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MAGAZINE

March 2018

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Memorialization & Aftercare

Rob O'Neill, Former Navy Seal and Special Ops Leader on Raid on Bin Laden
How to Give the Perfect Eulogy
The Journey of a Man's Cremation Ashes Via the Sea
Evolution of Cremation Memorialization- National Museum of Funeral History
Women in Funeral Service Feature, Erin Whitaker, Dedicated Provider
Working With The Media-Taking Your Skills to the Next Level
NFDA Goes Big in Boston, Kenneth Cahill Elected President
Retirement Roast-Robert G Horn
In Memory of; Mark Elder, Carson Sprow and Steve Vincent



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notes from the editor

provided by Laura Augustine

Guest writer: Rob O'Neill, Former Navy Seal and Special Ops leader on raid on Bin Laden

Spoiler alert, Bin Laden dies at the end of it. We knew we weren't coming home from that mission, we were going to die. We were going to get shot down on the way in. We're going to run out of fuel and just be in Pakistan and just live our short, miserable lives in a Pakistani prison. If anyone is going to blow himself up, it's bin Laden, we're not coming back.

The guy that ended up in the "Point Man" position taking me up the stairs to bin Laden's bedroom, he pulled me aside before we left, and he said, "Don't take this the wrong way, I'm going. But if we know we're going to die, why are we going?" Which is legit, he wanted to say it out loud. I said, "That's a good point. *"We are not going for fame and we are not going for bravado, we are going for the single mom who dropped her kids off at elementary school on a Tuesday morning, and then forty-five minutes later, she jumped to her death out of a skyscraper. Because that was a better alternative than burning alive, because it was 2,500 degrees inside. Her last gesture of human decency, was to hold her skirt down so nobody could see her underwear as she committed suicide. She didn't want to do any of that, she wasn't supposed to be in the fight, we're supposed to fight, that's why we're going."*

We were a week and a half into planning that big mission. We had some of the best minds planning the mission to kill bin Laden. We rehearsed the perfect plan over and over and over every day with real helicopters on a real training site, fourteen hours a day, then afterwards we'd talk about it around a table with a replica model. One night, the boss said, "All right guys, what's the worse thing that could happen?" The youngest guy in the room said, "Well, the helicopter could crash in the front yard. Can we talk about that for twenty seconds?" And, that happened. But, we were able to take a potentially catastrophic event and turn it into something great because of our preparation. No

matter what, we never quit.

People would be so close to a goal, 95% of the way to their achievement, then have a series of bad days, and then throw their hands, that's it, I quit, I'm done. You are not having a bad life, you are having a bad day. Now, saying "never quit" and never quitting are two different things, so I need to tell you a story. You're in the Navy so you know how to tie a lot of knots. The test is go tie a series of knots with this rope around that rope. The instructor will say, "Okay, go tie a Bowline Knot." You hold your breath and swim down there, tie a Bowline Knot and you back off. It's been about a minute and he comes back down and checks and says, "Yeah, that's good." You untie the Bowline Knot, you go back up, you get one breath of air, enough time for him to tell you about knot number two.

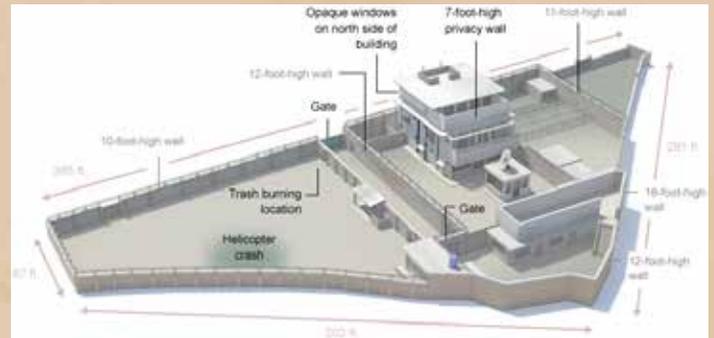
He'd say, "Go tie a Square Knot." The test is simple, tie five knots in a row and you pass. Now, they give you a certain number of attempts at each test. But, a friend of mine named John was on his last attempt. If he doesn't do all five now, they're going to kick him out today, he'll never be a Navy Seal. Lifelong dream, that's a lot of pressure. On his fifth knot attempt he drowned. The instructor swam down to get him, he straddles John and started immediately with a sternum rub to try to get him to cough it up, then he started CPR. We could actually hear him saying to John, "Come back to the light." John was out for a minute and a half, finally spit all of the water out of his lungs and the first words out of his mouth were, "Did I pass?"

The instructor sat back on him, because he was getting his color back too, because he gets to keep his job, and he goes, "Yeah, man you passed." John goes, "Thank God, I finally got the fifth knot." The instructor said, "No, you didn't. Look, I'm in a good mood right now, so I'm going to let you in on secret, I don't care how many knots you know how to tie, that is not part of

the curriculum to become a Navy Seal. My job simply is to see how far you'll push yourself. You just killed yourself, you passed the damn tests. Good job.

When you feel like quitter, which you will, don't quit right now, quit tomorrow. Wake up in the morning on time and make your bed the right way, then brush your teeth. Little victories. Make it to 5:00 a.m. PT on time. Get through that and make it to breakfast. After breakfast, concentrate on getting to lunch. After lunch make it to dinner. After dinner, do everything you need to do to get back in that bed no matter how bad your day was, you get a fresh start tomorrow because your bed was made right.

The enemy is all your doubts, all your fears, and everyone you know back home that told you you weren't good enough to do this. Keep your head down, no matter what-never quit and you'll be just fine. Keep moving forward.





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How to Give the Perfect Eulogy

7 tips to share your memories and thoughts at a funeral

By Justin Michael and Richard Chin



Donald J. Trump  @realDonaldTrump · Feb 14

My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school.

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Who is Sarah Chadwick?

She's the very vocal teen who retweeted President Trump's response to the Florida school shooting — and her sharp words went viral.

This Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student didn't want condolences. She didn't want prayers.

Trump tweeted at 3:50 p.m. Wednesday, less than an hour after police said 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz killed 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

"My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school," Trump tweeted.

My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school.

Chadwick was quick to condemn Trump on Twitter: "I don't want your condolences you ".....- --", my friends and teachers were shot. Multiple of

my fellow classmates are dead. Do something instead of sending prayers. Prayers won't fix this. But Gun control will prevent it from happening again."

So when does a President of the United States words actually offer true condolences?

Many of us still remember how President Ronald Reagan consoled a nation when the Challenger space shuttle exploded in 1986, killing all seven astronauts aboard, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe. "And I want to say something to the schoolchildren of America who were watching the live coverage of the shuttle's takeoff," Reagan said in his nationally televised speech. "I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them."

Don't fear that if you don't nail this speech, you have failed to honor the memory of your recently deceased relative.

But what do the rest of us do when we're asked to

speaking at the funeral of a loved one?

Eulogies combine two of the things that many people would rather avoid: death and public speaking, according to Justin Michael, founder of Eulogy Consultants, a eulogy ghostwriting business based in Austin, Texas.

No wonder many people find the prospect daunting.

Funeral Directors are left with the heavy burden to try to find the right words or comfort a family during devastating times and many times there are no words or actions on their part, they can only provide a dignified and professional service for the family.

But here are seven pieces of advice that can make the task easier:

1. First, relax.

Don't fear that if you don't nail this speech, you have failed to honor the memory of your recently-deceased relative.

"That's just not true," Michael said. "You have to take the pressure off and realize it's just not that important." According to Michael, your eulogy isn't your last chance to say goodbye. "This is just a simple preamble to how I'm going to remember this person," he said.

In his book *A Labor of Love: How to Write a Eulogy*, author Garry Schaeffer says you should remind yourself that you won't be facing a tough audience. Your relative just died. They'll be sympathetic.

"A eulogy does not have to be perfect," according to Schaeffer. "Realize whatever you write will be appreciated."

2. On the other hand, don't just try to wing it.

"Don't speak from the heart," Michael urged. At a funeral, "the heart is full of anguish. That is not eloquent. That is not pretty."

In other words, you want to have your eulogy speech written out and well-rehearsed before the funeral. And you'll want to take a copy of the speech with you. Don't try to deliver it from memory.

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“When death has just happened, people’s minds go blank,” said Theresa Scott, who has written hundreds of eulogies for Eulogy Consultants. “During a time of such grief, so many things can go wrong.”

3. A eulogy is not an obituary.

The role of the eulogist isn’t to present a biographical summary of a person’s life, but to share some memories of the deceased.

“You want it to be very personal,” Michael said.

Follow the old writer’s adage of show, not tell, with anecdotes that illustrate what the deceased was like and your relationship to him or her.

“Tell stories. You’re trying to paint a picture here,” Scott said. The idea is to share your memories as an example to people in the congregation so they’ll be comfortable sharing their own stories after the service.

4. Do a little homework before writing.

Feel free to interview friends or relatives to collect stories. Schaeffer suggests brainstorming with questions like, “What made your loved one truly happy?” Or “what will you remember most about this person?”

5. Humor is fine.

“If there’s a story that lovingly pokes fun at your deceased father, then please tell it,” Scott said.

The eulogy should be written in a conversational style. Don’t try to use big words. Keep the vocabulary simple. It should sound like what you would say to a good friend at a coffeeshop.

“Just really, really polished,” Scott said.

6. Keep it short.

Even if you will be the only speaker, don’t plan on speaking more than 10 minutes, said Scott, who was on competitive speech teams in high school and college. People have a limited attention span. They’ll likely stop listening after about 10 minutes, Scott said.

Something that lasts for only four or five minutes is perfectly fine, she noted. Speaking briefly doesn’t mean you loved the deceased any less.

Ronald Reagan’s tribute to the Challenger crew only lasted about four minutes.

7. Be prepared when it’s your time to speak.

Bring a glass or a bottle of water and, if you choke up, use the time while taking a drink to gather yourself. Print out your speech in extra-large type size so you won’t lose your place if you have to pause. Try to articulate and speak slowly. People tend to speak quickly when they’re nervous, Scott said.

If you have trouble coming up with a beginning, try something simple and to the point, suggested Scott. Introduce yourself, because not everyone may know you’re Bob’s daughter from his second marriage. Then thank everyone for coming.

Scott said a conclusion can be equally simple. She suggests speaking directly to the deceased. Thank dad for all the things he’s done for you. That can be a powerful way to end.

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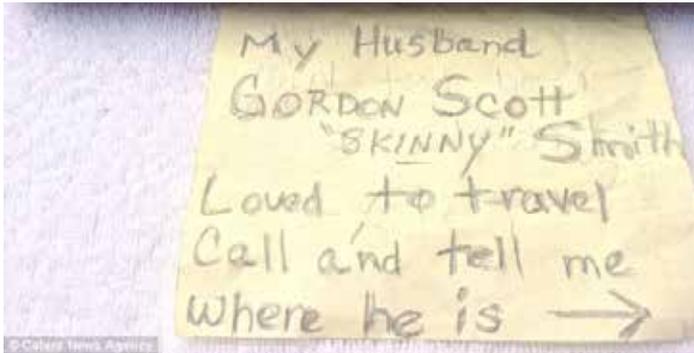
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The Journey of a Man's Cremation Ashes Via the Sea

Story provided by Deidre' Mitchell



Gordon 'Skinny' Smith died of a brain hemorrhage at 57 in March 2012

Three weeks later his wife put his ashes in a bottle with a note and \$2 and threw it into the sea. The bottle has now been found twice in Florida and traveled 80 miles

When travel-loving globetrotter Gordon Smith died of a brain haemorrhage aged 57, his wife Beverly felt he wasn't ready to stop exploring.

So she packed his ashes into a plastic bottle with a note and \$2, dropped him into the ocean from their favourite holiday retreat in Florida and waved farewell to him one last time.

Her note was simple. It read: 'My husband Gordon Scott 'Skinny' Smith loved to travel. Call and tell me where he is.'

And to her surprise, two weeks later she received a phone call from a man named Ross who had found Gordon on a beach 50 miles up the coast.

'Gordon loved the ocean,' said Beverly from her home in Tennessee. 'I wanted to let him travel a little and let him sail away.' She even joked that he would have loved to have visited his relatives in Scotland.

Ross then took his boat six miles into the ocean, wrote his own note to accompany the former construction worker and sent Gordon on his way again.

'I called his wife to let her know where her husband was and she was so, so happy. She said the money was

for a phone call to let her know where he was,' reads Ross' note.

Last week, Skinny Smith turned up again, this time in Key Colony Beach, Florida.

Judi Glunz Sidney was cleaning litter from the shore of the beach in front of Glunz Ocean Beach Hotel and Resort when she noticed a plastic bottle with money and what appeared to be sand inside.

Upon reading Beverly Smith's note, Sidney realized the 'sand' was actually the ashes of Gordon Skinny Smith. She called the number and told Beverly that her husband had made another stop on his journey.

'Judi called the wife in Tennessee, who was excited to know of Gordon's travels! Judi added her note,' the resort posted on its Facebook page.

'We put him in a rum bottle (you know, added a little fun to his trip) with the three notes. We added another \$1 in case Gordon travels far and a long distance call is needed.'

Sidney and her husband threw a beach party for Skinny, passing around the letter for everyone present to sign, then the couple drove to Seven Mile Bridge and threw the bottle into the water.



And most recently, Gordon's ashes were found in Key Colony Beach in Florida, having traveled 80 miles since his journey began.

Beverly and Gordon Smith took their last trip together in March 2012. Two hours after their return from Costa Rica, Gordon Smith died of a brain hemorrhage.

The couple had been married for 27 years when Gordon Smith died suddenly, leaving Beverly to ponder a future without her travel-loving husband.

Gordon Scott Smith was a big man with an even bigger personality. Once, the construction worker playfully took umbrage at a colleague nicknaming him 'Fatty', so Smith became 'Skinny'. The name was so entrenched that even his paychecks were made out to Skinny Smith.

'I don't think his bosses knew his real name,' says Beverly Smith told USA Today.

After Gordon was cremated, Beverly Smith placed the ashes, a message explaining that her husband Gordon 'Skinny' Smith loved to travel, and requesting that

anyone who came across his ashes call her and let her know where her husband was, and two \$1 bills to pay for the calls into a plastic bottle.

She took the bottle to Big Pine Key in Florida, a place the couple had visited on holiday every February since the early '80s and hurled it out into the sea, three weeks after her husband's death.

'We'd blow in and everybody would have a good time,' Beverly told USA Today, describing how Gordon Smith had earned the nickname 'Tennessee Tornado' and shared his moonshine among the other campers at Big Pine Key campsite. But while Beverly is still dealing with the grief of losing her husband every day, hearing of his adventures from people whose hearts he has touched, even in death, helps her cope.

'I've had a rough time losing my best friend,' she told USA Today.

'You can't change it but you can lift your head up and be thankful... that people can still appreciate love stories - real love stories.'



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Exhibit Showcases Evolution of Cremation Memorialization in the U.S.

by: Kelly Rehan

Urn on a mantle? Scattering ashes? The History of Cremation exhibit will show the public more enduring ways to permanently memorialize a loved one.

Cremation and memorialization have a muddled history in the United States. Scattering ashes, urns collecting dust on fireplace mantles, the lack of public awareness that permanent memorialization after cremation is possible—there’s a lot of confusion about how to properly honor cremated remains.

“To so many people, cremation is simply disposition,” says Jason Engler, official historian for the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). “But for people in the death care profession, cremation is preparation for memorialization. There’s a big difference and a big gap in people’s knowledge.”

To close this gap, the National Museum of Funeral History (NMFH) in Houston will open The History of Cremation exhibit this fall. The first-of-its-kind exhibit, which is a joint project with CANA, will bring cremation’s history in the United States to life—including how memorialization has changed from the late 1800s to today.

The exhibit will showcase the services available to permanently memorialize cremated remains, including placing a personalized urn in a columbarium niche wall to burying an urn in the ground with a headstone.

The goal is to show the public that they can and should plan for an enduring memorial for themselves or a loved one that stands the test of time after cremation.

“People often lose that sense of existence and feel they will be forgotten after cremation,” says Genevieve Keeney, NMFH President and curator. “The History of Cremation exhibit will help people understand the different types of memorialization available, so their existence can live on.”

Urns Through Time: Memorialization Highlights at The History of Cremation Exhibit

Engler’s unparalleled historical cremation knowledge,



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combined with his funeral director experience, have made him integral to The History of Cremation exhibit. Engler donated approximately 90 percent of his personal collection of historical cremation items to the exhibit.

The evolution of cremation memorialization in America is a focus for Engler, and he showcases his passion for the subject through the exhibit.

“The cool part about the exhibit is that we are focusing not only on how memorialization has been affected in the past but also how it is now,” Engler says.

Dubbed Urns Through Time, the memorialization section of the exhibit will take visitors back to Victorian times, when cremation first became available in the United States. Back then, urns weren’t constructed by standalone urn manufacturers—they were made by companies better known for making household goods.

“Anyone who made decorative items like lamps or tea kettles made urns during those times,” Engler says. “As the exhibit moves through time, visitors will see how urn manufacturing became a business of its own.”

The History of Cremation exhibit will feature urns from the 1890s through the present, many of which come from Engler’s personal collection. The exhibit will feature 120 of Engler’s historical urns.

While exploring the exhibit, visitors will discover how cremation memorialization has evolved since its birth in America in 1876. Views toward scattering cremated remains are one of the biggest changes.

Many consider the scattering of cremated remains a suitable way to memorialize after cremation, but America's founding cremationists felt differently.

"In cremation's past, the crematory operators of the day frequently combatted scattering by refusing to pulverize cremated remains after they were removed from the cremation chamber," wrote Engler in his blog at CremationHistorian.com.

The reason early American cremationists were so opposed to scattering, Engler wrote, was to discourage families of the departed from viewing the remains as "valueless ash."

In 1941, the Manual of Standard Crematory and Columbarium Practices was published and adopted by American cremationists. The manual included instructions for respectfully handling cremated remains, and promoted the use of memorial urns for permanent placement and memorialization.

"This time frame in cremation's history in America caused some of the most beautiful memorials imaginable to be created, and they remain beautiful to this day," Engler wrote.

The History of Cremation exhibit will feature urns from this golden age of cremation memorialization in America, which lasted from the early 1900s to the 1970s. Visitors will be able to view antique urns in a niche wall that shows what historic columbaria looked like. The exhibit will also have an entire wall featuring most of the standard memorialization options available to families, from burial of an urn in the ground to placement in a columbarium niche.

The last thing visitors will see as they leave the exhibit is the donor niche wall, which was graciously provided by Carrier Mausoleums Construction Inc. The donor niche wall will display urns engraved with businesses and individuals who've supported The History of Cremation exhibit, and it will offer visitors additional memorialization options to consider.

Today's Cremation Memorialization Challenges

Death care professionals face several challenges regarding memorialization after cremation—time after cremation and the digital domination are two main ones.

Be Part of the "Industry's Museum"

The National Museum of Funeral History (NMFH) is a non-profit organization that celebrates the contributions of every death care professional in America. Your generous donations ensure the museum continues to tell the inspiring stories of our industry.

Interested in making your mark on The History of Cremation exhibit? The following donation options are available:

- *Niche wall donors (contact Genevieve Keeney for pricing information):* **Commit your donor space by June 1, 2018**, to ensure your engraved urn with your company's name is on display in the niche wall by grand opening.
- *Urn donors (\$1,000):* **Commit your donation by July 1, 2018**, to ensure your company name is listed on the contribution wall by grand opening.
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Contributors will receive a Signature Keepsake Urn commemorating their donation. Niche space donors will have an urn engraved with their company's name placed in the donor niche wall for a 5-year period with the option to renew. Donors may also elect to place their own urn in the niche space upon approval. All donors will receive a personal invitation to the grand opening of The History of Cremation exhibit in the fall 2018.

To make a monetary donation to the museum:
Contact Genevieve Keeney, NMFH President
gkeeney@yahoo.com, (832)-419-3705

To donate a historical item to The History of Cremation exhibit:
Contact Jason Engler, CANA Historian
cremationhistorian@hotmail.com, (479)-381-4424

Time is a double-edged sword when it comes to cremation memorialization, Keeney says. On one hand, funeral professionals can help families create a thoughtful, enduring memorial during the aftercare period.

“If someone has been cremated, families have time to create a lasting long-term memorial,” Keeney says. “During that aftercare process, funeral directors can help the families create an everlasting memorialization for their loved one to withstand the test of time.”

But as the time after the cremation slips away, so too can the momentum to plan for a permanent resting place. When cremated remains aren’t memorialized in a mausoleum or burial vault, what happens when the last person who remembers the departed also passes away?

“A challenge of our industry is helping people think 20 years down the road about what they want done with their loved one’s ashes when no more family members are left to care for those ashes,” Keeney says. “If cremated remains are at home on a mantle, what’s the long-term plan? How can we solve that issue before it becomes a problem, especially because cremation is so popular?”

Another challenge faced by death care professionals is our society’s relationship with technology, which Engler says is not a good thing when it comes to memorialization.

“In the long run, one of the few things that shouldn’t be digital is death,” Engler says. “An urn or permanent monument memorial will preserve over time, and it’s a permanent spot for a family and the public to pay tribute to that life.

Paper can crumble, and the internet could crash. Having something physical for people to look back on makes a huge difference in how people view our society.”

“If we move away from the thought of a physical body in front of us, we become nothing more than disposers of the dead—and that’s not who we are,” Engler continues. “The memories don’t stop with a funeral service; they continue with memorialization.”

The NFHM: The Industry’s Museum and Partner in Educating the Public

The History of Cremation exhibit is part of a long line of NMFH programming aimed at providing the public a clearer understanding of the death care industry.

Among the biggest benefits of the museum, Keeney says, is that people can learn about death care services before they need them. When they aren’t consumed by grief, people are able to carefully consider all their options.

“When people visit the museum, they think about death care—either for themselves or for a loved one,” Keeney says. “The museum helps funeral directors provide a more tailored service to families because the public has been enriched from the information they learned at the museum.”

Keeney says the museum helps people think of their own funeral or reflect on a funeral of a loved one they attended.

“The museum shows visitors ways they can incorporate a funeral service to have a positive reflection on loved one’s life and incorporate memories of that person to help them move forward in life,” Keeney says.

“This truly is the industry’s museum,” she continues. “All funeral professionals can take ownership of it. This is a truly unique opportunity for our whole industry to educate the families that they will one day be working with.”

The History of Cremation exhibit opens fall 2018 at the National Museum of Funeral History in Houston. Stay updated on news and announcements leading up to its grand opening by visiting www.NMFH.org and liking NMFH on Facebook.



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Erin Whitaker, Dedicated Provider

By SFD Magazine's Elli Morris

With a personal drive for continued growth and a professional desire to bring value to others, Erin is an unstoppable passionate woman in the funeral profession.

“What’s fun about my current position, no doubt, is the opportunity to talk with funeral directors all over the country. “ As Vice President of Business Development for Foundation Partners Group, a position she has held for two years, Erin is ideally suited as the bridge between her employer and those they endeavor to partner with. What business wouldn’t want an outgoing, upbeat, energetic, ambitious, passionate, dedicated, and very skilled person with a list of accolades as their go-to for the profession they serve?”

“We all have different business philosophies and mindsets. What thrills me is the ability to form those relationships and meet people doing such great work in funeral service.”

Although Erin grew up in the funeral business, funeral service was her second career. Her family owns Whitaker Funeral Home in Newberry and Chapin, South Carolina and her father, Doggett Whitaker, is an NFDA Past President. After graduating from Georgia Tech with a degree in chemical engineering, she spent 6 years working for Eastman Kodak in Rochester and Colorado. “Thinking I was on a different career path, I returned home to get an International MBA at the University of South Carolina. During that time, I started working part-time with my family, helping out at the funeral homes, and as it turned out, the hook was set.”

Having gained a different appreciation for what her parents did, Erin began to understand the funeral service profession on level she had not before. “There’s a difference between liking a job and having work that you’re passionate about. I don’t use that term lightly. Knowing that it is a difficult, sad, emotional time every day for the families we serve, to be able to do so has to be a calling or something you’re passionate about.” Erin certainly fits that description herself, stating, “I can’t envision ever leaving funeral service. “



What else is exciting about your current position?

“It’s also exciting to help create a succession plan that allows for the owner to transition their business and at the same time presents a good fit for our business, where culturally, both businesses believe the same thing about our profession. In addition to meeting amazing people, to be able to help owners continue their legacy, is very rewarding when we join forces and continue to serve their families.

“When I say culture it’s from the standpoint of both the two businesses having similar values and thought processes about what it means to serve a family with highest level of quality and highest of level service.”

What are some of the struggles with your current position?

“It always seems to be on same pendulum! The amount of travel - I am all over the country meeting people in different time zones, different weather all in one week. It can be a little comical! That and it’s hard when there isn’t a fit for one reason or another and we are not able to provide the succession plan solution.”

How was it going from Colorado back to Newberry, South Carolina?

“I took a number of twists and turns! For part of the MBA, I spent 6 months in Vienna, Austria, for the international part of the program. I got my MBA in 2006. Then I got my associates in funeral service and the licenses in 2007. I went from one school right into the other!” It is an impressive list although Erin is quite modest about it: a chemical engineer, Six-Sigma Blackbelt, International MBA, a licensed funeral director, embalmer, a certified crematory operator, a certified funeral service professional, and a certified pre-planning consultant.

“Then I moved to Newberry; then moved to Arizona, working with The Foresight Companies; then back to Newberry!

“One of greatest things with Foundation Partners is their innovation and technology, and that also applies to how we run things within the business. Because of my travels they have not required me to relocate to Florida and allow me to telecommute. Not that there’s anything to complain about Florida winters! But I still live in South Carolina and travel to Florida occasionally. Foundation Partners is based in Orlando.”

So you did a lot of travelling before you took this job to do a lot of traveling?

“Yes! That’s a good way to say it! Newberry seemed to always win. I always chuckle a bit, it’s just a yoyo and I keep coming back and bouncing all around.”

Who is Erin when she travels? What do you do to keep your sanity?

“One of things you can probably pick up on is I do love to see new things and meet new people and hear their stories. Travel is a natural component of that. I take time to find something unique about the area. Sometimes it’s just taking in sights on the West coast. Sometimes checking out restaurants or a local hot spot. Sometimes it’s going with whomever I visit and learning their dives. All of those are perks of travel.

“I enjoy reading and take the opportunity to read and sometimes downtime is catching a movie on the plane. In travel you want to maximize your time so when you’re home you want to be home. It’s hard to have that balance. Even on the road, you have to balance work life so you are the best at both. Balance isn’t equal time, but making sure you are about both parts of who you are.”

What kind of books do you read? (Hint, remember she is driven to be her best!)

“Books I read - wow - I like books on the relaxing side. So I’ve read “Modern Romance” which was quite entertaining about the new challenges of dating in modern world! I like books that challenge me to grow, so I’m reading Daring Greatly about the importance and power of vulnerability. I like leadership books that give you things to ponder about yourself. It’s the people we influence and that’s the legacy we leave and leadership comes in many forms. I’ve also read Who Moved My Cheese. Sometimes it’s something light-hearted or whatever I find in the airport bookstore that peaks my interest.”

What are some of your favorite things to do when at home?

“I have a dog, her name is Lily. I like taking her for walks; she is a sporting dog so she accompanies me on my runs. When I’m home I still enjoy relationships with people. I live in a small town but there are a lot of events. In some ways, the whole town is like family. I love cooking, grilling out. I also love the times when it’s just you, maybe out working in the yard, gardening, or [spoken like a true Southerner] picking up pinecones. It’s the simple things I say. And music, I do enjoy music if the opportunity for good music comes up I like to take advantage of that. I have no musical ability so I appreciate that above all the others!”

Where do you see yourself heading?

“Man, I wish I had a crystal ball and could answer that! My journey has never been one I planned, (after all remember when I left for college I was NOT going to be in funeral service) and picked out but one of continuing to be open to see how the many skill sets I have that can benefit the funeral service profession.

“What I do know is I can’t fathom the day that my career deviates from funeral service. Everything is good, everything is going great, we’ll see where it

takes us, I'll always be tied into funeral service.”

Erin Whitaker, VP, Business Development, Foundation Partners Group, Orlando, FL

As a third generation funeral director, Erin Whitaker brings a diverse and comprehensive background to her role at FPG. Post undergraduate studies, Erin joined Eastman Kodak as a chemical engineer and project manager. After six years at Kodak, she returned to South Carolina to attend graduate school to obtain a Master's in Business Administration. While completing her degree, she began working part-time at the family's funeral home, Whitaker Funeral Home in Newberry, SC. Shortly after receiving her MBA she enrolled in mortuary school and became a licensed funeral director and embalmer, joining Whitaker Funeral Home on a permanent basis as both a funeral director and business manager. As a means to combine her business acumen with her knowledge of funeral service, Erin joined The Foresight Companies, LLC as a Financial and Business Management consultant. During her tenure, she worked with funeral homes and cemeteries nationwide

to understand their needs and help them reach their business goals. In her current role, she works to continue the company's growth and influence as the funeral and cemetery profession's most innovative privately-owned consolidator. Erin is certified as a Black Belt in Six Sigma methodology and has achieved the designation of Certified Funeral Service Practitioner and Certified Preplanning Consultant. She currently serves on the CANA Board of Directors and has previously served on the SC Funeral Directors Association Board, the NFDA Public Relations Committee, and the Piedmont Technical College School of Funeral Service Advisory Board.



(L-R) Convention goesers Casey Mims and Erin Whitaker



(L-R) Presenter at a recent conference, Erin shares networking time with Bob Ekins



Erin with her dad, Doggett Whitaker.... “All in the family!”



Erin during the recent 2017 NFDA Expo in Boston



Erin's Dog Lily



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Working with the Media

Taking your skills to the next level

By: Todd Van Beck, Director of Continuing Education, John A. Gupton College, Nashville, TN

In the last article I explored the issue of the media's historic dislike of funeral service. I also tried to offer some suggestions concerning how to deal with this awkward situation. Now it is time to press forward and examine some more items which might help in making our experience with the media more rewarding and successful.

Organize and link your thoughts by using transitions. Transitions are like modulations in music. A musical modulation takes the tune from one musical key signature to another. The tune has not changed, but now the tune is in a higher or lower key. Some of the greatest inspirational hymn playing on a pipe organ use modulations constantly to create magnificent sounds which touch the heart. Such is the power of word transitions in working with the media.

I have discovered during the times that I have been interviewed that I rarely if ever am allowed by the interviewer to state all my positions and evidence of such all at once. In fact some of the opening questions an interviewer might ask are really aimed to be a far from your set objectives, and when this happens you need to pull back to make your points. Think of this as building a bridge over a body of water. You want to "bridge" from your answer to an initial question to your own area of concern which should be funeral/cemetery work. So use transitional phrases to get back on track and smoothly bring the interviewer with you. Remember as we have mentioned many times before you have the right to take charge of your interview and not allow the interviewer to derail or bully you into submission. Here is a list of possibly helpful transition statements:

- "As I said earlier...."
- "Let's take a closer look at this point...."
- "Another point to remember is..."

- "In addition to that...."
- "What that answer really means...."
- "While _____ is true (important) let's not forget about _____..."
- "Now that we've covered _____, let's focus on _____ ..."
- "That's an important point because"
- "The major benefits to this are"

Such transitions or verbal modulations help link points and organize your thoughts. They will make you a more polished, more professional spokesperson for our great profession. Here is an example:

Many of you know that I grew up in Southwestern Iowa. Every Sunday afternoon there was a television program on Iowa Public Television concerning some political issues which at the time affected the Great State of Iowa. I was a regular viewer, and enjoyed immensely the bantering which took place on the screen. One Sunday afternoon the Governor of Iowa, Robert D. Ray, was the guest. Even as a young person I had great admiration for Governor Ray, and many other Iowans must have felt the same way because he ended up being elected Governor for a record breaking seven terms.

I was looking forward to what he would have to say. The television interviewer was the typical "Bob Barker" type without snow white hair. He was decked out with his impressive clip board, indelible magic marker, and there were even book shelves with fake books behind him as if to give the impression that the interview was actually taking place in the Governor's private library. I knew the book were fake all the time – didn't fool Todd.

Here is what happened. At the time the State of Illinois and the State of Iowa were locked in some mundane

water rights battle about the Mississippi River. It made the news daily, but it was not an end of the world issue for either state. Governor Ray was smack in the middle of the water issue and really was doing everything he could to persuade our good neighbor to the East to behave.

The preview hype leading up to the program and interview assured the Iowa viewers that the subject of the program would be devoted exclusively not to water rights but instead to additional state funding for the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in Iowa City. This was a terribly important situation, and Iowans were rightfully concerned that nothing bad happen to the University Hospital which was and is the world's largest teaching hospital and was and is the pride and joy of most Iowans. The Governor came well prepared and he had assured the people through the press prior to the interview that a solution concerning the University Hospital had indeed been found which he would explain on the air during the program.

The minute the interview began the interviewer dove head first into the deep end of the pool concerning the state's water issue. The Governor was clearly taken back, but the interviewer charged ahead. Finally the Governor looked the interviewer straight in the eye and made several marvelous transitions to get him out of this ambush situation. Governor Ray said, "OK let's take a closer look at this...." Then he proceeded to quickly explain what the status of the situation was and that is was yet to be resolved. The interviewer would not let up and started on the water issue once again, and again the Governor reverted to transition and said, "All right in addition to what I have just said let me quickly add...." The interviewer paused the Governor took this opportunity and jumped in and made his last transition by saying firmly, "Now that we've covered the water issue let's focus on what I am really here to talk about and what is on the minds of many Iowans and that is the status of the University Hospital and what we are going to do about it."

The studio audience applauded and the next day the newspapers across the state praised the good Governor for sticking to his guns. One editorial went so far as to print that it was clear that Governor Ray knew precisely what was on the minds of Iowans and the TV interviewer acted like he was from out of state.

Anticipate and prepare for likely, difficult, oddball and wacky questions

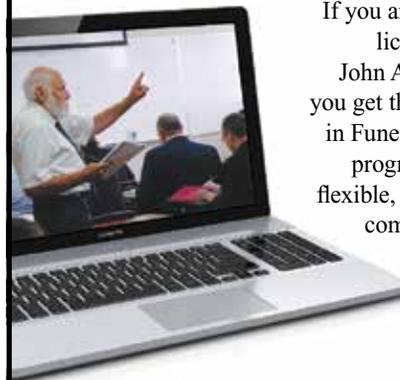
I personally have found very few people do this in their work to get ready for an interview. I ignored this suggestion for years and paid the price.

Questions are what drive media interviews. If you watch any of the interviewers on "60 Minutes" they do the same thing week after week after week. They ask questions, and questions, and questions, and some of them get paid a lot of money for asking questions.

It is wise to anticipate and prepare answers to typical, and tough questions you might be asked. In funeral and cemetery work the sky is the limit concerning questions and some of the questions may well offend, be stupid, be sick, and yes even cruel. Let's explore some typical questions concerning our profession that the media just might ask.

- "Why do funerals cost so much money?"
- "How much does the average funeral cost isn't it about \$50,000?"
- "How can you stand to embalm a dead body?"

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- “Doesn’t this line of work depress you?”
- “Did you read the Dear Abbey letter from the undertakers wife who said her husband made her lie in a tub of ice cold water before they made love, does that really happen?”
- “Do you ever dig up dead bodies and sell them?”
- “What kind of a funeral would you want for yourself?”
- “Come on now does embalming really last for a long long time?”
- “Isn’t pre need programs just a rip off to make more money?”
- “Why can’t I just be buried in my own back yard?”
- “Don’t you think if we keep on burying people the country will eventually become a cemetery?”
- “Why on earth would a casket have a 75 year warranty on it – who cares?”
- “Undertakers are really poorly educated aren’t they?”
- “What do you think about burial vaults that leak?”
- “Aren’t bones co-mingled in every cremation that takes place?”
- “Why does it cost \$800.00 to dig a hole in the ground which takes 30 minutes for a grave and only \$300.00 to burn a body up which takes several hours?”
- “Do the dead people’s hair and finger nails grow after they are dead?”
- “What was the creepiest case you have ever been on?”
- “Do people ever sit up in their casket?”
- “Why do you have all this stuff to sell to the grieving people?”
- “Why do so many people find embalming repulsive?”
- “What do you do with the blood after you take it out?”
- “Why don’t you put shoes on dead people?”
- “Now come on, isn’t this just a set up to sell, sell, and sell?”
- “Did anything traumatic happen to you as a child to make you want to become an undertaker?”

You get the idea, and you could probably add another 20 questions to this list.

Crisp, punchy, straightforward answers are best. Prepare your responses before the questions are hurled at you no matter how weird or strange they are – it is worth the time and effort.

Practice.

I have been fortunate and privileged to have given many talks, presentations and interviews – it has been a fascinating journey to be sure. Here is a secret. I still practice.

I have discovered that one essential step before an interview is to practice. Many people say they can’t take the time to think of questions they might be asked much less use a video or audiotape for practice. But, everyone who has ever had an interview and they bombed will tell you one thing: “I wish I’d practiced more.”

None of us grow up with a microphone or camera focused on us. We must practice to be our best. Practice may not guarantee absolute perfection, but no practice will almost ensure a less-than-good interview.

It is wise and good to be highly sensitive and well prepared for any possible question that you think the interviewer will ask you. Your sensitivity to the seriousness of this issue will translate into better image making potentials for you and your business.



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NFDA Goes Big In Boston – Kenneth Cahall Elected President

More than 6,000 attend 2017 NFDA International Convention & Expo



Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) 2017 International Convention & Expo, held October 29 through November 1 in Boston, drew 6,207 total attendees (4,105 attendees and 2,102 exhibitor representatives). A total of 514 international attendees, representing 42 countries and territories, participated in the 2017 NFDA Convention. The Expo Hall featured 381 exhibiting companies which filled 92,568 square feet of space (925 10' x 10' booth spaces).

Kenneth Cahall, Georgetown, OH was elected president for the 2017-2018 term, succeeding W. Ashley Cozine, Wichita, KS. Other officers elected included: Charles “Chuck” Bowman, President Elect, Liberal, KS; R. Bryant Hightower, Treasurer, Carrollton, GA and Randall “Randy” Anderson, Secretary, Alexander City, AL. The (4) At-large Representatives are: John “Jack”

Mitchell IV, Baltimore MD; Pasquale Folino, New London, CT; Douglas “Dutch” Nie II, Ann Arbor, MI and John Wenig, Sheboygen Falls, WI.

The NFDA convention proved to be an exceptional experience for all who were able to attend. The convention featured an outstanding slate of workshops that challenged attendees to think about funeral service in new ways and offered practical strategies to help them understand the evolving needs and desires of the bereaved families.

The Expo Hall was a highlight for many attendees because, in addition to connecting with their valued supplier partners, they also discovered new products and services that they can offer to families in their communities. From the rousing Welcome Party to the celebratory dinner cruise in Boston Harbor that closed out the convention, attendees had many opportunities

to network and have fun experiencing everything that makes Boston one of the country's most loved cities.

NFDA General Sessions Feature Powerhouse Speakers With Powerful Messages

NFDA hosted two premier speakers for its general sessions. John C. Maxwell, one of America's foremost leadership experts, opened the convention on Monday with an inspiring message about how to communicate in a way that runs far deeper than words. During the Monday general session, 2016-17 NFDA President W. Ashley Cozine, CFSP, CPC, CCO, offered his perspective on excellence and teamwork. He emphasized the importance of every funeral director and funeral home in the country doing their absolute best to serve each and every family that walks through the door.

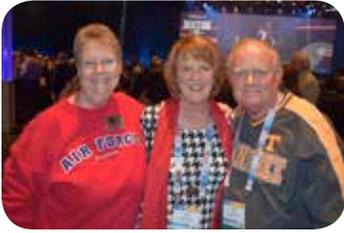
"I want to challenge and encourage all of us to leave Boston with a commitment to raise the bar, to truly become lifelong learners, to continually look for ways to improve what we do and how we serve families and to pursue excellence in all parts of our funeral homes and businesses," said Cozine. "Remember that we have

teammates all across the country that are all counting on each and every one of us to bring our A-games every time we serve families and to be the very best we can be as a profession!"

During the general session on Monday, attendees also heard from NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, CAE, who shared some of NFDA's newest offerings including the NFDA Work/Life Resource Program (EAP), a confidential resource that offers information, tools and guidance from licensed counselors and advisors who can provide confidential guidance on a variety of issues, from stress management and substance abuse to relationship issues and financial concerns. The Work/Life Resource program is available to NFDA members, their staff and immediate family members at no cost.

Pepper also highlighted: plans for a consumer website that educates consumers about the value of memorialization and connects families with NFDA-member funeral homes; a new embalming and restorative arts seminar – featuring live demonstrations – in May 2018 at the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science; a new embalming brochure that explains





embalming and the benefits of viewing to consumers; and a new video, “A Career in Funeral Service,” that can be used by funeral directors as they speak in the community about working in the funeral profession. During the closing session, three-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback Troy Aikman was interviewed by local Boston sportscaster Trey Daerr and shared how attendees can develop their inner champion.

Honoring the Christian and Jewish Funeral Traditions

A highlight of the 2017 NFDA Convention was the Service of Remembrance, which explored the rich and timeless funeral traditions of the Christian, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish faiths. As is NFDA’s custom, the Service of Remembrance was also a time for attendees to remember and honor the memory of colleagues and family members who died during the last year.

Big Winners

During the Monday General Session, NFDA presented the 2017 NFDA Innovation Award to ASD – Answering Service for Directors. The company was recognized for its Suicide-Telephone Operator Patch (STOP)

System. Established in 2009, the NFDA Innovation Award recognizes and promotes creativity, innovation and excellence among funeral service suppliers and vendors.

During the Wednesday General Session, NFDA recognized three funeral service suppliers for having the best booths in the Expo Hall during the 2017 Convention. The 2017 NFDA Booth Contest winners are:

- Booths 400 square feet or larger: Messenger
- Booths 300 square feet or smaller: Messenger
- New NFDA exhibitors: Cherished Keepsakes

Convention attendees voted for their favorite booths in the Expo Hall using five criteria: creativity, imagination and originality; use of product, images and visuals in booth design; booth staff’s enthusiasm, friendliness and interaction with attendees; promotional giveaways; and overall appearance and experience. NFDA also gave out fabulous prizes to attendees in the Great Big Giveaway, held during the Wednesday General Session. During Expo Hall hours on Wednesday morning, NFDA’s valued sponsors handed out tickets for a chance to win

one of 23 fabulous prizes: \$25, \$50 and \$100 American Express gift cards; Amazon Echoes; Apple Watches; and the grand prize, a 2018 NFDA International Convention & Expo Experience including convention registration, travel reimbursement up to \$1,000 and a Salt Lake City-inspired gift. The winner of the grand prize was Robert Fields of Brown Funeral Home in Martinsburg, W.Va.

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- Bronze: Clearpoint, Doric, Inman Shipping, Kelco Supply Co, Sich Casket Company, Wilbert Funeral Services

Planning Underway for 2018

The 2018 NFDA International Convention & Expo will take place October 14-17, 2018, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Combining the amenities of a major metropolitan area with the friendliness of a quaint, mountain town, Salt Lake City is an ideal location for the world's largest funeral service convention. A beautiful, safe, and vibrant destination, Salt Lake City combines unparalleled access to natural recreation, a bustling economy, dynamic nightlife, remarkable history, warm hospitality, and "Utah's Greatest Snow on Earth." Information about the 2018 NFDA Convention will be available soon on the NFDA website.

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving 19,700 individual members who represent more than 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.nfda.org.







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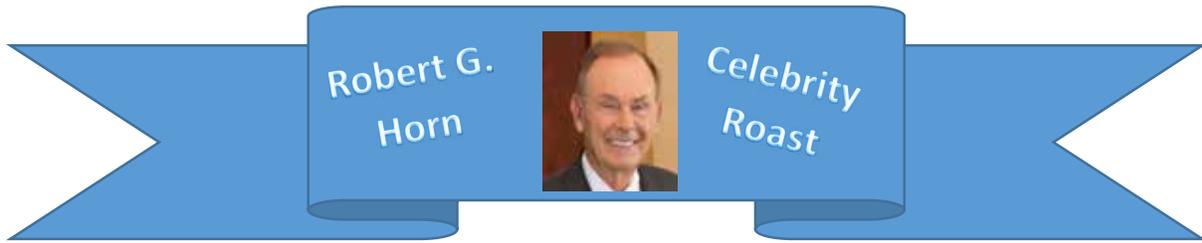
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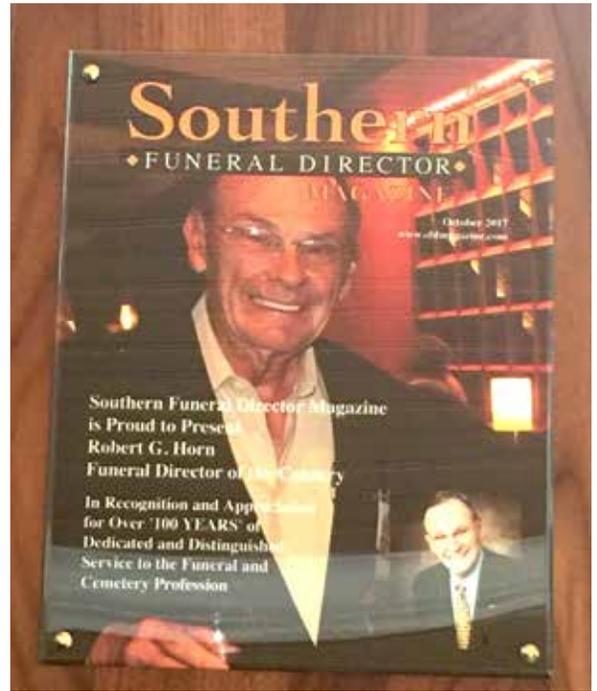


Robert G. (Bob) Horn Honored at Retirement Roast

Friends, family and colleagues all gathered at the Harvard Club in Boston, MA, prior to the NFDA convention, to honor and “Roast” legendary icon, Bob Horn. It was a fun evening filled with many war stories and laughable memories during Bob’s tenure in the funeral profession. We went way back to the days of IFS to Pierce Brothers to Prime Succession to Keystone Partners and other consulting positions, that Bob has put his trademark on.

A special thank to those who did a superb job of “Roasting” Bob which included: John Horan, Jim Price, Marilyn Gould, Ernie Hefner, Tony Colson, Jack Heen, Steve Shaffer, Jake Johnson, Kelvin Pennington, Connie Smith, Dick Fox, John Yopp, Mark Krause and Bill Forsberg, and Jill Roderick (Bob’s daughter). Bob also received the “2017 Funeral Director of the Century Award” from Southern Funeral Director Magazine, for his “100 Years of Service” to the profession

Needless to say, even the striking Marilyn Monroe made a cameo appearance donning one of Bob’s favorite drink, 12 Year-Old Macallan. Salute to Bob!



2017 Funeral Director of the Century Award” from Southern Funeral Director Magazine, for Bob’s “100 Years of Service” to the Profession





2017: Year By Numbers Last Year, ASD

As we look forward to an exciting and innovative year here at ASD, we've taken some time to look back on all the significant moments and major milestones from last year.

- Handled 570,358 First Calls, representing 3.8 billion dollars in potential revenue for our clients
- Assisted with more than 21% of all deaths reported in the U.S.
- Received more than 60,000 Shopper Calls
- Handled more than 20,000 calls on our busiest day of the year. This occurred on July 17th when many funeral homes across the country were impacted by tropical storms.
- Handled a total of 19,132 calls during Winter Storm Stella, including more than 1,600 First Calls, with ASD staff answering 94% of calls on 1st ring and 99% by the 4th ring.
- Provided mobile support to 15,490 ASD Mobile for Apple users
- Provided mobile support to 5,179 ASD Mobile for Android users
- Connected more than 180,700 MobileFH™ calls
- Sent more than 6.3 million ASD Mobile Push Notifications
- Sent more than 3.6 million text messages
- Saved our clients unnecessary expenses by blocking 237,779 Robo calls with Solicitor Shield™
- Automatically transferred more than 310,000 obituaries via FuneralSync™, saving funeral professionals approximately 20,000 hours of redundant work.
- Handled more than 2,600 Web Chats
- Received our third NFDA Innovation Award for our Suicide Telephone Operator Patch (S.T.O.P.) System, which was selected as the winner among 26 entries
- Participated in a dozen different TEAM ASD events
- Exercised on ASD's Treadmill Work Station and Recumbent Bike Stations for more than 6,000 miles, the equivalent of walking from New Jersey to California and back again.
- Donated more than \$6000 to charities selected this year for ASD's Exercise for a Cause Program including United for Puerto Rico, Providence Animal Center, The Breathing Room Foundation,

CADES, PA Veterinary Foundation (The Last Chance Fund) and the Make a Wish Foundation

- Helped countless grieving children find comfort by supporting Camp Erin initiatives, including the Care to Carry On 5K at the Philadelphia Zoo
- Donated 137lbs of food for Loaves and Fishes, our local food pantry, in memory of ASD Supervisor, Bob Gordon
- Donated hundreds of school supplies to Cradles to Crayons - an organization that provides children with essentials they need.
- Raised \$2,500 in support of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation in conjunction with the Starry Night Run/Walk at the Philadelphia Navy Yard
- Donated over 40 pints of blood during ASD's Blood Drive for the American Red Cross
- Created 220 Christmas cards and collected items for 5 donations boxes, which were sent to U.S. military serving overseas during the holidays.
- Provided countless hours of family time to our clients as we help with answering their callers' needs.

"Our family owned business protects your reputation for excellence in the communities you serve. Like our funeral director clients, we are committed to fostering a business culture of absolute integrity and transparency."

The Gachor Family



The Answering Service in a Class of its Own

Selected Transfer Services Partners with Eagle's Wings Air Members Book Air Transport with Ease and Efficiency

DEERFIELD, Ill. — Feb 16, 2018—Selected Independent Funeral Homes is pleased to announce its partnership with Eagle's Wings Air (EWA) to help members provide each other and their families the very best in transfer services through the Selected Transfer Services (STS) Program.

This new partnership will enable Selected members to conveniently book air transport online and to tap into the wealth of knowledge and best practices the team at EWA has to offer.

“Eagles Wings Air are the experts in the air shipment of human remains for funeral professionals,” said Dave McComb, Chairman and Owner. “The experienced EWA customer service team and their top tier technology saves the funeral director time and gives peace of mind while serving client families. We have high level relationships with all major airlines that protect and serve you.”

More than 260 Selected members participate in the STS Program which creates a trusted network of colleagues to assist with embalming, cremation or ground transport.

Together, STS and EWA take the worry out of conducting a transfer. Visit the STS website to learn more and to become an STS agent.

For more information, visit the EWA website and Selected's Preferred Partner Program page for a full list of professional funeral service consultants and vendors that offer preferred services and product discounts to Selected members.

About Selected Independent Funeral Homes: Selected Independent Funeral Homes (selectedfuneralhomes.org) delivers innovative and pertinent resources, solutions and ongoing support necessary for enduring excellence to its international network of independently owned death-care providers who aspire to be the very best in their profession. Members of Selected operate according to specific standards and best practices to provide the public with reliable, high-quality funeral

services and funeral-related information. 2017 marked the organization's 100th anniversary and a legacy of dedication and support to the death-care profession.

About Eagle's Wings Air: Eagle's Wings Air (callewa.com) specializes in air transportation uniquely focused on the needs of the death care community. They are not affiliated with any single airline, but instead work with many airlines to provide the best service for their clients. Eagle's Wings Air has already successfully managed the air transportation of 72,000+ loved ones to their final destinations.



Simple steps for you.

- Contact Us.
- Provide Details for your transportation needs.
- EWA researches options with multiple airlines, researching the most effective flight itinerary and responds back to you within 1 hour.
- Details sent via email or efax to you and the corresponding funeral home.
- EWA pays for flight upfront and invoices later.
- EWA proactively monitors and manages until the loved one is delivered to receiving home.

Any questions, any time. Peace of Mind for you...and your family in need. (866) 550-1EWA

In Memory of Mark Owen Elder - Vandor Corporation



Mark Owen Elder, age 59, passed away, January 31, 2018, at his home after a short illness. Mark, a former Casket Funeral Supply Association Board member, was the Vice President of Sales for the Vandor Corporation and the C.J. Boots Casket Company.

Mark was born on April 24, 1958, in Detroit, Michigan, to Bruce E. and Suzanne M. Norton Elder. He graduated from the Academy of the New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and attended Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Mark was an entrepreneur and a founder and partner of many growing businesses in Michigan and Indiana. Mark's passions include the General Church of the New Jerusalem and many other organizations, including "TEAM" youth basketball. He enjoyed golf and coaching and playing basketball.

Survivors include his wife of 34 years, Julie Ann LaFuze Elder; daughters, Ashley (Will) Johnston of Virginia and Jordan (John) Sheehan of Richmond, Indiana; son, Arie (Cree) Elder of Richmond; granddaughter, Harley-Madison Rose Johnston; mother and stepfather, Suzanne and Don Cochrane; one sister; six brothers; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Terry and Nancy LaFuze of Richmond; sister-in-law, Sherri (John) Fansher of Noblesville, Indiana; nieces; nephews; cousins; and many friends and team members.

He was preceded in death by his father; daughter, Madison Alyse; and son, Addison Kirk.

In Memory of Carson Wade Sprow



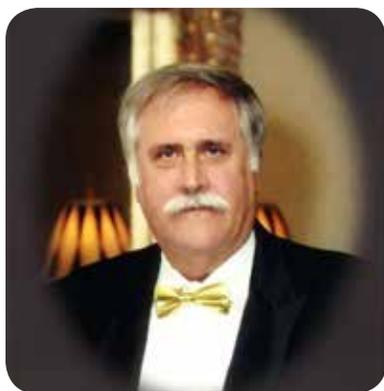
Carson Wade Sprow, the President and founder of International Mortuary Shipping LLC, passed away unexpectedly on February 18, 2018. Mr. Sprow was a United States Army Combat Veteran (February 1979-August 1989), serving as a proud United States Army Ranger, 2d Bn, 75th Infantry, and an instructor in the Florida Phase and Desert Phase Ranger School during his final five years of service. He attended the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, Houston TX and graduated in 1990, summa cum laude. During his career, Mr. Sprow taught Restorative Arts in the Piedmont Technical College Mortuary program and served as Preceptor for students completing the internships required for licensing. Mr. Sprow also co-authored the Standard Operating Procedures for identification of human remains through prosthetics and orthodontics with the late Dr. Tony Manoukian, Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Hawaii. The SOP was

first used following Hurricane Katrina and later adapted for use by other disaster organizations.

Mr. Sprow was a member of the National Funeral Directors Association, the South Carolina Funeral Directors Association, the South Carolina Coroner's Association and Association of Latin American Funeral Homes and Cemeteries. He was a Board Member of the Greenville Symphony and a supporter of the Terrier Club of Wofford College. Mr. Sprow was a member of the Spartanburg Rotary Club, a Mason, and an avid Carolina Panthers fan. Mr. Sprow was known for his boundless energy, generosity, booming laugh and sharp wit as well as his strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit.

Mr. Sprow is survived by his wife, Gale Plotkin Sprow, who resides in Union, South Carolina, and his brother Carl Sprow. He was pre-deceased by his son, Wade Sprow, his mother, Connie Williams and his father, Carlton Ward Sprow.

Doric President, Steve Vincent, passes away suddenly



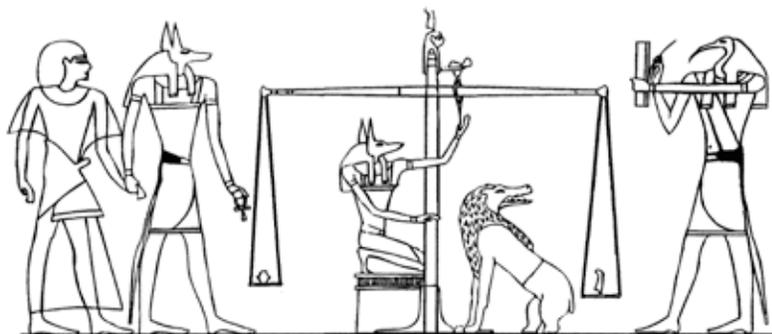
Doric Products, Inc wishes to announce the sudden passing on January 23rd of Steven F Vincent, the company's President, due to congestive heart failure. Steve was a true business leader that helped turn the company into the

successful corporation it is today. He was elected to the Doric Products, Inc. Board of Directors in 1991 and has served as President of Doric since July of 2006.

This loss has been heartfelt and profound. He spent the last years of his life working not only toward the success of Doric Products but to the success and well-being of each and every member of our extended Doric family. His leadership and friendship will be missed immensely. The Board of Directors has appointed Jim Wiens to fill the vacancy of President. Mike Crummitt

and Hubert McQuestion have been appointed to serve as Co-Vice Presidents. Gerald Hardy will continue to serve as Secretary, with Joseph Brewster, Jerry Cooper, Charles E Foskey, and Adair Payment continuing as Board of Directors.

Doric Products, Inc. is a leading manufacturer of burial vaults, cremation vaults and memorialization products. Distributed by highly trained professionals throughout the United States and Canada, Doric offers families burial vaults of exceptional quality, value and strength. Although Doric is best known as a leader in traditional concrete burial vaults, the Classic Metal Vaults division features one of the largest selections of air-seal metal vaults available anywhere. Well known for its modest price in relation to its strength, and durability; the Doric brand burial vault offers uncompromised security with tremendous value. The people of Doric Products are dedicated to providing outer burial enclosures that will honor a loved one's memory while giving family members comfort and peace of mind.



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