortality and grief in our culture. Expect to learn methods that pet death business owners can apply to their business models, as well as critical insights about the pet death/grieving industry from an outsider. For more information about "Furever," please visit www.fureverfilm.com.



All My Children Wear Fur Coats: How to Leave a Legacy for Your Pet:

Attorney Peggy Hoyt will provide an in-depth look at how your clients may plan and prepare for the care of a pet in case their pet outlives them. She will offer practical advice that you may offer pet parents for creating estate plans beyond treating pets as property, but rather as a member of the family.



What You Can Learn from Recent Events:

Although unfortunate, there have been some horrific tragedies in the pet death care industry of late, which affect the entire profession. Whether it's a story about pet dumping, communal cremation instead of private, or wrongful return of cremated remains,



these negative stories leave a black eye on the profession. Join Poul Lemasters as he describes three recent scandals and what you can learn from them. Attendees will learn the full details of each incident, including the outcome, and potential legal implications. Attendees will walk away with concrete knowledge of how to prevent and react should they face a similar situation.

Pet Parent Products: An Educational Experience:

In this session, PLPA supplier committee members will provide insight into offering additional education to pet parents in order to increase revenue from product sales. This session is designed to help attendees reconsider their sales strategy, product offerings and product displays to help increase their profitability, all while focusing on better educating the pet parent on the wide variety of options available to honor their beloved companion.

Through a role-playing scenario, attendees will walk away with a better understanding of:

- The difference between building value versus stating costs
- The difference between presenting tributes versus memorials
- How to develop an emotional connection to memorial products
- Effective positioning and merchandising to increase product sales

Panelists:

- Jeremiah Neville, Terrybear Urns and Memorials
- Toni Noel, Memory Vessels
- Sandy Haworth, A Keepsake Company
- Terry Swalley, Pet Memorial Resource by Kap-Lind Enterprises

Four Core Communication Skills of Highly Effective Caregivers:

Communication skills are integral to providing compassionate care to families who are grieving the loss of their beloved pet. Applying these skills improves outcomes, including delivering grief support, eliciting and meeting client expectations, and enhancing client and caregiver satisfaction. Effective communication results from identifying key skills and putting them into practice. This interactive workshop will present four core communication skills to enhance caregiver-client relationships.



Neville



Noel



Haworth



Swalley



JEWISH FUNERAL TRACK

BY THE JEWISH FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF AMERICA

Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 8, 2 to 3 p.m.

Business Meeting & Memorial Service
Wednesday, April 9, 3 to 4 p.m.

JFDA Roundtable Discussion: Join the Jewish Funeral Directors of America for a discussion of relevant topics pertaining to Jewish funeral and

burial services, moderated by Jim Cohen, owner of Feldman Mortuary, Inc., in Denver, Colorado. Typically, this session, regardless of published topic, serves as an informative and helpful discussion about the needs, questions, concerns, challenges and successes of JFDA members.

Jewish Funeral Traditions on Film: Jewish funeral, burial and mourning traditions are very different from Christian practices and it is important to understand these differences when preparing for potential Jewish clientele. Gail Rubin will use various

film clips to demonstrate a variety of Jewish funeral traditions. Topics covered include:

- The origin of selected Jewish funeral traditions
- Jewish traditions before, during and after a funeral
- How Jewish funeral traditions differ from Christian funeral traditions
- Three Hebrew prayers related to death and funerals



CREMATION CENTRAL

CREMATION TRACK

Three Ways to Profit From Cremations: Cremation is the largest growth sector in our profession. Don't fear it. Learn how to profit from it.



James Price, CCFE, CCRÉ, will provide examples of thriving cremation gardens, locations of permanent cremation memorialization. He'll display examples of gorgeous areas in both large and small cemeteries, provide cost and profit analyses, and help you take the first steps towards adding a cremation garden to your property.

Then, Beth Cavanaugh will examine an array of cremation memorialization products available on the market today. She'll explain their features, why they are endearing to families, how to communicate the value of tribute merchandise and how to increase the average amount of your cremation cases.

And finally, Blair Nelsen, CCRÉ, CFuE, CFSP, will discuss online cremation arranging. He'll detail how his family's funeral home created packages, implemented online purchasing options, the successes, the "learning moments" and how this option led them to dominate the cremation market in his hometown of Richmond, Virginia.

We Just Want a Cremation: Obstacle or Opportunity?:

Don't let those five feared words—"We just want a cremation"—be an obstacle to your success. This in-depth session will give you all of the necessary tools to prepare you to work with an increasing number of clients who want "just a cremation." Michael Devaney will highlight the latest trends in cremation, with an emphasis on the baby boomer demographic and its impact in the coming decades. Attendees will discover:

- How to ask the right questions and provide the right answers



- Best practices for positioning your business to attract those in your area wanting cremation
- Cremation trends and how they will affect your business viability
- Importance of being responsive and proactive to the changing needs of the families you serve
- Using packaging as a valuable tool in your arsenal

Five Cremation Issues That Are Affecting Us All:

Even the best of the best run across a problem from time to time. Join Poul Lemasters as he discusses the five most common issues facing cremation providers today. Issues to be discussed range from families not interested in participating to unclaimed cremation remains. Additionally, Lemasters will identify potential legal ramifications and detail the steps to take to reduce the liability of your business.



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ICCFA Hall of Fame

Join us as we induct **David J. Shipper**, president and CEO of Futura Group, into the ICCFA Hall of Fame during the Closing Dinner on Friday, April 11, from 8 to 10:30 p.m. A Closing Reception will precede the dinner beginning at 7 p.m.

The Futura Group, based in Ewing, New Jersey, owns and operates 42 cemetery and funeral home locations serving more than 12,000 families per year. Previously, Shipper served as a vice president and director of corporate development with Loewen Group International. During his tenure, he negotiated more than \$250 million in cemetery and combination acquisitions and more than \$1 billion in closing transactions.

He also serves on the ICCFA Board of Directors and is a past president of the association. His father, Irwin W. Shipper, CCE, was inducted into the ICCFA Hall of Fame 10 years ago. His family has been in funeral service for multiple generations.



ICCFA Educational Foundation Reception Thursday, April 10, 6 to 7 p.m.

Join us for a reception to honor donors, scholarship recipients and bestow the inaugural ICCFA Educational Foundation Lasting Impact Awards for Gary O'Sullivan, CCFE, and Todd Van Beck, CFuE. Tickets are \$100 and may be purchased on-site. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served. All proceeds will benefit the Educational Foundation, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charity that supports the association's educational programs.



REGISTRATION

- Non-members: Register at the non-member rate and receive one FREE year of ICCFA membership!
- One-day passes available
- Student rate: \$285 for full registration
- Single expo session passes available

Full program and registration available at iccfaconvention.com

KIP Awards

Attend this year's awards ceremony at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, April 10, in the general session area.



The **KIP (Keeping It Personal) Awards** for the best in personalization were created by ICCFA's Personalization Committee to recognize outstanding examples of personalization of services or products in the death care profession. Categories are:

- **Innovative Personalized Product** (suppliers-only category): Product that memorializes in a personal and meaningful way.
- **Most Personalized Service or Memorial**: An outstanding example of a personalized funeral for a particular individual, or a very personalized memorial.
- **Event**: For the most personal and creative workshop, seminar or holiday event sponsored by your cemetery or funeral home. The event must include the participation of your clients and/or the general public.
- **Best Practice**: A "best practice." Something that you do for every family, or every family in a certain situation (examples: when the deceased is a veteran, or a baby).
- **Most Personalized Pet Service or Memorial**: An outstanding example of a personalized funeral for a particular pet, or a very personalized memorial.

SPECIAL EVENTS

ICCFA Annual Memorial Service

Wednesday, April 9, 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.

Join us as we honor ICCFA members, their family, friends and loved ones who have died in the past year.

State Association Leadership Luncheon

Friday, April 11, Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Elected leaders, staff and "rising stars" from state and regional associations are invited to gather at this roundtable luncheon to network and discuss issues affecting their members. A ticket is required and can be purchased on the registration form.

ICCFA Annual Meeting of Members

Wednesday, April 9, 8 to 8:45 a.m.

Vote for representatives to the Board of Directors and hear reports from the association's officers.

ICCFA Prayer Breakfast

Thursday, April 10, 7:30 to 8:45 a.m.

How do we praise God when times are tough? Join Paul Elvig and Alan Creedy for this year's Prayer Breakfast to discuss ways to have a humble and grateful heart—always. This event is complimentary courtesy of sponsors, and is open to the first 60 people to request a ticket.

Five Things Every Funeral Director Should Know About Suicide

Joanne L. Harpel, M.Phil., J.D.

Professional Suicide Bereavement Advisor

Even as you're called upon to comfort families at their most raw and vulnerable, and even as you pride yourself on anticipating and meeting each family's particular needs, suicide presents a unique set of challenges. It's a subject that's frequently misunderstood, and has a way of bringing intense emotions rushing to the surface.

And even as you're bearing witness to others' intense grief and pain, you still have a job to do. So to help you navigate this tricky territory, here are five things every funeral director should know about suicide.

1. Suicide Is Complicated.

Suicide is almost always shocking. You hear things like: *"We just never saw it coming."* Or, *"he was the last one you'd expect."* But suicide isn't inexplicable. And it doesn't just come out of nowhere.

It's also not just the result of stress. You hear things like: *"It's because he lost his job."* Or, *it's because her husband left her."* Or, *"it's because he was bullied."* With something as frightening as suicide, it's human nature to look for a straightforward explanation, a way for it all to make sense. But it's really important to remember that the overwhelming number of people who lose their jobs or their marriages or are bullied don't kill themselves. It's simply not a normal reaction even to extremely stressful life circumstances.

Suicide isn't a sign of weakness, or a character flaw, or an easy way out. There's almost always a very complicated mix of things going on, which simply may not be obvious to the outside. Most importantly, there's almost always an underlying vulnerability due to some kind of mental disorder. In fact, we know from the research that more than 90% of people who die by suicide have some kind of mental disorder at the time of their death, most commonly depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or substance abuse, or some combination. These illnesses often go unrecognized, and even if they're diagnosed, they're often not treated,



or not treated effectively. And even if they're treated, in some people they can be fatal.

It's essential to know that these illnesses can cause excruciating psychological pain and desperate hopelessness. Someone can appear to have everything in the world to be happy about (and to live for), and still be suffering tremendously on the inside. You can have a great job, a good-looking spouse, a nice house, and still have cancer, right? Well, depression is no different. It's an illness. And mental disorders can impair a person's ability to think clearly about their future and their options, and make it hard for them to make good decisions, including about the need to get help. Of course, the vast majority of people who are depressed never become suicidal, but just like people can die of heart disease or cancer, they can die as a consequence of serious mental disorders.

Photo ©1991 Joanne Lelewer Harpel

The author and her brother, Stephen, the night before his wedding, July, 1991. He was the valedictorian of his high school class and an honors graduate of Yale University, who went on to Harvard Law School and then married his college sweetheart. He was so popular, he had eleven groomsmen at his wedding. But at the age of 26 he suddenly developed bipolar disorder, and despite the love of family and friends, and efforts to get him the right treatment, he took his own life less than a year later. Those same eleven young men were pallbearers at his funeral.



2. News Flash: It's better not to say "committed suicide."

You've probably heard and even said those words a hundred times and never even gave it a second thought. It's what most people say. It's what you typically see in the paper and hear on the news. So what's the big deal?

For someone who's lost a loved one to suicide those words can sting. They can feel negative and judgmental and hurtful. You see, you "commit" things like crimes and sins. But you would never say someone "committed" cancer or a heart attack. So, what should you say instead? Try this: "he died by suicide" or "she took her own life." Or even "he killed himself." It may feel a little awkward at first, but the families you work with will appreciate your sensitivity.

And while we're on the subject of language, think about how many times you've heard about a suicide attempt being "unsuccessful." Sounds pretty awful now, doesn't it? After all, there's really no such thing as a "successful" suicide, is there? Much better to talk about a suicide attempt as being "fatal" or "non-fatal."

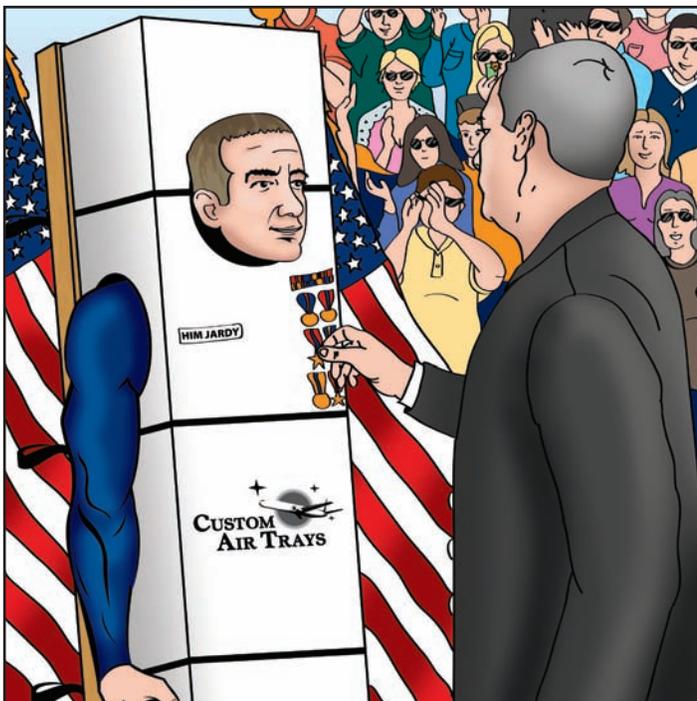
3. The people left behind may be blaming themselves...

It's not uncommon for grieving loved ones to relive those last days over and over again, asking themselves a thousand questions that all begin the same way: "Why?" They may find themselves scouring their memories, wondering whether there was something, anything, they said (or didn't say) or did (or didn't do) that could have somehow made everything turn out differently. They may feel guilty, responsible, ashamed, as if somehow it's all their fault. Of course it isn't. We've all heard about the "stigma" that unfortunately still persists around suicide. What we don't always remember is that often that stigma comes from the inside.

4. ...Or each other.

It's also common for those left behind to blame someone else: the wife who left him, the boss who fired her, the mother, the principal, the bully, the therapist. This heartbreaking round robin of anger is all too common after a suicide, and can cause tremendous pain, even driving families apart. It can make it impossible for people to support and care for one another when

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they need each other most. Most of this, thankfully, will soften over time, as people come to have more understanding and perspective. But at the time of the funeral, all of that emotion can be very intense. There may not be much that you can do to soothe those feelings, but just knowing that they may be simmering below the surface can help you be that much more compassionate and supportive.

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5. You Can Be a Resource.

As you fulfill your unique professional role as part trusted confidante, part counselor, part event planner, the more comfortable you are with this subject the better able you'll be to support the families who come to you. First, know that it's a myth that asking someone if they're suicidal can somehow put the idea in their minds. If you're worried about someone, don't be afraid to ask them directly if they're thinking of hurting themselves. And keep this number handy: 1-800-273-TALK. It's the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.



NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE™
I-800-273-TALK
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

If you're interested in understanding a little more about the experience of losing a loved one to suicide, *No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One* by Carla Fine, is excellent.

And finally, we know from the research that during the course of our lifetime, more than 85% of us will lose someone we know to suicide. If you've been touched by suicide yourself, this may hit close to home for you. Take good care.



A world-renowned expert on suicide bereavement and the longtime survivor of her own brother's suicide, Joanne Harpel is a professional suicide bereavement advisor, available to provide personalized guidance and support (either in person or by phone) to individuals and families coping with suicide loss. She can be reached at joanneharpel@icloud.com. For more information, please visit www.linkedin.com/in/joannelelewerharpel.

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Dean Mark Krause, CFuE

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- **No Ceremony, No Memorialization: Our Failure, Our Fault**, Ernie Heffner, CFuE **NEW!**
- **A \$27,000 Average Wedding vs. Your Final Celebration**, Allen Dave Jr.
- **What Casket Do You Want With Those Chicken Wings?!**, Mark Krause, CFuE
- **70% of Services Are Performed by Eternal Hills Staff**, Tim Lancaster

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- **Arranger Curriculum:** Gary Freytag, CCFE; Lacy Robinson **NEW!**; Julie A. Burn, CCrE, CSE; Nectar Ramirez; Doug Gober; Mark Krause, CFuE; Jim Starks, CFuE, CCrE
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Classes include:

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- **What Great Sales Managers Know That Good Sales Managers Don't**, Gary O'Sullivan, CCFE
- **Creating Your Brand: Going Beyond Advertising**, Tiffany Gallarzo
- **Build a Company That Attracts and Keeps Top Talent**, Andrés Aguilar,
- **Creating Community Connections That Generate Returns**, Ty Lohman

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Classes include:

- **Monica Bracho-Hernandez**, Enhancing an Organization's Safety Culture **NEW!**
- **Creating a Committal Service That Everybody Talks About**, John Gouch **NEW!**
- **Heroes Serving Heroes**, Jack Lechner Jr., CFSP (deputy superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery) **NEW!**
- **Those Sales People! What Are They Thinking?**, Jim Hammond
- **High Profile Funerals/Visit to Graceland and Elvis' Grave**, Marsha Chance **NEW!**
- **Exceptional Cemetery Maintenance: Experience the Difference**, Gino Merendino

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- **The All Important First Viewing: A Variety of Ways to Embalm the Infant Case; and Mentoring to a Worthy**

Apprentice, all by Ken Whittaker

- **There's Always a Better Way!**, Jack Adams, CFSP
- **The History of Embalming From the American Civil War to the Psychology of Embalming Today**, Todd Van Beck, CFuE

**Dean Dr. Joseph Marsaglia
Dean of Faculty & Students, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Pittsburgh, PA**



- **What's New That Can Get You Sued?**, Poul Lemasters, Esq. **NEW!**
- **Pre-Cremation Prep: Preparing the Unembalmed Remains for Viewing**, Todd Eckert
- **Reconstructive Surgery, Soft Tissue Injuries, Waxing and Airbrush Cosmetics**, Vernie Fountain, CFSP
- **Become a TSA Certified Cargo Screening Facility**, Jeff Van Calligan

The Funeral Ladies

When it comes to grief and loss, The Funeral Ladies certainly have a traveled path of experience. From their personal grief experiences they have revived a lost tradition to acknowledge the loss of a loved one, provide an outward display of mourning, and respect the grieving. Kate Hamilton, Managing Director explains that in today's society we have lost the tradition that provided so many benefits. She went on to explain that the idea was borne from a conversation between her sisters and mum. "My sister, who had been to a wake of her friend's grandmother, explained how uncomfortable and embarrassed she felt as a result of not being able to identify immediate family with whom she should sympathize. Each of us gave examples of wakes and

"A better path is often cleared for us to travel behind the experience of others."

Mourning Cross Bereavement Pins

As a result of their personal experience of losing many close family members including their father, the aptly named, Funeral Ladies from Ireland have designed and developed the elegant Mourning Cross Bereavement Pins.

funerals that we had attended where we had experienced similar, uncomfortable and embarrassing situations. We also recalled our own family wake of my father and how some visitors had walked past us not realizing that we were daughters. We talked about the loud whispers of people asking who was who and the stories that are lost about the deceased as a result of missed opportunities for sharing."

The Past



In times past, most cultures honored their loved ones with tributes at services and wore symbols during their time of mourning.

The Present



Unfortunately today, there is less respect for the Mourning process. The modern display of mourning is reduced to a rubber wrist band that could be mistaken for any event or cause.

Remembering the departed, Respecting the grieving



The Funeral Ladies designed and developed the Mourning Cross and non-denominational circle bereavement pins which are presented on a card with the poem entitled “It’s My Time” by Angel Lady Jackie Newcomb.

How the Mourning Cross bereavement pins support the grieving and mourning process.

In his book *Coaching at End of Life*, Dr. Don Eisenhauer, ACC (Associate Certified Coach accredited by the International Coach Federation) Hospice Chaplain and bereavement Coordinator, who currently uses the bereavement pins, explains that grief is what we feel on the inside after a loved one has died. It is the composite of thoughts and feelings about loss that is experienced internally within an individual. Mourning is the outward and visible expression of that grief. Dr. Eisenhauer explains that it is not enough for a person to feel grief. Healthy grief must involve mourning. He has endorsed the Mourning Cross Bereavement Pins and adds, *“Those who are mourning find it helpful to wear the Bereavement Pins in their everyday activities. As observers notice and ask about the pin they are wearing, opportunities arise for the one in grief to talk about their loved one. This is an important part of the grief process. When mourners are sad and cry at times when others don’t understand the tears, the pins become a sign and symbol acknowledging that this individual is experiencing grief.”*

The Funeral Ladies believe that reviving and preserving this tradition provides a symbolic and special significance of acknowledging the life lived and a symbol of mourning by the grieving family members at a very difficult time. They are passionate about reviving this old tradition using a respectful symbol to enhance the funeral experience not only for attendees but for the families of the deceased who benefit from the wonderful stories. Kate highlighted that some people wear the bereavement pins as an outward expression of grief and respect daily and on anniversaries of the date of death.

Why Funeral Directors offer the Mourning Cross Bereavement Pins

- To tangibly acknowledge the family’s loss...example from Funeral Director to immediate survivor: “Please accept my personal condolences and allow me to offer this bereavement pin as my acknowledgment of your loss. Remember that grief does not end at the conclusion of my service to you, so please wear this as a symbol during your time of grief and mourning.”
- The pins support Funeral Directors and their staff who themselves may have trouble identifying immediate family members.
- They provide a fresh new way to become the “funeral resource” to local hospice workers.
- The pins are a wonderful Transfer/Removal Leave Behind.
- Many funeral homes include the pins in their Memorial Packages.

Why Families love the Mourning Cross Bereavement Pins

- “I love the Mourning Cross. I wear it all the time, I feel it is keeping me in touch with my loved ones, it is a terrible pity to let old traditions fade away with modern times, it’s nice to wear a symbol of mourning with pride in remembrance of our loved ones.”
- “I just like the idea of showing your loss in a simple understated way, the Mourning Cross bereavement pins are perfect to do that.”

- “I went to a funeral yesterday and was delighted to see the family wearing the Mourning Cross, it made such a difference being able to identify the family that I needed to shake hands with. The crosses are very rich looking.”
- “I’ve seen the lapel pins worn at a wake and funeral and I knew straight away why they were being worn. They make it so easy to pay your respects to all of the family, they are really lovely and a fantastic idea.”
- “I’m thrilled with their quality, and permanence. They are both practical and beautiful; ultimately becoming a treasured keepsake, expressing the essence of what it means to ‘transcend.’”



Kate concludes by highlighting that we live in a society where people are expected to “pull themselves together, get over their loss.” Families appreciate the opportunity to outwardly display their mourning as in traditions gone by. Funeral Directors recognize that offering the pins to their families is adding value to their service and at the same time affording families the comfort which Mourning Cross bereavement pins bring.

It’s my Time

Jacky Newcomb

Where do we go when it’s time to leave? **It’s my time.**
 Through the tunnel of light, where it’s clear and bright. **It’s my time.**
 My friends are all waiting on the other side,
 I’m a little bit scared, but my angel’s at my side. **It’s my time.**
 I know you’ll cry, **It’s my time.**

I know you’ll be wondering ‘Why, Why, Why?’. **It’s my time.**
 I can’t stay on Earth where my work is done.
 Heaven is great, I’m happy and it’s fun. **It’s my time.**
 I’ll always love you and you’ll always love me, **It’s my time.**
 Never forget me, but I want you to move on, ‘Coz it’s my time.

All good things must come to an end,
 You’re in my heart, and you’ll always be my friend, but it’s my time,
 Although we must part it’s only for a while. **It’s not your time.**
 Make me proud as you carry on.
 It’s not your time.

I’ll wait for you ‘til you’re old and grey,
 I’m sorry that you have to stay, it’s not your time.
 Life is precious and although it’s not the same, it’s not your time
 Life will go on, I think you’ll find, it’s not your time
 I want you to promise that while I am away
 You’ll love one another, I hope and pray you’ll
 Understand my darling,

It’s my time, it’s my time It’s my time.

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Aftercare is More Important than You May Know



By Robert L. Pierce

I am not a funeral director. I have worked in the funeral industry for more than thirty years but my understanding of the dynamic of the service planning conference came as a result of being a family member and a consumer. I believe that it is my business background in funeral service and my consumer perspective that qualify me to write an article on how grief management, healing and aftercare fit into and contribute to the mission of funeral service.

Service - from the Consumer's Standpoint

In order to think about the role that aftercare plays in funeral service, we have to look at the services that we provide to the family from the standpoint of the consumer. What do they expect? What do they want from us? What makes a consumer happy? How can a funeral director provide value that transcends the cost of the services provided? When I think about the services that funeral directors provide, I begin by separating funeral home services into two categories.

- The basic elements of funeral service
- The things that make a funeral home's service special for the family

The basic elements of funeral service include all the aspects of funeral service that families should expect from a funeral home. A few of these basic services include courtesy, respect, great embalming, and a well-coordinated service. These are things for which a family pays and has every right to expect. They are the entry level upon which a funeral home builds its overall service to its families.

The hospitality industry has done an excellent job of positioning itself to make choices easier for its customers. Everyone knows that hotels and motels provide different levels of service. Whether you have stayed in one or not, you know the difference between the Ritz-Carlton, the Marriott and a Motel Six. Their brands effectively position them in the marketplace. Funeral homes do not have universally accepted and published "star ratings" to guide the funeral consumer or to inspire funeral directors. In fact, the funeral industry has never to my knowledge formally defined the mission of a funeral home nor have they formally defined what constitutes an exceptional service. The mission of funeral service, however, is very obvious to me. A funeral director's mission is to provide comfort and healing to bereaved families. While this may be very apparent to virtually everyone, the manner in which this is accomplished is not as obvious.

The "special" things that a funeral home delivers are the things that impress a family and their guests and make them more likely to have a service and to return when the next death occurs. It is the little things that, when accumulated, result in a superior service. An obviously partial list might include the following:

- Taking the time to get to know or reacquaint yourself and build a relationship with the deceased and their family before beginning to plan the services
- Using the relationship that you have fostered and the information that you have gotten from the family to help the family construct an event that reflects the values and culture of their family

- Making the family aware of the personalization opportunities that are available to them, their importance, and their impact on the services and attendees
- Providing services that are uniquely responsive to the culture of the deceased, attendees, and their family
- Creating an environment that fosters interaction and storytelling during services
- Designing and executing informative and celebratory services that bring attendees closer to the deceased to help them progress in the grieving process
- Providing the family with a warm and comfortable environment in which to make arrangements
- Providing the family with simple, rational and satisfying service and merchandising choices
- Providing the family with an understanding of the grieving process during the planning conference and the role that the funeral director / funeral home will play in the healing process
- Providing the family with a written outline of things that have to happen following a death including a timeline, common contact information and a sincere offering of assistance
- Providing the family with information that will allow them to purchase urns, jewelry and other ancillary products from the comfort of their home after the planning conference
- Providing the minister or celebrant with information about the deceased to help them be more responsive to the culture of the family
- Treating all families with the same dignity, respect, and opportunity that you would provide to a family that buys a precious metal casket
- Calling the family of the deceased at various times after the services to maintain contact and to determine how the family is coping with the death of their loved one
- Providing assistance with the grieving process (referral to Hospice, referral to a minister, referral to a trained grief therapist, interactive events, etc.)
- Treating every guest in your funeral home as if they were a guest in your home

It is the simple value oriented approach that families have toward funeral service that opens up the opportunity to become a better and more profitable funeral home with an expanded market share and happier families. All the funeral director has to do is make the family certain that

that they were treated special; that the funeral director took a genuine interest in them and their family, that they received a superior service, and that the value of the services that they received was greater than the cost of their services.

The Link between Service and Profitability

The purpose of this article is not to help define the role of the funeral director in our society. It is about how providing a superior level of service can increase the revenue, profit, and market share of a funeral home. Service and profit are inexorably linked and funeral service will not rise to the level of profitability that it deserves until it defines its service mission clearly and executes on it.

I suspect that there is near universal agreement about the elements that make up a profit management program. The profit management program includes:

- A strategic or long-term plan
- A one-year profit and service focused business plan
- A working budget
- Good reporting systems and focused management reports
- A Profit and Loss Statement that is monitored by management vs. the budget monthly
- Communication of the plan to team members and establishing team member's goals
- Regular feedback to team members and at least annual reviews to formally assess their performance
-

The importance of managing the customer experience is often overlooked when a funeral home business institutes a profit management program. Management of the customer experience is by far the greatest contributor to the additional profits that result.

Funeral homes typically spend between one and five percent on advertising and marketing depending on their circumstances. The marketing is typically intended to strengthen their brands. It is rarely positioned to increase product awareness or to result in a near-term increase in revenue, profit or market share. By redefining the customer experience as the critical element of the funeral home's marketing program, a funeral home can get an immediate increase in revenue and profit and further, can begin the longer-term process

of capturing market share from a competitor.

It is actually pretty simple to develop a funeral home's services into a serious marketing initiative. Make aftercare, the grief process, and healing the primary focus of the services that you provide during the arrangement conference and then again in your family follow-up program. Funeral homes typically look at aftercare as an add-on to their core services. Aftercare is not an afterthought. It is at the very core of the services that we provide to our families. Aftercare is going to be a big part of what keeps funeral homes relevant and profitable in our rapidly changing world.

Treat families as if they are the most important people on the planet and they will respond by having more commemorative services, spending more on the services that they have, and buying more and better merchandise. A profit management program that includes carefully managing the family experience adds a thousand dollars or more per call to the profit of a funeral home. In fact, I have never seen it fail to do so.

Bob Pierce was a Certified Public Accountant, the Chief Financial Officer of an aggressive cemetery and funeral company, and was involved in the purchase and sale of more than one thousand funeral homes and cemeteries. He is President of Pierce CFO, a firm specializing in profit and value management and sales and acquisitions of funeral homes. Pierce CFO has offices in Tallahassee, Florida and Alexandria, Virginia. He can be reached for comments at 888-860-6468, on the web at piercecfo.com, or by email at bob@piercecfo.com.



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CFSA 2013-2014 Board of Directors (L-R) Lou Tobia, Jr., President; Pete Galletly, Treasurer; Jerry Burchett, Director; Betsy VerPlank-Kerl, Director; Tina Houck, Vice President; Len Weber, Immediate Past President; Peggy Rouzzo, Director; Margaret "Peg" Deaton, Director; Terrill vieth, Director; Alain Dumont, Director; Mike Beardsley, Director; Steve Gadaleta, Director and Shannon Robinson, Director



(L-R) Newly Elected President, Lou Tobia, Jr., New England Casket, with Immediate Past President, Len Weber, Aurora Casket.



Keith Fleming giving a "Next 100-year speech" to the Board of Directors and guest during their annual Board dinner



President Len Weber giving a toast to CFSA's next 100 years.



(L-R) Jack Schmidt, The Red Book Directory, sharing a laugh during dinner with Mike Mims, Cherokee Child Caskets



Peg Deaton, Charlie Shaw and Nancy Lohman enjoying an afternoon in the exhibit hall



Long, long-timers Dave Beck, Clark Grave Vault; former CFSA Executive Director George Lemke and Nancy Beck during the 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner Celebration







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Astral acquires state of the art equipment

Astral Industries, Inc. manufactures 18 gauge, 20 gauge and stainless steel burial caskets in its approximate 200,000 square foot facility located in Lynn, Indiana. While deeply committed to the traditional values which are the backbone of the funeral products industry, Astral's management recognizes the need to maintain a forward-thinking approach, keeping products innovative and cost-effective, with those savings being passed directly on to the customers.

The recent addition of the SPRINT 20 Linear CNC lathe, which produces casket hardware parts, increases the efficiency and capabilities of Astral's production floor, and represents an exciting opportunity for production staff and management alike. "Quality is one of our top priorities on the floor", says Mike Nuñez, Astral engineer, "and the ability to produce hardware which we previously sourced elsewhere gives us greater control and oversight, resulting in improved quality controls." Nuñez also points out that the cost of producing hardware on site represents a significant cost savings while simultaneously improving supply chain management.



Astral has also added increased flexibility to its hardware supply chain with the acquisition of a vacuum metalizer, allowing the company to metalize durable, attractive casket hardware in-house. Vacuum metalizing has long been an industry standard with the ability to provide highly polished and detailed parts at a fraction of the cost of other coating methods. "When people talk to us about what makes a casket stand out, it's always the details that make the difference," says Charlie Shaw, owner and CEO of Astral Industries. "We're constantly looking for ways to provide that high eye appeal while providing funeral homes the highest value for themselves and the families they serve."

To learn more about Astral and its product line, contact your local sales representative or call the Customer Service department at 1-800-278-7252. You can also visit their website at www.astralindustries.com.

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Georgia Funeral Supply Sales Association Holds Annual Mid Year Meeting

The GFSSA recently held their annual Mid Year meeting at the Little Ocmulgee State Park and Golf Lodge. The morning session was dedicated to the annual golf tournament and after an afternoon social hour, the salesman were treated to a grilled ribeye steak dinner with all the trimmings.

Their was a brief meeting following dinner and among the topics discussed was the rising cremation rate and the adjustments that funeral directors and suppliers must adhere to, in order to provide quality products and services for the families. Many companies have had to expand their product lines to offset the rise in cremation and provide additional services which creates more options for the families.

The 2013-2014 GFSSA officers and directors include: Doug Ward, President, Ward's Transport Services; Dan Reece, Immediate Past President, Matthews International; Paul Cotter, 1st Vice President, Deaton-Kennedy/Messenger; Dave Aarmes, 2nd Vice President, Cincinnati Equitable and Patty Hutcheson, Secretary/Treasurer, Gupton-Jones College.



(L-R) Chris Grimsley, Doug Ward, Bob Tuggle and Chris Graham

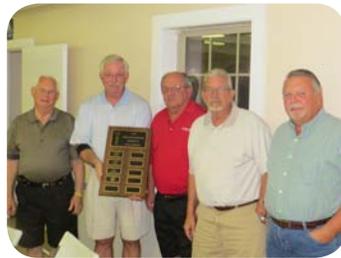
(L-R) Winning Team of Winston Brown, Hal Singletary and Tommy Johnson



(L-R) Tony Spell, Johnny McClurd, Scott Jones and John Yopp

Tommy Johnson before he hits his 310 yard drive..... With a 5 iron





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SIX PIERCE CHEMICAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES EARN SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

BROADVIEW, IL, February 20, 2014 – Pierce Chemical presented six Regional Sales Representatives with special achievement awards at the Wilbert/Pierce Annual Sales Meeting, held in January in Dallas, TX. Dennis Welzenbach, President, Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc., presented the awards.



David Hicks (right), receives the Bill Pierce Award

David Hicks was awarded the distinguished Bill Pierce Award, given to one who demonstrates exemplary professionalism and above-and-beyond efforts. Covering Kentucky and parts of Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia, David is seen by his customers as a partner and advisor with laser focus on their needs. In addition, in 2013 David taught a seminar at Mid-America College of Funeral Service, Jeffersonville, IN where he had formerly served as an instructor, plus was a presenter at the inaugural interactive video conference held by Pierce Colleges.

Charles Miles earned the award for the Greatest Increase in Overall Sales in 2013. Charles covers North Carolina and South Carolina.



Charles Miles



Michael Kuruc

Michael Kuruc was given the award for Greatest Increase in Fluid Sales in 2013. Michael is the sales rep for Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, and parts of Virginia and West Virginia.

Don Summers achieved Top Sales of Memorial Books in 2013. Don's territory encompasses parts of Texas.



Don Summers

Four individuals received the Pierce 110% Club Award, given to sales representatives whose 2013 sales were at least 110% of those in 2012. These individuals are:



Tommy Johnson

- Charles Miles (North Carolina, South Carolina)
- Tommy Johnson (parts of Georgia)
- David Hicks (Kentucky, and parts of Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia)
- Chris Grimsley (parts of Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee)

"All of these individuals are top-notch professionals with a laser-focus on helping their customers," said Lance Ray, Executive Vice-President of Sales, Pierce Chemical. "Their collaborative approach with customers helps ensure that families receive the absolute best experience during difficult times. All deserve our congratulations."



Chris Grimsley

To learn more about Pierce Chemical, visit www.piercechemical.com.

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Ellis Melton dies at 97; founder of Ellis Melton Company

Ask any Arkansas funeral director who knew Mr. Ellis Melton and they will tell you he was more than a supplier of funeral products. He was a true friend who cared deeply about helping funeral homes achieve success. Ellis, 97, died Friday, February 7, 2014.

More than 6 decades ago, Ellis Melton, a sales representative for Funeral Supply and Equipment Company in Little Rock, Arkansas, pursued an opportunity that would eventually become the standard in providing quality burial products to funeral homes. Sixty eight years later, Mr. Melton's commitment to funeral homes is evident in the day to day operations of Melton Company, Inc, under the leadership of Ellis' son Presley Melton and now his grandsons Mark and Adam Melton.

Ellis Melton was part of The Greatest Generation having served in World War II and returning home to Arkansas to resume his career in funeral service. He was a true entrepreneur who believed in the success of his funeral home clients, but most importantly believed in funeral service. Ellis' incredible work ethic, commitment to funeral homes and ability to adapt to change led his company to growth and success.

Jeff Smith, owner of North Little Rock Funeral Home, remembers the day Mr. Melton took him out for lunch shortly after he began employment at the funeral home. Over lunch Mr. Melton expressed how proud he was of Jeff and shared many stories of Jeff's granddad, Clifford Smith, who founded North Little Rock Funeral Home in 1955. Jeff will never forget the day when Ellis made funeral arrangements for his wife of 69 years, Louise. It was no surprise that Ellis insisted on paying the full retail price of the casket he selected. Jeff believes it was that high level of respect that Mr. Melton demonstrated every single day that contributed to his successful working relationships across the state of Arkansas.

Ellis served over 20 years as Secretary of the Arkansas Funeral Supply Sales Club and also served as a board member of the Casket Manufacturers Association of America. For Ellis his customers were his friends and staying connected during retirement was no challenge. Ellis and Louise traveled the state in their motor home

visiting their friends in funeral service. Customers also looked forward to his annual Christmas phone calls. Arkansas funeral directors, will remember Ellis as being a man of honesty and integrity someone they could always count on.



“Ellis Melton began a legacy of service that continues to this day,” said Bill Hudson, Vice President of sales at Aurora. “Funeral professionals throughout Arkansas knew Mr. Melton was committed to helping their business. That tradition lives on through his family business today.”

He was predeceased by Louise, his wife of 69 years and his parents Lessie and Ellis H. Melton. He is survived by his sister NathaLee Witt of Heber Springs, two sons, Ellis Melton Jr. (Kay), of Fayetteville and Presley Melton (Jo), of North Little Rock; daughter, Ginger Smith (Danny), of Russellville; five grandsons, Brian Smith, Jason Smith (Jennifer), Andrew Melton, Mark Melton (Katie), and Adam Melton; four greatgrandchildren, Anna Smith and Lauren, Jack, and Lily Melton.



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Batesville Uses Digital Platform to Honor Black History Month

BatesvilleHonors.com website offers free information to help funeral professionals manage and grow their businesses

BATESVILLE, IN., February 5, 2014 – Batesville, the leading provider of comprehensive solutions to the death care industry, has partnered with Taylor Insight Worldwide, LLC, a New York-based leadership development and management consulting firm, to create and deliver career and business-oriented digital content for funeral directors and professionals in celebration of Black History Month.

Throughout the month of February, the company will be sharing information through a dedicated website, BatesvilleHonors.com, to help funeral professionals achieve business goals and manage their businesses more effectively. The website will include free blog posts, video segments and downloadable tutorials developed by author and entrepreneur Andre Taylor. Funeral professionals are encouraged to register at www.batesvillehonors.com to receive updates and check the site for new content.

The most trusted technology partner in the death care industry, Batesville is focused on providing its customers with easy-to-use solutions that leverage the latest technology to help grow their business and enhance relationships with families.

“There’s no better time than Black History Month to reinforce Batesville’s respect and appreciation for African-American heritage,” says Troy Turner, Chief Marketing Officer for Batesville. “We have long-standing relationships with many African-American funeral professionals and this is a meaningful way of giving back during this important celebration.”

For more than a century, Batesville has been dedicated to its mission of providing products and solutions to support families in remembering and honoring the lives of those they love. Funeral professionals depend on Batesville to deliver honest and insightful information that helps them be more effective in serving families and helping those families make informed choices; products and services that families value; today’s technology solutions tailored for the funeral industry;

and proven systems to make the most of each end-of-life experience, enhancing family satisfaction and improving business performance.

Taylor Insight Worldwide is a New York-based leadership development and management consulting firm, with an emphasis on original media. The company serves entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial companies with an array of training tools, events, consulting, and coaching services and is led by author, entrepreneur and media personality, André Taylor.

ABOUT BATESVILLE

Batesville (www.Batesville.com), a wholly owned subsidiary of Hillenbrand, Inc. (NYSE:HI), is the leader in the North American death care industry. For more than 125 years, Batesville has been dedicated to helping families honor the lives of those they love®. Batesville’s innovation has changed the face of funeral service, from advancements in manufacturing and quality to patented features and memorialization offerings, technology and web-based solutions, and profit-enhancing merchandising systems and room displays. Our history of manufacturing excellence, product innovation, superior customer service and reliable delivery has helped Batesville become – and remain – a market leader.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Taylor Insight

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NewBridge Group Expands Services Into Midwest With Senior Advisor Tony Kumming

NewBridge Group (www.NewBridgeGroup.com), one of the nation's leading succession planners to the funeral industry, is pleased to announce the continued expansion of services into the Midwest with Senior Advisor, Tony Kumming.

For the past 18 months, Kumming has initiated and led the growth of NewBridge's services in the Midwest by focusing on the needs of funeral home owners. Kumming recently opened an office in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, to better serve Midwest funeral home owners with NewBridge's high professional standards, its hands-on approach, and the ability to better understand the client's unique needs. Throughout the years, NewBridge has found that clients prefer an Advisor that is local and can be called upon on short notice. Kumming will be able to provide big city services with a local touch. Prior to his role with NewBridge, Kumming had worked previously as the Corporate Development Analyst with Keystone Group Holdings and also the Manager of Business Development for Foundation Partners Group. Kumming saw that there was an underrepresentation of businesses in the Midwest, "Having analyzed well over 100 funeral home

businesses throughout the country during my career with both Keystone and Foundation, I quickly realized the opportunities were primarily coming from the Southeast and the West. There was clearly a need for succession planning assistance for businesses in the Midwest. Being a native of Indiana, I felt that I could return home and lend a more hands-on approach for such an important time in a funeral home owner's life. I look forward to helping many Midwest funeral home owners with their succession planning and achieving the best price for the transfer of their business."

NewBridge Group serves clients throughout the United States from its home office in Atlanta and regional offices throughout the country. The company offers succession planning, financial advisory, acquisition strategy and funding and appraisal services to family owned and regional funeral home groups. Since 1997, NewBridge has accumulated a significant track record of helping buyers and sellers. As a group, we have assisted in the sale of more than 400 businesses. Our success has resulted from first understanding our clients' goals before tailoring services to fit their needs.

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ASD Updates FuneralSync 3.0 Software and Website Integration Program

Funeral professionals spend hours every week entering data into their funeral management systems and posting information on their websites. ASD—Answering Service for Directors has designed a FuneralSync Interface that allows funeral professionals to reclaim the time they once spent on these tasks. ASD has recently enhanced the company’s FuneralSync API to allow for integration with every funeral software management company and website provider. By providing these companies with access to ASD’s API, clients will benefit from using the most flexible integration tool available to funeral professionals.

ASD’s FuneralSync feature allows funeral professionals to reduce data entry tasks by syncing their systems with ASD. Through ASD’s integration with the funeral profession’s leading software and website providers, directors can automatically transfer funeral service information to and from ASD or pull First Call information, including call recordings, from ASD directly into their funeral home’s management program. The data can be automatically copied over effortlessly. Funeral professionals simply contact their software or website company and ask them to activate the integration with ASD’s new FuneralSync 3.0 API. This update provides users with more fields they can push information through and will also be synced with ASD’s forthcoming advanced web features. FuneralSync 3.0 was created to be a long-term solution that is highly adaptive to future changes. Updates can be made to the program easily and without delay.

“FuneralSync 3.0 gives ASD’s 20,000+ funeral professional users the freedom to integrate with any funeral software or website company,” says ASD Vice President and Family-Member Owner, Kevin Czachor. “This feature is a winner for all involved, allowing directors to spend more time with families and less time entering data while increasing accuracy.”

About ASD

ASD is the leader in answering services and call support for funeral professionals. Family owned and operated, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an experienced team of knowledgeable call specialists that possess a high level of understanding of the



funeral process. The company’s intensive training programs ensure that the potential value of every call is recognized and communicated to directors in the most cost efficient way. ASD’s innovative technology, custom-built systems and call support expertise have made it a national leader in the death care profession. Headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania, ASD offers comprehensive answering services for funeral homes and funeral related businesses of all sizes. For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

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The advertisement is for Cherokee Child Caskets. At the top, the brand name "Cherokee" is written in a large, elegant script font, followed by "Child Caskets" in a smaller, simple font. Below this is the slogan "... Your Choice When It Matters Most". The main heading is "Brushed Steel" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. A list of features is provided: "• 20 Gauge Gasketed", "• Crepe Interior", and "• Choice of Panel". Three casket models are shown: "Sky Blue" (top right), "Rich Pink" (middle left), and "Royal Lilac" (middle right). A fourth model, "Brushed Natural", is shown at the bottom. A note says "• Other Colors Available •". At the bottom of the ad, the website "www.cherokeechildcaskets.com" and the phone number "800-535-8667" are listed. The background is a soft, light purple and pink gradient with decorative starburst patterns.

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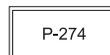
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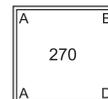
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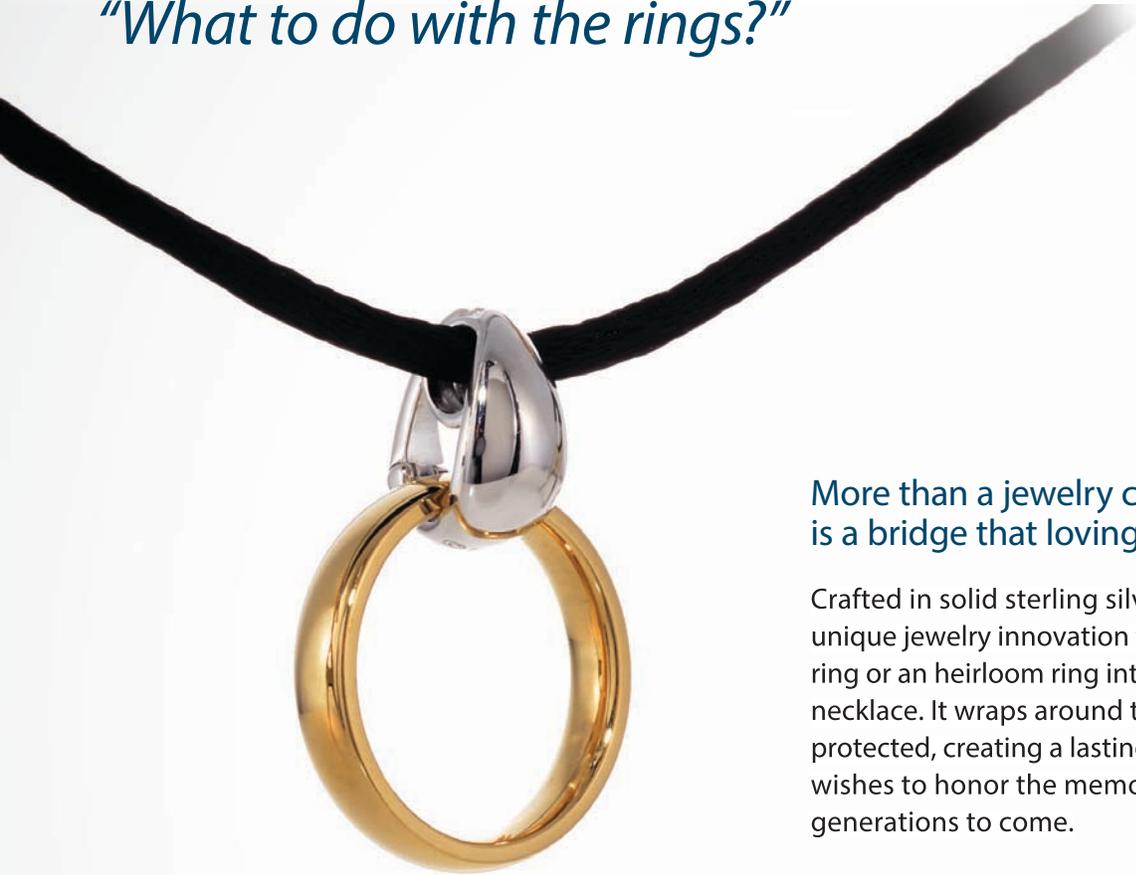
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HELP WANTED

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