



Montana Funeral Directors Association Directors Digest

SUMMER 2019



Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt Workshop

September 26 and 27, 2019
Copper King Inn
4655 Harrison Ave, Butte



This inspiring workshop supports people impacted by the death of a loved one to suicide. Learn more about what Dr. Wolfelt has termed “touchstones” of suicide grief and mourning. This compassionate workshop, presented by one of North America’s leading death educators, will help attendees understand the normal and necessary journey through suicide grief.

WHY IS THIS WORKSHOP SO IMPORTANT TO ATTEND

Suicide is death by another name, but the implications and stigma that surround its mystery and aftermath are strong enough to touch every facet of our lives and of society. Families and caregivers will explore a variety of sub-topics that will enhance your helping role in supporting those impacted by suicide.

Thursday, September 26, 2019

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Dr. Wolfelt Exploring Misconceptions of Suicide and Grief

Friday, September 27, 2019

9 AM – 3:30 PM

Dr. Wolfelt Exploring Grief After Suicide Workshop for Caregivers

5 CE credits available on Friday’s workshop

A block of rooms will be available at an MFDA discounted rate until **September 9.**

This workshop is free to all MFDA members

RSVP info@montanafda.org

Sponsored in part by



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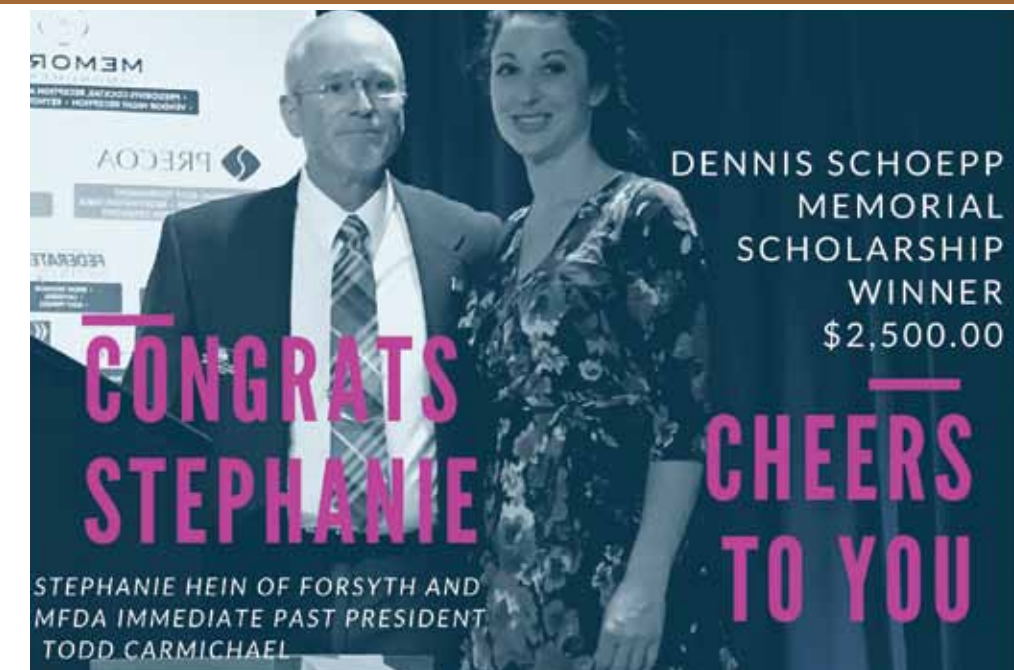


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CONGRATULATIONS NFDA SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



NFDA Funeral Service Foundation Welcomes New Executive Director

August 09, 2019

Funeral Service Foundation Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Lee Wiensch, CFRE, as the Foundation's executive director. A proven non-profit leader, effective communicator and principled fundraiser, Wiensch's robust experience, infectious energy and creative innovation will help carry forward the Foundation's mission to support funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and communities it serves.



Montana Funeral Trust

Contact Information

(844) 206-0049

mft@mtfuneraltrust.org

NFDA SCHOLARSHIPS

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Online submissions only.

Scholarships are available to full- and part-time students pursuing a degree in mortuary science from ABFSE-accredited schools or accredited Canadian schools.

- New applicants as well as those who have applied in previous years but have not been awarded an academic scholarship from the Foundation, are encouraged to apply.
- Foundation scholarships are subject to available funds and are not renewable; a Candidate may only receive a Foundation-awarded academic scholarship one time.
- Foundation academic scholarships are for mortuary science/funeral service study only.
- Funding is sent directly to the school; under no circumstances will the Funeral Service Foundation make a payment directly to the student.
- Funding may be used for tuition, fees, books and supplies.
- Alternates may be selected in the event that a scholarship recipient decides not to accept the award.
- The Foundation has no loan programs, vocational grants or assistance for graduate study available.
- The Funeral Service Foundation will only confirm receipt of completed applications and reserves the right to eliminate from consideration unsigned or incomplete applications without further notice to the applicant.
- If a student terminates his or her enrollment in the school for any reason, the remaining/unused balance of the scholarship must be returned to the Foundation only, may not be transferred to another school, and may not be paid to the student personally.
- Serious protracted illness or injury that would delay participation in the program may be considered reason for holding an award in reserve. Time limits and other restrictions may be set by the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Other leaves of absence will be considered on an individual basis.

All award decisions of The Funeral Service Foundation are final.

To apply visit <http://www.funeralservicefoundation.org/academicscholarships/>

APPLICATION PROCESS AUGUST 1 - NOVEMBER 15

MFDA CALENDER OF EVENTS

2019

FALL DISTRICT MEETING

ButteSeptember 26-27
Dr. Alan Wolfelt
Educational Workshop
Butte Copper King Hotel
Free to MFDA Members
Up to 5 CE's available

FALL BOARD MEETING

ButteSeptember 26
Butte Copper King Hotel

ANNUAL OSHA TRAINING

WEBINAROCTOBER 3

NFDA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

ChicagoOctober 27-30

Montana DinnerOctober 28
Mia Francesca's Lakeview in Chicago-7 PM
All MFDA members and their guests are welcome.

RSVP
info@montanafda.org
or by calling
Terri James
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Cover Photo Bannack, Montana

ANNUAL OSHA TRAINING



MARK ARNOLD
OSHA TRAINER/CONSULTANT

October 3

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awareness for workers in
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY FRANK ARB

Thank you. Yes, I want to start with a thank you. Thank you for giving me the honor of being president of the Montana Funeral Directors Association. Through the years, I have admired many of you and I have strived to be the kind of funeral director that so many of you are. Thank you for serving so many people in need. Thank you for loving so deeply. Thank you for giving of your time and talents while serving the families you deal with. Thank you for being a steward of the most sacred things in life. Thank you for being a funeral director.

There is such value in what you do and how you serve. I am so grateful and proud of those who serve in our profession. Whatever has brought you to this point in life to serve others, it has been and will continue to be a sacrifice. Your sacrifice blesses the lives of others. If you have one minute and 16 seconds, go to this link: <http://www.rememberingalife.com/honoring-alife/value-of-a-service/value-of-a-funeral-director> and watch the video. Please know that your service is valued.

While some deeply appreciate the service we render, there seems to always be room for improvement. I would like to give you two tools through the Montana Funeral Directors Association and the National Funeral Directors Association that can complement your services.

The first tool is a series of Public Service Announcements that you can (and should) use. If you are a member of NFDA, you have access to these videos. To find the videos and get started, go to: www.nfda.org/psas. The site has multiple videos and an easy step-by-step process with how to get started and use the PSAs for your funeral home. The videos are educational and touching for families.

The four videos include information on:

- Funerals Are For the Living
- Value of Funerals & Funeral Directors
- Homicide/Gang Violence
- Opioid Overdose

These videos can be a positive addition to your website or resources that you can offer families.

The second tool comes from James S DeLizia who presented at NFDA's Leadership Conference this year. His information can help in "Building Business Relevance and Customer Loyalty." His four message points are: Understand your customer and potential customers, define your essential value and be able to communicate it effectively, target value and messaging to segments of your customers, build products, services, and a customer experience that delivers essential value.

To quickly recap, we had our summer convention in Billings this year. I felt we had great speakers with an emphasis on traditional funerals and viewing of casketed bodies. I think at times we need to get back to the true value of what we do and showcase presenters to help us in that endeavor. I also attended the Leadership Training that NFDA provides for State leaders. The

main concern nationwide is the same that I feel we struggle within Montana; finding licensed Funeral Directors. There is a great shortage of young people coming into our profession. Something that we need to do is encourage young people in our communities to look at our profession when making a career choice.

I hope the information provided can help to complement and enhance the services you perform. Thank you for being a member of the Montana Funeral Directors Association. Thank you for striving to raise the bar. Thank you for the service you render.

Frank Arb



More than 120 years ago, Batesville began crafting high-quality caskets – and began a journey of helping funeral professionals honor every life with respect and compassion. Along the way, we have learned from thousands of funeral directors, and expanded our business to support every aspect of yours, from guiding families in the selection process to managing your business.

Thank you for your partnership, and inspiring us to always go further.

WE LISTEN. WE LEARN. WE WALK WITH YOU.

To learn how Batesville can make a difference for you and your families, visit Batesville.com/InspiringStories



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FAMOUS MONTANA GRAVES



Bridget Sullivan

Birth 1869

Allihies, County Cork, Ireland

Death 25 Mar 1948 (aged 78–79)

Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana, USA

Burial: Mount Olivet Cemetery

Anaconda, Deer Lodge County, Montana, USA

Memorial ID 7194468



American Folk Figure. She was the maid to Lizzie Borden and her family in Fall River, Massachusetts. On the day of the infamous murders of Lizzie Borden's parents, she was outside cleaning the windows, and was the last person to see them alive. She was a witness in the sensational trial that followed. After the trial, to get away from all the notoriety, she moved to Montana, where she died in 1948.



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Continued from page 13

Granted, people in general are less inclined to take it upon themselves to review a funeral home that helped their family than they would be to review a hotel or restaurant. It's just not something that quickly comes to mind.

But that also goes to the very point I'm making: If you ran a hotel or restaurant, you wouldn't have to be aggressive about soliciting reviews. You would get them whether you want them or not.

At a funeral home, you must take the initiative. If you don't set goals for positive review generation and stick to them, you'll never hit the quality and quantity "tipping points" that will make your firm dominate local competitors in search results.

Even worse, if you're sitting back and being entirely passive about online reviews, about 80 percent of time you'll either be receiving no reviews or negative ones.

Families don't necessarily think to submit a review of a funeral home, especially when the passing of their loved one is still fresh in their minds. You could provide the most amazing service in the history of the profession, but it won't necessarily occur to the family to review you.

That's why you must get comfortable with the notion of reaching out. Do so thoughtfully, of course; it's also

obviously a good idea to only inquire among families who clearly felt that you did an excellent job. (If you're not entirely sure, you should wait for the next one. A severely negative review can do more harm than 10 or 15 positive ones.)

This is also a good place to note that Yelp, despite being one of the biggest names in consumer reviews, prohibits business owners from directly soliciting reviews. You could try, of course, but if you got caught, Yelp can hit you with some serious penalties.

So I suggest you focus on Google reviews and Facebook reviews, which are really just as powerful as Yelp for death care online reputation anyway. If you give it a shot, I think you will be very pleased with the results.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® (funeralhomeprofits.com) and the author of Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes, 2019 Edition.

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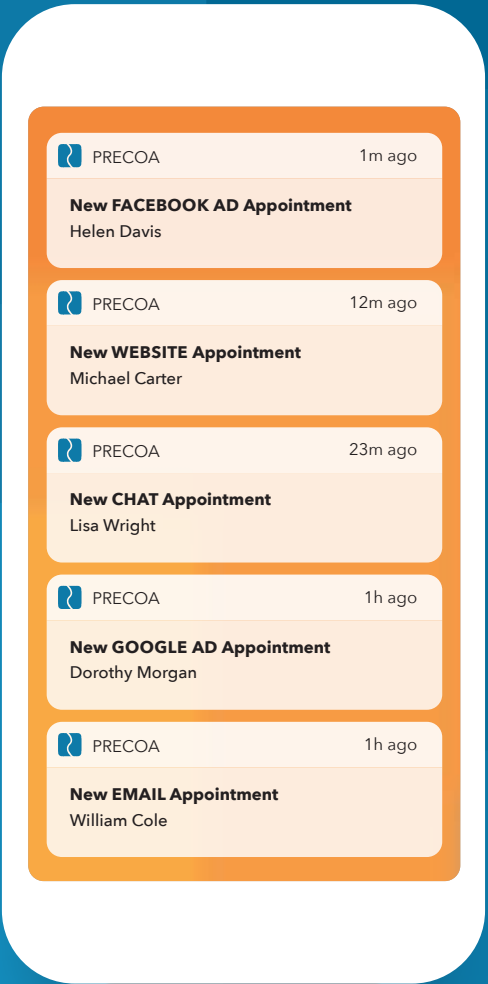
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT BY JAMES BROWN

Welcome to our summer edition of the MFDA Directors Digest. This is our post-state convention edition of the magazine.

We had a great convention this year, with great speakers, a great venue, great vendors, and great attendance. Our convention was held at the Northern Hotel in Billings this year. The Association has not held a convention in Billings in many years, and this year's convention location was designed to bring the convention 'closer to home' for our members located in the Eastern part of the State.

As our convention was in the 'magic city' this year, we had a 'magic' theme this year. In keeping with this theme, our Saturday night dinner was preceded by a masquerade party. Our attendees donned masks, venetian style.

The President's reception was held at the beautiful Moss Mansion this year. For those who have not visited that historic home, it is well worth seeing. The venue proved to be an appropriate one for our opening event of the convention. The evening was made even better due to the generosity of Smith Funeral home, which lent us use of their limousines to ferry attendees to the event and back. You haven't lived the lifestyles of the rich and famous until you have had Matt Coon serve as your chauffeur.

The 2019 convention was another great association event. The convention is always the best opportunity and time for our members and funeral industry partners to get together, to learn together, to network together, and to recreate together as one community. We had a great lineup of speakers this year, including Montana Secretary of State Corey Stapleton, Montana Chief State Medical Examiner Dr. Robert Kurtzman and Wayne State University professor Dominick Astorino.

The photographic images of the convention contained within these pages capture some of the 'magic' of the convention.

MFDA's membership approved the Association's Board and officers for the 2019-2020 time period. I am pleased to welcome Frank Arb of Stevenson & Sons Funeral Home, Forsyth, as the new MFDA President. I also want to extent

the Association's appreciation and gratitude to Todd Carmichael of Schnider Funeral Home of Great Falls for his year of service as MFDA's president. Todd took create care of the Association under his watch, and the Association grew in terms of assets and membership as the result of his leadership. Todd will continue on the Board in his position as immediate past president.



Unfortunately, with Todd's ascension to immediate past president, Kyle Zimmerman of Longfellow-Finnegan-Riddle steps off the board. Kyle served on the Association's board for many years, and we thank him for his dedication to Montana's funeral industry.

The following persons round out the MFDA for the coming year.

Chris Holt – Vice President

TJ Stevenson – Treasurer

Tyson Moore – Secretary

Stephanie Peterson – Southwestern District Governor

Vanessa Shook – Western District Governor

Drew Kent – Northcentral District Governor

Scott Stevenson – Eastern District Governor

Kent Bell – NFDA Policy Board Member

Our very successful state convention came on the heels of another productive legislative advocacy trip to Washington D.C. for the National Funeral Directors Association advocacy summit. Frank Arb, Todd Carmichael Kent Bell and I traveled to D.C. in early April to meet with Montana's congressional delegation.

During the trip, we advanced NFDA's top two legislative priorities. These bills being:

1. The Brave Act – HR 497/S.597; and
2. The Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act of 2019 – HR 1835.

The Brave Act is designed to ensure that all non-service-connected veteran deaths are treated equally in terms of the application of burial and funeral expenses. The



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MONTANA
NFDA
CONVENTION
DINNER
OCTOBER 28
7 PM

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Lakeview
Chicago

info@montanafda.org to RSVP

In Loving Memory



bill would require an equal burial benefit for all deaths regardless of where the death occurs, or the vet's circumstances at the time of their death.

The Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act is intended to ensure the respectful disposition of human bodies and non-transplantable human body parts donated for education, research, and mortuary science purposes.

You can learn more about these pieces of federal legislation by visiting the NFDA webpage at the following address: <http://www.nfda.org/advocacy/legislation>

I am pleased to write that Senator Jon Tester has once again cosponsored the Brave Act at our request. Senator Tester cosponsored this bill during the last session of Congress as well. Senator Tester's support is key because he is the ranking Democratic Party member of the Senate

Veterans' Affairs Committee. The Veterans' Affairs committee has jurisdiction over the bill.

On behalf of the board members and officers of the MFDA, I want to thank those who attended our state convention. And, for those who didn't, what's your excuse for not being at the best run convention in the Treasure State? By not attending, you truly missed out on excellent networking and educational opportunities. By attending our summer convention, you are able to meet all your continuing education (CE) requirements for the year.

Our 2020 convention will be held in the 'Mining City', Butte. Butte is another city that has not hosted the MFDA for many years. The convention will be held at the recently renovated Copper King Inn. The convention dates are June 12 - 14. Block those dates off your calendar now.

Jim Brown

MFDA



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

It was a pleasure meeting with many of you at the recent convention and trade show in Billings.

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Jim walking across the top of the Alps, "the Spaghetti Traverse" as it has been nicknamed. Summer 2019



Greetings from the NFDA Policy Board. We recently met July 11th and July 12th, 2019 in San Diego just prior to the Leadership Conference.

The Policy Board elected Linda Allan of Collinsville, IL and Daniel J. Ford of Cheshire, CT as At-Large Representatives to the NFDA Board of Directors. It is somewhat consistent that one of these people will eventually serve through the chairs of the NFDA. Ten new members (20%) were sworn in to the Policy Board. That seems to be a consistent Policy Board turnover per year.

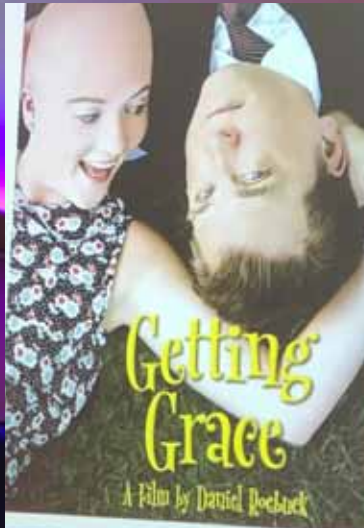
The NFDA Board is suggesting that the Policy Board advance National and State relations and directed the Policy Board to come up with new association governance models. They suggest changing the name of the Policy Board to reflect this new role. The NFDA wants better Policy Board member accountability, state reports, improved communications, and improved work on industry wide changes. We had lengthy discussion on consumer financing programs for funerals, insurance programs, and discussed Live Oak Bank and its 524 million out in Funeral Home financing, all since 2010. The most serious discussions concerned Continuing Education, the barriers affecting those programs, and NFDA's involvement in regulating CE Credits. Some states run their own show and oppose any industry management. Some funeral directors oppose it. There is way too much variance in what is required amongst the different states for continuing education. Some states have very little requirements. Our industry is way behind on regulation. From Florida to South Carolina to Michigan to Colorado, the differences are astounding. The North Carolina rep said to get licensed requires no schooling, no training, they are glad to have you. Yet Minnesota and Wisconsin have some of the highest standards. From continuing education to the selling of pre-need to actual licensing itself our industry as a whole from state to state is very inconsistent. Probably a third of the states had representatives speak but we came to no consistent dialogue that we could all uniformly follow. As an industry we need to.

Our national counsel, Scott Gilligan reported the Supreme Court upheld Indiana's law requiring aborted and miscarried fetuses to be buried or cremated, that the FTC has scheduled the start of the Funeral Rule review for the second half of 2019 but even that is not guaranteed, that a wage and claim against a funeral home in Texas was dropped by the Department of Labor, that the State of Washington has a new human composting law, and that credit card surcharges are now legal for funeral homes in California, Florida, New York and Texas. Montana needs to pursue this avenue as well. Legal issues were discussed

that encompassed an Arizona Funeral Home was released for overcharging an estate for body storage, Vermont can gain a funeral directors license without schooling, the Washington State Association is getting out of the preneed trusting business, Arkansas has combined the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers with the Arkansas Division of Insurance, Connecticut raised preneed limits from \$8,000 to \$10,000, Florida can now have one person manage two funeral homes if they are within 25 miles of each other, Michigan has reduced their Association to half the districts and adopted a mandatory continuing education bill, New York now requires annual audits, Virginia now regulates their doctors to promptly sign death certificates, New Jersey is allowing food service in funeral homes, North Dakotas preneed limit goes from \$9,000 to a "reasonable amount", and the state of Tennessee is starting a preneed master trust.

Montana, from information acquired in 2017, has the 5th highest cremation rate in the nation behind Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and Maine. Colorado is 6th and Wyoming is 7th. The national average in 2015 was 47.9 and by 2040 will be 78.7%. In 2015 the burials were 45.2% and by 2040 are expected to be 15.7%. There is a major difference between Eastern Montana and Western Montana for cremation rates. Eastern Montana is much like North Dakota at 45.1% and Western Montana raises the state average to its 74.6% with a Western Montana average approaching 90%. Of all cremations performed in the country 35% are direct with no services, 34% are cremation with a memorial service, 31% are a funeral service with viewing followed by cremation. Montana has 37 crematories, South Dakota has the least at 12 and California the most at 225.

Respectfully, Kent Bell





AWARDS

Years as Montana Funeral Director

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CHARLES WILSON

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SCOTT STEVENSON

15 YEARS
RALPH MILFELD

5 YEARS
MIKEL STEVENSON
ADAM MILLS
DUSTIN HAYCOCK
DREW KENT
JAMES SCOTT RENVILLE



STEVENSON & SONS FUNERAL HOMES

The Stevenson family is truly at the heart of the history of the Stevenson & Sons Funeral Homes. Throughout the years, their family has maintained a standard of personal care and service that stems from the values within their own homes. Stevenson & Sons Funeral Homes has been a family owned and operated establishment since 1962. After serving the community for almost thirty years, founder Dale Stevenson sold the business to the next generations. In November 2012 Stevenson & Sons celebrated their 50th year of funeral service. Since the 1990's, Joe & Patty, Todd & Terri, slowly started to grow the business into other areas where opportunities allowed. They are now serving as far west as Helena, MT to several locations in western North Dakota.





They are honored to have the 3rd generation joining the business. Scott Stevenson, TJ Stevenson, and Mikel Stevenson are all active in various locations and responsibilities. The Stevenson Family is excited to announce their latest location in Butte, MT, Axelson Funeral and Cremation Services. As a family they are grateful for the outstanding funeral directors, office managers, and staff that we have in each location. They all are dedicated in serving the families in their communities and are key to the success of each firm.

For more information visit
<https://stevensonandsons.com/>

Don't Be Bashful When Asking for Reviews

I want to tell you about one marketing initiative that independent funeral home owners *really* need to do if they want to ramp up both their at-need calls and their preneed business.

It's also the one thing many owners (and funeral directors in general) don't especially *want* to do—which probably isn't a coincidence. If more of them felt comfortable doing it, it wouldn't be such a challenge.

Which is too bad, because once they get the hang of it, it's really not hard at all.

So, I hope you're asking, what do you need to do? You need to get used to *asking the families you serve for reviews*.

I know. For some of you, I might as well be encouraging you to spend a day at the Department of Motor Vehicles. I work with a lot of funeral home owners, and this is the one area where I find a lot of resistance.

It's not like I don't understand: Funeral professionals never want to be viewed as being callous in any way. They don't want to look like they're as concerned with their own businesses as they are with the families they serve.

Regardless, in this digital age, the *online* reputation

of local businesses has overtaken *offline* reputation—and by that, I mean community word of mouth—in importance.

I recently searched for Google reviews of funeral homes in 10 American cities with metro area populations over 200,000. You would expect the larger funeral homes in these well-known cities to have close to 100 reviews by now. But that's not the case.

In one, the most-reviewed firm had 26 reviews. The runner-up had only 13. No other funeral home in this relatively large metro area had Google reviews in the double digits.

The same was true in many other similarly sized regions. There was the occasional outlier: One area had a funeral home with 44 reviews—a fraction of what it should have, but comparatively spectacular in the industry.

This is understandable to a certain degree. Many funeral homes still don't prioritize aggressive marketing in general. They're less inclined to promote themselves online. And many funeral directors remain uncomfortable with pursuing online reviews from families after providing services.

Continued on Page 18



General Patton's Burial Site

Luxembourg American Cemetary and Memorial

Photo Credit Jeff Zealley

General George Smith Patton Jr. had survived two great wars, three battle wounds and dozens of narrow battlefield escapes. It seemed likely that he would be able to survive the terrible auto accident in Germany in early December which had broken his neck. Encased in a plaster cast, he fought back from the edge of death. But then, on Friday, December 21, 12 days after the accident, death came suddenly and peacefully. A lung clot killed "Old Blood and Guts" while he slept.

Did you know he was also an Olympian?

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AGING BABY BOOMERS PROVED CATALYST IN SHIFT BEYOND TRADITIONAL BURIAL

NFDA 2019 Cremation and Burial Report reveals fourth consecutive year of growth for cremation

Brookfield, Wis. (July 15, 2019) – By the year 2035, adults age 65 and older are projected to outnumber children for the first time in American history, according to the 2019 Cremation and Burial Report, released by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA). With this large of an aging population comes a natural increase in the death rate.

This rise is concurrent with the ever-growing popularity of cremation, which, for the fourth consecutive year, has outpaced the rate of burial. By 2040, according to the report, the cremation rate in the U.S. is projected to be 78.7% while the burial rate is predicted to be just 15.7%, signifying that cremation is no fading trend – it is the new norm, set in motion by Baby Boomers’ evolving end-of-life preferences.

“The main reasons for the continued rise in cremation rates are cost, the perceived environmental impact, an increasingly transient population, weakening of traditional religious

prohibitions and changing consumer preferences,” said Mike Nicodemus, licensed funeral director and NFDA vice president of cremation services. “Baby Boomers have been a significant factor in this shift and their preferences will inform decisions made by the funeral profession for years to come.”

This shift has given funeral homeowners a unique opportunity to adjust business practices to address the impact of cremation and meet changing consumer preferences. The number of licensed crematories in the United States increased 8.9% over the last two years, and approximately one-third of funeral homes operate their own crematories, with another 11% planning to open their own in the next five years.

The increase in the cremation rate also raises the question of what happens to cremated remains after the fact. Families have many options and, according to the report, as of 2019, approximately 42% of cremated remains are returned to families, 35.2% are buried at a cemetery, 16.0% are

Continued on page 11



MEMORIAL
— MONUMENTS —

Continued from page 10

scattered at non-cemetery locations and 8.1% are placed in a columbarium. As the cremation rate rises in the coming years, non-burial options for cremated remains are expected to gain popularity as well.

Whether families prefer burial or want to learn more about cremation options, they may not know where to start the planning process. Answering questions and filling the knowledge gap at all stages of planning, RememberingALife.com offers guidance on where to begin, the kinds of decisions that families can make, and the many options available to make a tribute personal and meaningful. Whether visitors are curious about their own affairs or need fast answers following the death of a loved one, the “Ask a Funeral Expert” tool gives access to experienced professionals who can answer questions or refer

them to a local funeral director.

As the trusted leader and worldwide resource for the funeral service profession, NFDA lists RememberingALife.com among their top resources providing helpful information about planning a meaningful service, as well as resources to help people understand their own and others’ grief and loss.

NFDA members may download a copy of the 2019 NFDA Cremation and Burial Report from the association’s website, www.nfda.org/cremation (login required). The report is available to members at no cost as a benefit of membership.