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MAGAZINE

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Cremation & CANA Pre Convention

- *CANA Reviews Western History of Cremation
- *CANA Expo - Agenda, Speakers, Workshops & Exhibits
- *The Crematory Operator's Pre-Cremation Checklist Even if it's not written down, it should always be in your head! by Larry Stuart
- *Cremation Options - Quality and Planning by Derek Mahar
- *Satisfaction - Cremation Recycling by Kevin McKay
- *Create Value and Drive Cremation Revenues with Better Cremation Options by Kilian Rempem
- *Aquamation: The Rising Tide of Eco-Friendly Cremation by Chad Morrison
- *Three Funeral Service Veterans Join Anthem Partners
- *Ambulance & Coach Sales, Nashville, TN, makes deliveries in Alabama and Tennessee
- *Funeral Auto Co., Louisville, KY, Takes Delivery of 9 Hearses and 6 Limos



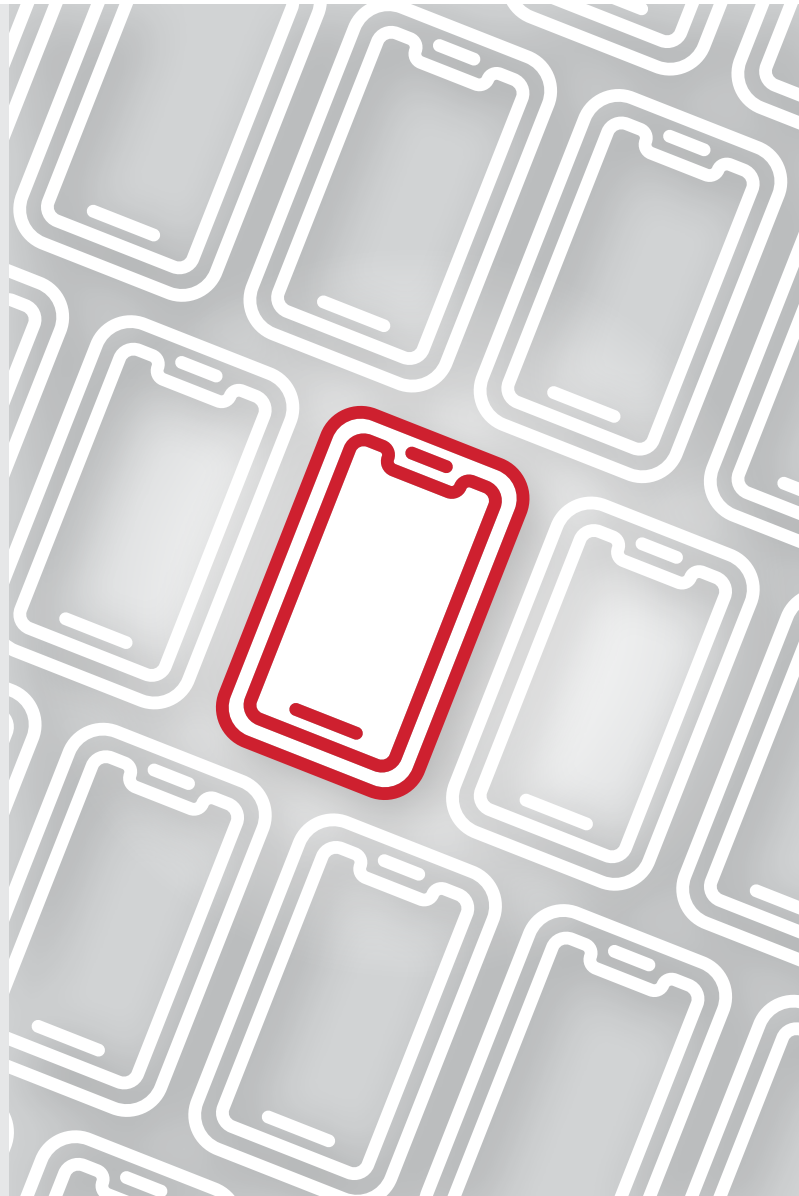
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FEATURES

- 4 CANA Reviews Western History of Cremation
- 6 CANA Expo - Agenda, Speakers, Workshops & Exhibits
- 16 Scenes for the 2022 CANA Expo in Atlanta
- The Crematory Operator's Pre-Cremation Checklist Even if it's not written down, it should always be in your head! by Larry Stuart
- 18
- 20 Cremation Options - Quality and Planning by Derek Mahar
- 24 Satisfaction - Cremation Recycling by Kevin McKay
- 26 Create Value and Drive Cremation Revenues with Better Cremation Options by Kilian Rempem
- 30 Aquamation: The Rising Tide of Eco-Friendly Cremation by Chad Morrison

INDUSTRY NEWS

- 20 Three Funeral Service Veterans Join Anthem Partners
- 19 Ambulance & Coach Sales, Nashville, TN, makes deliveries in Alabama and Tennessee
- 35 Funeral Auto Co., Louisville, KY, Takes Delivery of 9 Hearses and 6 Limos

July 2023

Southern Funeral Director Magazine[®]
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 with a Southern Accent Since 1919

Celebrating 104 Years of Service to the Industry

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notes from the editor

CANA Reviews Western History of Cremation

By John Yopp

Scholars today quite generally agree that cremation probably began in any real sense during the early Stone Age – around 3000 B.C. – and most likely in Europe and the Near East. During the late Stone Age cremation began to spread across northern Europe, as evidenced by particularly informative finds of decorative pottery urns in western Russia among the Slavic peoples.

With the advent of the Bronze Age – 2500 to 1000 B.C. – cremation moved into the British Isles and into what is now Spain and Portugal. Cemeteries for cremation developed in Hungary and northern Italy, spreading to northern Europe and even Ireland.

In the Mycenaean Age – circa 1000 B.C. – cremation became an integral part of the elaborate Grecian burial custom. In fact, it became the dominant mode of disposition by the time of Homer in 800 B.C. and was actually encouraged for reasons of health and expedient burial of slain warriors in this battle-ravaged country. Following this Grecian trend, the early Romans probably embraced cremation some time around 600 B.C. and it apparently became so prevalent that an official decree had to be issued in the mid 5th Century against the cremation of bodies within the city. By the time of the Roman Empire – 27 B.C. to 395 A.D. – it was widely practiced, and cremated remains were generally stored in elaborate urns, often within columbarium-like buildings.

Although the practice was prevalent among the Romans, cremation was rare with the early Christians who considered it pagan and in the Jewish culture where traditional sepulcher entombment was preferred.

However, by 400 A.D., as a result of Constantine's Christianization of the Empire, earth burial had completely replaced cremation except for rare instances of plague or war, and for the next 1,500 years remained the accepted mode of disposition throughout Europe. Modern cremation, as we know it, actually began only a little over a century ago, after years of experimentation into the development of a dependable chamber.

When Professor Ludovico Brunetti of Italy finally perfected his model and displayed it at the 1873 Vienna Exposition, the cremation movement started almost simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the British Isles, the movement was fostered by Queen Victoria's surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson. Concerned with hazardous health conditions, Sir Henry and his colleagues founded the Cremation Society of England in 1874. The first crematories in Europe were built in 1878 in Woking, England and Gotha, Germany. Meanwhile in North America, although there had been two recorded instances of cremation before 1800, the real start began in 1876 when Dr. Julius LeMoyne built the first crematory in Washington, Pennsylvania.

In 1884 the second crematory opened in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and, as was true of many of the early crematories, it was owned and operated by a cremation society. Other forces behind early crematory openings were Protestant clergy who desired to reform burial practices and the medical profession concerned with health conditions around early cemeteries.

Crematories soon sprang up in Buffalo, New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Detroit and Los Angeles. By 1900, there were already 20 crematories in operation, and by the time that Dr. Hugo Erichsen founded the Cremation Association of America in 1913, there were 52 crematories in North America and over 10,000 cremations took place in that year.

In 1975, the name was changed to the Cremation Association of North America to be more indicative of the membership composition of the United States and Canada. At that time, there were over 425 crematories and nearly 150,000 cremations.

In 1999, there were 1,468 crematories and 595,617 cremations, a percentage of 25.39% of all deaths in the United States. By 2019, there were over 3,000 crematories and over 1,500,000 cremations...and 54.6% of deaths in the United States were handled through cremation.



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This August, CANA is headed to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the 105th Annual Cremation Innovation Convention!

CAPITOL INSPIRATION! This premier event brings innovative cremation professionals together to share ideas, learn from experts, and see the newest products and services from industry suppliers. Bring the family to enjoy all D.C. has to offer—monuments, museums, architecture, parks and more, many located within walking distance from the Convention hotel!

KEY TOPICS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS! Learn from experts in hospitality and event planning, gain insights into the unique needs of families affected by suicide, take cremation memorialization into the 21st century, and more! Sessions focus on practical takeaways that make a difference to your business.

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- up to 7 hours of CE, sharing insights that can transform your business
- a trade show packed with cremation products and services
- a friendly and welcoming atmosphere with exhibits, sessions, and meals in one room—with delicious food and drink throughout
- generous networking time with colleagues from across a range of businesses and experiences
- ample opportunity to explore the attractions of D.C.
- options to tour Arlington National Cemetery and unwind at a ball game

Connect with cremation experts from across the profession, discover new products and services from more than 60 exhibitors, find inspiration while earning CE, and explore America’s capital city!

Make sure you’re in the room where it happens!
 CANA’s convention hotel, the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, is just a short walk from the Smithsonian Museums and world-famous monuments. Book online by July 15 at CANARooms.com or call (202) 737-1234 to receive the CANA rate. Rates start at \$189.

Learn more and register: goCANA.org/CANA23

EDUCATION SESSIONS

Session 1 – Blocked, Burned Out, Blasé: How to Engage Your Staff to Become Creative and Enthusiastic Professionals • CE: 1 hr **with Glenda Stansbury and Brent Patterson**

One of the most pressing issues in funeral service today is staffing. Statistics show that approximately 2,000 Baby Boomer funeral directors will be retiring within the next ten years. At the same time, we are struggling to find people to hire and watching some of our staff walk out the door. Perhaps it is time to begin to think differently about work culture, support and expectations to provide an inviting and healthy work environment. This workshop will provide some ideas, suggestions and food for thought as we look toward the future of our profession and provide the right environment to grow and nurture employees. Topics include licensure options and utilizing the non-traditional licensee; incorporating creative and innovative ideas from the hospitality industry; mentorship and collaboration with employees; and ensuring we have safe spaces for voicing mental health needs.



Glenda Stansbury joined InSight in 1996 as Marketing & Development Director. She has worked as an educator, teacher trainer, and seminar developer. She is a practicing Celebrant, an adjunct professor at the University of Central Oklahoma Funeral Department as well as Worsham College of Mortuary Science, and is a licensed funeral director/embalmer. She is also a recipient of the ICCFA Education Foundation's Lasting Impact Award and the 2021 Death Care Rockstar of the Year award from the Parting Stone Cremation Rocks Awards. Glenda is available for speaking to funeral professionals at state and national conventions or for private staff training.



Brent Patterson earned his degree at the University of Central Oklahoma in Computer Science but always had a desire to serve Grady County as a licensed funeral director. His grandfather, father and uncle had served families in funeral homes over the years along with his mother serving families at the local flower shop. For the past 20 years, Brent has served families in Tuttle, Chickasha, Blanchard, Yukon and the greater Oklahoma City metro area. A caregiver at heart, Brent cared for his father battling multiple sclerosis alongside his mother his entire life. Following the death of his father in July, Brent returned to mortuary school to pursue his purpose in the funeral industry. Known for his ability to create unique experiences customized to each families loved one, Brent values created a meaningful space for families to pay tribute to their loved ones.

Session 2 – Targeting with Data • CE: 1 hr **with Eric Layer**

Session Summary: Using national data from the last several years, Eric Layer will share key findings about family preferences around disposition, memorialization, and the funeral industry generally. By painting a picture of who we are currently serving well, and who we are missing completely, the industry can start to see clearer where we've focused our efforts so far—and where we must step up to be relevant in the future.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, August 9

8:00 am - 4:00 pm	CANA COCP (pre-convention seminar)
12:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Exhibitor Set Up/Registration Opens
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	First Timer's Gathering
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	Supplier Meeting
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Opening Cocktail Reception/Exhibits
9:00 pm - ???	After Party - Thornton Room

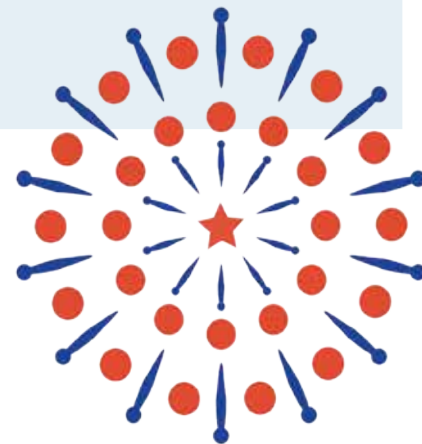


Thursday, August 10

7:00 am - 5:00 pm	Registration and Exhibit Hall Open
7:00 am - 7:45 am	Breakfast/Exhibits
7:45 am - 7:50 am	Convention Welcome - Opening Ceremonies
7:50 am - 8:30 am	Supplier Showcase
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Session 1 - <i>Blocked, Burned Out, Blasé</i>
9:30 am - 10:00 am	Coffee Break/Exhibits
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Session 2 - <i>Targeting with Data</i>
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Session 3 - <i>Regulate, Recruit, and React: A Quick Take on Current Issues</i>
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Membership Meeting/In Memoriam
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Session 4 - <i>Why Mentoring Matters</i>
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Exhibits (snacks, beer and wine)
4:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Prize Drawings/Exhibits
5:00 pm	Exhibitor Breakdown

Friday, August 11

7:00 am - 8:00 am	Breakfast
8:00 am - 10:00 am	Session 5 - <i>Responding to Suicide Death and Recognizing Suicide Risk</i>
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Coffee Break
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Session 6 - <i>Built to Last: How to Breathe New Life into Cemeteries</i>
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Tour - Arlington National Cemetery
7:05 pm	Nationals play Athletics in D.C.



Register today: goCANA.org/CANA23



Eric Layer is the author of *The Right Way of Death: Restoring the American Funeral Business to Its True Calling*. Eric has spent his entire life around funeral service. His parents were married in the chapel of the mortuary where they both worked, and his childhood was marked by firsthand experience with the funeral homes and cemetery where his family built their careers. Today, he leads the death care division as partner at McKee Wallwork, an internationally recognized marketing advisory firm that specializes in generating momentum for stalled, stuck, and stale industries and brands. There, he has consulted for globally recognized funeral brands and has played an integral role in their campaigns, products, and research efforts.

Session 3 – Regulate, Recruit, and React: A Quick Take on Current Issues • CE: 1 hr

with Caressa Hughes, Jim Price, and Scott Smith

Regulatory Update

With staffing shortages, growing attention focused on new forms of disposition and a stifled economy, the regulatory landscape is changing faster than most of us can track. Caressa Hughes, CANA President and Assistant Vice President of Government and Industry Relations for Service Corporation International, will present a regulatory update and answer participant questions so you know what to expect over the coming months and years.

Recruiting Veterans

In the midst of the current staffing shortage, we must think about how to leverage skill sets from complementary professions to serve our families. Caring, competent and mission-driven are all words that describe our veterans, who already have a heart to serve. Learn about Journey to Serve, a free toolkit to help you recruit this highly capable employee, from President of the ICCFA Educational Foundation Jim Price.

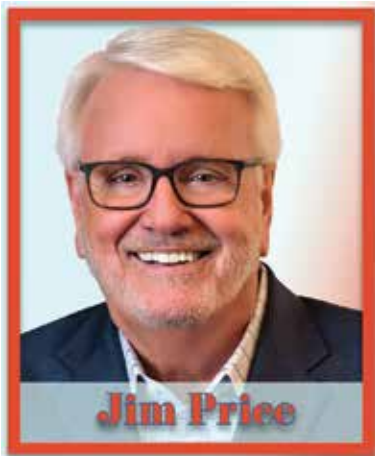
How Can I Pitch In?

When disaster strikes, it's in our nature to help. Between DMORT, FEMA, local EMA, CERT and the other federal and local agencies trained to respond, it's hard to figure out where to go when our communities need us. Scott Smith, past president of CANA and Texas Funeral Directors Association, joins the panel to discuss his experience, the role of funeral homes, crematories and cemeteries and how you can help when things go wrong.



Caressa Hughes is Assistant Vice President of Government and Industry Relations for Service Corporation International in Houston, Texas. With more than 30 years of experience with a career in government relations, she is responsible for overseeing all the federal and state governmental relations in all states where SCI operates.

Jim Price joined PLC in February 2016 as the Chief Executive Officer of MMG, and was then appointed to Senior VP, Industry Relations. Prior to joining PLC, he co-founded and served as EVP/ Chief Operations Officer of Foundation Partners Group and formerly co-founded and served as Chief Operations Officer of Keystone Group Holdings. Jim currently serves on the International Cemetery,



Jim Price

Cremation & Funeral Association (ICCFA) Board of Directors, ICCFA Governmental Affairs Committee, and is currently President of the ICCFA Educational Foundation. He also serves on the Advisory Board for the Sykes School of Business, Center for the Study of Ethics, at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Florida. Jim has over 50 years of experience in the funeral profession and is a graduate of the California College of Mortuary Science.



Scott Smith

Scott Smith, CEO/President of All Texas Cremation/Heritage Crematory, comes from a long line of funeral professionals. He is a 3rd generation funeral director/embalmer and has been licensed in the state of Texas since 1993. Scott is very involved in every aspect of the funeral industry and was appointed by Governor Perry in 2014 and continues to serve as commissioner for the Texas Funeral Service Commission. Scott is the past president of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, past president of the Dallas County Funeral Directors Association and the North Texas Funeral Directors Association and past president of CANA. He currently serves as vice chair of the Texas Disaster Response Team and has been involved and immediately responded to the needs after the West, TX plant explosion as well as the Oklahoma City, OK bombing. Scott had the distinct honor to be chosen by the state of Texas to handle the cremation of the first Ebola death in the United States that occurred in North Texas. He has spoken throughout Texas and worldwide to help better plan for the unknown.

Session 4 - Why Mentoring Matters • CE: 1 hr with Lisa Baue

Would you like to discover the what, how, why, and when of mentoring and how it positively impacts your firm and your staff members? This 1-hour session will help you clarify the difference between coaching and mentoring. So many of us use these words interchangeably and they are actually very different. We will identify the 7 essential components of mentoring and you will understand the positive impact it can have on owners and team members. We will also discuss the benefits mentoring has on Millennials and Gen Z, who are now the largest generations in the workplace. Also, learn how to create and run a Mentor program in your firm. This program is beneficial for all including owners, managers, supervisors, and front-line staff.



Lisa Baue

Lisa Baue is a 44-year licensed funeral director and the former President/CEO of Baue Funeral Homes Crematory and Cemetery, in St. Charles MO for 32 years. She grew her family's small 1 location business to four funeral homes, a Flower & Gift Shop, an 80-acre cemetery, a Centralized Cremation & Care Center, A Cremation Society, and a Pet Cremation business serving over 2500 families a year. Lisa sold her business in 2019 to the Park Lawn Corporation, and in 2021 founded her coaching and consulting business, Your Funeral Coach, which helps owners, managers, and death care professionals grow themselves and their companies. Lisa also hosts one of the Top 5 podcasts in the profession that discusses business best practices, leadership learning, women in the profession, and caring and mentoring staff.

Session 5 – Responding to Suicide Death and Recognizing Suicide Risk • CE: 2 hr **with Sara Murphy**

There may be no cause of death more silenced, stigmatized, and misunderstood than a death of suicide. As both a leading cause of death and a public health crisis, suicide is often hidden in plain sight within both private and public spaces. Persons at risk for suicide death as well as those who are bereaved by suicide loss frequently do not receive the support they need, even from helping professionals. This session will assist attendees in:

1. understanding the impact of suicide death loss on survivors.
2. differentiating between myths and realities of suicide.
3. developing helpful versus harmful responses to suicide survivor families.
4. recognizing and responding to suicide risk within the funeral services profession.

Importantly, it will also reframe factors contributing to complicated grief and to suicide risk in the complex context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on her extensive work on suicide, from prevention to postvention, Murphy will also review commonalities in suicidality and high-risk warning signs, as well as offer opportunities to contribute positively to professional and community responses to suicide.



Sara Murphy, PhD, CT, is a death educator, Certified Thanatologist (Association for Death Education and Counseling), and suicidologist with over fifteen years of scholarly, pedagogical, and professional experience in the field. She has been a faculty member at the University of Rhode Island for fourteen years, where she has developed and taught over fifty interdisciplinary courses on thanatological theory; death, dying, and bereavement; biopsychosocial grief experiences; disenfranchised grief; and stigmatized means of death. She is also an affiliate faculty member in the Thanatology Graduate Program at Marian University, where she teaches courses on suicide, addiction loss, and social justice thanatology.

Session 6 – Built to Last: How to Breathe New Life into Cemeteries • CE: 1 hr **with Cole Waybright, Bryan Mueller, and Dan Cassin**

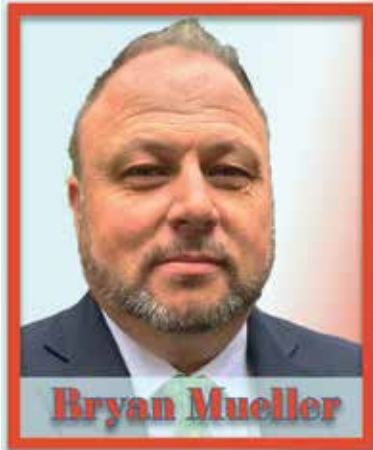
As the U.S. cremation rate continues to rise, cemetery managers across the country need to reframe the discussion around permanent memorialization to turn challenges into new opportunities for growth and profitability. Foundation Partners Group operates 270 funeral homes & cremation centers and 22 cemeteries in 21 states across the country. With a companywide cremation rate of 88%, 30% of Foundation Partners' interments involve permanent placement of cremated remains—a percentage that has doubled over the past five years. In this session, the leaders of the company's cemetery sales and design teams will share cremation garden success stories, including one in which a new cremation garden increased cremation memorialization sales by 350%, and ideas for programs that will help attendees open doors to new markets and breathe new life into their cemeteries.

In this session, participants will:

1. Develop a better understanding of the role design plays in cremation garden success.
2. Learn new strategies for educating the public about the benefits of permanent memorialization.
3. Learn how to stay current with new memorialization product & service options.
4. Walk away with a checklist of actionable items to increase the visibility, profitability and sustainability of their cemeteries.



Cole Waybright, Vice President of Sales Operations with Foundation Partners Group, is a licensed funeral director and experienced leader in strategic sales and business operations. He is highly regarded in the industry for his innovation, process development and optimization, and strategic planning rooted in his experience serving families at funeral homes and cemeteries across the country. A native of West Virginia, Cole now resides in Orlando, FL with his wife Lindsay and son Connor.



Bryan Mueller is a seasoned Area Sales Manager for Foundation Partners Group, a reputable funeral cemetery company. With his extensive experience and proven track record of success, Bryan has become one of the most sought-after sales managers in the industry. Throughout his career, Bryan has honed his skills in leadership, communication, and sales, making him an expert in his field. He has a keen eye for identifying opportunities and transforming sales teams into the best version of themselves. By implementing cutting-edge strategies, he gets his salespeople out of their comfort zones and into tactics that create prospecting habits, giving them the belief and winning mentality necessary to close deals.



Dan Cassin, Account Executive with Merendino Cemetery Care has worked with cemeteries across the country, to design and develop cremation gardens and areas for cremation consumers, as well as development and expansion projects for cemeteries for traditional and mixed-use. Many of the projects he has been involved with have resulted in significant sales growth for the cemeteries. He resides in Connecticut with his family.

Connect with cremation experts from across the profession, discover new products and services from more than 60 exhibitors, find inspiration while earning CE, and explore America's capital city!

Learn more and register:

goCANA.org/CANA23

Hotel Accommodations



Discover the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Only 1,287 steps away from the U.S. Capitol and just a short walk from the Smithsonian Museums and world-famous monuments. To make your sleeping room reservations, either book online at CANARooms.com or call (202) 737-1234 in order to receive the CANA rate. Please make housing arrangements by July 15, 2023—before the CANA room block is sold out!

Room Rates starting at \$189/night.



Arlington National Cemetery Tour

Friday, August 11, 12-4 pm

"For many visitors, a pilgrimage to Arlington is a devotional act—to seek out a buried relative, to pay respects to a treasured friend, to leave a promised beer or cigarette at the tomb of an Army buddy, to brush off a wife's grave and bring her up to date on the latest headlines. ... Few images linger in the national imagination as vividly as this hallowed ground, with its ghostly white tombstones, its deep green turf, its gnarled trees alive with songbirds and cicadas."

—Robert M. Poole, *On Hallowed Ground*

After the 105th Convention closes, attendees are invited to tour Arlington National Cemetery and witness a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. With the purchase of an add-on ticket, the tour includes a boxed lunch for the bus ride, a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a guided trolley tour to several key spots in the cemetery. Seating is limited, so register soon!



Major League Baseball: Athletics at the Nationals

Friday, August 11, 7:05 pm

You can also enjoy the great American pastime in America's capital! The Oakland Athletics are at the Washington Nationals Park on Friday, August 11, and CANA plans to be there. A limited number of seats are available so register soon!



Photo by Grant Thomas on Unsplash

OVERVIEW OF THE CREMATION PROCESS

EQUIPMENT AND OPERATIONS

THE CREMATION PROCESS IN DETAIL

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

REDUCING LEGAL RISK

CREMATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

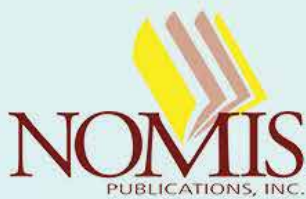
Optional Pre-Convention Programming

The CANA COCP
Wednesday, August 9
8am-4 pm

Combo pricing is available for those who would like to register for both the COCP and the CANA Convention August 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Visit the convention website for programming information and to register for the combo ticket.

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Scenes from the 2022 CANA Expo in Atlanta





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The Crematory Operator's Pre-Cremation Checklist

Even if it's not written down, it should always be in your head!

by Larry Stuart

Cremation lawsuits are becoming more common, and it's essential to minimize risk and liability in crematory operations. Since you can't undo a cremation, it's even more important to get it right. Take advice from a perfectionist (that is, an OCD/anal retentive over-thinker). I might know someone.

When tackling a project, it's always important to anticipate potential problems that could arise to avoid them. For me, 'anticipate' is a bit of a mantra. Being a bit obsessive with performing cremations can prevent a whole host of issues. Before every case, it's always a good idea to perform a pre-operation checklist to anticipate and correct any potential hiccups in the process. Before you start the process of retrieving the decedent and checking the paperwork, open the loading door to your cremator and make sure there is no one still in there. Yes, it sounds absurd, but I've heard stories of operators that have left a cremation to complete overnight, and the morning shift operator inserts a new case before removing the cremated remains from the night before. Not only is this co-mingling of remains illegal, but it is also something that should be disclosed to the families of the deceased. You do not want to be the person that has to have that conversation.

Also always make sure there is a cremated remains tray in place before you begin a cremation. There is nothing dignified or respectful in sweeping someone onto the floor after a cremation. This happens more often than you would think.

There is also value in taking a few seconds to inspect the general condition of the refractory materials before beginning a new cremation. Many things could have happened during the previous case that caused damage to the refractory. It is always better to check than to discover halfway through the next case that a wall or other structure has collapsed. Now you will have to interrupt the cycle and remove a half-cremated body along with bricks. Yes, this is possibly a worst-case scenario, but it has happened. A quick look can avoid a potential disaster.

It's now time to retrieve the next case and begin the actual cremation process. The most important thing to keep in mind here is to make sure you are cremating the correct body. Identification is just as much the responsibility of the crematory operator as it is of the funeral director. The operator is the last line of defense and the last chance to get it right. Remember, cremation is irreversible and if you cremate the wrong body, you could be committing an error that could affect the grieving family adversely for years. Not to mention you will likely lose your job and even get up close and intimate with a bevy of high-priced lawyers.

The crematory operator is not likely to know what the decedents are supposed to look like or be able to tell the difference between similar cases, but if the paperwork states the decedent is one Gladys R. Jones, Caucasian, 98 years old, 105 pounds, that died of natural causes and you have a very old, thin white lady in the container, you can be as confident as you can be. But if something does not match, you must stop and confirm. (note that if it is not allowed at your facility or by law in your area for you to open the container to inspect the remains for cremation, you must follow the rules) If everything matches scrutinize the container for any items that can't be cremated, remove them, and proceed with the next step, purge.

A purge cycle is built into all modern equipment manufactured in the last 30+ years or so. This cycle simply re-circulates the air in the interior chambers of the cremator with fresh outside air to assure that there is no residual gas present before you or the system ignites the secondary burner. This cycle runs approximately 3 minutes (and while waiting for it to finish can seem like 3 hours!) but it is important not to bypass it. We all know what happens when we take too long to light the gas grille with the gas building up. Multiply that by thousands and you get the idea. This feature may seem redundant with all of the safety features built-in with the modern cremator design, but nothing is foolproof. Three minutes is not that long to wait to assure your safety.

After the purge cycle is completed, the system will allow you to ignite the secondary burner (or the system will ignite it automatically depending on your control system). Preheating the secondary chamber before igniting the case in the main chamber is necessary for pollution control. The secondary chamber will, through heat and combustion, destroy the pollution produced in the main chamber. (Think smoke, flame, and odor) This re-combustion and destruction cannot happen without the proper temperature in the secondary chamber and the result will be smoke and pollution exiting the stack of the unit. As you can guess, the secondary chamber is where all of the magic happens in modern cremation equipment to assure clean emissions.

These “pre-cremation” steps, when completed before every cremation, can reduce the chance of something bad happening. Thankfully, the chances are small, to begin with, but a responsible cremationist always goes one step further to anticipate and mitigate risks to personal safety, the environment, and the dignity of the deceased in their care.

*Larry Stuart, Jr., Founder And Principal
Funeral Service and Cremation Expert, Thought Leader,
Consultant, Innovator, Entrepreneur, Author, Public*

Speaker, Trainer, Traveler, Foodie, and Dog Lover.

Throughout my experience as a cremation consultant and previously as the President of a cremation equipment company, I have seen, from a unique point of view, how funeral service has struggled to evolve, especially in the eyes of the public. To broaden our purpose, we have expanded Cremation Strategies & Consulting and are now Raven Plume Consulting. It is our goal to change the way people think of funeral service and to help funeral service professionals succeed.

Always looking for the next best thing, I completed digital marketing and automation course to increase the effectiveness of my own marketing strategies and in the process because a certified partner with the software platform. This certification process confirmed what I suspected for a long time. We are marketing to the wrong folks! Our partnership with Keap/Infusionsoft allows us to share proven strategies and implement custom digital marketing solutions for our clients.



A promotional graphic for the International Memorialization Supply Association (IMSA). The background is a dark, textured image of a cemetery with tombstones. At the top center is the IMSA logo, which consists of a stylized yellow and white graphic above the letters 'IMSA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the text 'INTERNATIONAL MEMORIALIZATION SUPPLY ASSOCIATION' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below this, the text 'A TRUSTED RESOURCE OF FUNERAL & CEMETERY SUPPLIER COMPANIES SINCE 1976' is displayed in a yellow, sans-serif font. Underneath is the heading 'ABOUT US' in a yellow, sans-serif font. The main body of text is in white, sans-serif font, and is separated into three sections by thin yellow horizontal lines. The first section reads: 'Since 1976 IMSA has been empowering cemetery and funeral service providers by advocating for unity with various industry associations and ensuring greater access to supplier products and services.' The second section reads: 'Our organization of companies is committed to supplying quality products and services to the funeral profession while providing the leading best practices and standards in the industry.' The third section reads: 'As a member of IMSA you'll receive exclusive benefits no other supplier association can provide.' At the bottom of the graphic, the text 'FIND A SUPPLIER OR BECOME A MEMBER AT' is in yellow, and the website address 'www.hello@imsa-online.org' is in white.

Cremation Options - Quality and Planning

by Derek Mahar

We are all well aware that cremation rates are continuing to rise across North America. It began in the larger centers and has continued to creep into every area of the continent. With that continuing increase, we see many communities behind the curve, trying to catch up with inventory and options. In some respects, this can be an advantage as they can learn from the mistakes and successes of others over the past several years.



What we see is that families want something unique and built with quality. Simply having an area for the placement of cremated remains is no longer enough. The families you serve want something interesting, and personal.

Many niche and columbarium companies may only be concerned about what they sell and not how that sale will work. As suppliers we need to look beyond that initial sale and ensure we are providing products that continue the success of the cemetery. When I began running a large municipal cemetery operation, our cemetery had not given any thought to how to cater to the cremation families. We merely had cremation plots placed where we had space and columbaria plunked in locations that were not fit for earth burials. We thought as most did in the early days of cremation - “cremation means cheap”.

If you have preconceived thoughts about the choices families will make, you tend to steer them in that direction. It’s because of this thinking that families began to pull away from cemeteries and looked for options that they felt were more suited for them. It is not a surprise that over 60% of cremation families opt to avoid cemeteries with the cremated remains of loved ones. We can make this a good thing by being aware of this and through that awareness making a change. We need to listen to the families and be open to offerings that are more in tune with what they want. This process can begin small, with a single columbarium.

This first structure should become the centerpiece of the garden area that you can then add to as demand dictates. The key is to have a plan but be open to adding some small family units or benches.



You can see this cemetery had the plan to add several units throughout an area, which also includes small family units, an ossuary, benches, and a place for memorialization. The scale of the project is up to you but thought must be given to the direction. Adding planted beds also helps to beautify an area and creates more visual interest. Having a place for families to plant or place flowers is also a great option. All of this creates an area that can become a draw for the cemetery. It can become an area for quiet reflection that if promoted properly can help increase interest for the whole cemetery.

We can find and offer better options. The internet allows for direct contact with families. We need to know who our clients actually are. They may not be who we originally thought, but a younger generation that wants to see what they can have and what speaks to them.

My experience in every facet of the profession is that our opinion sometimes does not really matter when it comes to what we think people will like. The clients are dictating what they want and will find those who are offering it. We need to plan for the future but also be open to the change that is confronting us every day. We need to connect with our clients and society as a whole to allow us to learn and educate at the same

time. We know that a portion of society has a negative view of our profession until they actually need and work with us.

So many times, they are surprised by how well they are treated. This is based on what they expected because of the negatives they hear. Many of those compliments are because of us listening and engaging in what they want. There will always be price shoppers that just want things to be over and done with, but these are not the majority, the majority expect value, which is different for everyone. We have the tools for outreach like never before and we need to listen to what people think and want from us as a profession. We cannot take this input too personally and must learn every day. Let us work on how to make this happen and come

“Committal shelves for use on a niche for the inurnment”



As mentioned before, planning is key. No matter what scale you are looking at, having a plan will help keep things moving in the direction that is needed and expected by the families you serve. This is not to say that changes can't be made as things move forward but having a plan will allow for future management to have an idea of where the thought process was when things were designed.

As for design, many companies offer design services. Depending on the size and scope of the work required will dictate what company to work with. Some offer full cemetery planning and landscape design while others may specialize in cremation offerings. Our company can offer a great deal of design work whether in-house or through our vast network of industry professionals. Work with your providers as they should have the expertise and contacts to help as needed.

We can't forget about the quality of the construction. If you look back maybe to your first car or the furniture you bought for your first home. For most of us, we purchased what we could afford and maybe not what was the best quality option. You need to realize that when a family entrusts their loved one to you, the offerings



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need to use quality materials and be built to last.

This profession is in the “Forever” business, and we cannot base our purchases on how we did with that first house or car. This does not mean the most expensive alternative is the best as we know price does not always mean quality. You need to research and see how and where the companies make their products. Do they use quality materials that they can stand behind or do they purchase based on price and their own bottom line?

I get calls or emails at least once every 2 weeks from columbarium owners that are having issues with their niches. They have varying issues but almost all come down to one thing. These units were purchased based on price and had now started to break down and fall apart. Some were barely 10 years old. That should never happen, which is why you need to look for a supplier that can provide quality and care about what they build. As you can imagine these choices created problems moving forward. We had to replace 4 angled-style columbaria walls where water had begun to enter and thus degrade. Replacement was the only option and though it was costly it had to be done. The big issue was having the families whose loved ones had been entrusted to us, contacted to move the cremated remains.

They should not have had to go through this ordeal and as you can imagine many were very upset. The reason I bring up this example is that the columbarium supplier that did these, built them to look good but not to last. Some designs, though they are attractive on paper, do not stand up in the real world over time. When it comes to Mother Nature, she always wins and with water, water will find a way. You need to work with suppliers who care and think about these things, as you certainly



should not have to deal with these issues.

As a professional in the industry for over 40 years I understand the difficulty of the changing consumer and the options we must provide. This is throughout society, and we will not be able to please everyone, but we need to be open to listening and hearing what the families may want. By doing this and offering quality options we can better serve our communities and the families we have the honor of serving.



Derek Maher is a fourth-generation funeral director, having worked as a funeral director and embalmer at several locations throughout Canada as well as Japan. He managed the business operations of a large municipal cemetery operation before becoming general manager and then part owner of a columbarium company, Kyber. He has been designing, selling, and installing columbaria for over 16 years throughout North America.



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Satisfaction - Cremation Recycling

by Kevin McKay

As consumers, we're conditioned to seek out the best deals. Whether it be a vehicle purchase or how much we pay for groceries, we always want to get the best deal. This is where ad agencies prove their merit by perfectly tailoring the solicitation to us to make sure we buy that specific product or service – makes me think of the song “Satisfaction” by the Stones where Jagger sings “A man comes on and tells me, how white my shirts can be”.

But it's also key to make sure we aren't sacrificing quality for the illusion of a great price or fee. There are countless examples of too-good-to-be-true offers in the world, especially since the advent of the internet, which gives a global platform for deceptive practices. Common sense should prevail, but what about when the appeal comes from a position of authority? From doctors “preferring” a certain brand of cigarettes back in the 1940s to incredible weight-loss claims still touted today, it can be very difficult to tell whether we're being deceived or being given sound advice. This is never more true than when considering a metal recycler for your crematory.

Intuitively, when crematory owners are looking into our company, they start a conversation by asking me “What are your rates?” or “How do your rates compare to those of your competitors?” While you should definitely know what the terms of the agreement are, the “rates of return” aren't nearly as good an indicator of what you should expect to receive from the recycler as you might think. What you should be focused on is how the recycler can substantiate the findings they're reporting.

First, you need to understand the specifics of the transaction of sending in your metals to be recycled. A crematory owner is in the unenviable position of not knowing exactly what is contained in the scrap drum. This puts the recycler in a position of power. Frankly, the recyclers can report whatever they want, and unfortunately, it's all too common that some of them do just that. As an example, if your scrap drum had \$10,000 in actual value, but a recycler who lacks transparent practices reported only \$3,000, how would you know?

The rates of return in this scenario are meaningless -- they were only used to beat their competition and get your metal.

Here are three measures you can and should take to ensure that you are being treated fairly:

1 You should always work with a recycler who offers you a sample from your melt. During the smelting process when recycling metal, we need to draw a sample of the metal when it's in a molten state to properly assay it (analyze its composition). Think of getting blood drawn by your doctor to determine your cholesterol level.

When this metal assay is done, a piece can easily be set aside for you, the client. This should be offered to you every time without you asking for it after the reporting. Make sure this is a part of the recycler's protocol.

2. You should work with a recycler who has an open-door policy. Because the value of the metals recovered through the recycling process is very high, you really should try to visit your recycling partner at least once. But, given how busy funeral directors and crematory operators are, maybe it's not realistic for you. However, you should always at least get a couple of comprehensive references from people who have been able to visit the recycler's facility. Ask them what they saw: how many furnaces were there? How professional was the staff and how many staff members were there? Did it seem like a well-run operation? A truly useful reference goes into detail and is without any personal biases.

Seeing the process in person is a great experience that you should try to have at least once. But whether or not you can, you should definitely be encouraged by your recycler to visit their facility. This demonstrates how confident they are in their operation.

3. You should demand detailed reporting. As a recycler, we look at the process as multi-faceted. Yes, we will ultimately buy the metal contained, but first things first, we need to analyze and report to our clients what

they've sent us. This reporting should detail important information like, how much metal was sent in, how much the bar weighed after it was melted, and the assayed percentage for each metal, to name a few key details. It surprises me how unscientific some recyclers' approach is when it comes to reporting. In my opinion, the more info the better.

To sum up, in a world where we can instantly compare prices online in the palm of our hand, our expectations for fast and accurate results are higher than ever. But some things require a bit of digging and communication between you and your recycling partner. The advice I want to leave you with is this: (1) Ask as many questions as you need to feel comfortable, and (2) don't settle for less-than-good answers.

Kevin is the head manager of Cremation Recycling, a division of Mid-States Recycling (MSR), where he is in charge of client acquisition and retention. In addition to client support, he focuses a great deal on educating the crematory profession by speaking and writing informative pieces. Before working with Cremation Recycling he was a customer of MSR for nearly 15 years. He was born and raised in Chicago, where he lives in the suburbs now in Naperville with his two daughters, Molly and Katie. Although he ventured off to Florida and Hawaii for school and life experience, Chicago has always managed to pull him back.



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Create Value and Drive Cremation Revenues with Better Cremation Options

by Kilian Rempem

Over the years the funeral industry has educated families that cremation is “the cheap option” when they choose between cremation and burial. Instead of investing the time and energy to make cremation a valuable experience for families, the industry devalued cremation with bare-bones cremation containers and cheap “temporary” urns. Nevertheless cremation continued to become more popular, and today funeral homes are competing to offer the cheapest direct cremations possible.

Studies have shown that cost is not the major appeal of cremation for families, so why aren't we focused on making cremation better, instead of cheaper? If anything, funeral homes should give extra attention to cremation since it's what most of their families will choose. It's possible to create a better cremation experience for families, while simultaneously making your cremation business more lucrative. Today, with cremation dominating the market, we need to break the mold of cutting cremation costs, and instead work on adding value to the cremation experience.

Data consistently shows that cremation is becoming even more popular in America. Roughly half of those who choose cremation go on to scatter the remains and by 2040, the NFDA estimates that nearly 80% of funerals will be cremations. This rise in popularity is mainly driven by the flexibility that cremation offers, the lower environmental impact, and cultural shifts.

The families that choose cremation are also interested in greener funeral options. The generations that popularized hybrid cars, alternative energy sources, and Fair Trade goods are the people planning funerals today. Data released by KB Publications reports that an astonishing 91% of people consider the environmental impact of a funeral to be important. 84% would consider a green funeral if it was offered to them, and 85% would contact a funeral home in their area if they were planning a green funeral. Over 92% of people also said that personalization is at least somewhat important.

These numbers show that funeral businesses are positioned perfectly to make small changes that will boost their business, while also better serving their families. The majority of people are choosing cremation for its environmental benefits and variability. Most also say they are interested in more variety and personalization options while leaving a smaller environmental footprint, and yet the majority of people who want these options will still seek out a funeral home when the time comes to plan a funeral.

Funeral homes need to educate their families on what is available and distinguish themselves as the best provider of these services, and the demand is already there. This isn't a matter of planning for the future, it is something that's happening today.

A cremation container plays a similar role to a burial

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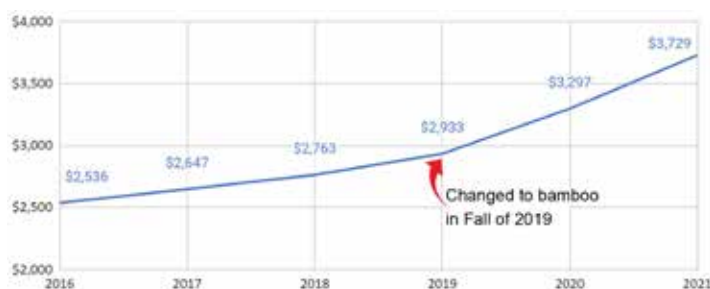
casket. We don't offer basic cardboard burial caskets, so why do we make cremation vessels so cheap? Families that choose cremation still need a dignified vessel for their loved one.

We created the Simple Bamboo Container from the ground up to be the ideal cremation container. It's a beautiful, handmade product that brings purpose and intention to cremation. Cardboard containers look and feel industrial, and reinforce the message that "cremation should be cheap." On the other hand, using a product like the Simple Bamboo Container shows that you value dignity in cremation.



All families want the best for their loved one, and deserve a cremation container option that is dignified and comforting. Families that choose cremation for the eco-friendliness will appreciate the sustainability that bamboo offers. Funeral homes that are not the cheapest will benefit from rejecting cardboard for a cleaner-burning, higher value cremation container. Nobody wants to see their loved one in a cardboard box and a cleaner burning container is a benefit for all.

In a case study, a funeral home that rejected cardboard cremation containers altogether and used our Simple Bamboo Container as their basic option had great results. After a year, the funeral home was seeing higher revenues from cremation that went beyond the additional price of the container itself (without raising prices on other services). Families were more likely to purchase flowers, have a viewing, and invest more



in the funeral. The stance taken by the funeral home to offer better cremation containers shifted the dialogue between family and funeral director from apprehension to collaboration. Families showed less resistance and were more willing to engage. They also reported higher satisfaction in post-funeral surveys.

By spending a bit of extra attention on your products, you can encourage families to think more about creating their ideal funeral and less about the price tag. This change in mindset also opens the door to conversations about what comes after cremation. If the family intends to scatter, how can you make that a positive experience for them? A hunter may want their remains to be laid to rest in the forest. A scuba diver could be scattered at sea in an urn made from Himalayan Salt, or a stargazer could be sent off to space.

The basic plastic or cardboard temporary container being handed to family is probably not the end of the funeral, but that box unfortunately could be the lasting reminder of the service provided by the funeral home; the cremation, and only the cremation. But the real value to the family is what comes next: the memorial, and the goodbye.

Unless your business's main sales proposition is being the cheapest, families are coming to you because they know you offer more than a low price. People value the flexibility and variety that cremation offers. If a family chooses to purchase only the basic cardboard container and temporary urn, it's not necessarily because that's the option they wanted, it only means that they didn't see enough value in the other options presented, and didn't want to price shop.

At Passages, we have had families choose cremation, purchase dozens of mini-sized water biodegradable urns to split the remains and take friends and family on a whale watching tour to scatter the remains at sea. We had a family purchase a Turtle Urn, and during their ceremony at sea they were visited by real sea turtles.

Amazing stories like these leave an impact on families, and they will never forget these unique goodbye ceremonies. It doesn't have to be as fantastic as these two stories; simple things like a beautiful sunset, a short hike to the scattering location, and the memory of being with their loved one in that location, all help create a more personal, healing experience for the family.

The best thing about cremation is the endless amount of variety that is available, and it all begins with a proper cremation container. Many people today want to be involved and participate in memorials, and traditional burial can leave them feeling disconnected. Being able to provide an extra level of personal connection, and honoring their loved one in a way that truly holds meaning to the family, makes a huge difference.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” memorial service that will satisfy every family, and while it might be uncomfortable for us to step into something new and unfa-



miliar, the movement away from traditional funerals is proving more comfortable to families during their hardest times. It’s the responsibility of funeral homes to show families the best options that they will value, specifically their cremation container and urn choice. If you introduce families to better cremation container options, scattering options, and memorial products, they are less likely to choose your lowest priced options and find what they truly want somewhere else.

Kilian Rempen was born and raised in Albuquerque, NM, studied Advertising and International Business at Loyola Marymount University, and worked in Boulder, Colorado and Bangkok, Thailand before moving back to Albuquerque, where he joined Passages International as Marketing Manager.



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Aquamation: The Rising Tide of Eco-Friendly Cremation

by Chad Morrison

In the ever-evolving world of death care, a new alternative to traditional cremation has been making waves: Aquamation. Also known as alkaline hydrolysis or water cremation, is a gentle, environmentally friendly process that is gaining popularity among those seeking more sustainable end-of-life options.

Aquamation operates on the principle of alkaline hydrolysis, a process that has been used for years in various scientific and industrial applications. The deceased's body is placed in a specialized vessel filled with a solution of water and alkali, such as potassium hydroxide. The vessel is then heated and pressurized, creating an environment that accelerates natural decomposition. For several hours, the body is gently transformed into liquid and bone remnants.

One of the key advantages of Aquamation over traditional cremation is its significantly reduced carbon footprint. In traditional cremation, the deceased's body is incinerated at high temperatures, typically using natural gas or propane. This combustion process releases large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In contrast, Aquamation operates at a lower temperature, consuming less energy and generating only a fraction of the emissions associated with traditional cremation.

But it's not just the reduction in carbon emissions that makes Aquamation an Eco-friendly choice. The process also avoids the release of harmful pollutants such as mercury, which is often present in dental amalgam fillings. In traditional cremation, mercury vapor is released into the air, posing a risk to both the environment and human health.

Aquamation, on the other hand, retains the mercury and other heavy metals in the solution, preventing their release into the environment. Furthermore, Aquamation uses less water compared to traditional burial methods. While burial requires land and resources for caskets, embalming fluids, and cemetery maintenance, Aquamation relies on a closed-loop water system. The water

used in the process can be treated and recycled, minimizing water consumption and reducing the strain on local water supplies. In addition to its environmental benefits, Aquamation offers families a more gentle and respectful way of handling their loved ones' remains.

The process is inherently non-destructive, preserving the structure of the bones and providing families with the option to keep the remains in an urn or scatter them in a meaningful location. This can be particularly appealing to those who prioritize the preservation of their loved one's physical remains. Aquamation has been gaining traction across North America, with a growing number of funeral homes and crematoriums offering this alternative to their clients. Several states have also passed legislation to legalize and regulate the practice, recognizing its environmental merits. As the demand for Eco-friendly options continues to rise, Aquamation presents a compelling choice for families seeking a greener approach to end-of-life care.

Understanding the scientific underpinnings of Aquamation will shed light on its Eco-friendliness and how it compares to traditional cremation in more detail. Stay tuned for an in-depth exploration of this rising tide of Eco-friendly cremation. To truly appreciate the eco-friendliness of Aquamation, it's essential to delve into the scientific processes that make it possible. The alkaline hydrolysis method used in Aquamation mimics the natural decomposition that occurs when a body is buried but at an accelerated rate. During Aquamation, the combination of water and alkali creates a highly alkaline solution with a pH level of around 14. This high pH level, along with the heat and pressure in the vessel, triggers a process known as saponification. Saponification involves the breakdown of fats and lipids into their component parts—fatty acids and glycerol. As a result, the body's tissues, including muscles and organs, begin to dissolve.

The breakdown of proteins, another crucial component of the human body, occurs through hydrolysis. The high pH and temperature of the Aquamation process


break down proteins into their constituent amino acids. This dissolution of tissues and proteins is a key step in the transformation of the body into a liquid state. While the soft tissues are broken down and dissolved, the bones remain intact, albeit softened. They are primarily composed of a mineral called hydroxyapatite, which is resistant to the high pH levels of the Aquamation solution. After the process is complete, the remaining bones are easily pulverized into cremains. Compared to traditional cremation, Aquamation takes a bit longer.

The process typically lasts between three and six hours, depending on the size and composition of the body. However, this extra time allows for a gentler, more natural decomposition, without the intense heat and flames associated with cremation. The environmental benefits of Aquamation become evident when considering the byproducts of the process. Unlike traditional cremation, which produces significant amounts of carbon dioxide, Aquamation generates minimal greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, it primarily produces a sterile liquid, similar to the effluent generated by wastewater treatment facilities. This liquid is non-toxic and can be

safely disposed of, treated, or even used for irrigation purposes, making it a sustainable and Eco-friendly choice.


Furthermore, Aquamation retains the remains of any metals or implants, such as artificial joints or dental fillings, within the vessel. This eliminates the need for additional processing or filtering to remove potentially harmful substances from the cremains. The resulting ashes from Aquamation are pure and free of contaminants, ensuring families receive the authentic remains of their loved ones. As Aquamation continues to gain momentum in the death care industry, it's important to consider how it measures up against traditional cremation in various aspects.

Let's delve into the areas of cost, availability, and public perception to better understand the role Aquamation plays in the evolving landscape of Eco-friendly cremation. Cost-wise, Aquamation tends to be slightly more expensive than traditional cremation. The equipment required for Aquamation is specialized and comes with a higher upfront investment cost for funeral homes and crematoriums. However, as the demand for Aquama-



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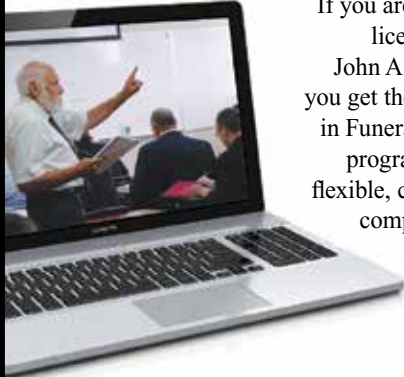
John A. Gupton College has developed online continuing education courses. These courses have been approved for CEU hours by both Tennessee and Kentucky Boards. The online subjects range from funeral service history, embalming techniques, funeral home management, grief psychology and bereavement counseling. **For information concerning cost and program call 615-327-3927, go to our website at guptoncollege.edu or email admissions@guptoncollege.edu.**



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tion grows and the technology becomes more widely adopted, economies of scale may lead to a decrease in overall costs. Additionally, the long-term environmental benefits of Aquamation may outweigh the initial higher cost for families who prioritize sustainability. Public perception plays a crucial role in the adoption of any new death care practice. While traditional cremation has become widely accepted and normalized over the years, Aquamation is relatively new and unfamiliar to many. However, as awareness about the environmental impact of traditional cremation grows, so does interest in more sustainable options.


With proper education and transparent communication, Aquamation has the potential to gain wider public acceptance and become a mainstream choice for those seeking Eco-friendly cremation. In conclusion, Aquamation offers a compelling alternative to traditional cremation, particularly for individuals and families who prioritize environmental sustainability in end-of-life care. Its gentle, Eco-friendly process significantly reduces carbon emissions, avoids the release of harmful pollutants, and uses less water compared to burial methods. Aquamation also provides families with

a more respectful way of handling their loved ones' remains, preserving the bone structure intact and offering various options for memorialization. As the demand for sustainable practices continues to rise, it is crucial for funeral homes, crematoriums, and industry professionals to stay abreast of advancements in Aquamation technology and consider integrating it into their service offerings. By embracing this rising tide of Eco-friendly cremation, the death care industry can contribute to a greener future while providing families with meaningful and sustainable end-of-life choices.


Chad Morrison is an Army veteran living in Ohio. A former cemetery worker at the beginning of his professional writing journey. He's hoping with the written word he can do his small part for the funeral profession that he feels blessed to now be a part of. He's been married for twenty-three years and has two wonderful boys.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

Three Funeral Service Veterans Join Anthem Partners

Appointments Strengthen Executive Team as Company Continues Explosive Growth

Anthem Partners, a premier operator of funeral homes and cemeteries, is pleased to announce that Kevin Krizak, Dewey Akers, and Dave Sullivan have joined the organization. Krizak will be Vice President – Sales and lead the sales organization for Anthem’s U.S.-based funeral home and cemetery locations. Akers has assumed the role of Vice President of Cemetery Operations throughout the Anthem network and is responsible for the overall operations of the cemetery properties. Sullivan will serve Anthem in a senior advisor role, providing insights and strategic counsel to Anthem’s executive team.

“I am excited to augment our already experienced executive team with these three individuals. Kevin, Dewey, and Dave each bring a wealth of talent and experience to the Anthem organization,” stated Will Andrews, President of Anthem Partners - US. “Their deep and multi-faceted backgrounds in funeral service will serve them well in their new roles and benefit our company as we execute our longer-term strategic priorities.”

Krizak has more than forty years in funeral service – including time as an owner of a funeral home, cemetery, and monument company as well as working for several of the major consolidator companies. He most recently served as Vice President of Sales for the Midwest and Northeast Regions of one of the largest publicly traded funeral, cremation, and cemetery providers. Kevin and his wife Nellie have two daughters, a son, and eight grandchildren. Although they have lived in many states, they now call Texas home and reside in Seabrook just southeast of Houston.

“I am thrilled to join this exceptional company, particularly at this crucial time in its development,” said Krizak. “I am looking forward to strengthening Anthem’s sales processes and contributing to the company’s goal of being the preferred option for leading funeral homes and cemeteries with which to align.”

Akers has been involved in various aspects of funeral service since 1990. Just before joining Anthem, Akers

was the VP of Operations, Southeast Region for one of the largest publicly traded funeral, cremation, and cemetery providers. Earlier, Akers was the VP of Operations for Saber Management, LLC. Akers began his career in 1990, working for Gibraltar Mausoleum Corporation. He has a Bachelor’s degree in accounting from Indiana University. He and his wife currently reside in Sellersburg, Indiana, and have three grown children.

“I can’t wait to leverage my decades of experience to enhance the operations at each Anthem cemetery property,” said Akers. “The culture that Will has developed since launching Anthem two years ago is truly inspiring. I look forward to working with the entire leadership team to develop the best tools and solutions for our employees and families.”

Sullivan boasts a long and storied career in funeral service. He joined Gibraltar Mausoleum Corp. in 1977 and rose to become the executive vice president of sales and marketing. He stayed with that company for 18 years until he formed Saber Management in January 1998. He remained as Saber CEO until he sold the company to a large funeral home consolidator. He earned a degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Virginia.

“Joining Anthem presents an exciting opportunity to contribute to their vision of providing partners with maximum value for their companies and to increase the opportunity of value growth creation,” commented Sullivan. “I am deeply committed to helping drive strategic growth and further positioning Anthem as a leader in funeral service.”

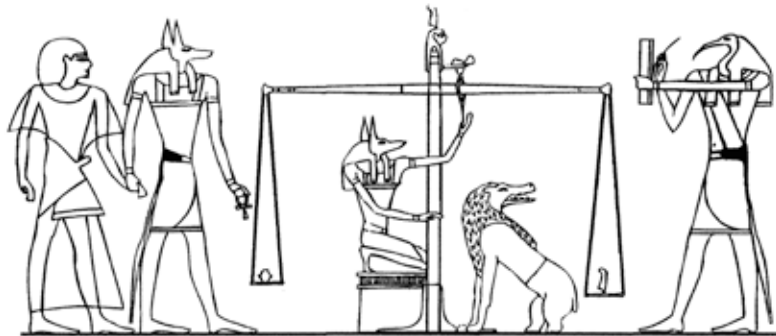
About Anthem Partners: Anthem Partners is a privately-owned operator of cemeteries and funeral homes. Founded by a group of industry professionals and backed by long-term, patient investors, Anthem Partners is actively seeking opportunities to grow with like-minded professionals and firms who share their vision. To learn more, call 972.418.2908 or visit www.anthempartners.com.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Funeral Auto Company, Louisville, KY, Takes Delivery of All New Fleet of 9 Hearses and 6 Limos

We are excited to announce the all-new fleet of nine hearses and six limousines at the Funeral Auto Company in Louisville, Kentucky. Our locally-owned company has been serving families with the utmost care and compassion since 1914. It is proud to offer these cutting-edge vehicles purchased from Ambulance & Coach Sales, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Our livery service is under the ownership of several esteemed funeral homes, all of which are well-known for their unwavering commitment to providing families with dignified and respectful funeral services. These include Barlow Funeral Home, Bosse Funeral Home, Herman Meyer & Son, Inc., Highlands Family Owned Funeral Home, Pearson Funeral Home Breckenridge Chapel, Ratterman Embry Bosse Funeral Home, Ratterman & Sons Funeral and Cremation Care, Ratterman Southwest Funeral Home, Joseph E. Ratterman & Son, Ratterman Brothers Funeral Homes, Rodgers-Awkard & Lyons, and W.T. Shumake & Daughters. With our state-of-the-art equipment and experienced staff, we are well-equipped to provide families with the support they need during difficult times.



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Bobby Brown of Brown Funeral Home in Mobile, Alabama receiving new fleet of S&S Vehicles by Wayne Day Ambulance and Coach Sales



Ralph Mosier at Rogers Funeral Home in South Pittsburg, TN, receiving newly delivered S&S Victoria Coach from Ellis Galyon

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C&J Financial	29	www.cjf.com
Express Funeral Funding	40	www.expressfuneralfunding.com
FuneralCall	2	www.funeralcall.com
IMSA	19	www.www.imsa-online.org
John A. Gupton College	31	www.guptoncollege.edu
Lamcraft	26, 32	www.lamcraft.com
Matthews-Aurora Funeral Solutions	2	www.matthewsaurora.com
NewBridge Group	28	www.newbridgegroup.com
Service Casket/SICH	21	www.sichcasket.com
Shields Professional Vehicles	33, 39	www.myhearse.com
Talk of a Lifetime	2	www.talkofalifetime.org
The Messenger Company	17	www.themessengerco.com
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