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◆ FUNERAL DIRECTOR ◆

MAGAZINE

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W E L C O M E

February 2022

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ICCF^A

INTERNATIONAL CEMETERY, CREMATION[®]
AND FUNERAL ASSOCIATION

ICCF^A Expo - Schedule of Events, Keynote Speakers
and Agenda

Catching Up With Lacy Robinson - Q&A

Pre-Recruitment Preparation... Your Key to Success!

by Bob Heidlage & Alex Kistler

Overcoming the Funeral Home Recruitment and
Retention Challenge by Alexandra Jo

What's the Key to Running a Successful Funeral Home?

Your Team by Jenny Goldade

Who Should Handle Your Funeral Home Marketing
by Welton Hong

Call to Duty: The Funeral Director's Response to
the Titanic Disaster - 1912 by Todd W. Van Beck

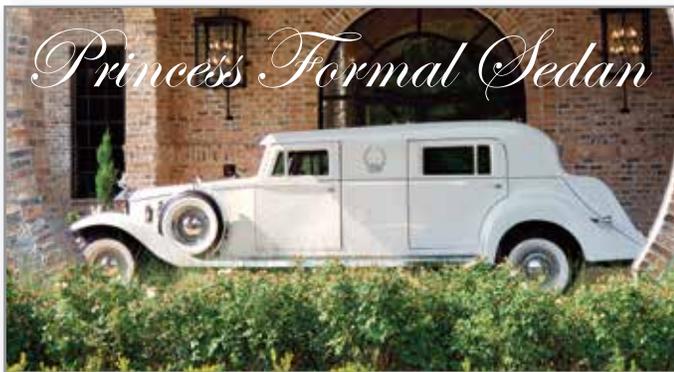
Messenger Acquires Bass-Mollett



Grand O'Vale



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Princess Formal Sedan



Grand Vista Protège Trailer Hearse

2022

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February 2022

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 with a Southern Accent Since 1919

Celebrating 102 Years of Service to the Industry

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Southern Funeral Director Magazine[®]
 P.O. Box 768152
 Roswell, GA 30076



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



Joe Weigel
 Associate Editor
 joseph.weigel@gmail.com



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

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**2022
ICCFA
ANNUAL
CONVENTION
& EXPOSITION**

Las Vegas, Nevada

**What happens
at Annual, *only*
happens at
Annual!**

**March 22–25, 2022
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino
#iccfa2022**

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, March 22

2:00–2:50 PM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

Shifts in Customer Desires and Habits Brought on by the Pandemic

Angelique Simpson, Matthews International

2:00–2:50 PM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Defining Leadership in the Workplace

Don Winsett, Davey Resource Group/Davey Tree Expert Co.

3:00–3:50 PM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Overcoming the Staffing Challenges of the 21st Century in a Post-Pandemic World

Bob Heidlage, Global Recruiters of Batesville

3:00–3:50 PM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

P.A.U.S.E.: Next of Kin Scenarios

Mike Elliott, Carriage Services

4:00–7:00 PM

Grand Opening Reception in the Expo Hall

7:00–9:00 PM



Oak Ridge Boys Concert in the Expo Hall

Thanks to the generosity of Service Corporation International (SCI), the ICCFA is pleased to close out the first day of exhibits with a concert featuring Grammy award-winning artists, The Oak Ridge Boys. The band will take the main stage of the expo hall on Tuesday, March 22 at 7 pm. All registrants are invited to the concert to enjoy some great music, food and drinks as we celebrate the start of convention!

Join us at the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition in Vegas

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, March 23

9:00–10:00 AM

ICCFA Annual Meeting of Members

Vote* for members to represent you on the ICCFA Board of Directors, listen to officers' reports on the state of the association, and fully engage in the running of the ICCFA.

*NOTE: Following a successful and secure online Board of Director's election in 2021, the ICCFA will conduct the 2022 Board of Director's elections using the same online voting platform. The primary contact of all Regular members in good standing will be contacted via email with a secure link to register their vote. The election period opens February 16, 2022 and remains open until March 23, 2022 at 12 noon PDT, when the final votes will be reported and the new Board of Directors announced.

10:00–11:00 AM

GENERAL SESSION



Keynote: Leading Across the Generational Divide

Lynne Lancaster

What makes a great leader and how do the generations

view the role of leadership differently? Today, the expectations of leaders are evolving. Whether you're a seasoned veteran directing those younger than you, an experienced Xer juggling multiple generations, a skilled Millennial managing upward, or you are struggling to connect with all the generations, Lynne's savvy research, entertaining anecdotes, and practical advice will help you:

- Understand who the generations are and how their expectations of leaders have changed
- Quantify generational gaps in recruiting, engaging, communicating, and retaining

- Increase your effectiveness as a leader by understanding how to engage each generation
- Apply hands-on techniques to flex your leadership style

Lynne Lancaster is one of today's most sought-after generational experts and the founder of two successful consulting firms. Her clients include 3M, Apple, Coca-Cola, Deloitte, Disney, Exxon, NASA, General Mills, Rose State College, Tinker Airforce Base, the University of Notre Dame, and St. Jude's Children's Hospital. She is co-author of two best-selling books: When Generations Collide and The M-Factor: How the Millennial Generation is Rocking the Workplace. She has interviewed literally thousands of Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials, and Gen Y to understand what makes them tick.

11:00 AM–2:30 PM

Expo Hall Open/Lunch with Exhibitors

2:30–3:30 PM

GENERAL SESSION



Keynote: The Brand Within - Branding Yourself from Birth to the Boardroom

Daymond John

When William Shakespeare said,

"All the world's a stage," he was indirectly talking about branding! Corporations love employees with a strong sense of branding because it inspires out-of-the-box thinking, creating an infectious energy that flows throughout the work environment. It's no secret that the world has gotten smaller. Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, and dozens of other

View the full program at iccf.com/annual/

Wednesday, March 23

social websites have increased the desire for people to be noticed as a brand. From how he remade his brand image and transitioned from clothing mogul to television personality, Daymond John is going to share the stories and lessons that got him there. Along his entrepreneurial journey, through his many successes as well as failures, he has learned a few things about getting the best out of business and life. He believes the keys to his success include establishing the right mindset and following a few fundamental principles, which he calls his five "S.H.A.R.K points." Daymond John believes the ability to shift power in our favor starts with how we present ourselves to the world, and how the world looks back on us. And that begins with mastering influence and developing a reputation that highlights what you stand for. In today's world, we all live or die by the stories we tell, which is why we need to think about the stories that define our past before we can begin to take that next big step. Get ready! Daymond John will share how to take control of your destiny and empower audience members to make positive changes in every aspect of their lives.

An entrepreneur in every sense of the word, Daymond John has come a long way from taking out a \$100,000 mortgage on his mother's house and moving his business operation into its basement. John is CEO and founder of FUBU, a much-celebrated global lifestyle brand, and a pioneer in the fashion industry with over \$6 billion in product sales world-wide. Daymond is an award-winning entrepreneur and has received over 35 awards including the Brand Week Marketer of the Year, Advertising Age Marketing 1000 Award for Outstanding Ad Campaign, Ernst & Young's New York Entrepreneur of the Year Award and, most recently, was named #2 on LinkedIn's Top 20 Voices, a list of the top influencers who are using their voices to help us analyze today's changing world of work, navigate our industries, and find balance through an unprecedented year! His marketing strategies and ability to build successful brands has made him a highly influential consultant and motivational speaker today. His marketing firm, The Shark Group, offers advice on how to effectively communicate to consumers through innovative means and connects brands with the world's top celebrities for everything from endorsements to product extensions. Daymond is also an author of 5 best-selling books including his New York Times best-sellers, The Power of Broke (2016) and Rise and Grind (2018). In March 2020, Daymond released his fifth book, Powershift, that walks through his tried-and-true process

of how to transform any situation, close any deal, and achieve any outcome through his own experience and vast network of industry leaders. Finally, Daymond is celebrating his 13th season on ABC TV's critically acclaimed business reality show Shark Tank produced by the renowned Mark Burnett, which has reinvigorated entrepreneurship around the world. Shark Tank has now gone on to win five Emmy® awards in the US and millions of weekly viewers world-wide tune into the show as Daymond demonstrates his marketing prowess and entrepreneurial insights.

3:30–5:00 PM

Happy Hour Reception in the Expo Hall

5:00–6:00 PM

First Timers Reception

5:00–6:00 PM

PLPA Reception

6:00–7:00 PM



Educational Foundation Reception

Join us as we thank the generosity of donors and recognize scholarship recipients and toast the 2022 Lasting Impact awardee **Glenda Stansbury** at

the Educational Foundation Reception.

Glenda's legacy is notable for her training and development of celebrants, who offer an alternative to services provided by clergypersons for families who are not affiliated with a church or who do not wish to have a traditional religious funeral service. Under her guidance, she has trained over 4,665 celebrants with an estimated 7.5 million individuals who have witnessed the impact of a ceremony performed by one of her trainees.

Join us at the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition in Vegas

Schedule of Events

Thursday, March 24

7:30–8:30 AM

Prayer Breakfast

8:30–9:00 AM

Keeping It Personal (KIP) Award and Executive Certification Awards

9:00–9:30 AM

GENERAL SESSION



Keynote: Digital Legacy - Take Control of Your Digital Afterlife

Rikard Steiber

Do you know what happens to your digital “stuff” when you die?

No? You are not alone! As it turns out, 90% have no plans for what will happen to their online financial and social media accounts, documents, photos etc., but 80% of people want a solution. With 30 million dead people sending birthday reminders of Facebook, this is a real problem. You’re invited to Rikard’s keynote session to learn what will happen to your digital accounts like Google, Apple, and Facebook when you die. Gain insight on how digital accounts, documents, and photo memories are becoming an important part of pre-need planning. Also, catch a glimpse into the future, where you can live on forever as an AI avatar interacting with future generations. Gain new insights and learnings from the author of the book, *Digital Legacy: Take Control of Your Digital Afterlife*.

Rikard Steiber is a visionary internet entrepreneur with extensive experience in successfully launching and growing digital businesses at global companies including Google, Modern Times Group, HTC VIVE and Einride. Rikard has unique expertise in building digital subscription services, global marketing, and digital strategy. He is an active advocate of “Technology for Good” and founder of Europe’s largest Women in Tech network and event. He is also the initiator of the “VR for Impact Initiative” supporting UN Sustainability Goals and is a future astronaut with Virgin Galactic.

9:30–10:30 AM

GENERAL SESSION



Keynote: Nice Bike - Making Meaningful Connections

Mark Scharenbroich

Mix thousands and thousands of black leather-clad, bandana-wearing, tattoo-bearing Harley-Davidson riders with a 100th Anniversary and one beige rental car and the end result will be the perfect metaphor for connecting with others: “Nice Bike.” Nice Bike acts as a powerful catalyst to help build stronger, more unified teams. The message inspires audience members to be more engaged and passionate about connecting with others.

Join Emmy award-winning speaker, Mark Scharenbroich as he takes you for a fun ride on how to be effective at making meaningful connections in both your professional and personal life. His Nice Bike principle is supported by three strong actions: acknowledge, honor, and connect. Mark has spent

View the full program at iccf.com/annual/

Thursday, March 24

his career working in both industry and education discovering how some of the best organizations and team leaders build a culture that encourages people to perform at a higher level through greater engagement. Part motivational speaker, part thought-provoker and pure comedic entertainer, Mark Scharenbroich will inspire, teach, and engage you with Nice Bike.

Keynote speaker Mark Scharenbroich is the expert in creating authentic connections and inspiring his audience to transform corporate cultures. By discovering the power of connections, leaders are moved to connect more effectively with their team and, in turn, the team more effectively connects with the customer. Mark's "Nice Bike" metaphor is a memorable principle that helps create raving fans one customer at a time.

10:30 AM–1:30 PM

Lunch with Exhibitors in the Expo Hall

2:00–2:50 PM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Aftercare Startups to the Rescue?

Howard Sankel, Options For Ashes, P.B.C.

2:00–2:50 PM

SALES & MARKETING

17 Marketing Tactics to Grow Your Business

John Seal, Hangar Marketing

2:00–2:50 PM

FUNERAL HOME

Music, Words and Ceremonies for Natural Burial Graveside Services

Amy Cunningham, Fitting Tribute Funeral Services LLC

2:00–2:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Emerging Leaders

Leili McMurrugh, Worsham College of Mortuary Science, McMurrugh Funeral Chapel

2:00–2:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Veteran Recruitment: Journey to Serve Panel Discussion

Moderators: Gino Merendino, Merendino Cemetery Care; Jim Price, CCFE, CCE, Park Lawn Corporation; Lee Wiensch, Funeral Service Foundation

3:00–3:50 PM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

The Risks and Returns of Outsourcing

Terence Washington, Service Corporation International

3:00–3:50 PM

SALES & MARKETING

Muslim Funerals: How Local Funeral Homes and Cemeteries Can Market to Muslims in Their Area

Haroon Firdausi, Muslim Funeral Services

3:00–3:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Top Tips for Navigating OSHA Compliance

Dennis Madison, Forest Lawn Memorial - Parks & Mortuaries

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Thursday, March 24

3:00–3:50 PM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Filling the Gaps in Service with Pets and Catering

Lauren Blevins, CCFE, Williams Funeral Homes & Crematory

3:00–3:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Consumers Want “Green” Deathcare Options: Insights and Solutions from the Green Burial Council Panel Discussion

Moderator: Rachel Essig, River View Cemetery Funeral Home

Panelists: Ed Bixby, Green Burial Counsel and Darren Crouch, Passages International

4:00–4:50 PM

SALES & MARKETING

Boomers are Changing - How to Reach Your Target Demographic in 2022

Ryan Thogmartin, DISRUPT Media

4:00–4:50 PM

CREMATION OPERATIONS

Increasing Your Cremation Averages

Thomas Holland, Atlantic Coast Life Insurance Co.

4:00–4:50 PM

CEMETERY OPERATIONS

How to Win at Cemetery Management: Top 10 Mistakes You Don't Want to Make

Beth Kmiec, ClearPoint Federal Bank & Trust

4:00–4:50 PM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

Complex Reconstruction Cases

Karl Wenzel, Canadian School of Advanced PREP

4:00–4:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Women in Leadership: Compassion Fatigue & Self-Care Panel Discussion

Moderators - Jennifer Olvera, CCE, Green Hills Memorial Park & Tiffany Gallarzo, Green Hills Mortuary and Memorial Chapel, and Néctar Ramírez, Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries

Panelists: Gwen Mooney, CCFE, Cave Hill Cemetery; and Delana Pratt, CSE, Cairn Partners

View the full program at iccfa.com/annual/

Schedule of Events

Friday, March 25

9:00–9:50 AM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

How Silicon Valley is Trying to Destroy the Funeral Industry and What You Can Do About It

Zach Chatterton, Gather

9:00–9:50 AM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

How to Compete on Service in a Price-Sensitive Market

Wanda Sizemore, Homesteaders Life Company

9:00–9:50 AM

GENERAL INTEREST

The Truth About Google vs. Facebook and At-Needs vs. Pre-needs

Tim Fish, Ring Ring Marketing

9:00–9:50 AM

CREMATION OPERATIONS

Celebrants: The Key to a Successful Future

Matthew Bailey, B.C. Bailey Funeral Home Inc.

9:00–9:50 AM

CEMETERY OPERATIONS

Cemetery Consumer Service Council Panel Discussion

10:00–10:50 AM

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT

Pain Killers Can Be KILLERS: Funeral Arrangements for An Overdose Death

Marc Markell, St. Cloud State University/Worsham College of Mortuary Science

10:00–10:50 AM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

Success and Succession in Funeral Service

Jake Johnson, Johnson Consulting Group

10:00–10:50 AM

CEMETERY OPERATIONS

Radically Different: One Cemetery's Strategy for Attracting New Business

Jason Troyer, PhD, and C. Lynn Gibson, PhD

10:00–10:50 AM

GENERAL INTEREST

People, Process, Tools: Solving the Right Problem

Jason Cavett, webCemeteries.com

10:00–10:50 AM

PET LOSS

PLPA Pet Care Panel Discussion

Moderator: Lauren Blevins, CCFE, Williams Funeral Homes & Crematory

Join us at the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition in Vegas

Friday, March 25

11:00–11:50 AM

LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Talent Acquisition - The Human Resource & Your Business

Jason Buchbinder, Carriage Services

11:00–11:50 AM

LEGAL

Ethics in Deathcare

Poul Lemasters, Esq., ICCFA General Counsel

11:00–11:50 AM

SALES & MARKETING

How Reviews Got Us More Business

Scott Mueller, Mueller Memorial and Taelor Johnson, Mueller Memorial

11:00–11:50 AM

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT

Supporting Adults Who Are Caring for Preschoolers Who Are Grieving

Adam Carter, PhD, National Alliance for Children's Grief

12:00–12:50 PM

FUNERAL HOME OPERATIONS

Understanding Estate Processes

Matthew Van Drimmelen, Full-Circle Aftercare

12:00–12:50 PM

PET LOSS

Disenfranchised Grief: Moving Beyond "Just a Pet" and Filling a Crucial Need for Bereaved Pet Owners

Maryglenn Warnock, Paws to Remember

12:00–12:50 PM

SALES & MARKETING

Telling Our Story in a Positive Way

Joe Weigel, Weigel Strategic Marketing

12:00–12:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Five Ways to Create Meaningful Experiences for Online Guests

Trajan Schulzke, Foveo Memorial Services Inc.

12:00–12:50 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

Inclusive Funeral Directors: Affirming LGBTQ People During the Funeral Process

Marc Markell, PhD, St. Cloud State University, Worsham College of Mortuary Science

1:00–2:30 PM

GENERAL INTEREST

LEGAL

Legal & Legislative Luncheon

Poul Lemasters, Esq., ICCFA General Counsel

5:30–10:00 PM



Closing Banquet

We will cap of the end of a memorable week with the Closing Banquet! Enjoy a night of drinks, dinner and friendship. The evening begins with a reception followed by

the annual Celebration of Remembrance, dinner, and a speech from **ICCFA President Gary Freytag, CCFE**. We will honor inductees into the Quarter/Half Century Club and Hall of Fame.

Registration Information

This is the ICCFA's biggest event of the year, so don't miss this opportunity to learn, network and connect with other deathcare professionals—register today! Your registration will provide you access to all of our exciting keynote speakers, amazing exhibit hall, hours of educational sessions, and tons of receptions and networking opportunities. There are few opportunities as good as this one to gather with deathcare professionals from all over the world while learning and laughing live and in-person in Las Vegas!

Cemetery, Crematory & Funeral Home Member Pricing: Regular: \$750	Cemetery, Crematory & Funeral Home Non-Member Pricing: Regular: \$1,005
Supplier Member Pricing: Regular: \$955	Supplier Non-Member Pricing: Regular: \$1,200
Spouse/Guest Pricing: \$350	

What Does Your Registration Include?

Full member, non-member and supplier/professional registrations include admission to all expo functions and convention educational sessions, as well as the Closing Banquet.

The Spouse registration is offered only to individuals not employed in the cemetery, funeral service and related professions. It includes daily admission to all expo hall functions and to the Closing Banquet.

Registration Policies

Attendees registered by February 11, 2022, will receive the early registration discount. Only registered individuals with a badge or ticket(s) may attend convention events.

Special Notes About Ticketed Events

Closing Banquet: Each full attendee and spouse registration includes a ticket for the Closing Banquet. Non-registered individuals may purchase a ticket. Tickets may be purchased on the form or on-site at the ICCFA registration desk. Tickets may be purchased up to 24 hours prior to the event.

Educational Foundation Reception: Ticketing information available soon at iccfa.com/annual.

Continuing Education Credits

Funeral directors can earn up to 14 CE hours at the convention, pending individual state approval. Please note that due to onerous filing and/or fee requirements, the ICCFA no longer applies for CE credits from Pennsylvania or Virginia. Attendance certificates will be available at the ICCFA registration desk and ICCFA staff will validate your certificate on-site.

Badge Replacement Policy

Persons requiring a badge to be reprinted for any reason prior to entering the expo hall and breakout educational sessions will be charged a \$20 replacement fee.

Register today at iccfa.com/annual

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Catching up with Lacy Robinson

You have been very busy over the past several years! What exactly have you been up to?

Since I have scaled back on traveling considerably, I can focus on virtual training and coaching. It's been great to work with funeral directors one-on-one and collaborate with associations to enhance their educational offerings for members. In addition to that, I teach Fundamentals of Customer Service for Worsham College of Mortuary Science. The best part about not traveling is the community outreach programs I have been able to create and provide not only where I live but virtually for funeral homes!

As you know, training is the focus of this month's edition of Southern Funeral Director magazine. With your specialty being customer service skills what are your recommendations for how a funeral home could breathe life into their training initiatives this year?

The first step is to sit down with team members and ask about their challenges, topics they're interested in, solutions to current issues, professional goals, and identifying one's learning style. Showing interest in what is on their mind and getting their input will help to ensure the team is unified as management moves forward with training. Based on information learned from team members seek out training programs that meet their professional goals, are aligned with company objectives, and help to enhance the customer experience. I also recommend giving the training experience those special touches just as a funeral director would for a funeral.

Consider investing in customized training materials, order a Cameo from a celebrity hyping up the training, utilize a facilitator that is interesting and engaging, order a delicious lunch and tasty snacks, incorporate training videos, be unpredictable like mystery shopping a funeral home on speakerphone or conduct a rapid-fire product question, and answer session. The ideas are endless when it comes to energizing training programs.

You have facilitated in-person workshops as well as online courses. Which type have you found to be the most impactful?

Many different factors come into play for determining which type of training is best for a funeral home. Those factors include; how dynamic the facilitator is, the participant's learning style, and the type of content that is being presented. I recommend offering a variety of ongoing training opportunities that range from in-person group training classes to one-on-one virtual coaching.

This will help team members feel there is a training experience that works for them and meets their needs.

Out of all the different training programs you facilitate what topic is the most requested, and which one is your favorite?

The most requested is STILL how to handle cremation phone inquiries. When I created that particular program ten years ago I didn't realize at that time how popular it would be. It's been exciting to see the growth of that program. My favorite training program to facilitate is A Winning Guide to Partnering with Hospice Providers. My experiences as a hospice volunteer motivate me to provide valuable information and tools to help funeral homes have a mutually beneficial relationship with their local hospice providers. That program gets my adrenaline going.

In 2022, I'll be releasing an ebook I wrote with Greg Grabowski, founder of Hospice Advisors. Our purpose in writing this ebook is to educate funeral service professionals on the structure of hospice agencies and pull the curtain back on the incredible care hospice patients, and families receive.

We also give direction to establishing hospice outreach initiatives with an executable plan. The ideas presented are budget-friendly time-saving ways to connect with hospice care team members that will have a huge impact on your business.

I see that you have been teaching an online customer service class at Worsham College of Mortuary Science. What can you share with us about what the students are learning?

Fundamentals of Customer Service has been designed to help students understand more about today's funeral consumers, improve their communication skills, and feel motivated to provide an exceptional funeral experience every time. Every module includes great ideas and skills as well as hands-on assignments. For example, I teach the students how to design a meaningful vignette using the loved one's personal belongings and then ask them to create one at home and share their pictures with the entire class to gain feedback. Those types of hands-on activities enhance the online learning experience.

I also introduce students to exceptional people in funeral service who are making a real difference. Students have enjoyed learning from individuals like Ed Defort, editor in chief for NFDA, notable cremation historian Jason Engler, and Jeremy Field, Managing Director for C.P.J. Field in England.

Lacy offers funeral home clients more than 15 years of success in developing and facilitating customer service training programs. Lacy currently serves as an instructor for Worsham College of Mortuary Science teaching Fundamentals of Customer Service and facilitates training programs for Johnson Consulting Group clients. Lacy is a licensed funeral director/embalmer, a certified funeral celebrant, and has previously served on the APFSP Board of Trustees. She is a graduate of Georgetown College holding a bachelor's degree in Communications. She is also a graduate of Mid-America College of Funeral Service.




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Pre-Recruitment Preparation... Your Key to Success!

by Bob Heidlage & Alex Kistler, Global Recruiters of Batesville

If there is one thing that has become almost gospel truth in funeral service these days, it is that good help is hard to find! We have been recruiting exclusively for the funeral and cemeteries professions for over 15 years, and see the challenge up close every day. Covid-19 has certainly exacerbated the issue but did not cause it.

The risk of Covid-19 has caused some Directors and Embalmers at every experience level to re-think their career choice, and clearly, some have chosen to leave the profession. Some owners have sold their businesses; others have chosen to take a step back from the day-to-day activities. The net effect has been more opportunities at every level, but at the same time, we've seen a dip in the number of available top-notch candidates. This has created a rather unique circumstance that makes this the perfect time to re-think your staffing strategy.

One trend we have noticed with our clients is that many firms started a candidate search without having a well-developed plan in place. Think of a search campaign as a football coach thinks about recruiting. You need to know exactly what you are looking for, or you might end up with a new recruit who doesn't fit your needs. That is why the "Before You Recruit" phase of a search is extremely important for you to have a successful outcome!

We will focus on three (3) critical areas, based on our conversations with hiring managers and licensees over the past several years, and some best practices that have been tried and true. We recognize that finding the right people can be difficult at a local level. And while it may be tougher than it has ever been, and not likely to get easier in the short term, these tips should help you get the most out of your team-building efforts:

1. Retention of Exceptional Staff
2. Identification of Need
3. Intentional Recruiting

Retention of Exceptional Staff is something that is of-

ten overlooked, but we speak about it with our clients every chance we get. We call it 'Inside-Out Recruiting' and it just makes good business. It is also MUCH cheaper for you to effectively utilize. Why spend time, talent, or treasure finding new people when a small investment in your current staff minimizes the need to hire as many new people over time? We know that great teams are almost always full of experienced, exceptional individuals, so keep the great ones on your team, and then focus your hiring efforts on how to best supplement your existing, well-trained team.

There is a truism in the recruiting world that employees don't leave companies or jobs, but they do leave bad managers and unappreciative bosses. As owners we want our employees to appreciate US, to be thankful that we gave them a job. And that approach might work when prospects are plentiful, but that is not where we are in the business cycle right now. As an example, if you have an Apprentice who is a rising star, express early and often that you see a bright future for them with your team. Do not be afraid to ask for their commitment to stay with you in their post-apprenticeship career. And the same holds true for everyone, in every role, at your firm!

We have a saying that seems appropriate, "Don't let your best team members leave for greener pastures; instead, make your pasture greener so your superstars stay with you!" How best to brighten your pasture? Well, public praise can go a long way toward making employees feel appreciated and valued. Those efforts can have huge benefits to your business. Sending someone home early to allow them to participate in a special family event is a great way to say, "Thank You". Have you ever sent a note home to show a spouse or significant other that you appreciate their loved one's time spent away from their family for your business? If not, why not?

Owners often tell us that 'they love on families every day', that this is their 'secret sauce'. Maybe loving on a great employee's family would not only be appreci-



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ated, but a perfect match for the company culture you have spent a lifetime creating!

Identification of Need is a simple concept, but we see firms running forward without being concerned about the direction they are going and often end up lost. Recruit for 'generalist' positions and you will find generalists. If you really need an Arranger but hire an Embalmer who prefers to work in the Care Center, have you achieved your goal? Mistakes can be avoided by adopting a 'go slow to go fast' process. Before doing anything, assess what you truly need. Understand the specific attributes you are looking for based on current and future needs.

Go beyond job titles, and get to specific tasks that need to be completed. Do you expect a Director will spend 30% of their week meeting families or 75%? Will 20% of the average week be working services or 60%? Know what you need, and then prepare to go find a person who can do THAT! Write down a list of the needs you have and then use that list as a guiding document.

Most of the firms we partner with do not have a written Job Description when we start. The Job Description clearly lists the individual tasks that your new employee will be expected to complete and forms the basis for what you are looking for going forward. A Recruiting Checklist is another useful document to create. It is simply a 'scorecard' you can refer to when speaking with interested candidates. The more items on your checklist that a particular candidate is prepared to handle on Day 1, the more immediate impact they can have in your business. No one will be a 100% match; we expect an 80-85% match is an outstanding candidate. Perhaps, in this market, a 70% candidate is perfectly sufficient and can be 'trained up' on the other critical skills over time.

One example we often use might help as you think about what you need, and how to determine the most critical skills you will be looking for in a search. Alabama's Nick Saban does not ask his QB to be a Punt Returner, and Georgia's Kirby Smart would never expect his Offensive Linemen to kick field goals. Both coaches know what they need for each role, and they focus on finding the best version of that person available.

Likewise, in our profession, a terrific Embalmer does not a great Arranger make. And a tremendous personality in an Arranger may not be organized enough to run services efficiently and effectively or to write a worthy obituary. Make your Recruiting Checklist items specific, optimize your Job Description for what you need, and then go forward feeling great about finding the right person to serve the families who choose your firm.

Intentional Recruiting means going about the recruiting process in a systematic way. Once you are ready to go forward, and you have a solid Job Description and Recruiting Checklist, be ready to react to interested candidates quickly, or risk losing them. We recommend scheduling time on your calendar to work on the recruitment process. If an owner does not respond in a timely fashion to a request from an interested candidate, you risk losing out. And unfortunately, we see that happen too frequently.

Remember too, if you are an owner, that an employee's schedule is much less flexible than yours typically, especially if they are currently employed elsewhere. They cannot always call you when it works for you, so be as flexible as possible with your schedule so the candidate can have a confidential discussion with you at a time and on a day that is best for them. Their ability to make that call privately and 'safely' might be the difference between being able to connect with them or losing a potentially 'Wow' candidate.

Being intentional does not mean being inflexible or rigid, but it does mean consistently moving forward toward the goal of hiring the right person, in the right role, and who can complete the critical tasks you need done well. One final tip, especially for anyone who has not hired a new team member in this current environment, is to remember that we are not hunting for unicorns. We need to find someone who exists in your market, and is available for you to hire!

Every owner has a recruiting approach that will feel right, and as long as you stay engaged throughout, your probability of success goes way up. Whether you choose to make discreet phone calls, post your job for all to see, use public social media, or partner with a funeral service recruiter who can do the heavy lifting for you, be intentional. As the old adage recommends, 'Plan Your Work, then Work Your Plan'. Your success-

ful recruitment will ultimately raise the service level provided to the families you serve. And that's really what it is all about!



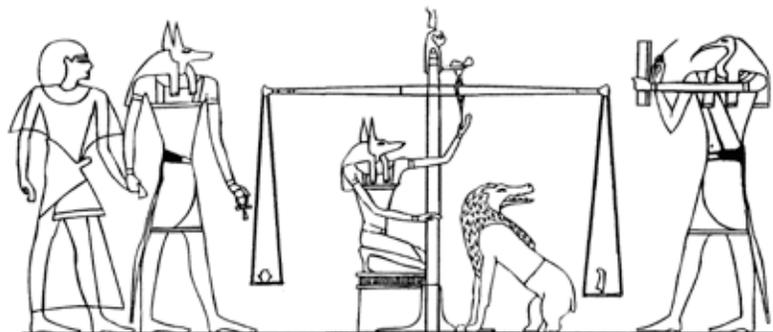
As President & Managing Partner of GRN Batesville, Bob brings more than 25 years of experience on the vendor/supplier side of the funeral & cemetery profession. Bob spent 8 years as the Senior Search Consultant for GRN of Cincinnati before purchasing the business in 2021. Before that, Bob spent 10+ years at Batesville Casket Company and 8+ years as an award-winning sales & marketing consultant for 8 years with The Forethought Group. His breadth of experience working with Funeral Home clients gives Bob a unique understanding of the recruiting needs of the profession. He can be reached at 812.932.1290 or bheidlage@grnbatesville.com.

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Alex (Heidlage) Kistler joined Global Recruiters of Batesville in 2021 after a 4-year career in the Search and Placement profession. She learned the fundamentals of search by working with individuals & companies, and was a part of, and ultimately led, a team dedicated to fulfilling the needs of both individuals & businesses.



Alex focuses her time at GRN Batesville working with individuals who are looking to make a positive move forward in their careers. She loves to engage with funeral professionals at every level of education, experience, and licensure. Alex is also our Mortuary School liaison, where she routinely engages students who will become the future of our profession. Alex can be reached at 812.932.1290 or akistler@grnbatesville.com.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

Make Waves at the 2022 NFDA Professional Women's Conference

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) invites women in the funeral service profession to make waves at its 2022 Professional Women's Conference, April 29-May 1, at The Confi-dante Hotel in Miami Beach, Florida. This uplifting conference offers attendees the opportunity to learn, grow and connect with colleagues so they can continue to make a difference for their families and communities. The Funeral Service Foundation is making the profession's premier event for women more accessible than ever by offering 20 all-inclusive David C. Baue NFDA Professional Women's Conference Scholarships.

Visionary Speakers

The 2022 Professional Women's Conference features a line-up of inspiring conference sessions led by ground-breaking experts covering a wide range of topics:

April 30

- **Women at the Helm: The Future of Funeral Service** presented by Dr. Jodi Carrington, speaker, author and leader of Carrington & Company
- **Setting Goals to Accelerate Your Success: Practical Tips for Continued Achievement** presented by Jenn Parvin, vice president of Marketing and Technology, Batesville

- **Standing for Something Larger than Yourself** presented by Annette March-Grier, RN, CFSP, co-founder and president of Roberta's House
- **Imagining the Unimaginable: Supporting Families Following the Death of a Child** presented by Kristin James, LPCP, executive director, Greater Illinois Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition and Missing Pieces Child Loss Network; and Betsy Hawley, MA, executive director, Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition

May 1

Concurrent Sessions – choose from:

- **Embalming Infants & Children: One of the Most Difficult Parts of the Job** presented by Lincoln Plain, The Dodge Company representative, Eastern North Dakota & Minnesota
- **Experience Matters: The Secret Engine Behind the Most Meaningful Innovations** presented by Jenny McClanahan, creative director of At-need Marketing, Precoa; and Kelly Kohut, senior director of field project development – Selected Services, Precoa
- **What's Your Style?** presented by Marguerite Ham, CEO (Chief Energizing Officer) and founder of Igniting Success. www.nfda.org/pwc, or by calling 800-228-6332



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Overcoming the Funeral Home Recruitment and Retention Challenge

by Alexandra Jo, Manager at Parting Pro

In 2021 Connecting Directors put out a survey for funeral professionals to gather data on the wants, needs, concerns, and habits of deathcare workers. In that survey, “Employee Recruitment and Retention” was ranked highest among a list of challenges faced by funeral professionals today.

With a high rate of burnout for funeral professionals, and the deep emotional investment required of the profession, it’s no surprise that recruitment and retention feels like a huge challenge in the deathcare space. However, this profession can also be extremely rewarding, and it turns out that finding and keeping solid employees doesn’t have to be the hardest part of a funeral director’s job. Prioritizing mental health support for employees, rethinking benefits packages and company culture, and re-framing how we recruit new talent from mortuary school programs can help funeral home owners and managers recruit and retain excellent, high-performing deathcare employees.

Make Your Benefits Competitive

America is facing a worker shortage and employment revolution across many professions today, and deathcare is no exception. In fact, a recent article from Business Insider quotes lack of living wage paying jobs, sluggish increases in pay, lack of support for caregiving duties and childcare issues, lack of flexibility, lack of healthcare, and mental health/burnout on a long list of contributions to the current employment problem. Add on the erratic hours, emotional burdens, and high-pressure demands of jobs in the funeral profession, and it’s no wonder that many funeral business owners are struggling with employee recruitment retention in today’s job landscape.

Funeral business owners can observe these employment patterns and find opportunities to update outdated and stale benefits packages, parental/sick/vacation leave policies, and salary standards in order to attract and keep quality employees in today’s professional world. According to an article from the Society for Human Resource Management (or SHRM), “A tighter job market requires that an organization present itself as

an employer of choice, a situation that is leading HR to offer benefit options that appeal to a wide range of employee demographics, the ‘2016 Strategic Benefits—Leveraging Benefits to Retain and Recruit Employees’ report found. [...] About three-fifths of respondents indicated that benefits for professional and career development, flexible work, health care, and retirement savings and planning will increase in importance to retain employees in the next three to five years. More than one-half expect that wellness and preventive health benefits will increase in importance to retain employees over the same period.”

A good modern benefits package will offer comprehensive healthcare, retirement and financial benefits, opportunities for flexible work schedules, and ample paid time off including parental leave. It’s well known and documented by institutions like the Pew Research Center that the United States is basically the only industrialized nation that does not mandate required parental leave, even though there are clear benefits for both the parents and the businesses that employ them. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “The benefits of paid leave are well established. Providing new parents with paid time off to care for newborn or recently adopted children contributes to healthy development, improves maternal health, and enhances families’ economic security. Paid medical and caregiving leave lets workers care for themselves and loved ones when ill or injured, and reduces financial insecurity and stress during those times. Paid leave benefits businesses by improving retention and productivity and boosting labor force participation.”

Additionally, one of the newer ideas in expanding benefits packages is implementing a wellness plan into your business strategy. Wellness plans not only go a long way in attracting and retaining top talent, but can also save your business on healthcare costs and unexpected absences. The same article from the Society for Human Resource Management claims that almost one-half of HR professionals in the aforementioned report said that wellness initiatives decreased their health care costs, about two-fifths said that wellness initiatives

decreased unplanned absences, and about one-third said wellness initiatives increased work productivity. Wellness initiatives in funeral businesses could include partnering with local gyms to get free memberships for employees, programs that incentivize healthy habits, stress management programs, and support for mental health and a healthy work-life balance.

Create a Safe Space for Mental Health Support

In deathcare specifically, mental health is a major factor in burnout and contributes to many employees leaving the profession. If a workplace doesn't prioritize and actively communicate support for the mental health of its employees, those workers could feel like they have to shoulder the burdens of compassion fatigue, heavy emotional investment, and burnout alone, which contributes to the deathcare profession's high employee turnover rate.

On the Deathcare Decoded Podcast, episode titled A Path to Normalizing Mental Health in Deathcare, Jody Herrington, Location manager at Skylawn Memorial Park in Oakland, CA explains why creating an open dialogue around mental health support is vital in funeral

business. She explains, "This is such a high intensity job, oftentimes it feels like there is no way to decompress, so that's a big issue with funeral directors. You have all of this grief and trauma, but no decompression from it, because you're always on, you're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year[...] Having outlets and being ok to say 'I need to just take a moment' is so very important, but it takes a lot of trust [...] and that's not something that develops overnight, that's something you have to foster and nurture [in the workplace]. Taboo subjects [like death] that we are already dealing with certainly don't help the situation, but there are ways that building the trust within the team can help alleviate the burden from some of those going through the more heightened emotional aspects [of this job]."

Cultivating a safe space for employees to voice mental health needs and concerns starts at the very top with established company policies about prioritizing mental health, offering resources and programs to struggling employees, and never penalizing or stigmatizing employees for talking about mental health hardship or asking for help. Healthcare benefit policies should in-

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clude and cover mental healthcare like therapists and professionals, and schedules should be flexible to reasonably accommodate employees' needs in seeking mental health support.

Furthermore, when it comes to mental health support in your business, being open to safe dialogue around mental health and offering opportunities for mental health support could also be a key factor in recruiting young talent specifically. Millennial (ages 25-40) and gen-z (ages 18-24) employees are statistically more likely to leave a job for lack of mental health support, according to an article from Time, which outlines that “half of millennials—and 75% of Gen Z-ers, who in 2020 are ages 23 and under—said they had voluntarily or involuntarily left a job in part because of mental-health reasons, according to a 2019 survey of 1,500 U.S. workers by Mind Share Partners, a nonprofit that provides mental-health training for corporations.”

Re-Frame How Your Business Recruits Recent Mort Grads

Tanya Scotece, Professor of Funeral Service Education at Miami Dade College and licensed Funeral Director, has first-hand knowledge of exactly who is graduating from mortuary science programs today, what those graduates are looking for, and how funeral businesses can make finding the best new employees easy.

First of all, Tanya recommends that funeral homes make it easier for current mort students to complete observations and volunteer hours required for graduation. These in-school degree requirements can be opportunities for connecting with the top-talent from mortuary schools in your area, and if it isn't easy to contact, communicate with, and work with your funeral home, the best and brightest will look elsewhere. On the Deathcare Decoded podcast, Tanya explains, “Some of the classes that we have require students to do observations [...] I would like to see more [...] local funeral homes have a system in place where the students can just go sign a form for confidentiality and have observation opportunities ready to go. As opposed to the students having to seek out an observation position and it's almost like going through an HR process when maybe they just need to get those 5 observations done.” Streamlining these opportunities will also save your current employees time and energy, which will make working with current mortuary students less of a pain.

Tanya also suggests offering incentive programs for current employees tasked with guiding mortuary students through observation programs, like a small cash bonus or extra vacation day. There is a chance that your current employees could feel threatened by new talent, so openly communicating their value at your company, while involving them directly in the recruitment process and incentivising them to participate is a wise strategy. Tanya explains, “for the seasoned funeral directors, I'd like to see funeral home owners and managers show more of an appreciation for their existing directors, [so they don't] feel threatened by the incoming ones. People are always afraid that this new person is going to ‘take my job’ so value and appreciation for current employees would go a long way. I see and I hear in my classes that students have friction with seasoned directors, as new employees trying to make a home in the funeral world.”

Additionally, adjusting internal company culture to reflect a modern world could help recruit and retain younger mortuary school grads. Like many other professions that have relaxed dress code standards in the past few years, Funeral Directors should expect the aesthetics of new generations to evolve. According to an article from BBC which explains data from a recent survey of professionals across industries, “of those surveyed, 61% said the dress code had no positive impact on their productivity, while 45% said they'd be more productive wearing what they felt most comfortable in.” On the other side of the desk, millennial consumers probably do not expect or desire a formal funeral home experience. More research shows that millennial professionals are less likely to want a job that requires formal dress. According to one 2018 survey on Medium.com of 2000 adults, 61% of workers across ages and professions did not see an upside to strict work dress codes. Furthermore, that survey revealed that “the unhappiness with dress codes was strongest with millennials, the demographic group most likely to consider leaving a job over an office dress code.”

Building Company Culture for a Brighter Future in Deathcare

The funeral profession at large can adapt to the modern world in order to attract and retain quality employees for the future. Comprehensive benefits including flexibility, paid leave, healthcare, and retirement, mental health safety and support, and understanding the next generation of employees will go a long way towards

helping retain talented employees, as well as keeping all of your current employees supported and engaged. All of these markers point to building and maintaining a strong, uplifting company culture within your funeral business. It's clear that the day to day functions of your business matter, both when it comes to finding new talent, and incentivizing current employees to stick around. Putting the work in and going the extra mile to make employees feel supported and valued, especially in a demanding field like deathcare, will help set your company apart in an already competitive market.

Author Bio:

Alexandra is the Content Manager at Parting Stone where she creates forward thinking content for funeral professionals. Alexandra is passionately death curious, and hosts the Deathcare Decoded podcast. Learn more about Parting Stone and their complete alternative to cremated remains by visiting their website, partingstone.com



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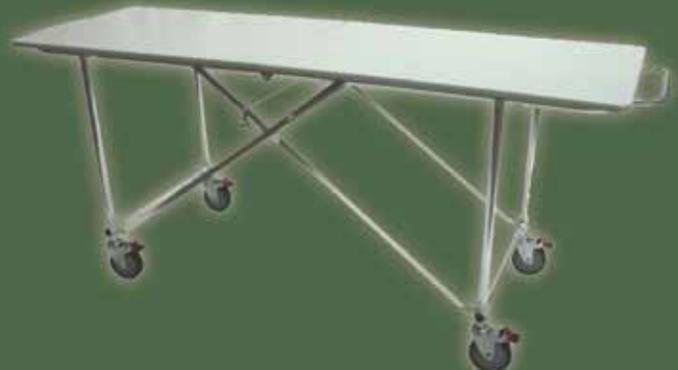


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What's the Key to Running a Successful Funeral Home? Your Team

by Jenny Goldade, Frazer Consultants

From the rise of cremation to the pandemic, there are many things disrupting the funeral profession right now. If your funeral home doesn't have a plan, it can lead your staff to experience burnout. As a result, they may leave your firm or even the funeral profession altogether.

But don't worry! By following the steps in this article, you can learn how to build, train, and keep your funeral home's dream team.



Step 1: Building Your Funeral Home's Dream Team

The first step to building your funeral home's dream team is to recruit the right people. But before you hire anyone, determine the roles your funeral home needs the most.

Determine Your Roles

These can be current open positions and new positions you'd like to hire for. Don't forget to consider positions like an event planner if your funeral home hosts a lot of community events and could use an extra hand. This could even be an intern.

Create Job Descriptions

Next, create a job description for each role, which should include the position's required skills and main responsibilities. Then, you'll need to determine how many roles your firm has the budget to hire for. It also may help to list the roles in order of highest to lowest priority.

Spread the Word

Once you know what roles you want to add to your team, it's time to spread the word. A few places you can reach out to are your state's funeral directors association, national funeral directors associations, funeral profession trade publications and magazines, mortuary schools, and local colleges. A lot of these organizations may be willing to post your job listings on their website and in their newsletter. Don't forget to post on job search sites like Indeed and social media platforms like LinkedIn as well.

Prepare for Interviews

After you have a pool of qualified candidates, it's time to prepare for the interviews by refreshing your questions. Understandably, your questions may vary depending on the position, so create a set of questions for each role. You should ask questions that you can't easily answer yourself by looking at their resume. Avoid yes or no questions and ask questions that require more thoughtful responses, such as why were you called to the funeral profession? or tell me about a time you created a personalized funeral experience for a family.

Keep Candidates Informed

Make sure you keep your candidates informed. No one likes to be left hanging. Once you have an accepted offer, let the other candidates know that the position has been filled. If appropriate, you could also give them some useful feedback for their next job interview.

Step 2: Training Your Dream Team



Congratulations! You've hired some promising new talent onto your team. To make sure that they have everything they need to be successful in their new roles, it's time to train them.



Make a Training Guide

To start, create a training guide for onboarding your latest hires. This should include information like the basics of how you operate your business, your mission statement, employee contact information, supply storage locations, and other useful information. While every funeral home should follow similar rules, some situations may vary based on the state's rules and owner's preferences. This guide also comes in handy when succession planning.

Show Them How to Use Your Technology

When training your hires, don't forget about training them on how to use your funeral technology solutions. Along with in-person training, you also can create an instructions section in your guide and video tutorials for them to reference. For instance, include steps for editing your funeral home's website, creating or editing an obituary, and creating or editing a case in your management software. You also can include the link to the technology provider's support page for additional FAQ. Having technology solutions like management software can even speed up the training process. For example, instead of training your staff on the lengthy process of recording cases on paper, digital management software is often easy to use and learn, no matter your experience using technology.

Don't Forget About Ongoing Training

Don't forget about ongoing training for your staff. You should make sure everyone's up to date on the latest funeral profession trends, your new technology solutions, and any other changes you make to your processes. If it's a small update, you could send everyone an email with the new changes. If it requires more explanation, record a video or schedule a training session. By recording the training session, employees can reference it later or those who couldn't attend it live can watch it later.

Step 3: Keeping Your Dream Team

Now that you've hired and trained your dream team, how do you keep them? By creating a work environment that encourages growth and support.



Provide Growth Opportunities

To provide growth, encourage them to keep learning about the latest tips and trends, such as by attending in-person and virtual events, reading industry magazines and blogs, watching webinars, signing up for courses, and any other learning opportunities. Also encourage them to present any new ideas they learned. Additionally, you should have a review process in place to give them feedback and praise them for a job well done. As you should be able to give them feedback, they should be able to do the same. Encourage them to let you know if there's anything you could be doing to make their jobs easier. Open communication is the key to running any successful business.

Give Support

To give support, help them out when they need it. If they're feeling overwhelmed, see if you can delegate any of their responsibilities. After all, running a funeral

home is a team effort. Also encourage them to practice self-care. If they don't take care of themselves, they can't take care of their client families. Things like letting them leave a little bit earlier if it isn't busy or giving them a gift card to your local spa can help them take some time to relax and recharge.

Plan Team Building Activities

Team building activities are another way to let your employees have some fun while getting to know each other. For example, you could have a staff potluck or volunteer together in your community for good cause. You can even incorporate the holidays, such as through a secret Santa gift exchange or Memorial Day picnic. You could also do ice breaker games. I know sometimes people cringe at the thought of ice breakers, but there are a lot of games that are fun. One game is Two Truths and a Lie. For this silly activity, everyone shares two truths and a lie about themselves, and everyone guesses the lie. It's a lower-pressure way for your team to get to know each other better.

Celebrate Your Wins

Lastly, don't forget to celebrate your wins. When congratulations are in order, give your team members a shout for their hard work. It may give them the confi-

dence boost they need and reassurance they're doing a good job.

Final Thoughts

By following these steps, you can recruit, train, and retain your funeral home's dream team. It's all about being clear about the job responsibilities from the start, providing them with onboarding and ongoing training, and giving them the support they need to succeed both professionally and personally.

About the Author

For the past five years, Jenny Goldade has been writing and learning about the funeral profession as the Senior Content Specialist at Frazer Consultants, a funeral technology company that specializes in website design, personalization software, and more.



She writes blog posts, guides, and other resources to help funeral directors be successful. When Jenny is not writing, she spends time with her family, has board game nights with friends, and takes her family's dog Rosie for walks. She also enjoys reading mystery novels, making crafts, and baking all kinds of cookies.



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Who Should Handle Your Funeral Home Marketing?

By Welton Hong

RING RING
MARKETING

A century ago, family-driven funerals were the norm. Today, most people wouldn't, couldn't, or *shouldn't* prepare their own loved ones for burial or cremation. Regulations, expertise, and technical processes all come into play to make this far less likely than it was historically.

However, that doesn't mean families can't do a lot themselves. Many deathcare providers make a point of providing flexible services, including home funerals, natural or green burials, and life celebrations that put loved ones at the helm of the effort.

Online marketing is similar. Historically, many businesses—small and large—managed marketing and advertising with in-house teams. Today's digital landscape requires knowledge, tools, and scalability that doesn't always work in-house, though, which is why many deathcare firms turn to outside resources.

As with *anything* related to online marketing, what works for one firm might not work for you.

Here's a look at several options for handling your funeral home marketing, along with some pros and cons of each, to help you discern which strategy might be best for you:

Do It All In-House

The first option is to handle all your funeral home marketing with in-house staff. Some of the things you'll need to do to help support success include:

- Define your target audiences
- Create strategic marketing and advertising plans that work together to connect with those audiences
- Create and manage an online presence on your own website as well as Google My Business and social media pages
- Conduct keyword research to inform SEO content and ad campaigns
- Create and publish content, including blog and social posts, videos, and images
- Write ad copy and manage PPC ad bidding campaigns

The biggest benefit of keeping your online marketing 100 percent in-house is that you maintain complete control.

But as you can see, the list of work required is long, and you need certain skills and tools to accomplish these tasks. Also, a DIY approach probably won't necessarily save you money, because you'll need to hire marketing staff or pay extra hours for existing staff to handle this workload on top of their own.

Outsource the Entire Process to a Firm

Alternatively, you can outsource the entire marketing process to one business. In effect, you hand over the reins to a business partner and let them deal with the day-to-day work of marketing while you deal with running your deathcare firm.

The biggest downside here is that you potentially give up a lot of control. For example, this could involve "handing over" your ad budget to the business partner to spend as they feel appropriate.

The benefit is that you can save a lot of time and money if you work with a reputable agency. You simply provide overall instructions and guidance for the big picture, and you don't have to worry about marketing much during a regular workday or week. An experienced provider can also typically provide more ROI for your spend because they already know how to engage in proven marketing practices.

If this sounds like an option for you, make sure you choose a marketing firm with transparent practices and strong reporting. That way, you're always in the know regarding your marketing spend.

Choose Several Partners With Niche Experience

If you can't find one marketing partner that does everything you need, you can work with several businesses. You might work with a PPC ad company, freelancers to create content, a web developer to create and maintain your site, and social media marketers to build up your Facebook or Instagram presence.

One benefit of this approach is that you can pick and choose companies that offer exactly what you need in each arena. The downside is that you may need to

play communication traffic cop between all those partners, and if you're not careful, you might find that vendors are overlapping each other or that necessary marketing tasks are falling through the cracks.

Employ a Hybrid of Outsourcing and In-House Staff

One way to get the benefits of multiple vendors without so much of the confusion is to create a process that uses both in-house staff and external marketing experts.

For example, you might have someone on staff that's great with social media. They may be able to post regular, brand-appropriate content that connects fully with your audience, so you only need a marketing firm to handle website marketing and PPC ads.

Alternatively, perhaps you have an employee who writes well and wants to generate blog posts for the firm. You can then hand off that copy off to an SEO company to add in keywords, meta tags, and other components before publishing the posts on your site.

How you manage your online marketing is up to you, and every option has pros and cons. But one thing is true no matter what: You must make a decision and stick with it a while to test whether it works for your funeral home.



Welton Hong
Founder of Ring Ring Marketing®



Welton is a leading expert in helping funeral homes convert leads from online directly to the phone line. He's the author of the book *Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes*. Learn more at FuneralHomeProfits.com.

Call to Duty: The Funeral Director's Response to the Titanic Disaster – 1912

Part I of a II Part Series

By Todd W. Van Beck

INTRODUCTION

After all the frenzy of the “Titanic” movie, interest in the subject has shown no signs of abating. Books, seminars, videos and souvenirs concerning the sinking of the unsink-able White Star liner abound at every corner of life. With all the old and new information concerning the Titanic, it would seem reasonable to think that every story imaginable has been told about the fateful voyage of the world's largest ship. Such thoroughness of the Titanic subject is, however, not entirely true, for another story needs to be told and this is the work that the funeral directors of the Maritime Provinces did in caring for the dead of the Titanic wreck.

Here, then, is an account of a little known, but very noble part, of the history of our great profession.

PREPARATIONS

By 10:00 p.m. Atlantic time on April 15, 1912, the truth of the magnitude of the Titanic disaster was known in Halifax. The White Star Line, owner of the Titanic, had already contracted with its Halifax agents, A.G. Jones and Company, and through them had chartered the Commercial Cable Company's cable ship MacKay-Bennett for a very difficult assignment: to search thoroughly the area where Titanic had sunk and, whenever possible, to recover the bodies of passengers and crew.

JOHN SNOW & CO. UNDERTAKERS

The White Star agents also contracted with John Snow and Company Ltd., the largest undertaking firm in the province of Nova Scotia to oversee the recovery project. John Snow founded the undertaking concern in 1883 and by 1912 he and his sons, John R. Snow, Jr. and W. H. (Will) Snow, had become the most notable and successful funeral firm in the Maritimes.

John Snow was no stranger to death and in view of the numbers expected, Snow asked for and received the assistance of nearly every undertaker and embalmer in the provides of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

By April 16, 1912, more than 40 members of the Funeral Director's Association of the Maritime were on their way to Halifax. Among the group of embalmers en route to Halifax was one Mary Dodosky Walsh, wife of Arthur Walsh who was the owner and manager of O'Neill Funeral Home in St. John., NB. Mr. Walsh was also a well-known actor and was away in Boston on the stage at the time of the Titanic crash. Mrs. Walsh was assigned by John Snow to embalm all the women and children.

At the Halifax waterfront, the embalmers were busy. Snow's had ordered several tons of ice which were poured into the MacKay-Bennett's Cable tanks and holds.

Each embalmer was instructed by Snow's to bring their own embalmer's grip with instruments. Cooling board and jugs of preservative chemicals were stored. Snow's also had more than 100 plain wood caskets brought on board the vessel.

All the volunteer undertakers from the group assembled by Snow, and headed by the chief embalmer—John R. Snow, Jr., came on board. Each embalmer settled in his own room and awaited the departure of the ship. From Halifax's All Saints Cathedral came Canon Kenneth O. Hind, who would conduct all the burials that would be done at sea.

At 12:35 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 1912, the largest floating embalming facility on earth left the Halifax Harbour. Captain of the ship, F. H. Lardner, felt uneasy about the trip for he had to pay his all-volunteer crew double wages to help with the difficult days that lay ahead. The MacKay-Bennett steamed out of the Halifax Harbour at full speed and was noticed by neither the press nor the community.

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

The wireless operator on the MacKay-Bennett sent out a request for all ships that had seen wreckage or bodies to communicate with her.

Soon a message came in from the North German Lloyd line Rhein to the effect that they had passed wreckage and bodies in latitude 42° 01' N, longitude 49° 13' W. As the MacKay-Bennett made for that position, the liner Bremen reported three icebergs and bodies at latitude 42° 00' N, longitude 49° 20' W. The two sightings seemed conclusive. After passing numerous towering icebergs, Lardner's ship arrived in the area at 8:00 p.m. Saturday, too late to begin recovery efforts.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

At daylight the somber task of caring for the dead began. The embalmers set up their preparation stations on the deck of the boat as MacKay-Bennett's boats were lowered. In spite of heavy seas, 51 bodies were recovered.

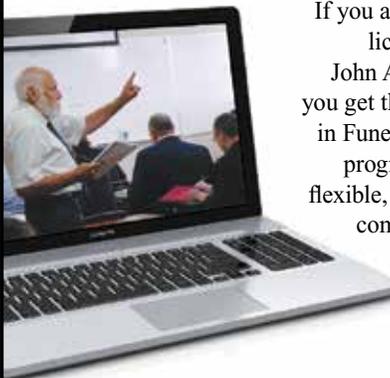
On this day, one child—perhaps two years old with blond hair—and four women were recovered. The rest were men. Once on board the cable ship, the Titanic's people were treated with absolute dignity and respect, and all the embalmers carried out a carefully-planned procedure that John R. Snow, Jr., had developed.

The Plan: Snow's plan went as follows: as each body

was recovered, a piece of canvas with a stenciled number on it was attached. In a ledger book a description entry was made on the numbered page corresponding to the assigned number. Hair color, height, weight, age, obvious markings such as scars, tattoos or birthmarks, and other details of physical description were recorded. With a witness present in each case, a full inventory of the deceased's pockets, money belt, jewelry and clothing was compiled in meticulous detail. By the procedure, First, Second and Third Class passengers were more easily identified. This identification was critical because the plan was very simple and direct—First Class passengers would be embalmed first, right on the deck of the ship. Second and Third Class passengers would be frozen and embalmed back in Halifax. Some bodies recovered would be buried at sea. Also, the Halifax Harbour Authority would allow only embalmed or frozen bodies to be brought into port. John R. Snow, Jr., was the man who made these decisions as to what treatment would be used.

Addresses on letters, names on passports, number of passage tickets, legends on key tags, descriptions of personal photographs found in billfolds—all were recorded to assist in identifying the deceased either on

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board or later ashore. Personal property was placed in canvas bags, each bearing the number corresponding to its contents' owner.

At 5:00 p.m., the day's work was at a close and the boats were hauled back on board. Snow, Jr., and the rest of the embalmers on board prepared 20 bodies that night, a further six First Class being left for the following morning. At 8:15 p.m., Canon Hind officiated at a moving burial service on the deck of the MacKay-Bennett. Some two dozen bodies, mostly crew, but none identified and all badly disfigured by sea life, were committed to the deep.

MONDAY, APRIL 22

The ship recovered 27 bodies, Colonel John Jacob Astor among them. As John R. Snow, Jr., later observed,

"Everybody had on a lifebelt and bodies floated very high in the water in spite of sodden clothes and things in pockets. Apparently people had lots of time and discipline for some had on their pajamas, two or three skirts, two pairs of pants, two vests, two jackets and an overcoat. In some pockets we {the embalmers} found quantities of meat and biscuits. In most every man's pocket were found quite a bit of tobacco and matches and vials of whiskey. Many people had keys to their stateroom and lockers."

At 4:30 p.m., as light was fading, after steaming for 19 miles in and out of the line of wreckage, MacKay-Bennett came upon additional victims. A buoy was dropped to mark the spot where the next day's work would begin. The day closed as they all did, with Canon Hind presiding as fifteen were committed to the sea, "some of them very badly smashed and bruised," according to Cecil Zink, an embalmer from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

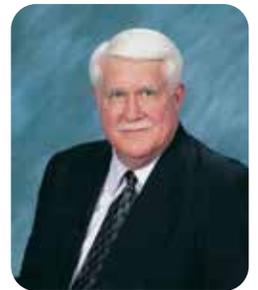
At 4:30 a.m., a body was found—which was the prelude of what was to be a most arduous day for the embalmers. During the next 14 hours, 87 additional victims were recovered, search and tagged. All were embalmed and kept on board. By now it was apparent that the facilities, equipment and people on the MacKay-Bennett were being severely taxed. Captain Lardner wired for help and A.G. Jones & Company chartered a second vessel, Minia, to go aid the recovery effort. Also, Captain Lardner wired John Snow, Sr., in Hali-

fax that they were running out of caskets and embalming chemicals. Mr. Snow, Sr., immediately notified the James Dempster Co., Ltd., casket manufacturers, which kept their factory running through the afternoon and evening to supply 150 more caskets. The Rev. H. W. Cunningham, of St. George's Church in Halifax, and undertaker W. H. (Will) Snow came up the Minia gangway and at midnight she departed Halifax. Stowed on board were 150 caskets and 20 tons of ice.

The Minia arrived at the disaster site at about 12:45 a.m. on Friday, April 25, 1912. At 6:15 a.m. the Minia sent a supply of embalming chemicals across by lifeboat and the two ships began searching together. By noon they had found 14 more bodies, and these were placed aboard the MacKay-Bennett, which then departed for Halifax, having on board all the bodies that could be looked after.

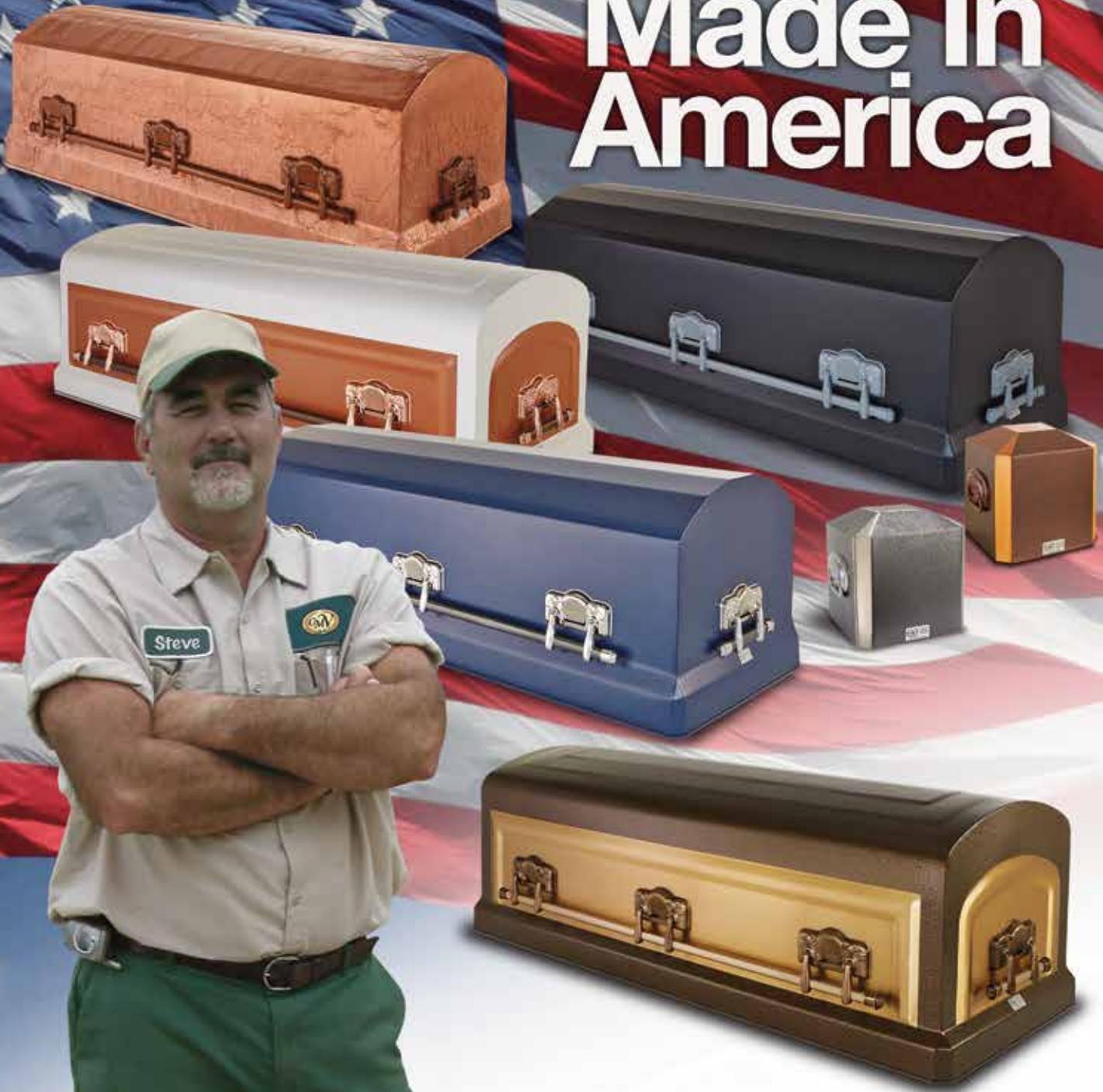
MacKay-Bennett had found 306 bodies and of those, Snow, Jr., had decided that 116 had to be buried at sea, too badly decomposed to be brought into Halifax Harbour. The ship returned to Halifax with 190 victims on board, almost twice as many as the original casket order called for. As the MacKay-Bennett steamed towards Halifax, John Snow, Sr., had the latest news about the recoveries and movements of the MacKay-Bennett and the Minia, which was still continuing the search.

Todd lives in Nashville, TN with his wife, Georgia. He received an honorary Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, Houston, TX, Master of Arts Degree in Pastoral Ministry from Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, Cincinnati, OH, Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Psychology and Philosophy from Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, IA and Mortuary Arts and Sciences Diploma from New England Institute of Anatomy, Sanitary Science, Embalming and Funeral Directing, Boston, MA. He is the Dean of the College of Funeral Management at the University of Memphis. He is a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner and a member of the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice, a Certified Embalmer, the author of 4 books, 400 professional articles.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

Glenda Stansbury to be Honored with the ICCFA Educational Foundation's Lasting Impact Award

The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association's (ICCFA) Educational Foundation will present its Lasting Impact Award to Glenda Stansbury at a reception on March 23 at the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention and Exposition in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Glenda is a certified celebrant, licensed embalmer and funeral director, and Vice President of Marketing and Development at Insight Books. She is also the Dean of the College of 21st Century Services at ICCFA University and Adjunct Professor at both the University of Central Oklahoma and Worsham College of Mortuary Science.

Stansbury's legacy is notable for her training and development of celebrants, who offer an alternative to services provided by clergypersons for families who are not affiliated with a church or who do not wish to have a traditional religious funeral service. They are trained to design services that are completely personal, incorporating those unique stories, songs and experiences that defined the deceased. Under her guidance, she has trained over 4,665 celebrants with an estimated 7.5 million individuals who have witnessed the impact of a ceremony performed by one of her trainees.

"Glenda Stansbury provides our profession and the families we serve with something that will endure for generations beyond her life. It will be her legacy," said Jim Price, ICCFA Educational Foundation President. "One would be challenged to think of anyone who has done more to enhance our profession's ability to meet

the ceremonial needs of all families, specifically the religiously unaffiliated. She is truly a worthy recipient of this prestigious award."

The Lasting Impact Award is presented annually to an individual that has made significant contributions to the deathcare

profession in education and memorialization. The Educational Foundation's Lasting Impact Award will be presented to Stansbury at a reception held in conjunction with the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention and Exposition in Las Vegas, Nevada on March 23 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Information on the reception and the Annual Convention & Exposition can be found at iccfa.com/annual.

The ICCFA Educational Foundation, founded in 2005, seeks to make education accessible to the future leaders of the deathcare profession. It does this by awarding scholarships to the educational programs of the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association, as well as advancing initiatives designed to promote the profession and support the individuals who answer the call of service.



INDUSTRY NEWS

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INDUSTRY NEWS

The Messenger Company Acquires Bass-Mollett

AUBURN, IN – The Messenger Company is pleased to announce the acquisition of Bass-Mollett Publishers. The acquisition brings together the funeral industry's two leading stationery providers, whose combined product line, personalization options and technology solutions will create the broadest product platforms available for funeral homes.

Bass-Mollett, a family-owned business, has served its funeral home clientele with outstanding products and exceptional service since 1951. John Flowers, President and CEO of Bass-Mollett Publishers says, "Today we celebrate the coming together of two well established family companies with more than one hundred eighty years of combined and dedicated service to the funeral industry. Both companies put their funeral home clients at the forefront of what they do and the synergies of products, staff and operations will significantly enhance our opportunities to serve customers with comprehensive solutions."

Kevin Tkacz, President at Messenger commented, "Bass-Mollett is very well respected within the industry and our common focus on excellent customer service and product solutions make this a natural addition to the Messenger "family." Heather Garman, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Messenger, will lead the worldwide efforts of both sales and service teams to ensure customer satisfaction continues to be the highest priority. Heather commented, "It's exciting to be part of this historic event where two long-established brands come together for the common good of serving our funeral home clients."

All sales and customer service inquiries will be handled by the respective companies at this time. To reach Messenger, please continue to call 1.800.827.5151 or email messenger@messsengerllc.com. To reach Bass-Mollett, please call 1.800.851.4046.

The Messenger Co., LLC, headquartered in Auburn, Indiana, was founded in 1913 by Frank Messenger, who started in the religious calendar business. Messenger has since become the leading provider of stationery,

funeral service items and personalization services. In 2019, Messenger acquired Express Funeral Funding, the largest privately-held insurance assignment funding company and later added We Fund Funerals to the family. Focused on being a trusted partner to funeral professionals, Messenger delivers time saving solutions to increase customer satisfaction and add value. Messenger provides quality product and services with quick lead times and exemplary customer service, exclusive partnerships and one of the most experienced and extensive sales teams in the funeral industry. For more information about Messenger, visit www.messengerstationery.com or call 1.800.827.5151.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

ICCFA to induct Jim Price and Bill Wright into Hall of Fame at 2022 Annual Convention & Expo

The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) will honor Jim Price, CCFE, CCE, and Bill Wright, CCE, with its prestigious Hall of Fame Award during the 2022 ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition, March 22 - 25, at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The ceremony will take place during the Closing Banquet on Friday, March 25, which begins at 5:30 pm.

Jim Price has dedicated over 50 years of service to the deathcare profession, embodying the idea of giving back and paying it forward. He has served on the Board of Directors of the ICCFA and as a Trustee for the ICCFA Educational Foundation. In 2015, Jim Price was elected as President & Chairman of the ICCFA Educational Foundation, a position he continues to serve to this day. His leadership of the Educational Foundation has seen an unparalleled rise in donations, scholarships awarded, and initiatives undertaken. Aside from his role with the Educational Foundation, Price continues his service to the ICCFA as a member of both the Government & Legal Affairs Committee and Veterans Committee.

Bill Wright has displayed continued dedication to the ICCFA throughout his 24 years spent supporting the Association. He has served in a number of leadership roles including Director, Vice President of Education, Vice President of the Government & Public Affairs Steering Committee, and as President of the ICCFA from 2002 - 2003. Notably, he founded the ICCFA's Political Action Committee (PAC) in 2003 and served as chairman for six years. The ICCFA's PAC has made a tremendous impact on the deathcare profession through its advocacy efforts. Wright continues to serve the association to this day as a member of the ICCFA's Veterans Committee.



The Hall of Fame award is the ICCFA's highest honor. It was created to pay tribute to those who have demonstrated unselfish service and outstanding contributions to the ICCFA, to the cemetery, funeral, cremation, and memorialization profession, and, ultimately, to the public. Since its creation in 1965, it has been awarded to only 35 individuals.

Founded in 1887, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization profession. The association is comprised of more than 10,000 members in the cemetery, funeral home and crematory industries, as well as supplier and related businesses worldwide.

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