

Southern[®]

◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆ MAGAZINE

August 2023

www.sfdmagazine.com



WELCOME

TO *Fabulous*

NFDA Convention

In Las Vegas

"Guest" Notes from the Editor - NFDA President John O. "Jack" Mitchell, IV
NFDA Convention Agenda, Speakers, Workshops, Seminars & Exhibit Hours
NFDA Members Elect Officers to Serve on Board of Directors, Vote on
Bylaws Changes: Dutch Nie Elected to be 2023-24 President to Succeed
Current President, John O. "Jack" Mitchell, IV
Why Online Memorials Are More Important by Mandy Benoualid
Leveraging Backlinks: Boosting Funeral Home Websites' SEO
by Alexis Reed
The Business Case for Funeral Streaming - Your gateway to a profitable
path in digital services by Trajan Schulzke
2023 Pursuit of Excellence Award Honorees Will be Recognized During
the NFDA International Convention & Expo
Kelly Manion Named New Homesteaders Director of Consumer Marketing
Deathtech Solutions Provider PlotBox Announces Capital Investment Success

Amb&Coach Sales

Service Since 1964



Ellis Galyon
615-481-8021



Randy Garner
479-459-3641



Hal Singletary
770-500-0923



McKinley Joyce
615-419-6585



Wayne Day
256-504-4105



Chad Garner
479-461-6259



Doug Roberts
606-350-0268



Darryl Streed
716-485-1133



*Cadillac XT6
Victoria Coach*



1212 Jo Johnston Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37203 • 888-336-8421 • ambulanceandcoach.com



New • Pre-Owned • Leasing • In House Financing • Parts

Southern[®]

◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆

MAGAZINE

Family owned and published since 1919

FEATURES

- 4 "Guest" Notes from the Editor - NFDA President John O. "Jack" Mitchell, IV
- 6 NFDA Convention Agenda, Speakers, Workshops, Seminars & Exhibit Hours
- 22 Why Online Memorials Are More Important by Mandy Benoualid
- 24 Leveraging Backlinks: Boosting Funeral Home Websites' SEO by Alexis Reed
- 26 The Business Case for Funeral Streaming - Your gateway to a profitable path in digital services by Trajan Schulzke

INDUSTRY NEWS

- 30 2023 Pursuit of Excellence Award Honorees Will be Recognized During the NFDA International Convention & Expo
- 32 NFDA Members Elect Officers to Serve on Board of Directors, Vote on Bylaws Changes: Dutch Nie Elected to be 2023-24 President to Succeed Current President, John O. "Jack" Mitchell, IV
- 33 Kelly Manion Named New Homesteaders Director of Consumer Marketing
- 34 Deathtech Solutions Provider PlotBox Announces Capital Investment Success

You don't build a business, you build people, then people build the business"....
Zig Ziglar



August 2023

Southern Funeral Director Magazine®
Vol. 174 No. 8

The National Funeral Service Journal
with a Southern Accent Since 1919

Celebrating 104 Years of Service to the Industry

Southern Funeral Director Magazine, LLC is a ® and registered with the United States Patent and Trade Office and assigned serial number 'USPTO 85831455'

Any other claims from third parties to the name "Southern Funeral Director" are without validity and justification. Southern Funeral Director Magazine, LLC., is in good standing and in compliance with the Office of the Secretary State of Georgia, and John W. Yopp is the Publisher and Editor

POSTMASTER:

Notify us of address changes by form 3579 to:
Southern Funeral Director Magazine®
P.O. Box 768152
Roswell, GA 30076



John W. Yopp
Publisher/Editor
404-312-6640
johnyopp3@aol.com



Joe Weigel
Associate Editor
joseph.weigel@gmail.com



Kathy A. Guillory
Graphics/Art Director
kathyakopov@gmail.com

FuneralCall

On The Go

Simplicity at your fingertips.



"We absolutely love the FuneralCall App. We can access our messages at anytime, and it's so easy to use!"

- Ellen McBrayer
Jones Wynn
Funeral Homes
& Crematory

888-239-0351 | www.funeralcall.com



notes from the editor

“Guest” Notes from the Editor by NFDA President, John O. “Jack” Mitchell, IV

It’s that time of year! Well, actually, not quite. But Vegas had other plans, so off we go to convention in September. Wait a minute. Did I say Vegas? Yes, that’s right. For the first time in 16 years, the members of the National Funeral Directors Association will be descending upon fabulous Las Vegas for it’s annual International Convention & Expo. I can’t wait. And neither can my father, so the nickel slots downtown better get ready.

With the ever-changing landscape of funeral service, whether you’re talking about newer and different forms of memorialization or disposition, education is more important than ever. And between the over thirty educational workshops, certification programs, conversation cafes, and well over 300 exhibitors on the expo floor, attendees will be swimming in a sea of ideas, innovation, and valuable information.

But perhaps what I enjoy most about our convention, and always have, is simply the people. Yes, it can be considered networking, but I like to think of it more as just making new friends. That’s what got me hooked on convention nearly thirty years ago and I do so enjoy renewing acquaintances, some of which go back to that very first year.



And is there a better place than Las Vegas to do it all? While the convention is chock-full of activity, the schedule still allows for time to enjoy the host city and surrounding area. You’ll not find better dining or entertainment anywhere in the world and there are plenty of wheels to spin and dice to roll everywhere you go.

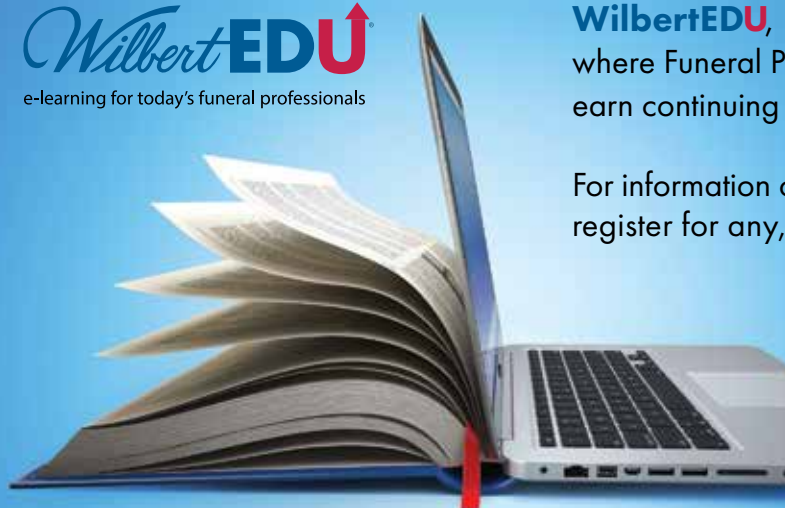
Whether it is on the expo floor or the casino floor, I look forward to seeing you in America’s Playground. There is so much to be gained and a future to be made so much brighter, I hope you don’t miss it.

WilbertEDU
e-learning for today’s funeral professionals

WilbertEDU,
where Funeral Professionals can learn and
earn continuing education units at no cost!

VISIT NFDA
BOOTH 1233

For information on the wide variety of topics and to
register for any, go to wilbert.com/wilbertedu



Treasured Tribute Tools



WE'RE EXCITED TO SHOW YOU

what's new

at

THE MESSENGER CO.

Thank you for being a part of our story for 110 years! Since 1913, Messenger has been a trusted name in the funeral care industry. From our humble beginnings as a religious calendar company, we have evolved into a family of brands that delivers best-in-class personalized stationery, keepsakes, urns, sympathy gifts, funeral supplies, technology solutions, funeral funding and more. We're honored to be a part of your story as we collectively serve families with compassion, community and purpose.

We're excited to show you what's new this year at NFDA in fabulous Las Vegas!

THE MESSENGER CO.



1913 YEARS 2023

COMPASSION. COMMUNITY. PURPOSE.

NFDA 2023 | LAS VEGAS

1547 1747 1737 1856 1738 1705 1526

VISIT OUR FAMILY OF BRANDS



Thumbies

themessengerco.com

Promo Code 9294

We'll see you one month earlier this year!
September 10-13

NFDA

NATIONAL
FUNERAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION

NFDA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & EXPO
LAS VEGAS, NV • SEPTEMBER 10-13



**CHOOSE YOUR OWN
ADVENTURE**

2023 NFDA International Convention & Expo
Las Vegas • September 10-13

CONVENTION PLANNING GUIDE

nfda.org/convention

2023

AT A GLANCE

(Subject to change)

* Additional registration required
** By invitation only

Friday, September 8

1 – 6 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 1)

Saturday, September 9

6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Volunteer Opportunity:
Habitat for Humanity*

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration

8 a.m. – 4 p.m. NFDA Cremation
Certification Program*

8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. NFDA Arranger Training*

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 2)

12 – 5 p.m. NFDA Central

Sunday, September 10

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Celebrant Training* (Day 3)

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. NFDA Central

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Safe Zone Training*

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Managing Various Hospital and
Trauma Cases*

11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Funeral Service Foundation
Golf Classic*

11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Workshops

5 – 5:30 p.m. First Time Attendee Reception**

5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Welcome Party

Monday, September 11

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration

7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. NFDA Central

8 – 9 a.m. Workshops

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Opening Session and
Service of Remembrance

12 – 5 p.m. NFDA Expo

12:15 p.m. NFDA Expo Ribbon-cutting
Photo Opp

4 – 5 p.m. All-star Recognition Ceremony

5 – 6:30 p.m. Funeral Service Foundation
Donor Appreciation Reception**

Tuesday, September 12

7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration

7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. NFDA Central

8 – 10:15 a.m. Workshops

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. General Session: Special
Engagement

12 – 5 p.m. NFDA Expo

12:30 – 2 p.m. Conversation Cafés

4:30 – 5 p.m. Installation of 2023-24 NFDA
President & Board of Directors

5 – 5:30 p.m. NFDA Board of Directors
Installation Reception

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Heritage Club Reception**

5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Funeral Directors Under 40 Party*

6:30 – 8 p.m. International Reception**

Wednesday, September 13

7:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Registration

7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. NFDA Central

8 – 9 a.m. Workshops

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. NFDA Expo

12:15 – 1:30 p.m. Closing Session



nfda.org/convention

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Opening Session/Service of Remembrance

Monday, September 11, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Momentum: Accelerate Your Performance Without the Burnout

Suneel Gupta, Author and Harvard Medical School Visiting Scholar

In the face of an exhaustion epidemic, it's time to rethink how we view high performance. Grit and hustle have their place but are also scientifically associated with burnout. Gupta helps organizations increase performance, innovation, and creativity by showing why high-potential people and teams fizzle out. This presentation is rooted in Gupta's study of the habits of extraordinary leaders who reached breakthrough levels of productivity, resilience, fulfillment, and momentum.

Sponsored by 

Service of Remembrance: 9/11 Never Forget

On the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, join us as we remember the victims, in addition to the families and survivors whose lives were forever changed. A 9/11 First Responder and Ambassador from Tunnel to Towers (t2t.org) will inspire us to reflect on the events of that day and honor the memories of all who died. We'll also pay tribute to our funeral service family members who died during the past year.

Video provided by  Gifts provided by 



Special Engagement

Tuesday, September 12, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Hacking the Rockstar Attitude: How to Ignite Rockstar Performance During Uncertain Times

Mark Schulman, World-class Drummer, Speaker and Author

Schulman's high-energy, dynamic presentation can best be described as a rock show disguised as a keynote. In his engaging, interactive and entertaining performance, Schulman focuses on three core principles: Attitude, Behavior and Consequences. You can't always control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude, which drives your behavior, and your behaviors determine your consequences. You'll walk away with a blueprint for how to incorporate rock 'n' roll philosophy, techniques and swagger in order to overcome obstacles, drive performance and energize your work and personal life. Are you ready to rock?

Closing Session

Wednesday, September 13, 12:15 – 1:30 p.m.

Embracing AI Technology: Practical Tools and Strategies for Funeral Directors

Dennis Yu, CEO, BlitzMetrics

Curious about the AI technologies that are revolutionizing the business landscape? Join Yu as we delve into the fascinating and often confusing world of AI. We've randomly selected a mix of NFDA members to implement some simple steps to enhance their marketing. We'll reveal the results live and share action guides so attendees can immediately start using AI to optimize their website, edit videos, create ad campaigns and more. Yu will also fill us in on the common pitfalls that come with using AI such as hallucinations, false information, accidental plagiarism and SEO penalties.



nfd.org/convention



PRECONVENTION SEMINARS

Saturday, September 9



Professional Skills

NFDA Arranger Training

Melissa Posey Loose, NFDA Training and Development Manager

Registration: 7:30 – 8 a.m.

Seminar: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Learn how to make the most of the arrangement conference through a creative, five-step process only available from NFDA. This high-energy, interactive program provides you with the tools you need to convey the value of the funeral to families and partner with them to design memorable life-tribute events. Through a combination of small- and large-group discussions, problem-solving and creative collaboration, you'll leave with fresh approaches and new ideas to transform your arrangement conferences. (8 CE hours)

\$495 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$625 nonmember funeral directors; \$160 mortuary students; fee includes refreshments and lunch

Sponsored by 

Friday, September 8 –
Sunday, September 10



Business Operations,
Customer Service,
Professional Skills

Certified Celebrant Training

*Glenda Stansbury and
Matt Bailey, InSight
Institute*



*Brought to you by InSight
Institute and hosted by
NFDA*

Registration: Friday 12:30 p.m.

Seminar Day 1: Friday 1 – 6 p.m.

Seminar Day 2: Saturday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Seminar Day 3: Sunday 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Set your firm apart from the competition and offer more to the families you serve! As families' wishes continue to evolve, it is more important than ever to offer a variety of services that meet their needs and exceed their expectations. Fewer families incorporate religious rites into memorial services now so how can you fill that gap? Many funeral homes look to celebrants and find it most economical to train their staff to accommodate this growing demand for customized services. A certified celebrant works with a funeral director to provide a funeral service, memorial service or tribute that is personalized to reflect the personality and life of the deceased. (17 CE hours through InSight Institute)

\$895 NFDA members or eligible non-funeral directors; \$1,050 nonmember funeral directors; fee includes light meals and refreshments



Compliance and Legal, Cremation

NFDA Cremation Certification Program

Michael Nicodemus, NFDA Vice President, Cremation Services

Registration: 7:30 – 8 a.m.

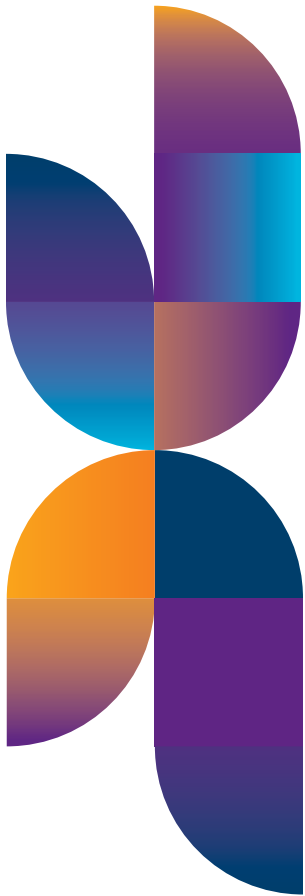
Seminar: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Whether you currently own or operate a crematory, are thinking of opening one, or want to evaluate a third-party crematory, this training is essential for your success. NFDA's Cremation Certification Program™ covers best practices for safe, proper and ethical crematory operations; sets the standard for excellence, compliance and integrity in cremation services; and provides the information you require to address potential cremation liability issues. NFDA offers the only cremation certification program specifically created to protect funeral directors and the families they serve. Seminar and test are based on the NFDA *Cremation Standards for Funeral Service Professionals* manual. CE and certification require passing the online Cremation Certification Test. (7 CE Hours)

\$525 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$675 nonmember funeral directors; \$160 mortuary students; fee includes refreshments and lunch

Sponsored by 

nfda.org/convention



PRECONVENTION SEMINARS

I enjoy meeting new people and having conversations. I find it valuable to hear other funeral director's/embalmer's experiences/perspectives in how they practice.

Leigh Ann Graumlich
2022 Convention Attendee

nfd.org/convention

Sunday, September 10



Technical Skills

Managing Various Hospital and Trauma Cases

Karl Wenzel, CFSP, Founder, Canadian School of Advanced PREP; Glyn Tallon, CFSP, Instructor, Canadian School of Advanced PREP



Seminar: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Expand your knowledge and comfort level to tackle the most difficult cases. Instructors will illustrate step-by-step techniques to make difficult embalming cases more manageable.

Discover what techniques and products work best for various levels of hospital and trauma cases. Learn different techniques and chemicals proven to be successful. Learn what new products can aid you in the prep room. We will examine conditions such as edema, jaundice, cancers, decomposition and medical cases. Discover the skills that extraordinary embalmers possess that allow families to see their loved one for that final goodbye. (4 CE hours)

\$185 NFDA members by August 23; \$205 after August 23; nonmember funeral directors \$255 by August 23; \$280 after August 23; \$90 mortuary students



Customer Service

Safe Zone Training for Funeral Service Professionals

Sara Murphy, Ph.D., CT, Death Educator and Suicidologist

Seminar: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The need to strengthen the relationship between the LGBTQ+ community and funeral service has become unprecedentedly visible in recent years. Increasingly, funeral service professionals seek education to fill learning gaps regarding this community in order to meet the needs of clients and staff with grounded and unbiased knowledge, strategies for allyship, and cultural humility. This four-hour workshop will provide the first-ever Safe Zone training offered publicly to members of the funeral service profession. As an internationally recognized, evidence-informed training program, Safe Zone workshops provide attendees with interactive education on LGBTQ+ identities, privilege and biases, cycles of oppression, the coming-out experience, and skill building for allies. Facilitated by an expert in grief and bereavement who is also an experienced Safe Zone trainer, this intensive workshop has been designed specifically to meet the needs of NFDA convention attendees and to address common scenarios for professionals in funeral service. (4 CE hours)

\$205 NFDA members and nonmembers; \$75 mortuary students



WORKSHOPS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
1 CE Hour

Business Operations

Succession Planning and Investing in Key Employees

Sponsored by 

Compliance & Legal

Don't Fear Transparency With Online Pricing

Kara Gray Ludlum, CPA and Funeral Director, Osiris Funeral Software; Marty Ludlum, Professor of Business Law, University of Central Oklahoma

Customer Service

Improv for Funeral Directors

Joseph Thomas, CFSP, Shackelford Funeral Directors

Preneed

Delivering Phenomenal Preneed Experiences

Tyler Anderson, Vice President, Business Development, Precoa

Customer Service

Foundations for Trust in Funeral Service

Melissa Posey Loose, Training and Development Manager, NFDA

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.
1 CE Hour

Customer Service

Let's Talk: Serving Today's Families

Effie Anolik, Cofounder & CEO, Afterword

Grief & Bereavement

When a Child Dies: Creating a Community of Care

Betsy Hawley, MA, Executive Director, Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition; Buffy Peters, Director, Hamilton's Academy of Grief and Loss

Business Operations

How Do You Drive a Tesla Without a Battery?

Alan Creedy, Owner, Creedy & Associates; Danny Jefferson, Managing Leader, Pierce-Jefferson Funeral & Cremation Services

Technology

Stand Out to Tech-Savvy Families

Zack Moy, Cofounder & CTO, Afterword

Professional Skills

The Dirt on Natural Organic Reduction

Katey Houston, Services Manager, Return Home; Brienna Smith, COO, Return Home

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
1 CE Hour

Technical Skills

50 Prep Room Tricks of the Trade

Dana Goodell, Director of Sales, The Embalmers Supply Company

Compliance & Legal

Recording Native American Race on Death Certificates

Dr. John Hough, Health Scientist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Business Operations

Mending the Generational Divide

Antonio Green, Funeral Director, James H. Cole Home for Funerals; Allyse R. Worland, Funeral Director, Embalmer and Celebrant

Professional Skills

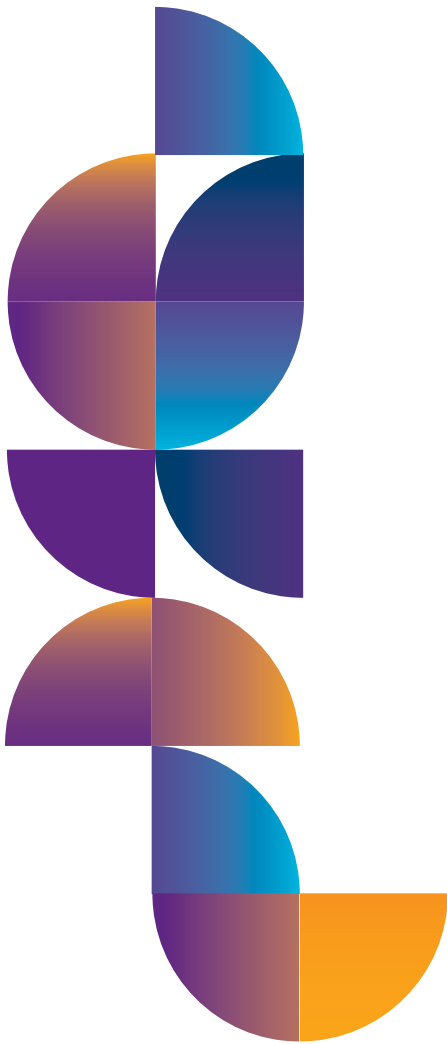
Walking a Peaceful Path Through Pet Loss

Anna McLain, Pet Loss Grief Support Specialist, PAWS Pathway

Business Operations

Washington Insider: Current Federal Developments & What You Need to Know

Lesley Witter, Senior Vice President, Advocacy, NFDA



WORKSHOPS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

8 – 9 a.m.
1 CE Hour

Technical Skills

To View or Not to View: Restorative Techniques for an Open Casket

Amanda King, Embalmer and
Funeral Director, Bailey Family
Funeral Homes

Grief & Bereavement

Suicide Risk Within the Deathcare Profession

Sara Murphy, Ph.D., CT, Death
Educator and Suicidologist

Business Operations

Department of Defense Overseas Mortuary Operations

Trevor Dean, Program Analyst,
Department of Defense;
Brooke Gurevich, Director, U.S.
Forces Korea Mortuary

Cremation

The Importance of Proper Paperwork

Mike Nicodemus, Vice
President, Cremation Services,
NFDA

Technology

How to Invest Your Advertising Dollars Wisely

Bill Johnston, President, Post
and Boost



Innovation Award
2023

Could This Year's Innovation Award Winner Benefit Your Business?

Every year, NFDA grants its Innovation Award to the supplier that introduces the best new product/service since last year's convention. During Monday's Opening Session, we'll announce this year's top three finalists and present the winner with NFDA's Innovation Award.

nfd.org/convention



WORKSHOPS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

8 – 9 a.m.
1 CE Hour

Customer Service
Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Service of Families
Christopher Costello, Funeral Director; Jacob Schoen & Son New Orleans, LA

Compliance and Legal
Funeral Rule Compliance and Update on the FTC Rule Review
Chris Farmer, NFDA General Counsel

Professional Skills
Compassion Fatigue: How to Mitigate Funeral Care Burnout
Lynda Cheldelin Fell, CEO, International Grief Institute

Customer Service
Transformative Times: Deathcare for the Gender Diverse Community
Faith Haug, Program Chair, Arapahoe Community College Mortuary Science Program

8 – 10 a.m.
2 CE Hours

Business Operations
Beyond the Funeral: How Savvy Funeral Professionals Connect With Their Communities
Georganne Bender and Richard Kizer, Kizer and Bender Speaking!

9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
1 CE Hour

Professional Skills
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Funeral: A Behind the Scenes Look
Tim Purves, Chairman, William Purves Funeral Directors, Edinburgh, Scotland

Professional Development
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Loss and Grief
Dr. Tashel Bordere, Ph.D., CT, Researcher and Adjunct Faculty

Technical Skills
Tried and True Embalming Techniques: Past and Present
John Hill, CCO, Embalmer and Funeral Director, James Funeral Home

Business Operations
Succeeding With Online Customers
Peter Forsberg, CEO, Elegy Software

Customer Service
Connecting Homicide Victims' Families With Resources
Kristina Rose, Director, Office for Victims of Crime



Conversation Café
12:30 – 2 p.m.
1.5 CE Hours

Compliance and Legal
The Defense Never Rests
Chris Farmer, NFDA General Counsel; Mike Nicodemus, NFDA Vice President, Cremation Services; Victor March, Owner, March Funeral Homes



WORKSHOPS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

8 – 9 a.m.
1 CE Hour

Business Operations
Closing the Gap: Growth by Acquisition
Jeff Smith, President, Smith North Little Rock Funeral Home

Technical Skills
Jeopardy of Jaundice
John Hill, CCO, Embalmer and Funeral Director, James Funeral Home



SPECIAL EVENTS

Habitat for Humanity Build Saturday, September 9 6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Join NFDA as we help Habitat for Humanity Las Vegas improve the community and make home ownership a reality for a local family. There are three easy ways to support Habitat for Humanity Las Vegas:

- Volunteer for the day
- Donate
- Sponsor the build

Visit nfda.org/habitat for more information.



The NFDA convention is the ultimate opportunity for funeral service professionals to network with each other, learn about new products and processes, and to learn more about what's happening in funeral service across the country and the world.

Randy Nash
2022 Convention Attendee



nfda.org/convention





23rd Annual Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic

Sunday, September 10, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Topgolf, Las Vegas, Nevada

Now in its twenty-third year, the Funeral Service Foundation's golf outing has raised more than \$1.6 million in support of its mission of investing in people and programs that strengthen funeral service and lift up grieving communities.

Experience all the perks of our annual Golf Classic in a social, casual and exciting atmosphere at Topgolf, just a 10-minute ride from Resorts World!

No matter your skill level, at Topgolf, you'll be able to take a swing and score some points during our tournament-style golf games. You can also relax and enjoy great food and drinks while networking with your fellow funeral service professionals. And because each covered bay is climate controlled, you're guaranteed to play no matter what weather comes our way in September.

Cost per player is \$325. Registration includes transportation, tournament fees, food and beverages, golf clubs, four hours of play in reserved bays, and a golf pro and tournament ambassadors to help the day's play run smoothly.

Want to support the foundation, but golf isn't your game? Simply join as a spectator! Your \$150 registration fee allows you to experience all the networking and excitement of the day without the pressure to step up to the bay and take a shot.

This year, we will once again offer a limited number of single-player registrations to licensed funeral directors, subject to availability.

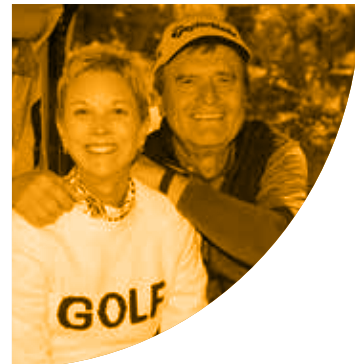
Visit FuneralServiceFoundation.org/golf and click on "Support the 2023 Golf Classic!" to register and learn about sponsorship opportunities.



**FUNERAL SERVICE
FOUNDATION**

About the Funeral Service Foundation:

The foundation awards a variety of academic and professional-development scholarships, offers free professional and community resources, and makes grants to organizations that advance its mission of investing in people and programs to strengthen funeral service and lift up grieving communities. Visit the foundation's booth (just outside the Expo Hall) to learn about scholarships and resources that support every stage of your career, and how you can make a gift that will impact the profession.



nfda.org/convention



SPECIAL EVENTS

Welcome Party

**Sunday, September 10,
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Your convention adventure kicks off in style at the Welcome Party! Every year, this is the place to be. Join us and reconnect with old friends, plus make some new ones, while enjoying amazing music, hors d'oeuvres, and refreshments. Will this be your first time attending the NFDA convention? Join us at the First-time Attendee Reception, starting at 5 p.m. before to the Welcome Party.

Sponsored by  **Batesville Legacy.com**

Service of Remembrance

9/11 Never Forget

**Monday, September 11 – during the
General Session**

On the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, join us as we remember the victims, in addition to the families and survivors whose lives were forever changed. A guest speaker from Tunnel to Towers will inspire us to reflect on the events of that day and honor the memories of all who died. We'll also pay tribute to our funeral service family members who died during the past year.

Since 9/11, Tunnel to Towers (t2t.org) has been helping America's heroes by providing mortgage-free homes to Gold Star and fallen first-responder families with young children, and by building specially adapted smart homes for catastrophically injured veterans and first responders.

Video provided by  **tukios**
MOBILE VIDEO AFFAIRS

Gifts provided by  **Messenger**

All-star Recognition Ceremony

Monday, September 11, 4 – 5 p.m.

Join the NFDA Board of Directors as the association celebrates the remarkable accomplishments of funeral homes and funeral service professionals during the past year:

- 2023 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award recipients
- NFDA's Green Funeral Practice Certificate holders
- NFDA Cremation Certification designees
- NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultants
- Funeral Service Foundation scholarship recipients
- 2022-23 NFDA National Emerging Leaders Program graduates
- 2023 Meet the Mentors program participants
- NFDA International Professional Achievement Certificate holders
- Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice Certified Funeral Service Practitioners

Funeral Directors Under 40 Party

**Tuesday, September 12,
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

When our under-40 funeral directors gather, you know it's going to be a great time! Watch for details about what is sure to be an amazing event in a venue that makes the most of everything Las Vegas has to offer. **Cost: \$75 per person.**

nfda.org/convention



The world's largest funeral exposition is an adventure in itself! Leading suppliers will offer the latest products and services – along with exclusive offers – in the NFDA Expo Hall.

Monday, September 11, 12 – 5 p.m.

Tuesday, September 12, 12 – 5 p.m.

Wednesday, September 13, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

DON'T MISS THE WORLD'S LARGEST FUNERAL EXPO!

NFDA-Endorsed Providers

How much time do you spend researching companies to get the best deal on products and services? How do you know which companies are worthy of your trust? NFDA takes the guesswork out of many of your decision-making challenges by vetting a select group of businesses that provide solid offers without unwanted surprises. See all that's available to you at the NFDA Expo. Plus, participate in a fun scavenger hunt to win prizes.

NFDA Funeral Career Center

Whether you're a student preparing for the next step in your funeral service journey, or the owner/manager of a firm seeking to hire the best and the brightest, discover resources and get connected at NFDA's Funeral Career Center, conveniently located on the NFDA Expo Hall floor. It's so much more than a job board!

NFDA Publications

NFDA strives to keep you informed, so please help keep us informed, too. Chat with the staff of *The Director*, *Memorial Business Journal* and *TheDirector.edu* about topics important to you and your business; pick up free copies of *The Director*; or ask us about *The Director* app, available exclusively for NFDA members.

A Brush With Death

New this year, listen in as Gabe Schauf, host of NFDA's "A Brush With Death" podcast, interviews guests about the future of the funeral service profession. Catch these episodes live, before they drop! Who knows, he might even invite you to sit down for a conversation.

Remembering A Life

NFDA is the only funeral service association with a comprehensive consumer-education initiative, and most Remembering A Life resources are free to NFDA members. If you're looking for new content about the value of a funeral to share with families, stop by the Remembering A Life booth. While you're there, pick up our free idea guides and ask for your free deck of our new Remembering A Life Journey Cards, the perfect gift for a grieving family.





NFDA CENTRAL

Discover everything you need to achieve more in your business, community and life!



NFDA Membership

If you're not already a member, this is the perfect time to join the world's largest funeral service association. Discover how NFDA can provide you with the resources you need, when you need them, to help you and your firm adapt and grow in the future. If you are an NFDA member, then stop by to renew your membership and/or music/webcasting license. Plus receive a free gift when you renew your NFDA firm membership.

NFDA Store

Looking for a perfect gift for the families you serve, or resources that will help you be more successful in work and life? The NFDA Store offers convenient one-stop shopping for all the resources you need, including books, community-outreach materials, novelty items, NFDA merchandise and Remembering A Life items.

NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Program

Visit the Pursuit of Excellence Program booth in NFDA Central to get to know the 2023 honorees and leave inspired by their creative ideas for serving families and communities. Plus, start your journey toward earning this prestigious recognition; when you register for the 2024 program year, you'll receive a special convention-only discount!

Funeral Service Foundation

The Foundation awards a variety of academic and professional-development scholarships, offers free professional and community resources, and makes grants to organizations that advance its mission of investing in people and programs to strengthen funeral service and lift up grieving communities. Visit the foundation's booth (just outside the Expo Hall near NFDA Central) to learn about scholarships and resources that support every stage of your career, and how you can make a gift that will impact the profession.

nfda.org/convention



THE ULTIMATE LAS VEGAS BUCKET LIST

There's more to Las Vegas than the Strip!

Our friends at Visit Las Vegas have put together a list of must-see attractions – both on and off the Strip – to add to your Las Vegas bucket list. Learn more at VisitLasVegas.com and start making your own bucket list.

Bellagio Conservatory & Botanical Gardens at Bellagio

You've got to get that selfie with the iconic fountains of Bellagio, right? While you're there, venture into the resort to take in the sights and scents of the season. Breathtakingly beautiful, the elaborate floral displays are definitely Instagram-worthy!

Eiffel Tower at Paris Las Vegas

Just say oui to this Las Vegas landmark, which offers visitors spectacular Strip-side views from 46 stories in the sky. The half-scale replica features a nightly light show – inspired by the original in Paris – and a French restaurant at the top.

Gondola Ride at The Venetian Resort Las Vegas

Whether you're on a romantic ride with your partner or taking a fun-loving float with friends, a gondola trip is always a good idea. Coast down the Grand Canal under bridges and balconies while being serenaded in Italian by your talented gondolier!

AREA15

Otherworldly experiences await at this massive arts and entertainment complex just off the Strip. Hit a bullseye at Dueling Axes, ride Haley's Comet, and explore a surreal "grocery store" at Meow Wolf's Omega Mart art installation – and that's only the beginning! The space also boasts bars, lounges and restaurants, such as The Beast by celebrity chef Todd English.

The Mob Museum

This downtown Las Vegas institution explores the fascinating history of organized crime and law enforcement. Featuring four floors of exhibits and artifacts, don't forget to grab a cocktail at The Underground, a fully functioning distillery and speakeasy housed in the building's basement.

High Roller at The LINQ Promenade

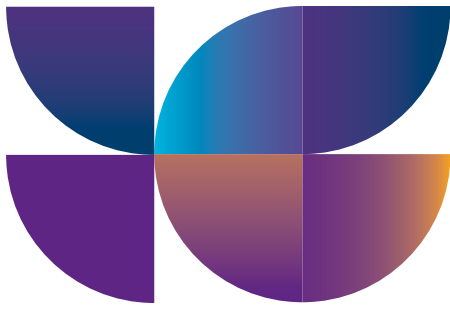
See the Las Vegas Strip and surrounding valley from a unique angle – 360 degrees of them to be exact! With a full rotation taking 30 minutes, the observation wheel brings visitors 550 feet up in the air.

Live Entertainment

It just wouldn't be a proper trip to Vegas without seeing a superstar residency or a world-class production. Good news: The Entertainment Capital of the World offers opportunities to catch something fabulous every night of the week, no matter what genre. Las Vegas has it all!

Source: VisitLasVegas.com





THANK YOU TO LAST YEAR'S SPONSORS!

Black Diamond



Platinum



Titanium



Gold



Silver



Bronze



Be a 2023 Sponsor

Visit suppliers.nfda.org or email Anthony Kaniuk at akaniuk@nfda.org or Lorri Wagner at lwagner@nfda.org for more information.

nfda.org/convention

29TH ANNUAL NMFH CHARITY **GOLF CLASSIC**

RLW

in support of the
**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
FUNERAL HISTORY®**



Sponsor Appreciation Night
SUNDAY 12.03.23

NMFH Golf Classic
MONDAY 12.04.23

Visit www.nmfh.org for more details!

ADVANCE CAREERS IN FUNERAL SERVICE

VISIT NFDA
BOOTH 1238



Visit dallasinstitute.edu to apply online or learn more 214.388.5466

**DALLAS
INSTITUTE**
OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Graduating Professionals of Distinction

Why Online Memorials Are More Important Than Ever For Funeral Homes

by Mandy Benoualid

In the digital age, technology has revolutionized various aspects of our lives, including how we mourn and remember our loved ones. Funeral homes, traditionally associated with in-person gatherings and physical memorials, are now embracing online memorials as a powerful tool to enhance their services. Platforms like Keeper Memorials can provide grieving families of funeral homes a way to honor and remember their loved ones, share memories, and find solace in a supportive community. In this article, we will explore the numerous benefits of having online memorials for funeral homes and how they are transforming the grieving process in the modern era.

Overcoming Geographical Barriers

One of the most significant advantages of online memorials is their ability to overcome geographical barriers. In the past, attending a funeral or memorial service might have been challenging for those who live far away or are unable to travel. However, online memorials allow family members, friends, and acquaintances from all over the world to participate and pay their respects remotely. This inclusivity ensures that no one is left out, fostering a sense of unity and support among those grieving, regardless of their location.

Accessibility and Convenience

Online memorials provide a convenient and accessible way for individuals to engage in the mourning process. Unlike traditional memorials that are confined to a specific time and location, online memorials are available 24/7, allowing people to visit and contribute at their own convenience. This accessibility ensures that everyone, regardless of their schedule or physical limitations, can participate and honor the memory of the departed. Furthermore, online memorials can be accessed from various devices, including computers, smartphones, and tablets, making it easier for individuals to engage and share their memories.

Preneed Benefits

Online memorial platforms allow you to empower families with secure legacy tools that preserve their

memories. Legacy tools can be a great way to introduce families to preneed, meaning they can stay engaged with your funeral home early and throughout the process. Once the person passes away, it can become an online memorial page where the extended family can choose how and with whom they'd like to share it. It's important for funeral homes to store all the respected names, emails, and other engagements on a memorial page, as it gives the family a digital lockbox and the funeral home a way to collect preneed leads.

Creating a Lasting Legacy

Online memorials offer an enduring tribute to the life and legacy of the departed. Unlike physical memorials that may deteriorate over time, online memorials can be maintained indefinitely. This digital presence becomes a permanent record of the individual's life, allowing future generations to learn about their loved one's legacy, values, and impact. Family members can add photos, videos, stories, and other cherished memories, ensuring that their loved one's life is celebrated and remembered for years to come.

Emotional Support and Healing

The grieving process can be a challenging and isolating experience. Online memorials provide a virtual space where individuals can find solace, emotional support, and understanding. By sharing memories, messages, and condolences, family members and friends can come together to mourn collectively and offer support to one another. The online community formed through these memorials becomes a source of comfort, allowing individuals to express their emotions, share stories, and receive words of encouragement during their healing journey.

Compassionate Aftercare Support

Choosing the right online memorial provider can make all the difference, ensuring families revisit their loved one's memorial page regularly and, in turn, reconnect with their funeral home over the years. Thoughtfully designed to cherish memories, these pages become a sacred space where families can share condolences

and find solace. Through an impactful aftercare plan and heartfelt memorial pages, funeral homes can send thoughtful messages, commemorating essential dates such as birthdays, the anniversary of passing, holidays, and more. With the right tools, your support remains unwavering, showing families your continued support.

Engaging a Global Community

Online memorials enable funeral homes to engage a global community and expand their reach. Through social media platforms, websites, and dedicated memorial websites, funeral homes can share information about services and invite individuals to participate in online memorials. This expanded reach not only ensures that more people can pay their respects but also allows funeral homes to connect with individuals who may require their services in the future. By leveraging technology, funeral homes can establish meaningful connections with a wider audience, fostering trust and establishing their reputation as compassionate providers of support.

The integration of online memorials into the services provided by funeral homes has transformed the way

we remember and honor our loved ones. These digital tributes overcome geographical barriers, provide accessibility and convenience, create lasting legacies, offer emotional support, and engage a global

Mandy Benoualid is the President and co-founder of Keeper, and the co-founder. Since 2013, Mandy has developed Keeper Memorials, a collaborative online memorial platform for families, which includes a suite of digital memorialization tools for funeral professionals. Her work extends to editing the consumer-focused death-positive blog, TalkDeath.com, interviewing deathcare professionals for the web series #TalkDeath, as well as attending and speaking at Death Cafes, and funeral and cemetery conferences.




FLAWLESS QUALITY.

RIDICULOUS AFFORDABILITY.

Quality, detail and manufacturer support equal to the top US brands at half their price or better.

Every Sich casket comes with \$5 million liability protection.

Benefits your company as well as the families you are serving.

ONLY YOUR ACCOUNTANT CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE.



- We carry a full line of metal, hardwood, and cloth-covered-wood caskets.
- Cremation, oversize and youth lines as well.
- High quality, competitively priced products, with the finest customer service.



CALL TODAY FOR A PRICE & SERVICE COMPARISON / TOLL FREE 1.800.226.1245
PO BOX 5664, COLUMBUS, GA 31906 / servicecasketcompany.com

Leveraging Backlinks:

Boosting Funeral Home Websites' SEO

by Alexis Reed



In today's digital age, having a strong online presence is crucial for businesses across all industries, including funeral homes. With an increasing number of people turning to the internet to find services, funeral homes must optimize their online visibility. One of the most effective strategies for enhancing search engine rankings and driving organic traffic to funeral home websites is through backlinking. In this article, we'll explore the importance of backlinking, particularly from Legacy.com, and how it can significantly impact the SEO efforts of funeral home websites.

Understanding Backlinking and SEO

Backlinking, also known as inbound linking, is the process of obtaining hyperlinks from external websites to your own. Search engines like Google consider backlinks as endorsements or votes of confidence for your website's content and credibility. When reputable websites, such as Legacy.com, link back to your funeral home website, search engines view it as a sign of authority and trustworthiness, thus boosting your site's search engine ranking.

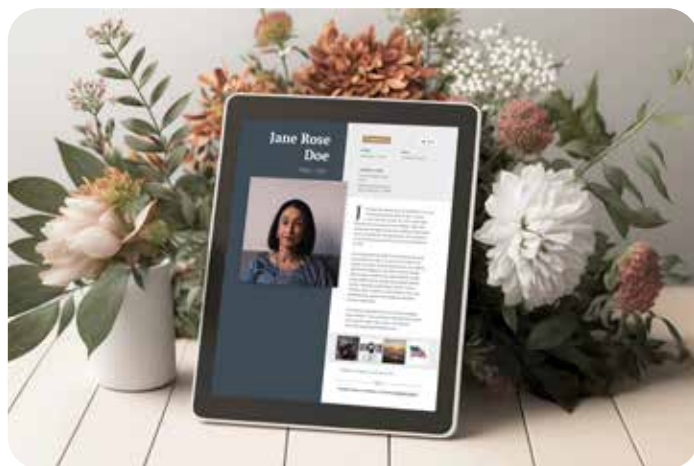
The Power of An Influential Platform

Using Legacy.com as an example, because it is a well-established and widely recognized platform in the realm of funeral services. It serves as an online memorialization platform, enabling families and friends to create obituaries and share their condolences. Due to

its extensive reach and authoritative standing, Legacy.com holds a powerful position in the eyes of search engines. Consequently, obtaining backlinks from Legacy.com can significantly impact the SEO performance of funeral home websites.

1. Enhanced Domain Authority

Search engines measure a website's authority using a metric called Domain Authority (DA). When high DA websites, such as Legacy.com, link to your funeral home website, they pass on a portion of their authority to your site. This, in turn, improves your website's own DA, signaling to search engines that your content is valuable and reliable. With higher DA, your funeral home website gains better chances of ranking higher in search results, attracting more organic traffic.



2. Relevant and Targeted Traffic

Backlinks from influential platforms can drive relevant and targeted traffic to your funeral home website. Since Legacy.com caters to individuals seeking funeral services, the audience it draws is already interested in end-of-life arrangements and memorialization. When visitors on Legacy.com find a link to your funeral home website, they are more likely to follow it if they need funeral services, resulting in increased potential customers for your business.

3. Credibility and Trust

Building trust with potential clients is crucial in the funeral industry. Backlinks from reputable and authoritative websites like Legacy.com convey a sense of trust and credibility to search engines and users alike. People are more likely to trust a funeral home that is associated with established platforms in the industry. Consequently, this trust can lead to higher conversion rates and more meaningful engagements with visitors to your website.

4. Improved Local SEO

For funeral homes, local SEO is paramount, as most potential clients are looking for services in their vicinity. Legacy.com often includes local funeral homes in its memorialization pages, allowing for targeted local

backlinks. These local backlinks can significantly enhance your funeral home website's local SEO efforts, making it easier for potential customers in your area to find and contact your business.

In conclusion, backlinking from authoritative platforms like Legacy.com can be a game-changer for funeral home websites' SEO efforts. The advantages of enhanced domain authority, targeted traffic, improved credibility, and local SEO benefits are essential for standing out in a competitive online landscape. By investing in backlinking strategies and establishing connections with reputable websites like Legacy.com, funeral homes can effectively strengthen their online presence, attract more potential clients, and solidify their position in the digital funeral services market.

About Legacy:

Legacy is the leading online obituary platform that has been helping families honor and remember their loved ones for over two decades. With a comprehensive database of obituaries and a wide range of end-of-life planning tools and resources, Legacy is dedicated to helping people celebrate life and preserve memories. Contact Legacy at legacypro@legacy.com.





Ward's Funeral Supplies

912-309-9295



**YOU CAN COUNT ON
DOUG WARD
FOR YOUR FUNERAL
SUPPLY NEEDS.**

Your Mortuary Cot Headquarters



Ferno



Junkin



MOBI

www.wardstransportservice.com

The Business Case for Funeral Streaming

Your gateway to a profitable path in digital services

by Trajan Schulzke

For over 50 years, how funeral professionals helped families manage the details surrounding a loved one's death changed very little. In early 2020, however, 80% of funeral homes quickly adopted various forms of live-streaming technology to help bereaved families cope during government-mandated restrictions on public gatherings.

As a result, in just six months, live streaming became the first digital technology to achieve universal adoption across the funeral profession since websites began to appear 25 years earlier. The pandemic's sudden, widespread upheaval placed tremendous pressure on funeral business owners and leaders to make best-guess decisions about which digital technologies would help them protect their businesses. Most struggled to evaluate the options and manage the tidal shift in customer needs and expectations. The majority responded by broadcasting ceremonies for free on Facebook Live. However, many suffered hard-learned lessons and deeply disappointing results, with broadcasts being muted, privacy issues, poor audio, and weak WiFi connections. While others turned to Zoom, they also struggled with guest interruptions, audio settings for music, and demands for technical support, while trying to maintain customary levels of in-person care for families and guests.

Evolution is the enemy

Despite these difficult experiences, funeral professionals overwhelmingly agree that funeral live streaming is here to stay—but behaviors and business practices aren't lining up with the acknowledgment. Perhaps the digital scars of the past three years have persuaded many funeral professionals to passively resist clear social and business pressures for better digital services. We've observed that most funeral businesses don't actively offer live streaming in arrangement conferences, relenting only when a family specifically requests it as a service. In connection with this, Chris Cruger, CEO of The Foresight Companies, has noted the "majority [still] think that it is going to go back to the way it used to be."



The fact that the profession's overall capacity to live-stream and offer digital services has not evolved much since 2020 seems to bear this out. This current state of the profession stands in stark contrast to the accelerated and sustained advances in consumer expectations and available streaming technologies. Based on company research, Cruger recently predicted that "there will be 3,000 to 4,000 fewer funeral homes in the next four to eight years," contending that only innovative firms that adapt well to change will be the ones that survive and thrive. If he's right, the profession won't have another 25 to 50 years to make needed changes.

Opening the digital door

In this context, the business plan of a thriving funeral business must certainly acknowledge the need for both digital and digitally enhanced services. Today's funeral consumers, regardless of their memorialization preferences, expect to be able to be more aware of and engaged in the arrangement process if they choose to be. They want transparency in processes, products, and pricing. They want easy access to information and tools to help them make their decisions. And they want the flexibility to make those decisions with others (or with the advice and reviews of others), in the time and place they choose. It doesn't mean they don't want to meet with you in person. It simply means they perceive significant value in being able to work with you in open,

convenient, and collaborative ways. They know that's what digital services can do for them. While there are literally hundreds of digital tools available to streamline your processes and enhance your customer experience, what you decide to do ought to be a deliberate decision based on your business plan, addressing an area you know needs improvement. Whether that's an internal process you need to automate or a digital service that needs refinement, start with what you know.

Live Streaming as a way forward

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing business leaders who want to respond to changing consumer preferences is the ability to invest in that change. Forecasting your return on investment (ROI) with little digital business experience or expertise can be difficult. That's why starting with what you know makes sense and can be an important first step toward a broader digital transformation. While the decision to begin live streaming may have been made of necessity, you now know there's demand for it. Begin charging for live streaming as a service, if you don't already do that. Or, if you're concerned about the quality or brand experience you're charging for, consider upgrading your

streaming platform from Facebook or another older funeral platform. These small upgrades can quickly pay for themselves. Here's how.

Unlocking the Hidden Business Value

Digital services, like your website, work for you in ways you can't. An effective livestream platform offers ways for online guests to interact with your brand and your company. While you are taking care of in-person needs, it's busy building trust and confidence in your business and the value of the services you provide. You're connecting with an expanded and uniquely targeted audience without doing anything more than you do today to livestream a ceremony. What's different about live stream audiences is that they have experienced a loss, they have a direct connection to your community (no matter where they watch from), you have provided a valuable service to them, AND they provided you with their contact information and permission to contact them. That is what can boost the value of each live stream for your business from just \$200 to \$10,000. An average of 40 guests register to attend a funeral ceremony via live stream (not even including those who will attend with them). If you livestream 30



Cherokee

Child Caskets

... Your Choice for when it Matters Most
Since 1941



Receive 10% off
when you buy 10 or more
caskets and/or vaults

800-535-8667

www.cherokeechildcaskets.com

ceremonies this year, you'll have served 1,200 additional guests directly. If 5% of those guests purchase \$5,000 in services from your business over the next 5 years, you'll add 60 new customers and \$300,000 in revenue. By simply streaming more often, you can boost your lead generation program and your new business pipelines. Using your own numbers, consider the long-term benefits of adding regular live streaming to your service offerings. By ensuring you offer live-stream guest experiences that are professional, engaging, and fully brand-aligned, you'll be connecting your business directly with a bigger market. The results will not only justify a modest investment in live streaming but can also create added flexibility to invest further in digital business tools.

The difference is the data

It is important to note that these kinds of results are dependent on collecting and using the information that guests provide you with when they register to attend a ceremony via live stream. Their contact information, also known as First-Party Data (i.e., the information you collect through your business processes), is key to your being able to reach potential new customers in thoughtful ways and at a time when they are reflecting on what families go through when a loved one dies. It's the right time after you have provided them with a meaningful online experience, to offer information on grief support or about your pre-need planning services. At the same time, you'll be keeping your funeral business top-of-mind for them, selling more funerals, and growing your market share.

Engage with expanded audiences

There will always be reasons why family members and friends cannot attend a funeral ceremony or memorial service in person. While simply streaming meets an important need for them, these guests often lament their inability to do more to personally demonstrate their deep care and sympathy to the family. Providing opportunities for meaningful online engagement is vital to meeting these deeper needs and building trust and value in your relationship with them.

Consider upgrading your platform or approach to enable online guests to share condolences and memories through messages, photos, and personal recordings while attending the live stream. These personal gifts are meaningful and valuable to your families as well. There are platforms that, similarly, also allow bereaved



families to manage privacy and personalize the memorial page with videos and pictures for their guests to enjoy alongside the live stream or recording. Your business can benefit from creating simple, beautifully refined, and fully-branded spaces and experiences that welcome guests and enable you to build and strengthen the relationships of trust that your business depends on to grow and thrive in a digital world.

Making the case

While the profession hasn't generally kept pace with digital technology advancements, live streaming is an important step forward that nearly every funeral business has taken. Considering the facts, a compelling business case can be made for making live streaming a central part of your business development strategy and direct marketing efforts. Leveraging your own practical experience and the technology you probably already have, this opportunity for business growth is still well within reach. In fact, the potential value in your live streaming could represent your business' smoothest path forward to growth and delivering even more services digitally in the future.

Trajan Schulzke is the founder and CEO of Foveo Memorial Services (www.foveo.org). Born and raised in Toronto, he calls Ottawa home. That's where he and his wife enjoy parenting their six children and serving in the community. He is grateful for his opportunity to help funeral professionals better understand and use the latest digital technologies to simplify their work, deliver better service experiences, and position their businesses for success.



NOTHING IS FASTER OR EASIER THAN QUICK CLAIM™!

Assignment Funding at Your Fingertips



FIRST OF ITS KIND & EASY TO USE WITH ALL-IN-ONE CAPABILITIES

DOWNLOAD OUR REVOLUTIONARY APP

800.785.0003



CJF.com



INDUSTRY NEWS

2023 Pursuit of Excellence Award Honorees Will be Recognized During the NFDA International Convention & Expo

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is delighted to announce the funeral businesses that earned a 2023 Pursuit of Excellence Award. For more than 40 years, NFDA has presented this award to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities.

The 2023 Pursuit of Excellence Award honorees will be formally recognized by the association at the All-Star Recognition Ceremony, taking place on Monday, September 11 at 4 p.m. during the NFDA International Convention & Expo (September 10-13 in Las Vegas, Nevada).

To earn a NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home must demonstrate proficiency in key areas of funeral service, including compliance with state and federal regulations; staff participation in ongoing education and professional development; offering outstanding programs and resources to bereaved families; maintaining an active level of involvement in the community; active participation in and service to the funeral service profession; and promoting funeral home services through a variety of marketing, advertising and public relations programs. Participants are also required to adhere to a Pledge of Ethical Practices.

“This year’s Pursuit of Excellence honorees are a truly exceptional group. Not only are they serving grieving families with dignity and compassion, but they are finding meaningful ways to support and give back to the community,” said NFDA Director of Public Relations Jessica Koth, who manages the Pursuit of Excellence Award program. “The Pursuit of Excellence Work Group was very impressed by this year’s entries and enjoyed reviewing each and every one. The Work Group applauds these firms for their hard work and dedication to providing a superior level of service to families and communities. We are proud to have them as part of our NFDA family.”

Information about the NFDA Pursuit of Excellence

program can be found by visiting www.nfda.org/pursuitofexcellence. Registration and application materials for 2024 will be available in mid-September 2024.

Best of the Best Award Recipients

All Pursuit of Excellence applicants submitted an essay describing the development and execution of a program or service that had a positive impact on the families they serve or their community, qualifying them for the Best of the Best Award, which recognizes the most novel and innovative programs and services in the profession.

Essays are judged on the uniqueness of the idea on a national and international level, quality of implementation, benefit to those served, benefit to the funeral home and how easily the idea could be replicated or modified by another funeral home.

After a thorough review, the Pursuit of Excellence Task Force selected nine funeral homes to receive the Best of the Best Award:

- *Arlington Memorial Chapels and Crematory, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines*
- *Arrington Funeral Directors & Crematory, Jackson, Tennessee*
- *David C. Brown Funeral Home, Belleville, MI*
- *Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc., Hamburg, New York (Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, Inc., West Seneca, NY)*
- *Macz Funeral Home, Centralia, Illinois (Day Macz Funeral Home, Sandoval, IL; Day Macz Funeral Home, Patoka, IL; Irvin Macz Funeral Home, Odin, IL)*
- *Martin Funeral, Cremation & Tribute Services, Mt. Morris, Michigan*
- *Morris-Baker Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Johnson City, Tennessee*
- *Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes & Crematory, New Castle, Delaware (Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes & Crematory, Delaware City, DE; Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes & Crematory, Newark, DE; Spicer-Mullikin Funeral Homes & Crematory, Middletown, DE)*
- *Waitt Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Morganville, New Jersey (Mathis Funeral Home, Medford, NJ)*

NFDA Hall of Excellence Inductees

NFDA-member funeral homes are inducted into the Hall of Excellence upon receiving their 10th Pursuit of Excellence Award. In recognition of their consistent display of professional and ethical excellence, seven funeral homes have been inducted into the NFDA Hall of Excellence in 2023:

- *Copeland Funeral Service, Beaufort, SC*
- *Falco, Caruso & Leonard Funeral Home, Pennsauken, New Jersey (Falco, Caruso & Leonard Funeral Homes, Camden, NJ)*
- *Mercer-Adams Funeral Service, Bethany, Oklahoma*
- *Morgan & Nay Funeral Centre, Madison, Indiana (Morgan & Nay Funeral Centre, Hannover, IN)*
- *Oliverie Funeral Homes, Manchester, New Jersey (Oliverie Funeral Homes, Jackson, NJ)*
- *Thomas McAfee Funeral Home – Southeast, Simpsonville, South Carolina*
- *Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Owosso, Michigan (Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Durand, MI; Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Perry, MI; Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Laingsburg, MI; Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Bancroft, MI; Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Corunna, MI; Watkins Brothers Funeral Homes, Howell, MI)*

Several funeral homes have achieved milestones in their participation in the Pursuit of Excellence Award program in 2023. NFDA salutes the following funeral homes for their ongoing commitment to excellence:

15th Pursuit of Excellence Award

- *Pedersen Funeral & Cremation, Morris, Minnesota (Starbuck Funeral Home, Starbuck, MN)*

20th Pursuit of Excellence Award

- *Memorial Funeral Home, Edinburg, Texas*
- *Milward Funeral Directors, Lexington, Kentucky (Milward Funeral Directors – Southland, Lexington, KY; Milward Funeral Directors – Man o’ War Chapel, Lexington, KY)*
- *Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, Royal Oak, Michigan (Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, Utica, MI)*

25th Pursuit of Excellence Award

- *Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services, Traverse City, Michigan*

35th Pursuit of Excellence Award

- *Martin Funeral, Cremation & Tribute Services, Mt. Morris, Michigan*

40th Pursuit of Excellence Award

- *A.J. Desmond & Sons Funeral Directors, Troy, Michigan (A.J. Desmond & Sons Funeral Directors, Vasu, Rogers & Connell, Troy, MI; A.J. Desmond & Sons Funeral Directors, Price Chapel, Tro*



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
CHILDREN'S GRIEF

No Child Should
Grieve Alone

- Resources for families and professionals
- A comprehensive listing of children's grief support across the United States
- Education and connection for professionals in the bereavement industry
- Visit www.nacg.org to learn more

INDUSTRY NEWS

NFDA Members Elect Officers to Serve on Board of Directors, Vote on Bylaws Changes: Dutch Nie Elected to be 2023-24 President to Succeed Current President, John O. “Jack” Mitchell, IV

Eligible voting members of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) elected the following individuals to serve as officers on the Board of Directors: President-elect Christopher P. Robinson, CFSP, CCO; Treasurer Daniel J. Ford, CFSP, CCO; and Secretary Chris E. Christian, CFSP, CCO. Additionally, all three proposed changes to the NFDA bylaws passed.

The officers will serve one-year terms of office that begin immediately following the 2023 NFDA International Convention & Expo, which will take place September 10-13 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

From July 25-August 7, 1,092 votes were cast by eligible voting members. Votes were cast online through a secure balloting system run by YesElections. Winners of the officer elections are determined by a plurality vote. The results were:

- **President-elect:** Christopher P. Robinson, CFSP, CCO 100% (1,048 votes)
- **Treasurer:** Daniel J. Ford, CFSP, CCO 100% (1,046 votes)
- **Secretary:** Chris E. Christian, CFSP, CCO, Christian-Sells Funeral Home, Rogersville, Tennessee 66.51% (717 votes)
- Beatrice E. Lewanduski, CFSP, Claude R. Boyd-Spencer Funeral Home, Babylon, New York 33.49% (361 votes)

Douglas R. “Dutch” Nie II, CFSP, CCO, of Nie Family Funeral Home & Cremation Service in Ann Arbor, Michigan, will ascend from his current president-elect role to lead the association as the 2023-24 NFDA President.

Current NFDA President **John O. “Jack” Mitchell IV, CFSP, CCSP**, will continue his service on the Board with a one-year term as Immediate Past President.

Also continuing their service on the Board of Directors are 2022-24 At-large Representatives Brad Walker of Walker Funeral Homes in Spanish Fork, Utah, and Bobby “Steve” Spann of Spann Funeral Home in

Dickson, Tennessee. They will be joined by **Homer E. Elwood Jr. and Ellen Wynn McBrayer, CFSP, CPC**, who were elected in June by state association representatives to serve as the 2023-25 at-large representatives. Information about the individuals elected to serve on the Board of Directors can be found on the NFDA website, www.nfda.org/elections.

Proposed Bylaws Changes

Along with electing officers to serve on the Board of Directors, qualified association members were also responsible for voting on proposed changes to the NFDA Bylaws. Bylaws changes require a two-thirds affirmative vote to pass. Each proposed change was voted on separately.

The proposed bylaw changes, though seemingly small, will ensure that NFDA continues to impartially and effectively represent the interests of all funeral directors. Details about each of these changes can be found online: <https://portal.nfda.org/Bylaws-Vote>.

- **Electronic Quorum Provision:** Passed with 95.79% (1,046 votes) in favor
- **State Association Representatives:** Passed with 95.24% (1,040 votes) in favor
- **Board Composition Requirements:** Passed with 94.05% (1,027 votes) in favor

NFDA is the world’s leading and largest funeral service association, serving more than 20,000 individual members who represent nearly 11,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.nfda.org.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Kelly Manion Named New Homesteaders Director of Consumer Marketing

West Des Moines, Iowa — Homesteaders Life Company is pleased to announce that Kelly Manion has joined the company's consumer engagement team as Director of Consumer Marketing. In her new role, Manion will oversee marketing efforts to support Homesteaders' consumer-focused initiatives.


"Kelly possesses a wealth of experience and passion for the work we are doing and understands the value of ongoing research, innovation and development of solutions that help funeral professionals connect with more consumers than ever before," said Jon Lefrandt, Homesteaders SVP-Consumer Experience. "Her strong connection to and understanding of the funeral profession will be invaluable in this role."

Manion brings more than 20 years of experience to Homesteaders, including a decade as the Director of Consumer Engagement for the Funeral Service Foundation.

"I believe in the key role funeral service professionals play in supporting grieving families and communities," stated Manion. "Becoming a part of the Homesteaders team was the perfect way for me to continue my career in this field. I am thrilled to join such an energetic and passionate team, and I am eager to contribute to the growth of the Homesteaders brand."




Manion earned her bachelor's degree in English and organizational communication from St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisc. In addition, Manion has served as a funeral service apprentice with the Milwaukee Area Technical College and received her grief support specialist certificate from UW-Madison.



CONTINUING EDUCATION ON-LINE

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.**



JOHN A. GUPTON COLLEGE

1616 Church Street | Nashville, TN 37203
615-327-3927 | www.guptoncollege.edu

NEW SIZE! Extra-Large Premium Memorial Bookmarks



Our Extra-Large PMC Bookmark is designed for laminating long, wide or two-column obituaries.

4½" x 11" with rounded corners

800.821.1333 | Order online: lamcraft.com

- Pouch Laminators
- Premium Memorial Cards
- Clear Lamination Pouches
- Customized Tribute Cards
- Micro-Perforated Printable Cards



Independently owned & operated since 1974

INDUSTRY NEWS

Deathtech Solutions Provider PlotBox Announces Capital Investment Success

Cemetery Software: Revolutionizing Cemetery Management

PlotBox, the leading software solutions provider to cemeteries, crematories, and funeral homes, has announced a \$6.2 million capital investment led by Guinness Ventures, with some existing investors, including Edinburgh-based firm Par Equity, also participating in the round.

Headquartered in Northern Ireland with offices in the United States and Australia, PlotBox has grown over the last decade from a multi-award-winning startup, to become the leading digital transformation partner of choice for deathcare service providers across the globe.

Founded in 2014 by husband and wife team Sean and Leona McAllister, PlotBox has pioneered the integration of high-resolution drone mapping imagery, geographical information systems, cloud-based software, and cemetery records - innovations that facilitate cemeteries, crematories, and funeral homes to operate to world-class standards.

The new funding will support PlotBox's strategy for global growth and expansion, enabling its continued development of best-in-class products and services that will help to revolutionize the way deathcare facilities both operate and grow.

PlotBox CEO, Sean McAllister said, "Our mission is to help take away some of the pain in dealing with death - for families, and those who serve them. This funding will enable us to continue to realize that mission by providing customer-focused, innovative solutions that give our partners greater visibility, confidence and control in their data, and most importantly - more time to focus on what matters most."

Shane Gallwey, Head of Ventures, Guinness Ventures said: "PlotBox is a leader in its field across its target markets including the UK and USA. Sean, Leona, and their team are innovators and disruptors in this sector.

Their hard work and commitment have established them as the best-in-class solution, bringing much-needed modernization to a fragmented industry. PlotBox is a fantastic addition to the Guinness Ventures portfolio and we're very much looking forward to supporting them on their continuing journey to reshape the death tech industry".



Your Solution to Today's Marketing Challenges

Weigel Strategic Marketing is a marketing firm providing strategic communication assistance and branding expertise to a diverse portfolio of funeral service clients.

The company is experienced in all forms of communications, public relations, publicity and marketing material development in print and digital format.

WEIGEL
STRATEGIC MARKETING
weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com

317.608.8914



2023 Chrysler Voyager



2023 Chrysler Voyager



2023 Platinum Cadillac Limo



2022 Eagle Cadillac Limo



2017 Eagle Cadillac Limo
10,359 miles



2017 Eagle Cadillac Limo
11,231 miles



2016 Eagle Cadillac Limo
19,010 miles

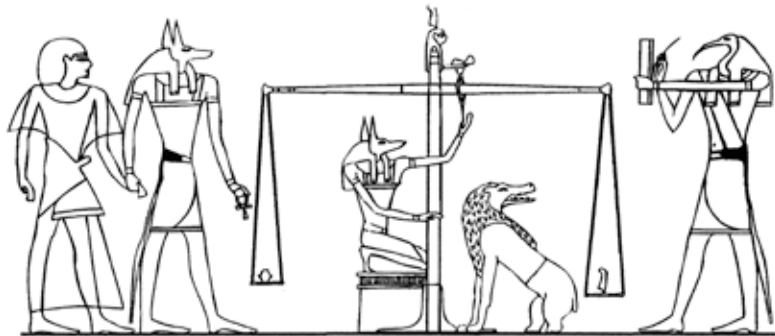


2016 Eagle Lincoln Limo
18,300 miles



2014 Eagle Cadillac Limo
74k miles

FROM OUR GARAGE TO YOUR DOOR IN AS LITTLE AS 5 DAYS



When you weigh the options

YARBROUGH MORTUARY SERVICES



The right choice
1-877-664-2802
Jackson, TN



REMOVAL, EMBALMING, OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION
Linda Yarbrough, Office Manager
Brandon Yarbrough, Licensed Funeral Director & Embalmer

FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS

NOT ONLY
ESSENTIAL
BUT ALSO
EXCEPTIONAL

Thank You

ASD

1-800-868-9950



myASD.com



United Midwest
Savings Bank

Funeral Home Acquisitions | Funeral Home Debt Consolidations | Funeral Home Renovations

SIMPLIFYING FUNERAL HOME LENDING



Chad Fondriest

614-205-7600

Senior VP - Commercial Lender
cfondriest@umwsb.com

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF YOUR FIRM

United Midwest is a national direct lender that specializes in lending to the funeral home industry. We understand the value of the business and the goodwill associated with a funeral home. We will lend against both fixed assets as well as the business and goodwill.

Call today and learn more.

LOAN PROGRAMS

Goodwill/Business
Real Estate Loans
Funeral Home Acquisitions
Funeral Home Refinancing

LOAN TERMS

Up to 90% Financing
Up to 25 Year Terms
Seller Carry Permitted



877-751-4622
www.umwsb.com
6460 Busch Blvd, Suite 201, Columbus, OH 43229



August 2023 Ad Index

Ambulance & Coach Sales	21	www.ambulanceandcoach.com
“ASD” - Answering Service for Directors	36	www.myasd.com
Cherokee Child Caskets	27	www.cherokeechildcaskets.com
C&J Financial	29	www.cjf.com
Dallas Institute of Funeral Service	21	www.dallasinstitute.edu
FuneralCall	3	www.funeralcall.com
John A. Gupton College	33	www.guptoncollege.edu
Lamcraft	33	www.lamcraft.com
Physicians Mutual	40	www.physiciansmutual.com
National Alliance for Grieving Children	31	www.newbridgegroup.com
NMFH Charity Golf Classic	21	www.nmfh.org/charity-golf-classic
Service Casket/SICH	23	www.sichcasket.com
Shields Professional Vehicles	35, 39	www.myhearse.com
Talk of a Lifetime	3	www.talkofalifetime.org
The Messenger Company	5	www.themessengerco.com
United Midwest Savings Bank	37	www.umwsb.com
Ward’s Funeral Supplies	25	912-309-9295
Weigel Strategic Marketing	34	www.weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com
Yarbrough Mortuary	35	877-664-2802
Wilbert EDU	4	www.wilbert.com/wilbertedu

Since 1969, we've been the trusted transportation partner for family-owned funeral homes

Browse our latest inventory of vehicles ready for you

MASTER DEALER
PLATINUM & MK COACH

AUTHORIZED DEALER
FEDERAL EAGLE COACH COMPANY



NEW

2023 Platinum Phoenix C Cadillac



NEW

2023 Platinum MasterCoach Cadillac



NEW

2023 Platinum Phoenix R Cadillac



NEW

2023 MK Lincoln Grand Legacy



NEW

2023 Platinum Phoenix Cadillac Hearse



2022 K2 Chevy Traverse
1,061 miles



2017 Platinum Phoenix Cadillac
33k miles



2017 MK Lincoln (2 in stock)
28k miles



2017 Platinum Phoenix R Cadillac
66,922 miles

FROM OUR GARAGE TO YOUR DOOR IN AS LITTLE AS 5 DAYS



Scan this code with your smartphone's camera to see all current inventory.
Delivered in as little as five days!



Cheers!

to the funeral profession
and its cherished legacies

Please join us at NFDA in booth 1447 for a glass of champagne or sparkling cider as we toast all funeral professionals – from dedicated funeral home owners to their tireless teams behind the scenes.

As you sit and sip, take a moment to learn about our innovative preneed products that can help you grow your business and serve your families.

We're excited about your future and know the best is yet to come.

See you in Vegas!



Visit us at NFDA
BOOTH 1447

Sept. 10-13, 2023
Las Vegas

