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MAGAZINE

January 2019

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Education in Funeral Service Is It Financially Rewarding?

A Day in the Life of a Mortuary College President
by Dr. Jill Karn, COO

Jefferson State Community College Students
Speak Out by Brianna Hash, Kayley Davis and
Linda Harmon

Education in NFDA - Nurturing the Next Generation
List of Mortuary Colleges Nationwide
John A. Gupton Annual Alumni Reunion Summary
and Photos

Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science Spring Con-
Ed + Purple Heart Recipients

Ogeechee Technical College Celebrating 16 Years
Mobile Browsing for Your Funeral Home's Website by
Lexie Graf, Frazer Consultants

Keys to Service = Understanding by Todd Van Beck
NFDA 134th Annual Expo Recap and Photos - Charles
"Chuck" Bowman Elected President

Funeral Service Foundation Welcomes New Trustees +
Donor Reception Photos

Batesville Announces Partnership with Aftercare.com

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notes from the editor

by John Yopp

First and foremost, Southern Funeral Director Magazine is celebrating its 100th Anniversary Year... (1919-2019). John W. Yopp, Sr., started the magazine in Atlanta, GA and continues to be owned, operated and published by the Yopp family as a third generation company. It will be interesting to see what the next 100 years in the funeral profession will bring!

There is a continuing controversy brewing about whom is responsible for the education and training of our professional funeral directors. While it is universally accepted that the education process includes mortuary college, apprenticeship, on the job training, mentorship and continuing education; the importance of each element of the education process is an ongoing discussion. This issue offers thoughts of industry people on the subject of education. The answer may be elusive, but the importance of the topic cannot be overemphasized. I hope this special "Education" issue sheds some light on a very important subject to the funeral profession. That, of course, is the mission of Southern Funeral Director Magazine.

As we move into the 21st century, the economic rewards of an education remain as important to a person's economic success as it is to their employment success.

This issue of Southern Funeral Director acknowledges the mortuary and technical schools that specialize in preparing young women and men for the funeral profession. Each school has a rich heritage of graduating special individuals to help families of their respective community during a very difficult time of their lives.

SFD is very pleased to have Dr. Jill Karn, COO of Pierce Mortuary Colleges share with us her insight on a featured article entitled: "A Day in the Life of a Mortuary College President." We appreciate Dr. Karn's vision for the mortuary colleges and preparing the students for their next profession. She writes, "A president serves and protects the college, while



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remaining transparent, compassionate, ethical, and professional - all crucial attributes of any college president."

Every year in our "Education" issue we like to reach out to some of the mortuary students to get their take on their perception of the funeral industry and what their thoughts and dreams are going forward. This year we are fortunate for Jefferson State Community College to have several essays shared by students Brianna Hash, Kayley Davis and Linda Harmon. We appreciate these individuals taking time out of their regular curriculum to share their experiences as a mortuary student.

We have also included several press releases from Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS), as well as a school profile for Ogeechee Technical College, the Annual John A. Gupton Alumni Reunion with listing of officers and photos and a listing of all the Mortuary Colleges nationwide and their locations and contact information.

A special thank you to Lexie Graf with Frazer Consultants for her article "Mobile Browsing for Your Funeral Home's Website" and a recap, summary and photos from NFDA's 134th Expo which was recently held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

Of a Mortuary College President

Jill Karn, Chief Operating Officer, Pierce Mortuary Colleges

A mortuary college is a dynamic environment that requires effective management in order to provide the best results for students and ultimately, the funeral profession. Of course, leading the faculty and its staff team is the college president, who is responsible for both the day-to-day management of the college, as well as ensuring that the long-term strategies and objectives are achieved. It's an incredibly challenging balance of human and financial resources that requires business acumen and leadership. Collaboration and communications with staff, faculty and students are key attributes for a successful college president. Let's explore a day in the life of a mortuary college president.

Many people would probably regard a college presidency as the perfect career, where one is greatly admired, has many exciting experiences, and a career with several perks and luxuries. For most college presidents the workday begins and ends under artificial light. There is a mounting range of duties and skillsets that demand a much greater balance to manage the pressures and constituencies that occur on a day-to-day basis for a college president.

A college president is always a leader first. Everything he or she does must forward the college's mission, goals and central aims and objectives. Their job, essentially, is to be a leader for the college both on campus and off campus. It's a 24/7 job. As a campus leader, internally, a president is responsible for the organization and administration, submits annual budgets, participates in numerous audits, directs the development of the academic programs, manages the P&L, and recommends all additions or changes in personnel. They are responsible for all state and accrediting approvals and all mandatory reporting such

as Integrated Postsecondary Education Data (IPED) and American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) annual reports.

Presidents develop the significant levers to shape the college. They establish the college structures and lines of responsibilities throughout the college. What's more, presidents are expected to meet with students and faculty and address a multitude of concerns. One of the major challenges for any college president is learning to juggle all the day-to-day responsibilities while coping with the inevitable crises that arise throughout the day. Presidents develop a plan and set an agenda but ultimately "things happen" and they are forced to adapt. A president's ability to cope and to stay centered is essential. Potential distractions are everywhere. The college president must balance all of this and "nudge" the levers that shape the choices and preliminary institutional outcomes that move towards positive success. That's the job.

Within these organized anarchies, the president's key responsibility is to set the college agenda. In other words, the president identifies the important overarching priorities and leads the strategic planning process while executing a significant change in higher education. Easier said than done. All-embracing, the president has to keep everyone focused on a few fixed targets despite any differences and varying perspectives. This is hard, but essential.

No matter how small or large a college may be, a president of a college must track college data and be astute to the latest trends in higher education, student debt, admission rates, retention rates, conversion rates, student satisfaction and engagement rates, graduation

rates, student loans and default rates, reports on student success, NBE pass rates, academic success rates, and gainful employment rates - all while increasing enrollment and reducing withdrawals. The list goes on. There is little denying the importance these rates and trends play in the overall campus environment. This role gives special priority to the trends and college data while keeping them somewhat in perspective for those improvements that may be needed, some immediate and some long term. College metrics can be at the very center of critical campus conversations and the catalyst for institutional change. This is a balancing act, to say the least.

Upon hearing the title, the predictable response one hears is, "Oh, so you run the place?" While larger institutions employ dozens of administrators to manage all the college departments, smaller institutions still have the identical silos to lead. At the end of the day, only one person on campus has full responsibility of the college – the college president. The level at which the college president is required to participate, coupled with the overall goal of the college, often dictates how s/he approaches the day-to-day management of the college. At smaller colleges such as ours, the presidents juggle and manage dozens of college units, answering to multiple constituencies and still find the time and energy to stay integrally involved in the business itself. So to answer the question as to "running the place", my answer is an unequivocal yes.

As a college president, boredom certainly is not part of the equation as one gets to change hats about twenty times in a given day. A day in the life of a college president would see one taking on roles including strategic leader, the official representative of the college, problem-solver on every level, coffee maker, sounding board for faculty, staff and students, partnership manufacturer, builder of a solid college network, financial aid expert, infrastructure specialist, hiring discerner, marketing guru, dignitary for all events, public speaker, vendor negotiator, cheerleader, crisis director, developer of higher education programs, people reader, author, constituent connector, and basically the person that everyone calls first. This is the short list, when personally speaking of our colleges, as it would be difficult to list all the layers to the president. In this position you must be able to connect with others without getting paralyzed by the multiple issues confronted on a daily basis. A president cannot

be one-dimensional. Again, this is difficult, but critical.

A president serves and protects the college, while remaining transparent, compassionate, ethical, and professional - all crucial attributes of any college president. S/he must ensure that the college acts with integrity and empathy, and must show appropriate due diligence and honesty. S/he must not only know the law, but also the standards of the accrediting body, regulations of the Department of Education, state laws, and local laws. The job is tough, but it gets done.

As we reflect on the qualities, a president is smart when considering all assets both financial and human. Higher education touts and expects this superior type of intelligence. It is a synthesized intellect that applies knowledge in a visionary way to generate tangible strategies and indicators of future success. However, I must say, it is more about the intrinsic abilities and traits described here that make a successful president. The campus president is everything to everyone at all times while remaining a genuine individual and committed to the college. This makes a well-rounded college president.

After pointing out all the ways in which a president must have knowledge, expertise and patience, let's not forget that we are talking about being the leader of an educational institution. Discipline-specific falls within the program's curriculum and faculty for each course that is offered. It is important for the president of a college to be emblematic of higher education by being an expert in administration, effective management, leading the institution, and business acumen and leadership, but a college president is not discipline-specific. I repeat...not discipline-specific.

So a day in the life of a mortuary college president is not for the weak of heart. But there is a tremendous sense of purpose to working in higher education. At Pierce Mortuary Colleges, we are educating students to be our future leaders in funeral service and are therefore very proud to be a part of something bigger. Presidents get to sit with students who didn't know what they were going to do with their lives and then choose to become funeral directors. Presidents get to play a part in improving the lives of our students and learners. They are surrounded with good people who share their passion and beliefs. They get to be an entrepreneur that shapes the institution –inside and out. They get

to coach and mentor people in the institution to move forward and to be successful. They get the luxury to hear stories of generational families and be inspired by them. They get to craft innovative programs that will assemble the right skillsets needed for the profession. They get to see the future as it unfolds daily. They get to explore the disciplines of thought with some of the brightest people in funeral service. Most of all, they get to present hundreds of graduates every year with their diplomas, their success in reaching their educational goal.

As the Chief Operating Officer of Pierce Mortuary Colleges, I would like to dedicate this article to the presidents of Pierce Mortuary Colleges.



Jill Karn is Chief Operating Officer for Pierce Mortuary Colleges and oversees the operations and overall strategic direction of all Pierce Mortuary Colleges, including Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, Dallas, TX; Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service, Decatur, GA; and Mid-America College of Funeral Service, Jeffersonville IN. Jill has over seventeen years in executive leadership roles, including fourteen years in higher education.

Pierce Colleges of Funeral Service

Mid-America College of Funeral Service

Mid-America College of Funeral Service (MACFS) is located at 3111 Hamburg Pike in Jeffersonville, Indiana, the northeast sector of the greater Louisville, Kentucky metropolitan area, including Jefferson County, Kentucky and Clark and Floyd Counties of Southern Indiana. Mid-America College of Funeral Service seeks to offer educational opportunities to those interested in funeral service as a career. The College provides the intensive theory portion of funeral service education, which prepares the student for a State and/or National Board Examination that enables him or her to begin or continue apprenticeship training for licensure in the funeral service profession.



Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service

Located in Decatur, Georgia (a suburb of Atlanta), Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service (GJCFS) is a non-profit institution offering post-high school education to men and women interested in funeral service as a career. The central purpose of the college is to give students a thorough acquaintance with those areas of knowledge essential to their specialization. The college is dedicated to the advancement of funeral service education and the funeral service profession. While attending Gupton-Jones College, one may enjoy exciting Atlanta which offers a variety of recreational, artistic, and historic attractions!

Dallas Institute of Funeral Service

Dallas Institute of Funeral Service (DIFS) is a non-profit institution dedicated to education and research for the funeral profession. The institute provides the theory portion and practical application of funeral service education preparing the student for entry into the profession and for a State and/or National Board examination enabling him/her to begin or continue apprenticeship or internship for licensure. Dallas and Dallas Institute... The excitement of a great city... The tradition of a great college. Come for the fun of it all!

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Jefferson State Community College Student Essays

E. Briana Hash

Why am I pursuing a career in funeral service?

To answer this question, I need to give you a bit of background information first. After graduating from high school I went to college as many graduates do, I only had vague ideas of what I wanted to pursue as a career. I came to the conclusion that a business degree was just commonplace enough to easily “get” me a job right out of college. I was very wrong. I did well in school and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Management. However, I quickly found out that, not only were jobs in my area few and far between, but the amount of people applying for these jobs would rapidly land me at the bottom of the hire list. No one wanted to hire someone right out of college with little to no experience. I went to interview after interview and submitted more resumes than I could keep count of, I was just not offered a job. I became very discouraged and was also focusing on my upcoming wedding. One afternoon, I went into a local boutique to have my wedding dress altered and to select a veil where I met the shop owner, Maryia. We quickly made conversation and she mentioned she needed a nanny for the summer to watch her son and I volunteered for the job. Shortly thereafter, she and her husband Jason hired me officially as their nanny. I came to find out that Jason was the managing partner of Lane Funeral Home & Crematory-South Crest Chapel. I was very intrigued by his job, but tried not to pry “too” much. One of the few jobs that I had worked in the past had been in retail and I very much disliked the pushy nature of the job, always trying to up sell the customer and being required to offer the customer to apply for a credit card. The “hook” was that if they were approved for the card they received a discount on their purchase; this never sat well with me. They would ding their credit and receive nothing in return. It always felt so hollow.

After nannying for Maryia and Jason for a year, Jason hired me on part time at the funeral home as the every other weekend secretary. I was very nervous going into the funeral home that first day, I had no idea what to expect. After working that first weekend there and seeing the dedication of the staff, the care, the love,

the attention to detail that they showed- I was hooked. I always wanted a job where I could be efficient and show my business skills, but where I also felt like I was making a difference and actually helping someone. Jason and his wife, although she was not employed at the funeral home, both showed such passion and commitment to the funeral home and the client families, it was inspiring. Working at Lane become more than “just a job,” it was a career and a calling.

After working at Lane for a few months, Jason offered me a full time position in the office. Now, I have been at Lane for 5 years and I have decided to pursue the career even further by going to mortuary school at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham, AL. I never dreamed I would go back to school, especially not mortuary school. When presented with the option of becoming a funeral director, I had to dig deep inside and really ask myself why would I do this? The answer is simple, service. We serve families in one of the worst times in their lives. This is a tremendous responsibility and honor to be able to assist them in any way we can. I never dreamed I would be so privileged to have a career where I actually felt like I was making a difference. I look forward to finishing my education in funeral service education at Jefferson State and to continue serving my community in North Georgia.



My name is E. Briana Hash, I am 28 years old and I live in North Georgia near Chattanooga, TN. I was born into a military family and so my family moved around quite a bit. I was born in Rosenheim, Germany in a women’s clinic not on a US military base therefore, I have dual citizenship. My two sisters and I grew up in many different communities and may

different schools. Our family finally settled here in the North Georgia area in time for me to go off to college. I have an Associate's Degree in Business from Young Harris College and a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management from North Georgia University. I can speak enough Spanish to "get by" which has turned out to be very useful in my current job at the funeral home. Before working at the funeral home I only had a few jobs: retail associate, college admissions representative, sales representative, and nanny. I have been married for 6 years now and we have a 3 year old son. We plan to stay in the North Georgia area and pursue our careers as well as grow our rental property business.

Kayley Davis

I remember the first time I was aware of being in a funeral home, I was nine years old. A family friend's father had passed away, so my parents and I had went to pay our respects. I remember being curious about the place and asking questions the entire time. "What is that big box? Who put him in there?" and so many familiar questions that any child would ask in a strange place. But the whole night, I was so curious about the place that most people try and avoid.

It wasn't until December 20, 2008 that I was made

aware of why someone goes to a funeral home. My maternal grandfather suddenly passed away, and like my family, I was left in shock. I had learned about "Fishy Heaven" as a child, but this was the first family member that I had experienced passing away. I was very upset for many months following, but I started to feel a tug on my heart to help people. I debated back and forth about what I wanted to pursue a career in, but all I knew is that I wanted to help people in need.

My mom and dad have pretty "normal" career choices. My mom is a second grade teacher and my dad is a plant manager at a steel service center, so the thought of becoming a funeral director was so bizarre to me. But as the years went on, I felt something stir in me to look into the career of a funeral director. About the time I decided to tell my parents that I thought I had decided on a career in funeral service, my paternal grandfather suddenly passed away in February of 2013.

Once again, my family and I were crushed, in shock, and heartbroken at the loss of another close family member. But this time was different, though I was sad to have lost my last grandfather, I wanted to help



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my family in any way as we went down this familiar road again. My mother made it a point to introduce the funeral director to me, since I had showed interest in this profession. The funeral director let me help during the process, answered any questions that I had, and she was there for my family and myself when we needed it the most. After we got home and the funeral was over, that was the day I decided to become a funeral director and embalmer.

You see, this isn't just a career to me. I answered a calling to help people in their most vulnerable time; when they need someone the most. From what I experienced when my grandfathers passed away, I realized how much it means just to know that someone is there for you. Just like in any other profession, we have good and bad days. Sometimes I question why God called me into this, why I choose to be around sad and hurting people. But then I am reminded when a recent widow, or a child burying their parent comes up to me, hugs my neck, and thanks me for everything I've done for them.



My name is Kayley Davis and I have a servant's heart, I love people, and doing whatever I can to help someone in need. This is why I want to work in the funeral service profession. As I continue my apprenticeship, and get ready to pursue my career as a Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer, I pray I always stay humble, and always do what I can to

help the families I am asked to serve. I may not be able to take their pain away, or bring their loved one back, but if I can make the process easier, and do what I have been called to do, then I have left a positive impression during an upsetting time, and fulfilled my calling. I have only been in this field for a few years, but I cannot wait to see what my future holds in it and what God has in store for me.

Linda Harmon

While growing up in Lower Alabama, namely Mobile, Alabama, and being surrounded by five brothers who made certain I would never see a boring moment....I found an uncanny interest in the lizards, the frogs that

were put in my shirts, the mosquito hawks I caught on the clothesline, the 'hopper-grass' I found amongst the sweet grass....and even a swollen water moccasin in a nearby lake. The swollen part of the snake contained a huge bullfrog. After capturing it and making an incision, it seemed to have possibly taken its last breath only moments before. I was enthused with finding out what was on the inside, and I don't even recall having any fear! I continued my plight and searched for as many animals I could find; sometimes having to hide behind my grandma's hydrangeas with my chinaberry popgun in case I ran into trouble. I was only seven and the meaning of immortality never even crossed my mind. When I saw a bird, I believed I could fly. This was short-lived when I ended up in the top of a pecan tree and all I remember is jumping and flapping my arms one and a half times. I ended up in the ER surrounded by nurses who were trying to hold me down while a doctor inserted 20 stitches into my foot.

At the end of the day, I could always find solace at the front gate where my granddad would meet me with those greasy brown bags full of homemade pastries. He was the head cook at St. Martin de Porres Hospital where I was born, and everyone loved the Louisiana flavor he put into all the dishes. But then he died. It was time for his funeral. My family didn't allow children to attend funerals, but someone in the family thought it was unfair towards me since I was so close to him. So, there I was, looking at Papa lying there and saying nothing to me. Just like all the creatures I had captured. I don't remember feeling any kind of way. There was no movement...just like the frog, or the snake, or the hopper-grass. But he had not been captured, or harmed, or anything. He had just brought me those sweet pastries the week before all of this! Afterwards, I felt vague....until I found myself waiting at the bottom of that gate again. My mind snatched me back to reality and now I knew he would never come back. I knew that because he never moved, he wasn't going to. I knew I had never saw him in the house with grandma since then. Since....I saw him dead.

While growing up, my folks thought I would be a doctor or nurse, but it finally dawned on me when my second eldest brother died. I was acquainted with the owner of the funeral home, so I played a big part in his preparations and arrangements and my entire family and friends were very impressed on how good he looked. His death was very painful, but I STILL had

closure. I began to have a very insatiable appetite for finding out what happens when people die. A yearning to make them look just like they did while living. I entered Mortuary School in 2003 but couldn't finish (with only two classes to go) due to Hurricane Katrina (in 2005) destroying everything I had worked for. I remained involved in the industry as a driver and funeral assistant. I worked other jobs to raise my three children, putting them through college, coordinating & planning three weddings, including my own, 15 years later I have married my husband and soulmate and re-entered Mortuary School....to finish!

My goal is to become an expert in the restorative art area. Helping grieving families gain the closure they need to say goodbye. I held my last occupation in 2017 as a 911 Supervisor. I was good at what I did. The director even expressed how much he wished I would stay. My ailing Mother (who's much better now) needed me more. I also saw this as my last chance to go back to college and to use our Vet benefits. I used to be amongst the first to be called in an emergency, the 'first responders' as we're named in the public's eye.... I'm no longer in charge of preserving life, but instead,

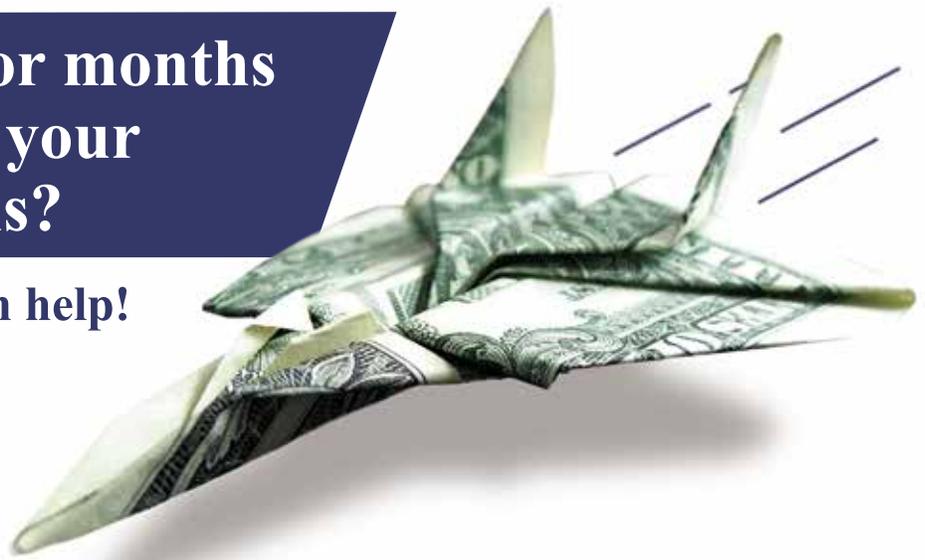
preserving the dead....for the living.....for closure. I am now the Last Responder.

My name is Linda Harmon. I am a U.S. Army Veteran and I recently went into early retirement after serving as a First Responder and 911 Supervisor for Mobile and nine other counties. I am currently a second year Funeral Services Student, but I have worked in the Funeral Profession for the past 17 years as a funeral assistant. I live in Mobile, Alabama with my husband, Charles Harmon and we have 5 (grown) children. I am employed with Heritage Funeral Home where I serve as President and as an Apprentice for both Funeral directing and Embalming. I am seeking to sharpen my expertise in the area of Restorative Art. Helping bereaved families find and accomplish closure is an important aspect of what I do. I have deemed myself as "The Last Responder".



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Education in NFDA - Nurturing the Next Generation

New Licensees Encouraged to Apply for 2019 Meet the Mentors Program

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is now accepting entries for a chance to participate in the 2019 Meet the Mentors program, March 10-12 at the Emory Conference Center Hotel, located on the campus of Emory University, in Atlanta, Ga. Meet the Mentors has been wholly funded by the Funeral Service Foundation since the program's 2011 inception.



During Meet the Mentors, 50 funeral professionals who are age 40 or under or new to the profession (first licensed within the last five years) will have an opportunity to meet, learn from and talk with innovative and successful funeral professionals. It's also an opportunity to network and form relationships with other new professionals.

Meet the Mentors attendees will spend time with three of the profession's most respected funeral professionals:

- Rosemarie Forsberg, CFSP, owner and operator of Heritage Funeral Home in Nipawin, SK, Canada, and Tisdale Funeral Home in Tisdale, SK, Canada
- Mark Krause, president of Krause Funeral Homes and Cremation Services, which has several locations in the Milwaukee, Wis. area
- Jeff Smith, owner of Smith Family Funeral Home, which has several locations in the Little Rock, Ark. area

During the program, the mentors will share career advice and lessons they have learned while building rewarding and fulfilling careers in funeral service. Attendees will be able to connect with the mentors and their fellow mentees during small group discussions, interactive exercises and meals.

"I found Meet the Mentors to be a great opportunity to meet with other funeral service professionals from all over the country," said one of the 2018 Meet the Mentors attendees. "It gave me the ability to see and hear what other firms are doing to engage with the public and their community. I would gladly recommend this program to new funeral directors looking to learn how they can best serve their families."

"The most valuable part was the inspiration I gained by being surrounded by peers in my same shoes, with the same hardships ahead," said another participant in the 2018 program. "Being able to brainstorm solutions to these problems was extremely helpful."

There is no cost to participate in the Meet the Mentors program itself. The Funeral Service Foundation's grant provides exclusive, career-transforming access to three mentors, and covers attendees' registration fees, two nights' lodging and select meals (reception and dinner on March 10; breakfast, lunch and dinner on March 11; and breakfast and lunch on March 12). The 50 individuals selected to attend only pay for their transportation to the program.

Nearly 600 young professionals and emerging leaders have benefited from the Meet the Mentors program, which underscores the Foundation's mission to support funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and communities it serves. The program is part of the Foundation's 45 Awards, which are designed to transform the careers of funeral service professionals through scholarships, awards, resources and mission-focused outreach.

The names of the 50 participants will be randomly drawn from among all who enter via the NFDA website, www.nfda.org/mentors. Entries will be accepted through 11:59 p.m. CST on January 4, 2019. Entrants must be NFDA members in good standing, licensed funeral directors and/or embalmers, and age 40 or under or new to the profession (first licensed within the last five years).

The names of the 50 participants will be drawn the week of January 21, 2019, from among all entries received. The names of 10 attendees will be revealed every day, Monday through Friday via the NFDA website and social media channels.

Complete details about the NFDA Meet the Mentors program, including all eligibility requirements and an event schedule, can be found on the NFDA website, www.nfda.org/mentors. Members can call NFDA at 800-228-6332 with questions.

About NFDA

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.



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CHANDLER-GILBERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE - Mortuary Science Program (Mesa), (480) 988-8501

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ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - MOUNTAIN HOME FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM, (870) 508-6157

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT HOPE FUNERAL SCIENCE PROGRAM, (870) 722-8523

CALIFORNIA

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (916) 484-8145

CYPRESS COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, (714) 484-7278

COLORADO

ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (303) 797-5716

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LINCOLN COLLEGE OF NEW ENGLAND - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (860) 628-4751

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FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE - FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM, (904) 766-6622

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAM, (305) 237-1244

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICES PROGRAM, (727) 341-3781

GEORGIA

GUPTON-JONES COLLEGE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, (770) 593-2257

OGEECHEE TECHNICAL COLLEGE - DEPARTMENT OF FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (800) 646-1316 or (912) 681-5500

ILLINOIS

CARL SANDBURG COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (309) 345-8501

MALCOLM X COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (312) 850-7214

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY MORTUARY SCIENCE AND FUNERAL SERVICE, (618) 453-5698

WORSHAM COLLEGE OF MORTUARY SCIENCE, (847) 808-8444

INDIANA

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE - CENTRAL INDIANA MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (317) 921-4325

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE - NORTHWEST MORTUARY SCIENCE, (219) 392-3600 FAX: (219) 392-3609

MID-AMERICA COLLEGE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, (812) 288-8878

VINCENNES UNIVERSITY - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAM, (812) 888-5469

IOWA

DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (515) 964-6244

KANSAS

KANSAS CITY KANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, (913) 288-7607

LOUISIANA

DELGADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (504) 671-6245

MARYLAND

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY - CATONSVILLE MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (443) 840-4924

MASSACHUSETTS

FINE MORTUARY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE, (781) 762-1211

CAPE COD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (313) 577-2050

MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - PROGRAM OF MORTUARY SCIENCE, (612) 624-6464

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EAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE TECHNOLOGY, (662) 476-5101

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (601) 605-3327

NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNERAL SERVICE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM, (662) 280-6136

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ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT FOREST PARK - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (314) 644-9327

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EASTWICK COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM, (201) 494-5062

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NEW YORK

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HUDSON VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, (518) 629-7334

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NORTH CAROLINA

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MT. HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL

SERVICE EDUCATION, (503) 491-6940

PENNSYLVANIA

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (610) 861-5576

PITTSBURGH INSTITUTE OF MORTUARY SCIENCE, (412) 362-8500

SOUTH CAROLINA

PIEDMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (864) 941-8774

TENNESSEE

JOHN A. GUPTON COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAMS, (615) 327-3927

TEXAS

AMARILLO COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE, (806) 354-6035

COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, (281) 873-0262

DALLAS INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE 3909, (214) 388-5466

NORTHEAST TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (903) 434-8314

SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, (210) 486-1137

UTAH

SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MORTUARY SCIENCE PROGRAM, (801) 957-6205

VIRGINIA

JOHN TYLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICES PROGRAM, (804) 706-5066

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM, (757) 822-7074

WASHINGTON

LAKE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION, (425) 739-8155

WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE - WEST CAMPUS FUNERAL SERVICE PROGRAM, (414) 456-5432

PROGRAMS in CANDIDACY Status

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

University of District of Columbia Community College, (202) 274-5858

John A. Gupton College Holds Annual Alumni Reunion

John A. Gupton College held its annual alumni reunion in Nashville, Tennessee, August 3-4 2018, for a weekend of fun and fellowship with graduates, spouses and guests. The annual “meet and greet” reception took place at the Loews-Vanderbilt Nashville Hotel and was once again sponsored by Danny Hurt and Wilbert Vault Company. Saturday morning was a hosted breakfast provided by Batesville Casket Company and Matthews-Aurora Funeral Solutions, at the Loews Hotel. The breakfast was followed by the annual Alumni Business Meeting at John A. Gupton College’s “Harris O. Yates Lecture Hall.

During the business session “50-Year Pins” were presented to David Bentley, Steve Chenault and Frank Mullis. Also at the conclusion of the business meeting, the Alumni elected the following officers for 2018-2019: Delbrita Greene, President; Andi Pointer, Past President; Chris Speck, 1st Vice President; Jane McKnight, 2nd Vice President; Tim Bond, Secretary and Bill Hudson, Treasurer. The evening featured a well attended and fun outing, reception and dinner at Top Golf in downtown Nashville. The evening was enjoyed by all and look forward to next years event on August 2-3, 2019.



John A. Gupton Elected Alumni Officers for 2018-2019 (L-R) Jane McKnight, 2nd V.P.; Bill Hudson, Treasurer; Delbrita Greene, President; Tim Bond, Secretary and Steve Spann, John A. Gupton College President (Not Pictured Chris Speck, 1st V.P. and Andi Pointer, Immediate Past President)



Receiving their 50 Year Pin (L-R) David Bentley, Steve Chenault and Frank Mullis with Steve Spann



(L-R) Ellis Galyon and Tim Bond enjoying some fellowship during the Friday night Reception



(L-R) Some things never change, once again, Bill Hudson and David Akard laughing during class not paying attention to the instructor



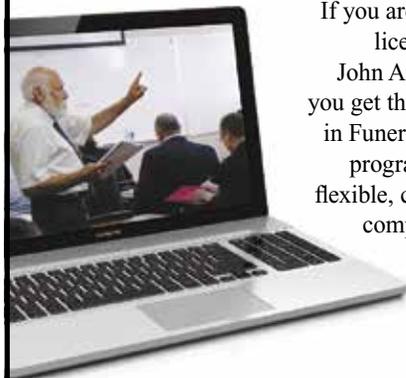
Danny Hurt trying to raffle off last minute parking vouchers to help pay the Bar tab



(L-R) Birthday girl, Christi Hurt (just turned 21!) with Meryl Spann and Jeff Duffer



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If you are interested in becoming a licensed funeral professional, John A. Gupton College can help you get there. The Associate Degree in Funeral Service is an accredited program. Our online program is flexible, career-focused and may be completed in 12 or 16 months. Financial Aid is available.

For information concerning cost and program call 615-327-3927, go to our website at guptoncollege.edu or email admissions@guptoncollege.edu.



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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.**



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Cherokee Casket Company Announces New Website and Catalogs for 2018

Cherokee Casket Company, Inc., internationally known for specializing in infant and child caskets and funeral related items, announces their new website www.cherokeechildcaskets.com. This site is now live and the new catalog set is now available for download. Cherokee is offering a catalog set containing three catalogs to ensure a quicker reference for the funeral professional. Since these catalogs will be updated throughout the year, each can be quickly accessed or downloaded from our website with assurance you have the most up to date information on our products.

- Volume #10 is our child product catalog with details on our specially sized caskets, urns, vaults and memorial books. Also includes the personalization samples and options.
- Infant & Child Funeral Supplies Volume #2 is for the funeral professional. This catalog gives details on funeral home supply items.
- Cherokee Personalization is our complete personalization guide with order forms that can be used by the funeral professional or family.

The highlight of our new catalogs and website are the unique personalization options. With the embroidery and vinyl works being handled in house, personalization can be completed in hours instead of days. Panels and blankets can be embroidered with names, monograms or with creative images from our library. Vinyl lettering or images can be added to the metal and hardwood caskets or style P0 through P5 vaults and combos.

For additional information contact the Cherokee Child Casket's customer service team @ 1-800-535-8667. Catalogs can be ordered via email request at info@cherokeechildcaskets.com or downloaded from our website www.cherokeechildcaskets.com.

About Cherokee Casket Company, Inc:

Cherokee has provided the funeral industry with high quality, handcrafted child caskets since 1941. Cherokee's expanded line of specially designed child's service products give families unique ways to memorialize their precious child.



New Premium Panels



Style 90 - Pink Crepe Exterior with Sunburst Ray & Personalized Panel
Shown with Premium Options
Premium Tiara Panel with Monogram & Embroidered Blanket



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PIMS to present Spring Con-Ed Seminar: 2019-PIMS Best Practices 101

Dr. Joseph Marsaglia, Dean of Faculty and Students of Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, is pleased to announce its Spring Continuing Education Event entitled **2019-PIMS Best Practices 101**. This all day seminar, Friday, March 15, 2019, will feature Martha Thayer and T. J. Roser. This multidimensional program will feature the following topics:

- **Serving the Family of a Perpetrator - Martha Thayer**
- **Funeral Directors and Organ Procurement; Tissue Retrieval; Demonstration of Embalming the Tissue Donor - T. J. Roser; et al.**

This 6 hour day-long program will not disappoint the embalmers and directors with discussions on both clinical and business issues.

Mark your calendars!

Where:	PIMS Special Events Center
When:	Friday, March 15, 2019 8:00 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.
Cost:	\$120 (received before March 2) \$135 (received March 3 - March 15) \$150 onsite registration
Program:	6 Continuing Education Hours

Application for approval for 6 continuing education units has been made to Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, New York and the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice. Breakfast, Lunch, and all course materials will be included for attendees.

PIMS Alumnus Receives the Purple Heart

PIMS alumna Shaiyla Hakeem receives the Purple Heart Medal from General Austin Scott Miller

Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS) graduate Shaiyla Hakeem was recently awarded The Purple Heart Medal.

The Purple Heart is the United States military decoration awarded in the name of the president to those wounded or killed while serving with the U.S. military; “Being wounded or killed in any action against an enemy of the United States or as a result of an act of any such enemy or opposing armed forces.”

Shaiyla is currently deployed in Kabul, Afghanistan as public affairs specialist with the U.S. Army and is the personal photographer to General Austin Scott Miller. While in Kandahar, Shaiyla’s unit came under fire by an Afghan soldier - resulting in three Afghan deaths, four wounded, including Shaiyla being shot and wounded. For her injuries, she received both the Purple Heart

Medal and Combat Action Badge. PIMS is proud of Shaiyla for her service to our country and for the sacrifices she has made.



National Mortuary Shipping (NMS) visits PIMS

Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS) welcomed representatives from National Mortuary Shipping (NMS) to speak with the students on Tuesday December 18, 2018.

The presentation and discussion included the intricacies of shipping human remains internationally and domestically.

Kahlen Knapik (a PIMS alumnus) and Lorri Krnc gave the students great insight into this most contemporary topic and added a few stories of unique cases they had handle in the past.

PIMS is grateful to NMS for their support of mortuary science education.



PIMS students host Annual Christmas Drive

PIMS students host Annual Christmas Drive for the Needy

On Saturday, December 15, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS)

Student Senate and student volunteers attended and assisted with the Kingsley Association Breakfast with Santa.

The Kingsley Association was established in 1893 for the purpose of providing a multitude services to working class families of Pittsburgh. The students collected almost 200 toys and numerous boxes of food and clothing to donate to the Kingsley.

They assisted with many arts and crafts at the event including cookie decorating, frame decorating, pictures with Santa, and serving the meal.

Community service is paramount in the funeral industry and our students take great pride in helping the PIMS neighborhood.



Ogeechee Tech Funeral Service program strong after 16 years

Description

The Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Service Education is designed to prepare students for a career in funeral service. All aspects of funeral service will be taught within the scope of this program. Academic and technical skills will be taught in the areas of general business, industry regulations and laws, embalming and restorative art skills, funeral service applications, funeral home management, grief counseling, etc. The goal is to prepare the student for successful completion of all necessary board examinations and to prepare the student for the rigors of daily work within the funeral service industry. The goals of the Funeral Service Education program are to promote and improve the standards of funeral service education and professionalism, to expose funeral service students to all aspects of the profession, and foster a desire to serve the public interest in an ethical, dignified manner. All Funeral Service Education students must take the National Board Examination to graduate from the program.

Employment Opportunities

Graduates of the Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Service Education are prepared for employment primarily in funeral home settings, although some related fields, such as embalming operations within medical college anatomy departments, trade embalming facilities, and autopsy support operations, are possible employment opportunities. Typically, a graduate who has passed all required board examinations and who has completed the required apprenticeship may be employed as a licensed funeral director/licensed embalmer. Prior to completion of apprenticeship and the subsequent licensure, the graduate would be employed as an apprentice funeral director/embalmer.

Aims and Objectives

The Funeral Service Education program at Ogeechee Technical College has as its central aim the recognition of funeral service personnel as members of a human services profession; members of the community in which they serve; participants in the relationship between bereaved families and those engaged in the funeral service profession; professionals knowledgeable of and compliant with federal, state, provincial/territorial, and local regulatory guidelines in the geographic area where they practice, as well as professionals sensitive to the responsibility for public health, safety, and welfare in caring for human remains. The Funeral Service Education program also has the following objectives: to enlarge the background and knowledge of students about the funeral service profession; to educate students in every phase of funeral service and to help enable them to develop proficiency and skills necessary for the profession; to educate students concerning the responsibilities of the funeral service profession to the community at large; to emphasize

high standards of ethical conduct; to provide a curriculum at the post-secondary level of instruction; and to encourage student and faculty research in the field of funeral service.

Accreditation/Approval

The Funeral Service Education degree program at Ogeechee Technical College is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), 992 Mantua Pike, Suite 108, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097, Phone 816.233.3747. Web: www.abfse.org

Licensure/Certification

To become licensed in the State of Georgia, a student must successfully complete the course of study at an accredited Funeral Service Education program, pass the national and state examinations, and complete a required apprenticeship

National Board Examination

The annual passage rate of first-time takers on the National Board Examination (NBE) for the most recent three-year period for this institution and all ABFSE accredited funeral service education programs is posted on the ABFSE website (www.abfse.org).



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Mobile Browsing for Your Funeral Home's Website

By Lexie Graf

Does your funeral home have a mobile-friendly website? Can users easily navigate through your content on their mobile device? Does your website only take a few seconds to load on a smartphone or tablet? If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” you may need to make some improvements to your website.

According to Pew Research Center, since 2011, the number of Americans who own a smartphone has grown from 35% to 77%. Many of these smartphone owners use their phone as their primary means of online access. This means that having mobile-friendly browsing for your website is more important than ever. Users expect a pleasant mobile browsing experience and are becoming increasingly unwilling to spend their time on a mobile website that loads slowly or is difficult to navigate. This is why many funeral homes are beginning to embrace the trend of having a mobile-friendly website.

If your funeral home does not have a mobile-friendly website, no worries. This article will get you back on track to providing your families an enjoyable mobile browsing experience.

Facts and Figures

As you know, the prevalence of smartphones and tablets isn't slowing down any time soon. Though Baby Boomers are adopting these technologies more, the younger generations are the ones relying on mobile browsing the most.

Pew Research Center found that one in five American adults owns a smartphone but does not have traditional home broadband service, which means that they will rarely see your funeral home's website on a desktop. This population primarily consists of younger adults, minorities, and lower-income households — all important demographics to showcase your services to. As Baby Boomers age, you want to have a website that

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Cell: 843-412-6433

is mobile-friendly for their children and grandchildren to access.

Getting Started

Want to know where your website stands when it comes to mobile browsing? Log into your website's Google Analytics, select "Audience" on the left side, then "Mobile." You may be surprised by your results. You also can run a mobile-friendly test by pasting your website's URL into Google's Mobile-Friendly Test feature. Just search "mobile-friendly test" on Google to use it.

If you're unhappy with your results, perhaps it's time that you make some improvements to your website! Before you dive into making changes, get to know how your website can become mobile-friendly and why that's important.

Mobile-Friendliness and SEO

Paying attention to your website's search engine optimization, or SEO, is important if you want families to be able to find your website when they use a search engine. Being mobile-friendly has an effect on your SEO. Both Google and Bing rank websites in their search engine based on many factors, including how well they perform on mobile devices.

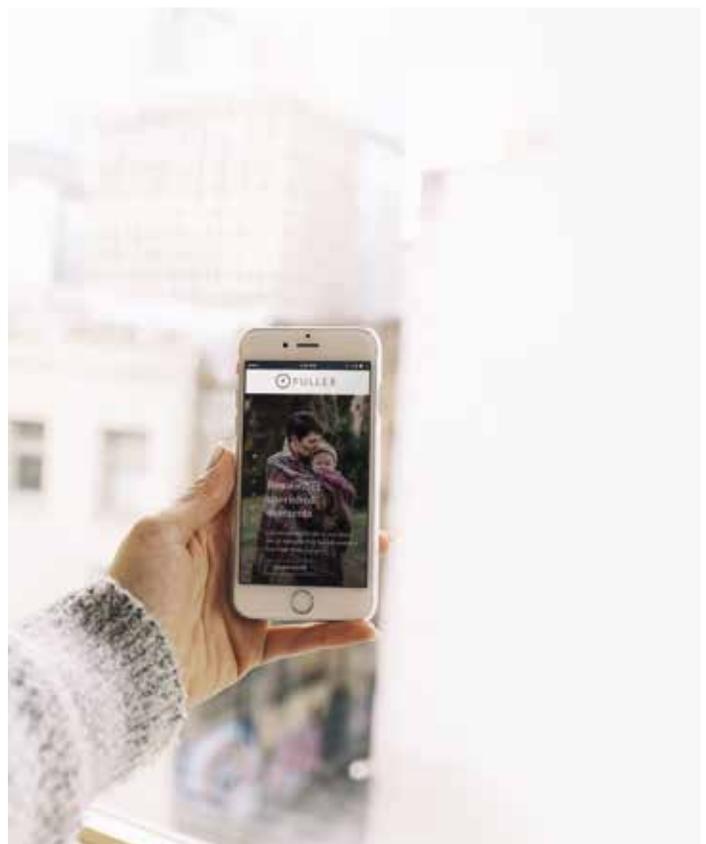
There are a few things to keep in mind to improve your SEO and mobile-friendliness. One thing is to make sure your website's navigation is large and spaced out enough. This includes menus, buttons, and links. You want them to be easy to use with touchscreens. No one likes clicking on the wrong link!

Some things to avoid are having to zoom in or scroll to find information, additional software like Flash or QuickTime for your videos that likely won't be viewable on mobile, and large files and images that make your website load slower.

Different Methods for Mobile-Friendliness

Responsive Websites

By having a responsive website, you are increasing your mobile-friendliness immensely. To have a responsive website means that your website responds or adjusts to whatever screen is being used, and this is important since smartphones and tablets vary greatly in size. It also responds to whether the mobile device is being used in a portrait or landscape orientation, so



if the user turns their phone to the side.

Users prefer responsive websites because they are easier to use. Rather than having to constantly zoom in or out, the website adjusts the content for them. This also is beneficial because that means families are seeing all of your content. It also means that they won't get irritated and move onto someone else's more mobile-friendly website.

Though a responsive website is a must if you want a mobile-friendly website, it's important to keep a few things in mind. Unless you have a strong background in coding, it is unlikely you will be able to build your own responsive website. Luckily, it is easy enough to hire a firm to do it for you.

It's also important that you carefully manage what content you decide to add to your website because too much can overburden mobile devices — especially mobile users with 3G or poor WiFi connections. Your responsive site will have the same content no matter the device, so it can be in your best interest to simplify as much as possible.

Adaptive Websites

If creating a responsive website seems like too much of a burden right now, you could make an adaptive website. But keep in mind that responsive websites are

more efficient for mobile browsing. Adaptive websites change at certain size intervals rather than changing size fluidly.

Funeral homes may choose to build an adaptive website because it is easier to update an existing website to be adaptive and mobile-friendly, whereas a responsive website tends to require you to start from scratch.

Mobile Websites

Before the prevalence of smartphones, having a separate mobile website was the only way to have a mobile-friendly website. Responsive or adaptive websites may not always be the best choice for your funeral home depending on the content you want to have.

Sometimes, mobile websites can better fit the needs of the families viewing your website. They tend to include larger buttons for obituaries, buttons for directions that automatically link to a navigation app, a stationary banner photo since rotating banners tend to load slower, a touchscreen-friendly menu, and content that users don't have to scroll to see.

Though Google considers responsive design best practice, mobile websites do have some advantages. They can allow for a more customized mobile browsing experience, they tend to load faster, and you can optimize your SEO by including keywords that are more likely to be searched for on mobile devices.

Mobile Apps

It may seem like every business has an app, and that might be a great business decision for them! They can gain customer insight and provide other functions to users. However, for funeral homes, an app really isn't worth the time, money, and effort.

Your website will cover anything an app would, and there isn't any SEO benefit to having an app. Save your money and put it into developing a website optimized for mobile browsing.

Thinking All of This Through

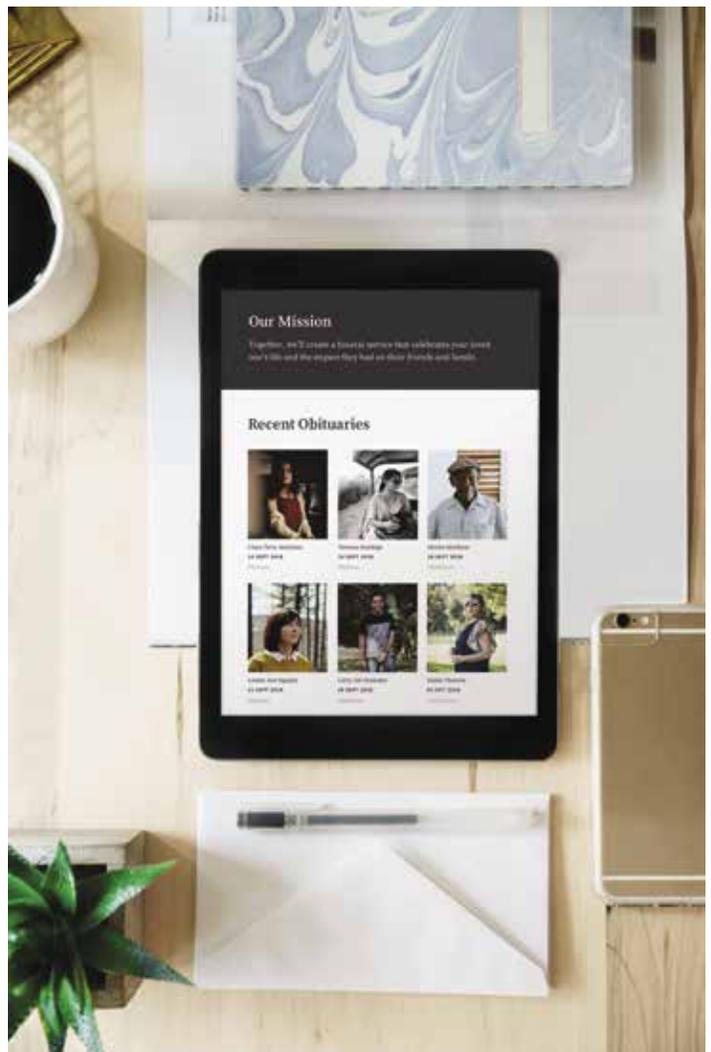
Remember, if your website takes more than a matter of seconds to load or is difficult to navigate, people will move onto the next one — that is just the world we are living in. People have experienced many mobile-friendly websites and no longer tolerate anything that

isn't. If you want to keep up with the times, a mobile-friendly website is a must.

However, that doesn't mean you should rush into any decisions! Use the information we provided to continue your research about mobile browsing. Mobile-friendly websites don't happen overnight, so make sure you're not spending your time and money on a website you're going to want to rebuild right away.

By making this decision, you will be providing a pleasant mobile experience that will make your funeral home website the go-to for families in search of funeral services. And at the end of the day, that's what allows you to do the job you love.

Frazer Consultants is a technology company that helps funeral professionals reimagine the funeral experience for families. To learn about their responsive funeral home websites, call Frazer Consultants at 866-372-9372 or email info@frazerconsultants.com.





Working with the Media

Keys to Service = Understanding

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

Have you every poured your heart out to somebody and they did not understand you? If this has happened to you then you will understand that one of the sterling qualities in the character makeup of the helping funeral professional is to understand other people to the best of our abilities.

In this article I am going to cover three aspects in the process of human understanding.

SELF UNDERSTANDING:

The first way to start to understand other people is to understand yourself and this most times is a painful exercise in character building which usually starts with our taking a long hard look in the mirror; not an easy assignment.

The helping funeral professional ideally is a continuous student of self-improvement and reads and thinks about the human condition, about death, loss, about the values of rituals and ceremonies, about life realities and life challenges, about grief and bereavement and how their own personal life story fits into all this life-stuff. This is indeed time well spent.

Here is a very difficult question: Do you understand yourself? In fact when I was in seminary our pastoral counseling profession Sister Elizabeth Cashman taught us that the most difficult question that any human being can ask is this: “Who am I?” Many times the answer is “I don’t know.”

If your answer is “I don’t know” is this then a motivator to discern and introspect about your life, its meaning and your relationships with others? Does this motivate you think about how you can do better in treating others, in understanding others, and in being of service to others?

This article is not centered exclusively around the funeral professional becoming more acquainted with their own personality per se, but it will suffice to say that of the three types of understanding we are addressing self understanding, self awareness, and self realization are the most difficult to embrace.

Personality inventories, attitude surveys, and personal assessments are on the internet in abundance and free to help jump start a beginning attempt for an individual to start answering the question “Who am I?” Another way to find out information about who you are is in simple conversations with trusted family, friends, and professional colleagues. These interactions can be an effective approach in our process of looking hard and long in the mirror. All of these avenues are readily available and for the serious life student should be taken full advantage of.

Here is a case study. For several years I played host to a group of nursing students who came to the funeral home I managed to take a tour. The nursing students did this twice a year. It has always fascinated me to watch people take a tour of a funeral home and the nursing students were no exception. The process is usually predictable: the group hesitantly enters the building, sometimes giggling, bumping into each other, trying to act mature, but then defy their act by laughing at inappropriate times and over inappropriate subjects.

Then I introduce myself. Any reader who knows me knows that I am a “big boy” and have a shock of white unruly hair, and a deep bass voice, that one of my speaker associates dubbed as “the voice of Todd.” In other words I am innocently intimidating – I don’t mean to be, but that is the way it is, of course until people get to know my loveable personality (that is a joke folks).

The nursing students, naturally don't know or understand anything concerned with anything about our beloved profession, absolutely nothing, and even if they "think" they know something the odds are always on the side that what they think they know is wrong. They also know absolutely nothing about TVB, so I know they are not looking at me as a feeling human being, but as an odd and strange fellow who is working in this odd and strange place.

So off I begin, and you know there is absolutely nothing I love to talk about more than funeral service and just how bloody great this career path truly is.

I move them across the threshold of funeral anxiety into the world of funeral interest, and once that happens watch out, because the young nursing student's, as most people do, move quickly into an arena of active interest and then questions start coming fast and furious. I believe this is the premier reason why funeral home tours are so important. It is the best way to move anxious people from funeral and death anxiety to funeral and death interest – that I firmly believe my friends that since the death rate is a perfect 100% this activity is always a good thing!

I have also discovered on these tours that while the different groups are interested in embalming, caskets, vaults, and such memorial items, what they really are interested in are themselves, and their own personal understanding of the world of death, dying, bereavement, and grief, their personal relationship to this reality, and how it makes them feel. And this is always a good thing, and happens most authentically inside of any funeral home anywhere on the globe.

The nursing professor always requires each student to write an assessment of this experience, and truth be told the nursing student's written words, after their experience of standing in the presence of death is simply astounding to read, and this happens on tour after tour after tour. Their writing reflect their new found introspection, discernment and maturity concerning the most certain event in their life after their birth – their death. The giggling has stopped and true understanding has happened. It is a marvelous thing to witness and be a part of.

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

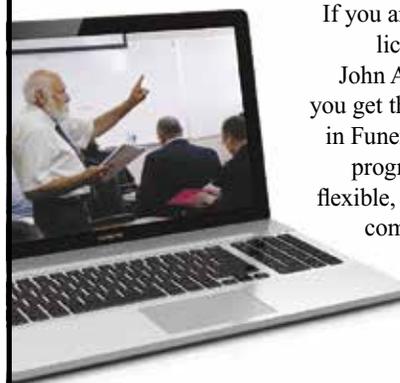
The second way of understanding is to understand

the other person, not through the eyes of others, but through our own eyes. Since this is the method by which we most frequently understand others, it deserves further scrutiny.

When I understand you or fail to understand you, I use the resources at my own command – no one else's: my perceptual apparatus, my thinking, my feeling, my knowledge and my skills. I understand you or do not understand you in terms of myself, my life space, my internal frame of reference. If we do not speak the same language – although we may both be speaking English – I may not understand you at all. This happens constantly and is most often the causal agent for wars between nations, relationship breakup, and interpersonal conflicts.

In brief, when I understand you or when I do not, it is in terms of my background, my experience, my imagination. Most often, I suppose, we cannot do otherwise and at best can only be aware that this is what we are doing, but even a sensitive awareness that this is what is going on is a great start in improving our ability to understand others. Let me give a short example to clarify: "I don't understand you. It's so hot

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in here, and yet you keep complaining that it's cold." This is simple and obvious. I cannot understand that you are cold when I am warm – this "stuff" happens constantly in human interactions.

Interestingly for our profession grief is universal human emotion. It is true that "pain is pain and grief is grief" the world over. Hence one binding connection that members of our great profession possess that eludes many other vocations is that no matter what you and I can probably understand the most difficult person by connecting with them in empathetic grief counseling, and we are very good at this.

While this deep connection is a valid and real possibility yet many times some in our profession continue to tend to understand these deep emotions only in terms of themselves instead of the person expressing them. Because of this authentic understanding of another person takes a tremendous amount of good old fashioned work, and this is also just possibly why veteran funeral directors seem to possess magical understanding of a myriad of grief situations because they have just worked at understanding this emotion and communicating with people experiencing this painful emotion for so long.

Understanding another person can be exhausting. For this reason lazy people usually fail at understanding others very successfully. The most un-ambitious expression which indicates a lazy person's interest in working to understand another is this phrase: "I don't care." Ever heard that one?

Such an internal attitude as "I don't care" is anathema to everything which we hold near and dear in our heart concerning our love of funeral service. Here is a haunting question: Have you ever heard anyone in funeral service say "I don't care?"

Another helpful and wise step in our understanding of others is that if we do not understand people, we may well want to find out what is causing the barrier. In some rare instances in funeral service, we may have to accept lack of communication as inevitable under certain circumstances with the result being that the client family leaves and engages another funeral home – this happens but fortunately it is rare.

As distasteful as the "lost call" can be at least we can attempt to cope with what we do not understand in

losing a client family and take some comfort in the fact that if the family had stayed it might well have been worse with days of repeated failings to communicate and hence understand them time after time which results in stress and turmoil for everyone involved. In a very real sense true understanding of certain situation results in the blunt realization that this client family in truth should be using another funeral home.

The upside to awkward situation is that although the barrier (why the client family left) will not have been removed with their absence neither will it have been fortified. The situation of the lost client in most funeral careers is so distasteful and stressful that the third way of understanding deserves our utmost attention.

UNDERSTAND WITH ANOTHER PERSON

The third way to understand another person is the most meaningful but at the same time the most demanding. It is to understand with another person.

This calls for putting aside everything but our common humanness and with it alone trying to understand with the other person how they think, feel, and see the world about them. This way of understanding means it is ALL about the other person – it is selfless pure and simple.

This means ridding ourselves of our internal frame of reference and adopting the other person's internal frame of reference without any mental reservation or compunction.

This skill is rare indeed. Here the issue is not to disagree or agree or even like or dislike the person but to understand what it is actually like to be that other person. This sounds quite simple though in reality it is extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve in life, with years of practice and discernment, let alone have it present within the boundaries and limits of the funeral conference.

Feeling what it is actually like to be another person requires training and extended education in the skills and procedures of the empathetic relationship. Customarily this skill is relegated to licensed therapists who form and maintain longtime working relationships with their clients.

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NFDA Holds 134th Annual Expo Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah - Elects Charles “Chuck” T. Bowman President

NFDA Convention offers incomparable education and networking and the biggest funeral expo in a stunning setting

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) 2018 International Convention & Expo, held October 14-17 in Salt Lake City, Utah, drew 4,029 total attendees (2,464 attendees and 1,565 exhibitor representatives). A total of 315 international attendees, representing 29 countries and territories, participated in the 2018 NFDA Convention. The Expo Hall featured 329 exhibiting companies which filled 82,800 square feet of space (828 10' x 10' booth spaces).

The NFDA convention proved to be an exceptional experience for all who were able to attend. The convention featured an outstanding slate of workshops, many of which were at or near capacity, that challenged attendees to think about funeral service in new ways while offering practical strategies to help them understand the evolving needs and desires of the bereaved families. Topics included embalming and restorative art, the opioid crisis, helping families who are grieving a death due to tragic circumstances, marketing, compliance and more.

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 they can offer to families in their communities.

From the rousing red-carpet themed Welcome Party to the heights of the Wasatch Mountains for an Oktoberfest-themed closing party, attendees had many opportunities to network and have fun while experiencing everything that makes Salt Lake City one of the country's hidden gems.

NFDA Highlights Consumer Outreach Initiatives

During the Monday General Session, NFDA CEO Christine Pepper highlighted the significant strides NFDA has made during the past year to educate consumers about the value of funerals and the important role that funeral directors play in helping families heal

after the death of a loved one.

“The association committed to finding more and better ways to tell your story,” Pepper said. “Our most significant initiatives focused on helping consumers understand the value of funerals and funeral directors. From a new consumer website to expanded public relations, we are putting funeral service in front of consumers like we have never done before.”

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

“In March, we launched RememberingALife.com, a website packed with useful resources for consumers,” Pepper explained. “It’s a place where they can find valuable information, whether they just experienced the death of a loved one or are preplanning a funeral. For many years, you’ve asked us to help educate the public about what you do and the value of a meaningful funeral. This website does that and more. The site provides information that encourages people to remember and honor their loved ones in ways that will help them reflect, mourn and begin to grieve. And when a consumer searches for a funeral home, the site’s directory connects them directly with an NFDA-member.”

The association also debuted the first in a series of public service announcements to help families that have experienced a tragic death.

When a loved one dies in a tragic way such as by drug overdose or violence, family members may think a funeral is not appropriate. They may not understand

how important it is to have the support of friends and family or how a funeral can help them during this difficult time.

NFDA hopes to help families that have experienced a tragic death to understand that a funeral is appropriate and how it can benefit them.

The new public service announcements, along with a consumer brochure, convey that regardless of how someone died, they should be remembered by having a funeral. More information about these resources will be available soon.

NFDA also introduced the winners of the RememberingALife.com Film Contest. The winning films, along with several honorable mentions, made their debut during the NFDA Convention and were available for viewing in the RememberingALife.com Area in the Convention Center.

Earlier this year, NFDA invited amateur and professional filmmakers from around the world to create films that help convey the importance and power

of memorializing lives. Three winning films were selected for their ability to inspire others to remember the lives of their loved ones.

“As funeral directors, you see the wide variety of ways people share the story of a person’s life through their funeral,” said Pepper. “It’s important to remember. It’s important to pay tribute. These short films give you a glimpse into three lives.”

The first-place winning film, A Brief & Concise History of Things and Other Things, was inspired by Sidney Butler’s family and illustrates how she sees us all connected to society in a bigger way. The second-place film, Tio Lino, was created by Adrian Burrell. It follows the life of an elderly gentleman who chose to devote his time and talents to serving his community and the disadvantaged youth in his neighborhood. The third-place film, Art Can Save You – The Story of Shari Kadar and 1,000 Colored Eggs was made by Austin Meyer. It tells the story of a World War II refugee from Hungary who came to America and discovered her passion for art.

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NFDA has arranged for its members to use the films selected as winners or honorable mentions to promote the value of funerals and memorialization, such as by posting films on their firm's website or social media sites or using them in community presentations. More information about how members can use the films is available online, www.nfda.org/rememberingalife (member login required).

NFDA Convention Photos Now Available

Professional photographers captured all of the excitement of the 2018 NFDA Convention. All of the photos can be viewed at www.nfda.org/saltlake. Attendees may download as many photos as they like at no charge; prints and other keepsake items are available for purchase.

Planning Underway for 2019 NFDA Expo Chicago, IL, McCormick Place Exhibit

The 2019 NFDA International Convention & Expo will take place October 27-30, in Chicago, Ill.

Chicago's great magic lies in its mix: sophisticated yet friendly, bustling city streets adjacent to long stretches of green parks and sparkling blue Lake Michigan, and a stunning year-round array of things to see and do unique in all the world.

Chicago is more walkable than most global cities, and visitors of all ages enjoy the proximity of such attractions as Navy Pier, Millennium Park, the Art Institute of Chicago and other treasures.

The city's explosive performance art scene delivers audience-thrilling theatre, music and dance in historic venues. And, of course, an endless assortment of restaurants, high-end shopping on the famous Magnificent Mile and nightlife are all at visitors' fingertips, ready to match every taste, budget and mood.

Information about the 2019 NFDA Convention will be available soon on the NFDA website. www.nfda.org

NFDA 2018-2019 Board of Officers & Directors



- Charles "Chuck" T. Bowman, CMSP, CFSP, CCO: 2018-2019 President
- R. Bryant Hightower Jr., CFSP: 2018-2019 President-elect
- Randall P. "Randy" Anderson, CFSP, CCO: 2018-2019 Treasurer
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Batesville Partners with Aftercare.com to Provide Personalized Outreach to Families

Batesville, a leading provider of high quality products and innovative technology solutions to funeral homes, announced a partnership with Aftercare.com that will allow funeral directors to continue to support families during the twelve months after a death occurs through personalized communications that recognize milestones in their loved ones' lives. The automated outreach program is a new value-added service for Batesville website customers that further enhances the family's overall funeral experience.

"The relationships we have with our loved ones are not broken by death," said Debby Neubauer, vice president of marketing for Batesville. "Our memories stay with us, and the sense of physical loss is amplified on birthdays, holidays and other special occasions."

The Aftercare Card Program™ allows funeral directors to continue to support families in their grief journey by sending a personalized sympathy card following the death, and remembrance cards honoring a loved one's birthday, the Christmas season and the first anniversary of their passing. All four cards can be customized with digital signatures, logos and messages to reflect the funeral home's brand. Families also receive a follow-up survey six weeks after the service so they can provide feedback on their experience – via mail or through an online review.

"Reaching out to families on those difficult days in the first year reinforces that you care, strengthening relationships and building loyalty that can lead to future business," said Ellery Bowker, CEO and founder of Aftercare.com. "Our system automates the scheduling and fulfillment processes to ensure a consistent high-touch experience for every family."

Aftercare.com designed its card program to give funeral directors maximum flexibility. They can decide on a case-by-case basis which families to enroll and then step back and let the process work. The decedent's information is automatically pulled into Aftercare.com from the obituary, avoiding duplicate data entry. From there, everything from printing and mailing cards to providing reports on survey feedback is managed by Aftercare.com's team of professionals.



Every family's journey through grief is unique. The Aftercare.com program complements other grief content and resources already available free of charge to Batesville website customers, including a library of professional materials by international grief expert Dr. Alan Wolfelt. The Aftercare Card Program is now available to Batesville Web Pro customers. For more information or a tutorial on how to start using the program, call the Batesville Technology Solutions team at 877.287.8661 or send an email to Technology.Sales@Batesville.com.

About Batesville:

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

About Aftercare.com:

Aftercare.com helps funeral homes build relationships and create customer loyalty by maintaining contact with families after the service is over. The automated Aftercare Card Program™ lets funeral directors focus on serving at-need families and still let previous families know they are thinking about them and are there for support. Aftercare.com serves funeral homes across the United States and Canada.

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Funeral Service Foundation Donor Reception



Funeral Service Foundation Welcomes Three New Trustees and Elects 2018-19 Executive Committee

The Funeral Service Foundation's Board of Trustees voted in three new trustees and elected its 2018-19 executive committee at its annual fall meeting, held last week during the NFDA International Convention & Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Representatives from across the funeral service spectrum serve on the Foundation's board; in accordance with its bylaws, the board consists of 60 percent NFDA-member funeral directors. Trustees volunteer their time and talents to advance the Foundation's mission to support funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and the communities it serves.

"Our three new trustees embrace the Foundation's philanthropic spirit and bring experience and expertise to the table," said Bob Arrington, who was re-elected as the Foundation's 2018-19 chair. "Their energy, passion and dedication make them solid additions to the Board and underscore our vision of an improved end-of-life experience for families and their loved ones."

The new trustees are Mark Krause, president, Krause Funeral Homes & Cremation Service, Milwaukee, Wis.; Kelly Milberger, senior vice president, national sales, Global Atlantic Financial Group, Batesville, Ind.; and Kurt Soffe, owner, Jenkins-Soffe Funeral Chapels & Cremation Center, South Jordan, Utah.

In addition to re-electing Arrington, of Arrington Funeral Directors in Jackson, Tenn., as 2018-19 chair, the Board of Trustees also re-elected Stephanie Kann, administrator, Worsham Community College, Wheeling, Ill., as chair-elect; and elected Eric Tanzberger, senior vice president and CFO, Service Corporation International, Houston, Texas, as secretary/treasurer. Bill Wappner, president, Wappner Funeral Directors and Crematory, Mansfield, Ohio, will serve as immediate past president.

Victor March, president and CEO of March Funeral Homes, Baltimore, Md., transitioned off the board after six years of dedicated service to the Foundation.



2018-19 Funeral Service Foundation Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees wore bow ties in memory of sitting trustee and friend Bob Biggins,

who died earlier this year. Front row (l-r): Mark Krause, Steven Gackebach, Immediate Past Chair Bill Wappner, Foundation Executive Director Danelle O'Neill, 2018-19 Chair Bob Arrington, 2018-19 Chair-elect Stephanie Kann, NFDA CEO Christine Pepper and Allan Cole. Back row (l-r): Jay Dodds, Dave McComb, Anthony Guerra, Jim Breaux, Joan Billman, Kim Medici Shelquist, NFDA Liaison R. Bryant Hightower, Brad Speaks, Kurt Soffe and J. Mark Busch. Not pictured: Secretary/Treasurer Eric Tanzberger, Kelly Milberger and Chris Trainor.



2018-19 Executive Committee (l-r): Immediate Past Chair Bill Wappner, Foundation Executive Director Danelle O'Neill, 2018-19 Chair Bob Arrington, and 2018-19 Chair-

elect Stephanie Kann. Missing: Secretary/Treasurer Eric Tanzberger.



Kurt Soffe (left) and Mark Krause (right) are two of the Foundation's newly elected trustees. Missing: Kelly Milberger.



Victor March is the Foundation's newest trustee emeritus. Victor served as a trustee from 2012-2018.

Heritage Club and NFDA International Reception During NFDA Expo



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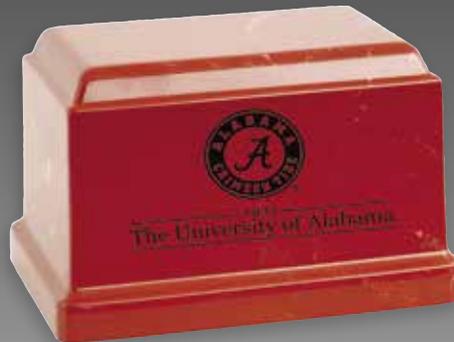
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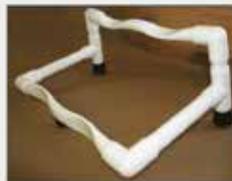
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