

DIRECTORS

Digest

PUB. 2 2023, ISSUE 3



2023 MFDA Convention and Trade Show

Getting To Know
2023-2024

MFDA President,

***TYSON
MOORE***

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tyson Moore

Together, We Can Do Great Things



I look forward to meeting with many of you over the next year and listening to how we can better serve the members of this association and the families we care for.

Not unlike the change in seasons, we as an association once again find ourselves in a period of transition. I appreciate the trust you have placed in me, and the others who serve our association, as we navigate the next few months within the Montana Funeral Directors Association.

We recently experienced a great summer convention in Miles City, MT. Thank you to all who attended, sponsored and worked so hard to make this convention a success. It was wonderful to meet so many new folks from the far reaches of the state.

Our association is strong and growing, and that speaks volumes about you and your commitment to the families you serve. As we know,

the world is changing at a rapid pace and funeral service, though perhaps not as the same rate, is changing as well. This association is a great tool to help navigate the changes we face as an industry and continue to care for the people of Montana.


We, as leadership, welcome your thoughts, ideas and concerns as we work together to expand on over 120 years of collaboration in providing the highest level of care in funeral service. Vince Lombardi once said, and I paraphrase, that individual commitment to a group effort is what makes a team, company, society and civilization work. It takes effort from all of us to do great things. I am thankful for those who have paved the path we are on now and offer my appreciation to T.J. Stevenson for a


job well done this past year. It was busy, and he represented us well.

I look forward to meeting with many of you over the next year and listening to how we can better serve the members of this association and the families we care for. Feel free to reach out to me anytime with questions or concerns.

Thank you all again for a great convention as well as the support and trust you give our association.

Tyson Moore
President



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Convention Dinner

Piero's
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Las Vegas, NV

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SEPT. 11
AT 6:15 PM**

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*Dress code enforced

Directors Digest | 5



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

James Brown, Esq., Executive Director

Welcome to our post-2023 convention edition of the *Directors Digest*. I write this article on a rainy summer day, and the rainfall Montana experienced during late spring couldn't be more of a blessing as it has helped stave off a long, smoky fire season.

The 2023 convention is now in the rear-view mirror, and the 4th of July holiday has come and gone. Like many Americans, I enjoyed a hot dog or two while celebrating the date of our nation's birth. In that, I was not alone. It is estimated that some 150 million hot dogs were consumed on the 4th — enough to stretch from D.C. to LA.

Held in the middle of June in Miles City, the Convention proved to be an interesting, informative and successful one. The attendees were treated to wagon rides, golfing, and gopher shooting activities, as well as a country barbeque — all things in keeping with Eastern Montana's cowboy country.

The Convention had its usual great lineup of speakers, including association favorite Dominic Astorino, a moving Service of Remembrance, and lots of quality interaction between MFDA members and MFDA associate members and vendors. We here at MFDA are particularly grateful that Dutch Nie, President-Elect of the NFDA, was able to join us all the way from Michigan. This was not the first time MFDA hosted Dutch and his lovely wife. They joined us at the 2018 Convention held in Great Falls as well. It was good to have them back for a little Montana fun.

Of course, the best part of the annual convention, as I noted during my remarks to the attendees, is the opportunity for peer-to-peer contact. Recently, I read an article about the high value of attending trade conventions and conferences. The authority of the article noted that the #1 benefit of attending a trade convention, identified by attendees, was the opportunity to interact directly with their colleagues. In other words, the opportunity to have face time with their peers was identified as the reason to attend a state convention.

Each year, the MFDA state convention presents the best opportunity for members of Montana's funeral industry to interact with each other and explore beneficial educational and trade opportunities. As such, if you were not able to attend this year's convention, we hope to see you at next year's convention and tradeshow.

During the final convention dinner, the Association acknowledged the terrific year of leadership by now-Past President T.J. Stevenson and his family. T.J. and his family threw themselves wholeheartedly into serving and promoting this association. We also welcomed newly elected MFDA President Tyson Moore of Garden City Funeral Home in Missoula. The Association looks forward to working with Tyson during his term as President.

Speaking of the association board positions, during the convention, the MFDA membership approved the 2023-2024 MFDA Officers, Board of Directors and District Governors. They are as follows:

- MFDA President: Tyson Moore
- MFDA Vice President: Steve Kirkegard
- MFDA Treasurer: Bri Mulvaney
- MFDA Secretary: Rick Walter
- MFDA Immediate Past President: T.J. Stevenson
- NFDA Policy Member: Chris Holt
- Eastern District Governor: Scott Stevenson
- Southcentral District Governor: Matt Coon
- Northcentral District Governor: Austin Asper
- Southwestern District Governor: Jessie Billquist
- Western District Governor: Fred Nelson
- Future Development Leaders Director: Katie Baca

The above-named individuals are assisting the Association and Montana's funeral industry on a volunteer basis. Serving on the MFDA Board requires both time and effort. And as such, if you see one of these individuals, please take a moment to thank them for their dedication.

I am pleased to share that the MFDA Board has already decided where next year's convention will be held. After receiving much positive feedback and input from our vendors and members about their preference for the convention location, the MFDA Board has decided that the 2024 Annual Convention will be held in Missoula. We are already looking forward to seeing you at that event.

In addition to having the Annual Convention behind us, the spring MFDA District Meetings have also taken place since our last edition of the *Directors Digest* was published. In one of his last acts as President of the MFDA, T.J. Stevenson joined Terri James and me as we traveled to the various District Meetings held across the state. The District Meetings were held in Miles City, Billings, Great Falls, Anaconda and Missoula. These meetings are always a great opportunity for MFDA members to earn continuing education credits in a relaxed atmosphere among peers and colleagues. As the spring District Meetings were held

in person, the annual Fall District Meeting will be hosted as a virtual event on November 16. So, be on the lookout for more details about that informative online event.

Inside this edition are photographs from both the State Convention and the spring District Meetings. I think you will find them amusing and, perhaps, a bit bemusing. On behalf of Terri and myself, we thank you once again for the confidence you have shown in us. We will continue to do our best to help the association and its members, like you, prosper.

We look forward to seeing you soon. Until such time, enjoy this summer fun fact — mosquitoes, summer's pests, have been around for more than 30 million years.

Jim Brown, Esq.
MFDA Executive Director

2023-2024 MFDA SCHEDULE

September 10-13

NFDA Convention
Las Vegas, NV

September 11

MFDA NFDA Convention Dinner
Las Vegas, NV

September 15-November 1

NFDA Scholarship Submission Cycle

November 9

Fall Board Meeting

November 16

District Meeting — Virtual 2 CE's
5-7:30 pm

January 25

Board Meeting
Helena Great Northern Hotel

March 19-22

NFDA Advocacy
Gaylord Hotel, Washington, D.C.

April

Board Meeting

Spring District Meetings TBD

- Missoula
- Butte
- Great Falls
- Billings
- Miles City

June 23-25

MFDA Convention
Holiday Inn Missoula

July 28-31

NFDA Leadership Conference
Ponte Verde, FL

October

NFDA Convention
New Orleans

November

District Meeting Virtual

November

Board Meeting Virtual

2023-2024 MFDA Board of Directors



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NFDA UPDATE

By Chris Holt

Happy summer. I hope everyone is enjoying the weather and the great outdoors. I cannot believe we are halfway through summer.

I had the great opportunity to join MFDA President Tyson Moore and MFDA Association Assistant Terri James in Phoenix for the NFDA Leadership Conference this past June.

The NFDA Leadership Conference is a time for the country's various state association's leadership of Funeral Service to gather and share ideas and thoughts about the current state of Funeral Service in our various states. We were presented with some speakers and opportunities to network with leadership from around the country and discuss various issues we are currently facing.

Our keynote speaker was Cassi Chandler, a former FBI Special Agent Assistant Director and current CEO of her company. She gave us a presentation on the challenges of organizations and ways to inspire and influence teams, individuals and organizations to better themselves and their companies to meet the needs of our communities and families we serve.

We had Bob Harris present strategies and ideas for associations to provide a higher level of service to each of our associations and its members. We also had an update on our various mortuary schools and programs and the pass rate for the National Boards, currently rising from falling the past few years.

A treat was Funeral Director Tim Purves from Scotland, who handled the first part of the Queen's services and rode in the hearse to transport her to final services. It was very

fascinating and informative. Tim will also be in Las Vegas for the convention.

We had breakout sessions with each office to discuss current issues. My past president breakout focused on retaining and finding employees to work. It seems that this is a nationwide problem. Finding qualified, caring and educated individuals to work in our industry seems to be a major issue nationwide.

An update on the FTC and the Body Broker Bill, currently working its way through both sides of Congress, was presented. The FTC will be making changes, but we do not know what and when yet.

On our final night, we had the great opportunity to visit the Heard Museum of American Indian Art with a nice dinner and traditional American Indian dancing, which was very impressive. The artwork was amazing and very worth the visit.

The NFDA had an excellent venue and conference site that provided some insight and ideas for our industry. It was an honor to represent Montana and to network with some excellent individuals. I would recommend that leaders in our industry attend at least one conference, if possible. They hold valuable information and insight.

I am honored to represent MFDA with the NFDA; thank you all for the opportunity. I wish everyone a wonderful, safe summer and keep up the excellent work you and your staff provide for our communities in the great state of Montana. God Bless.

Chris Holt

GETTING TO KNOW

2023-2024

MFDA PRESIDENT,

Tyson Moore

Tyson Moore is a Licensed Funeral Director and General Manager at Garden City Funeral Home and Crematory. He also oversees the day-to-day operations of five Western Montana firms. Tyson has been serving the Missoula community for over 10 years. Before moving to Montana, he lived in Colorado, where he and his family owned and operated a monument sales and manufacturing company serving Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming families. He has also worked on memorial projects throughout the United States. His largest project to date is the Korean War Memorial for the State of New Jersey, located on the boardwalk in Atlantic City.

His time away from the funeral home is spent with his wife and five children, along with Frasier, the therapy dog he brings to the funeral home. He is also quite active with his church community.

We recently sat down with Tyson and got to know more about him, his work life and his thoughts on the funeral service industry. The following are excerpts from our conversation. We hope you enjoy getting to know him as much as we did.



What are the two or three biggest issues facing the funeral industry?

I think the biggest issue that the industry is facing is recruitment. It is difficult to attract young talent to an industry with irregular hours that demands so much emotionally. The younger generation likes to have flexibility. With a degree in finance, one can work in retail, banking, etc. Other degree areas are similar, which lends itself to being able to change workplaces and careers over and over. The funeral service industry is a niche space; once one enters the field, it takes a commitment, or they will end up leaving the industry altogether.

The second biggest issue is being stuck in the status quo. We need to break away from the traditional thinking of what a funeral experience looks like and meet consumers where they are. As funeral professionals, we sometimes think we know what the consumer needs and we aren't listening to what they want. We need to listen, be flexible and adapt to a new generation of ideas and values, or we won't remain relevant.

How do you think the industry will change in the next 3-5 years?

It depends on how well we do at listening. If we listen and adapt, funeral service will remain relevant and vibrant with a connection to our consumers and communities. If we fail to listen and adapt, we may find ourselves as order takers offering disposition only, losing our connection to the community and helping people heal from tremendous loss and grief.

Cremation rates will continue to rise throughout the country, but that doesn't have to replace rituals or gatherings. Cremation and service can coexist.

How long have you been an MFDA member, and why did you get involved in the association? What are the benefits of membership?

I have been a member since I was licensed in Montana 10 years ago. Our organization has always been a supporter of MFDA. Membership is a great way to build community within the industry.

MFDA is a huge advocate for funeral professionals in Montana. They not only provide useful continuing education but also provide legislative advocacy to protect us as licensees. Without MFDA, funeral service in Montana would look different. There are folks out there who want to get rid of licensing, and MFDA has been there to protect our position. MFDA also supports a standard of ethics that promotes the best in funeral service. We want the public to look at our member firms and vendors as advocates and community members who are there to help.

How did you get involved in a leadership role within MFDA?

I was nominated by my peers. I wasn't necessarily looking for a position at the time but was honored that my peer group within the association had respect and trust in me, so I accepted the nomination, and the rest is history.

What are your goals as president?

My number one goal is to help our industry remain relevant. We need to be an association that provides value to our members and vendors. We need to provide services that the membership wants and values. We have done well in the past, but we can improve. I want our members to look at their return on investment and feel good about what we have provided them. I also want to be a resource for young people who are contemplating a career in funeral service.

What help do you need from members to accomplish those goals?

The number one ask of our members is to communicate. I am of the opinion that we cannot improve if we don't hear what we are doing right or wrong. My office and phone are always available to listen to what our members value. We may not have the resources to do everything, but we can allocate resources to what is most important to our members.

What do you plan to do to help members?

I will do my best to listen and provide solutions. This may be something small, like answering questions about regulation or licensing, or it may lead to something legislative or to a new program that we may offer.



Have you had any mentors, and what did you learn from them?

I have had many great mentors. They have helped me better understand people. If you can learn to understand people — who they are, what makes their world turn, find their motivations, and so on — you will be successful. There are many ways to do things, and everyone has something to offer.

Synergy has been a part of my vocabulary since my teens. I was taught early that working together produces far more results than even the combined total of us all working individually. Synergy, however, requires trust, which is uncommon in the world today. We need to get back to a place in society where we can trust each other.

When you mentor others, what are three pieces of advice you would share?

My advice is simple:

1. The only right way to do something is to do it well. It doesn't matter who or what you want to become, just do it well.

2. Listen before you speak. I'm still working on this one.
3. Find joy in what you do. Life is short and meant to be enjoyed.

Tell us about your family.

My wife, Kimberly, and I have one daughter and four sons, ranging in age from 8-15. I spend most of my free time attending my children's sporting events. All of them play soccer, three of my boys play football, and all four play basketball. My daughter is an avid wrestler.

How did you get into the funeral industry?

I am a third-generation vault guy. My family was in the concrete burial vault business. We started with the Doric brand and ended with Trigard, which led to my dad being in the granite memorialization business in addition to vaults. I eventually went into the granite business, along with three of my brothers.

When I was young, I spent a lot of my time in cemeteries and funeral homes. I never really enjoyed funeral homes and always thought they were kind of creepy. I remember thinking that they smelled funny, that some of the funeral directors were quite strange and the buildings were all so dimly lit.

Many years later, there came a time when the granite business was slowing down, and I needed a Plan B. So, I reflected on why I enjoyed that business so much. It definitely wasn't the heavy lifting. I did, however, enjoy the creative nature of the business — I was able to use the



artistic talent and skills I had developed to create some beautiful memorial pieces.

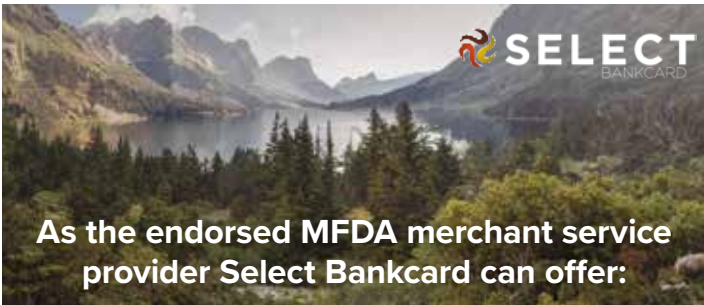
It finally occurred to me that I loved hearing people's stories — how people either wanted to be remembered or how they were going to remember their loved ones. Additionally, everyone has a unique story to tell. I thought the funeral business would be a perfect fit for me to continue being able to hear stories and help families along the way.

So, I enrolled in mortuary school all while continuing to run my business, helping my wife run her childcare business and keeping up with my growing children. It all worked out, and I have been blessed continually along the way. I continue to design and sell cemetery memorials and burial vaults — where my story began.

Any last thoughts?

Funeral service is really a great place to be. Yes, it is difficult, demanding at times and ever-changing. With all that in mind, it is a place where we truly have the opportunity to serve. We may get some bad press, but the media loves a bad story. Like with most things in American society today, the majority is silent, but they support what we do. We are doing good things. We help people both within the industry and in the communities we serve. Thank you to everyone who supports the funeral service and especially those who support this great association. ■





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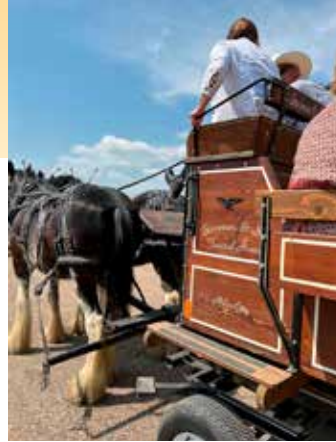
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2023 MFDA

CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW



Service of Remembrance



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2023 Award Recipients

1963 — 60 years Jered Scherer	2003 — 20 years Shawnee Krauszer
1973 — 50 years Terry Bullis	2008 — 15 years Matthew O'Brien
1978 — 45 years Dick Brown Greg Kirkwood	2013 — 10 years Thomas Weiss Tyson Moore
1993 — 30 years Denis Pitman	2018 — 5 Years Dannon Gibby



Denis Pitman
1993, 30 years



Greg Kirkwood
1978, 45 years



Dick Brown
1978, 45 years



Terry Bullis
1973, 50 years



Jered Scherer
1963, 60 years



MFDA Board of Directors

Scott Stevenson
Matt Coon
Tyson Moore
Bri Mulvaney
Dutch Nie
NFDA President-Elect

T.J. Stevenson
Rick Walter *(not pictured)*
Fred Nelson *(not pictured)*
Steve Kirkegard *(not pictured)*
Jessie Billquist *(not pictured)*
Katie Bacca *(not pictured)*



2023 MFDA VENDOR OF THE YEAR

MFDA Executive Director Jim Brown and Steven Hunter from Memorial Monuments

This year, in recognition of their support and dedication to MFDA, we awarded the 2023 Outstanding Associate Member Award to Memorial Monuments.



MFDA 2023-2024
President **Tyson Moore**

The passing of the gavel from
T.J. Stevenson to **Tyson Moore**



Prayer and thanks by
Niles Nelson

NFDA President-Elect
Dutch Nie and his wife **Donna**



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Dodge	Welcoming Words
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IN LOVING MEMORY



Helen Mae Meyer

JUNE 14, 1922 - JUNE 3, 2023

After World War II, Helen met Richard (Dick) Meyer and they were married on Dec. 31, 1946, in Bottineau, North Dakota. They were blessed with three sons, Gary, Joseph, and Lee, all of whom sadly passed away within a few days after their birth. Their true blessing came when their daughter Joyce was born.

Helen was devoted to caring for others from a young age, first caring for her grandfather, James Smith (a Civil War veteran), and later caring for her mother who was a severe diabetic. She worked as a nurse's aide at St. Andrew's Hospital in Bottineau, ND, and at St. Ann's Hospital in Anaconda. She was employed at the Montana State Hospital Galen Campus as a nurse's aide and rehabilitation aide until she retired in 1984. Helen also babysat for several families in Anaconda. After her retirement, Helen worked as a companion for Mrs. Lorene Knight until Lorene's death. She loved children and caring for others. Helen was a very kind person, was always willing to help others, and donated to many charities.

Helen Mae Meyer was born on Flag Day, June 14, 1922, to Elsie and Jay Gregory on the farm at Carpenter, North Dakota, one mile from the Canadian border and four miles from the International Peace Garden. Helen has had incredible stamina since the minute she was born. She often talked about being born one month early on the isolated farm, with a throat full of mucus. It was touch-and-go for her and her mother for a while, but they both were strong and stubborn women. It is ironic that Helen left this world on June 3 in the same manner that she came in. She is reunited in peace with her loving husband Dick and three infant boys.

Helen often commented that although her life on the farm was often difficult, it was the most peaceful life she had. She loved all of the gardening and animals and her horse Brownie. She was educated in the local North Dakota schools.

In their younger years, Helen and Dick belonged to the Anaconda Saddle Club and owned several horses. She enjoyed riding and the companionship of the horses. Helen's other hobbies and interests included dancing, needlework, making stuffed toys for children, recycling cards for the Nursing Home and Hearthstone, and playing bingo. She made many beautiful, embroidered pillows for the Anaconda Rest Home residents and always remembered them with cards, treats, and visits. She spent many hours volunteering for the Anaconda Head Start Program where she was "grandma" to so many of the children. Each year, she looked forward to helping distribute dictionaries to Deer Lodge, Powell, and Granite County third graders as part of her volunteer work with Avon Grange.

All of Helen's friends and the Anaconda businesses were very important and special to her. She loved having tea with them, visiting them at their campsite, going out for a meal, or visiting with the local business owners and staff.

Although Helen was a convert to the Catholic Church, she was a devoted member. She was a 38-year member of Avon Grange #125, Mill Creek Extension Homemakers, the Montana Retired Public Employees Council, the Anaconda Red Hat Group, and was a frequent visitor to the Smelter City Senior Center.

Helen deeply loved her family and enjoyed spending time with all of them. She felt very blessed to have lived long enough to watch her granddaughter,

Jessie, grow up and have children. Spending time and taking part in activities with her great-grandchildren Jaycee, Justin, Tucker, Jerzey, Cody and Jake was one of her biggest joys.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband Richard; three sons Gary Jay, Joseph, and Lee Richard; parents Jay and Elsie (Smith) Gregory; sister Bessie Gregory; sister and husband Violet and Carl Abrahamson; brother Kenneth Gregory; brother and wife George and Kathy Gregory; nephews Terry Gregory and Clayton Abrahamson; niece Alice Beckton; in-laws Emma and Henry Meyer and many of her husband Dick's family.

Helen is survived by her beloved daughter and son-in-law Joyce and Marty Billquist; granddaughter Jessie Billquist-Sather and her husband Doug Sather; former grandson-in-law Arthur Jette; great-grandchildren Jaycee Jette and fiancé Quinn DeMarois, Justin Jette, Tucker Jette, Jerzey Jette, Cody Amundson, and Jake Sather; and many nieces and nephews on both sides of the family.

In honor of what would have been Helen's 101st birthday, a Celebration of Her Life was held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at the Longfellow Finnegan Riddle Funeral Home Chapel. Following the Celebration of Life, a graveside service was held at Sunset Cemetery. Immediately following the graveside service, a reception was held at the Anaconda Elks Lodge. To honor Helen's vibrant spirit and her Flag Day birthday, many individuals wore their brightest shades of pink or purple or red, white and blue.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Avon Grange Memorial Fund c/o Nancy Hardtla, PO Box 1367, Anaconda MT 59711 or to the Smelter City Senior Citizen Center, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Anaconda, MT 59711.

Please visit longfellowfinneganriddle.com to offer the family a condolence or to share a memory of Helen.

Longfellow Finnegan Riddle Funeral Home and Cremation Services has been privileged to care for Helen and her family. ■



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Silha Funeral Home



The Silha Funeral Home is located in downtown Glendive, MT. Built in the 1950s, it was originally the Koch Huebel Funeral Home. It was eventually bought by Larry Silvernale and became the Silvernale Funeral Home. Then, in 1980, Lance Silha moved to Glendive and joined the business. The name changes to Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home.

In 1984, Larry's son, Dane Silvernale, became a full partner in the firm. In 2014, Lances's nephew, Tyler Silha bought his uncle out and became full



owner. Today, Tyler is the Owner, Mortician and Certified Crematory Operator for Silha Funeral Homes.

Tyler grew up in Bowman, ND. When he was in high school, his father was very good friends with the nursing home administrator in his hometown. The administrator told his father that he should be a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) because it paid well — this was in the mid-90s. Tyler pursued his CNA training and became a certified nurse's aide at the local nursing home.

There weren't very many young men doing that job, especially then, so Tyler stood out in a good way. The nurses he worked with told him that he should consider becoming a funeral director because of how good he was at dealing with older people and how well he could talk to their families. They couldn't believe a high school kid could do that with such ease. At the time, Tyler didn't think much about it.

He went off to college and, after graduating, became a land surveyor. During the winter, land surveying slowed down and left Tyler looking for something to fill his time. He called the funeral director in his hometown and asked if he could job-shadow him to see if it was a career he wanted to pursue.

After helping with some funerals, embalming and removals, Tyler decided that a career in funeral services was the path he was going to take. He finished up a couple more classes that he needed to apply to the mortuary program at Arapahoe Community College. He graduated in the spring of 2006 and immediately started an apprenticeship at Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home.

Once he passed his tests and received all his licenses, he purchased the funeral home and has been serving the community ever since.

The best part of Tyler's job is the people he gets to meet and visit with. "There are a lot of unique people out there, and seeing the relief on their faces when I show up, knowing that their loved one will be well taken care of, makes me



feel needed.” He continued, “The trust that I’ve earned by serving the community has been earned through many sleepless nights. But ultimately, it’s worth it.”

Tyler has been married to his wife, Angie, for 20 years. They have two teenage children — a set of twins — a boy and a girl. He loves spending time in the outdoors, especially in eastern Montana and western North Dakota, hunting, fishing and golfing.

Silha Funeral Homes currently has two locations serving the Glendive and Wibaux, MT, communities and one location serving the Beach, ND, community. To learn more, please visit www.silhafuneralhomes.com. ■

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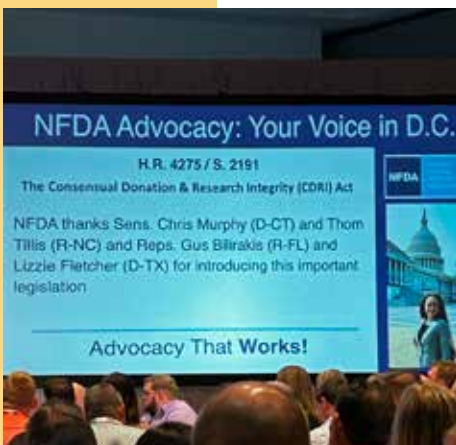
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The Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act

Protecting the Dignity of Donors and Offering Peace of Mind to Families



With the introduction of the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act (S. 2191/H.R. 4275), Congress took a vital step toward bringing necessary minimum standards to the largely unregulated process of whole-body donation. The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) thanks Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX) for introducing this important legislation.

“NFDA fully supports and applauds congressional efforts to pass the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act, which will provide long-overdue accountability and transparency to the whole-body donation process and ensure donors’ bodies are treated with dignity and respect at all times,” said NFDA Senior Vice President, Advocacy, Lesley Witter, MPA, CAE.

Donating the body of a loved one to medical research can bring healing and comfort to a family, knowing that their gift may help advance scientific knowledge and discoveries. However, unscrupulous body brokers, who often aggressively target the poor and elderly, take advantage of this generosity and sell or lease bodies and body parts at a significant profit.

“Non-transplant tissue banks that accept whole body donations need to be better regulated,” said NFDA President Jack Mitchell, CFSP, CCSP. “There are

regulations that govern how the body of an individual may be donated, but there is little federal or state oversight over what happens to that donation. This means that anyone, regardless of expertise, can set up a facility and dissect and sell or lease human bodies and body parts to anyone. The money that can be made by body brokers is significant and has led to bad actors taking advantage of the generosity of donor families by desecrating the bodies of their loved ones. We encourage Congress to pass the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act.”

The Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act would provide the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with oversight of entities that deal with human bodies and non-transplantable body parts donated for education, research, and the advancement of medical, dental and mortuary science.

The bill, among other things, also requires non-transplant tissue banks to be registered with the U.S. Department of HHS. This gives HHS the authority to conduct inspections, requires informed consent when a donation is made, creates a clear chain of custody for each human body or body part, ensures shipments of human bodies and body parts are properly labeled and packaged, and ensures the respectful and proper disposition of donated bodies and body parts. Additionally, the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act establishes penalties for violations.

Background

The decision to donate a loved one's body for scientific or medical research is an admirable choice and can offer healing to a grieving family. With whole body donation, bodies and body parts are used for education, research or the advancement of medical, dental or mortuary science. Researchers rely on donated human body parts to develop new surgical instruments, techniques, implants, medicines and treatments for diseases. Surgeons, paramedics and funeral directors use donated bodies and body parts for training, education and research and take great care to respect the tremendous gift of a donor cadaver.

While medical schools and state-run anatomy programs do not actively solicit donations, body brokers target the poor and elderly to donate their loved one's body. Some medical schools have reported that competition from body brokers has reduced the number of bodies donated to schools to train students and conduct research because some brokers can offer donors more favorable terms, such as free removal of the body and cremation.

A patchwork of federal and state laws applies to body brokers. Under the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, most state anatomical gift laws largely regulate just one side of the process — how a body may be donated. Most do not address what happens next, such as how brokers dissect, handle and ship the bodies and body parts; the prices they set on human remains; to whom they sell or resell them; how the parts are used by buyers; or the rights of donors and next-of-kin.

In almost every state, it is legal for anyone, even if they do not have training, to sell the human remains of adults. Generally, a broker can sell a donated human body for about \$5,000, though prices sometimes top \$10,000. Bodies and body parts can be bought, sold and leased again and again. As a result, it can be difficult to track what becomes of donors' bodies, ensure they are handled with dignity, and returned to their loved ones after cremation.

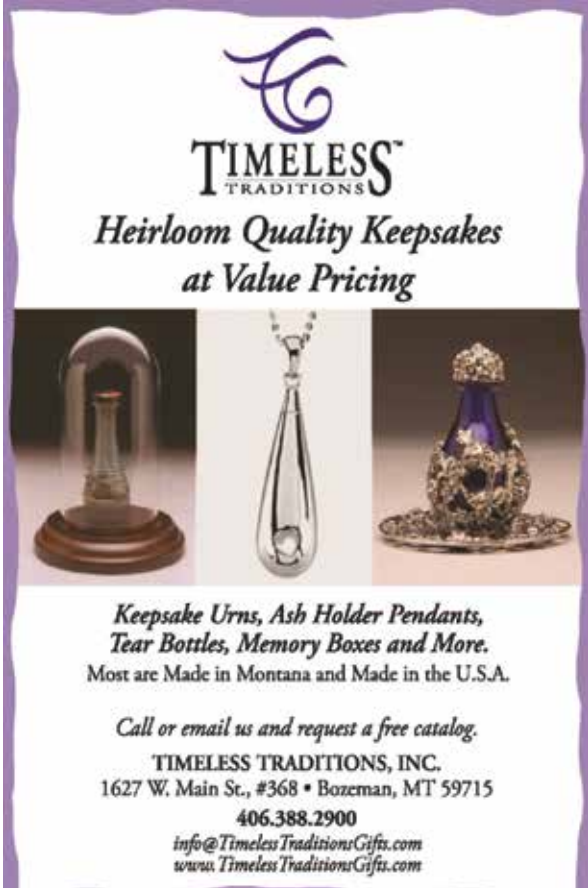
Fewer rules mean fewer consequences when bodies are mistreated, and when donor bodies are mistreated, the impact on surviving family members can be heartbreaking.

“We have heard upsetting stories from families that believed they were doing a good thing when they donated

a loved one's body for medical research,” said NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, CAE. “They truly believed the donation would create a positive legacy. However, the shocking actions of body brokers have only caused further grief. We strongly urge Congress to pass the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act and provide long-overdue accountability and transparency to the whole-body donation process and ensure donors' bodies are treated with dignity and respect at all times.”

For more information about the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act, visit www.nfda.org/bodybrokerbill. ■

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



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Reviewing the OSHA Top 10 To Help Reduce Common Workers' Compensation Injuries

By Federated Insurance

Operating a successful business carries a lot of responsibility. Understanding and reviewing common risks with your employees can go a long way in preventing accidents, controlling losses and protecting profits to lead to a safer, healthier work environment.

What Can You Do To Help Prevent Workplace Injuries and Accidents?

Having an understanding of the OSHA Top 10 most frequently cited standards is a great way to keep an eye out for common risks that could lead to workers' compensation injuries and claims. Take time to review the following with your employees.

For the 2021 fiscal year, the Top 10 consisted of:¹

1. Fall Protection
2. Respiratory Protection
3. Ladders
4. Hazard Communication
5. Scaffolding
6. Fall Protection Training
7. Control of Hazardous Energy (lockout/tagout)
8. Eye and Face Protection
9. Powered Industrial Trucks
10. Machinery and Machine Guarding

Be Proactive

As an employer, you have a responsibility to help keep your employees safe. Take action now by:

- Posting OSHA and safe work reminders in places employees will see them
- Providing regular safety training
- Delegating a risk manager
- Implementing and regularly updating written safety programs
- Maintaining accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses

- Supplying proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Informing of potential job site hazards through labels, alarms, and information sheets

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1. <https://www.osha.gov/top10citedstandards> The Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards. Accessed 5/15/23.

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