

MFDA 2020 Convention & Trade Show

Butte Copper King Inn
June 11-14
Historic Butte, Montana

SALUTE TO VETERANS

Meet new vendors and visit your returning favorites

Featured Speakers

Dominick Astorino
Wayne State University

Jeff Zealley
SLC College of Mortuary Science

Randy Anderson
President Elect NFDA

Steve Jones
Mathews Aurora

Cameron Axelson
LifeNet Health

Lt. Col. Darin Gaub USA Retired

DC Legg
Federated Insurance

Montana Funeral Directors Association



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Cremation Certification by NFDA
Emergency Situation Training
Caring for Caregivers Training
Scientific Approach to Common Embalming & more
up to 14.5 CE Credits

Annual Golf Tournament Bus Tour of Butte

100 ft. underground Mine Tour
Visit historic graves
Historic Dumas Brothel
Kelly Mine Yard home of the Headframe
Spirits Distillery

Milestone Achievement Awards

Past Presidents Welcome Reception



Montana Funeral Directors Association Directors Digest

SPRING 2020



Featured Firm

 **WILDERNESS**
Funeral Home & Cremation Services

The Dahl Family



1ST ANNUAL CAR SHOW

June 11th, 2020
Butte Copper King

Cocktails, Food, Prizes, and Fun!



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Terri James
Association Assistant
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CONGRATULATIONS

2020 MFDA Award Recipients

Awards will be presented at the
MFDA Convention June 13th

50+ Years
Gary Croxford

45 Years
Fred Nelson

35 Years
Terri Stevenson
Todd Stevenson
Fred Rausch

30 Years
Randy Wilke

25 Years
Bill Rothie
Steve Schnackenberg
Matt Coon

15 Years
Jeremy Bristol

10 Years
T.J. Stevenson
Kristen Cummins
Lee Darlington

5 Years
Vanessa Shook

*If your name has been mistakenly left off this list
please contact MFDA office.*

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When Jason and his wife
made the decision to
adopt, he decided to get
two corneal transplants so
he could see again and be
the father he wanted to be.

Both the transplants were
successful, and so was the
adoption.

Corneal Recipient, Jason, Age 31, with his wife and two daughters, holding the photo of his cornea donor, Nick.
Photo © Tori Cervantes

sightlife.org

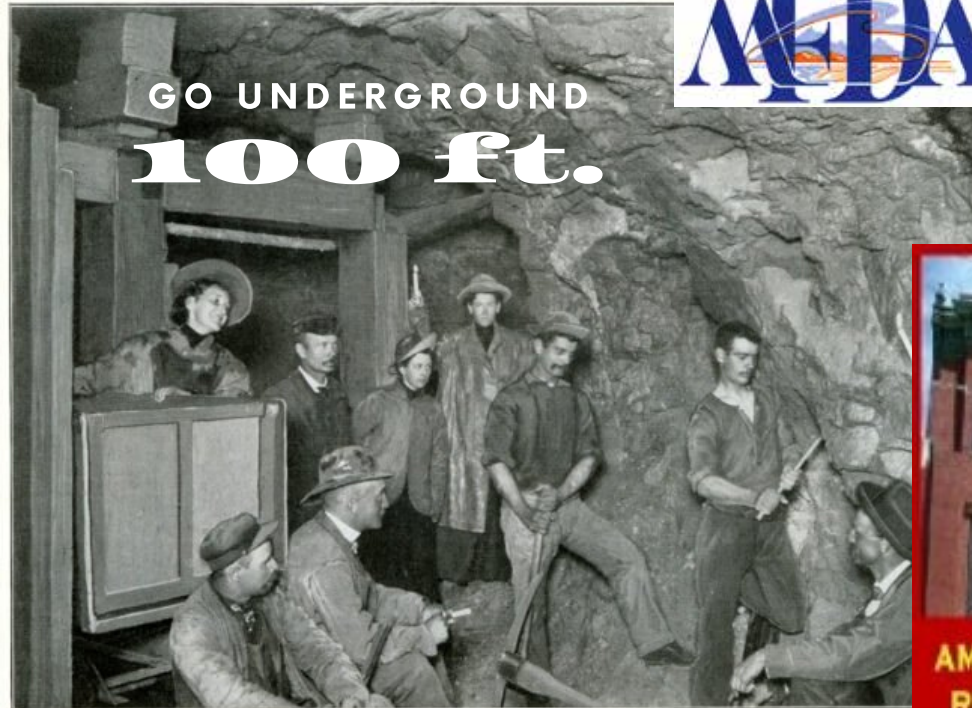
Thank you, MFDA!



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mft@mtfuneraltrust.org

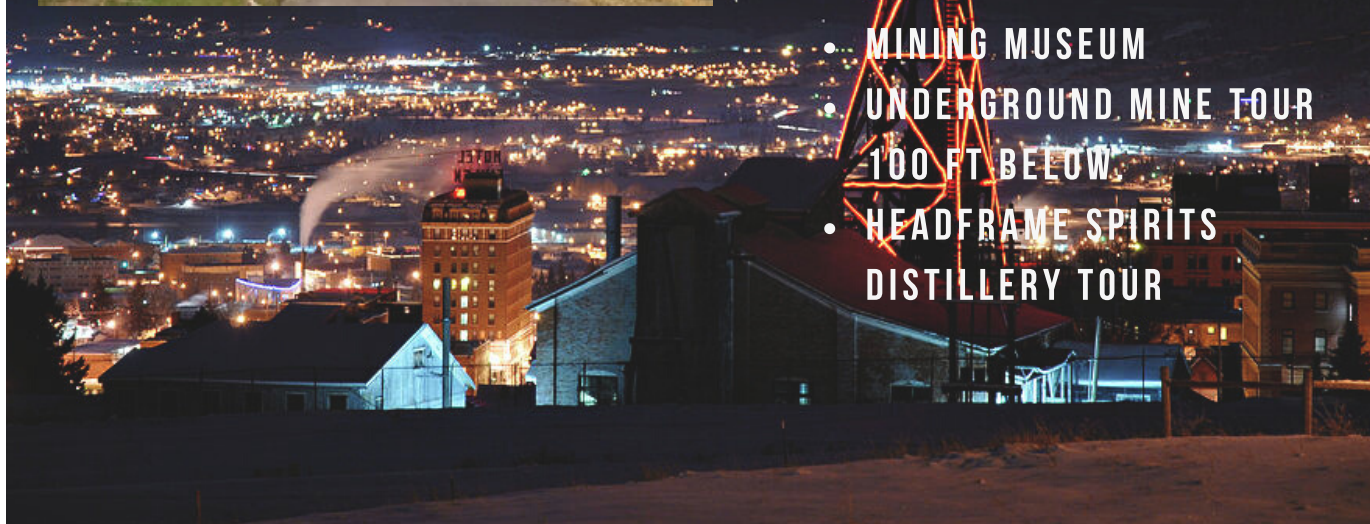
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- MINING MUSEUM
- UNDERGROUND MINE TOUR 100 FT BELOW
- HEADFRAME SPIRITS DISTILLERY TOUR



Limited Seating Available

MFDA Calendar of events

April 30 Spring District Meeting Online 6 PM-8 PM

- Jim Brown- MFDA Executive Director-Introduction/Welcome
- Melissa Sargillas-MFDA Trust Report 6:05
- Frank Arb-MFDA President Presidents Report
- Scholarships Update
- Pete Mudrow - Select Bankcard 2020 Convention Update
- Jim Brown-ED Report
- Membership Update
- Association Finances
- MFDA Website Social Media
- Publications Directors Digest/Membership Directory
- Legislative Report
- Upcoming Events
- Tyson Moore-Board of Funeral Service Report
- Congressman Greg Gianforte 6:30
- Cameron Axelson-Compassion Fatigue 7 PM
- Matt Smith-7:30 PM

June 11-14 MFDA Convention and Trade Show Butte Copper King

June 11 NFDA Cremation Certification

June 12 MFDA Golf Tournament

June 12 MFDA Butte Bus Tour

Underground Mine 100 ft. Headframe Distillery at the Kelly Mine

Yard

Historic Grave Sites in Butte Guided by Butte Historian Chris Fisk

August 2-5 NFDA leadership Conference

Charleston, SC

September 14 Fall District Meeting

Miles City

September 15 Fall District Meeting

Billings

September 16 Fall District Meeting

Bozeman

September 17 Fall District Meeting

Missoula

September 18 Fall District Meeting

Great Falls

October 18-21 NFDA International Convention

New Orleans

November 6 MFDA Board of Directors Meeting

Great Northern Hotel

Helena

February 3, 2021 MFDA Board of Directors Meeting

11-4

Great Northern Hotel

Helena

February 3, 2021 Legislators Cocktail Reception

6 PM-8 PM

Great Northern

February 4, 2021 Mid-Winter Conference

Great Northern

2020 MFDA CONVENTION



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Visit slcc.edu/mortuaryscience or contact our program director, David Hess: david.hess@slcc.edu or 801-957-6205 for more information.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY FRANK ARB

My thoughts and concerns are with you all during these trying, stressful and difficult times. We know there isn't a minute that goes by that we are not hearing more sorrowful news about the virus; be it on TV, radio, print or social media. It has certainly changed the environment in which we live and work.

I know in my heart that we as Funeral Directors - MONTANA STATE FUNERAL DIRECTORS - will be there for the families we serve and will make the best of a terrible situation. You have my respect and gratitude for all that you are doing during this exasperating time. Putting the needs of the families you serve first shows me the true moral character of the members of MFDA! Keep up the good work.

The Association continues to function and operate under the guidance of our Executive Director James Brown. Jim and his assistant, Terri James are doing their best to keep the Association running as smoothly as possible, all things considered. I have not heard of any excessive delays getting payment or paperwork processed from the Trust. If you do have issues please let us know if we can help.

I, as your President, am so very proud of the leadership that Jim and Terri have shown during this time. To keep our Association running under such challenging conditions is mind-boggling. And yet they have met the challenge. Jim, Terri, and I speak frequently about the updates and developments impacting all of us. It is our goal to make sure you are all informed, be it day, night and even weekends. The Association always has your back. If you have a critical need for PPE or other supplies let us know and we will help find what is available.

I again cannot thank you enough for all that you are doing during this time, but please be safe.

As you are probably aware the Advocacy Summit scheduled for the end of April was canceled this year. We will work hard to keep you updated as we learn of any news from NFDA. Please remember that NFDA had copious amounts of information available to you as resources for dealing with all aspects of COVID-19.

I worked with Matt Smith to arrange the availability to have all MFDA members be able to access his in-depth online presentation regarding dealing with the virus as a Funeral Director. MFDA has paid the fee for all members to be able to view this and get CE credits. He will be available to answer questions live during our online district meeting on April 30, 2020. I hope you will be taking advantage of this. This is another great reason to be a member of our association.

I want to thank you again for the honor you have given me to serve as president of MFDA this year. The association is in great shape financially and has the absolute best in the field as far as staffing. The MFDA board has worked very hard through the last few years to trim the budget and be good stewards of the money you pay in dues. We will need to continue to watch closely the income and expenses of the association so it can continue to protect and better our profession. If any of you would like to be more involved in the association please contact a board member.



I am looking forward to seeing you all at the State convention.

Warm Personal Regards,

President
Montana Funeral Directors Association

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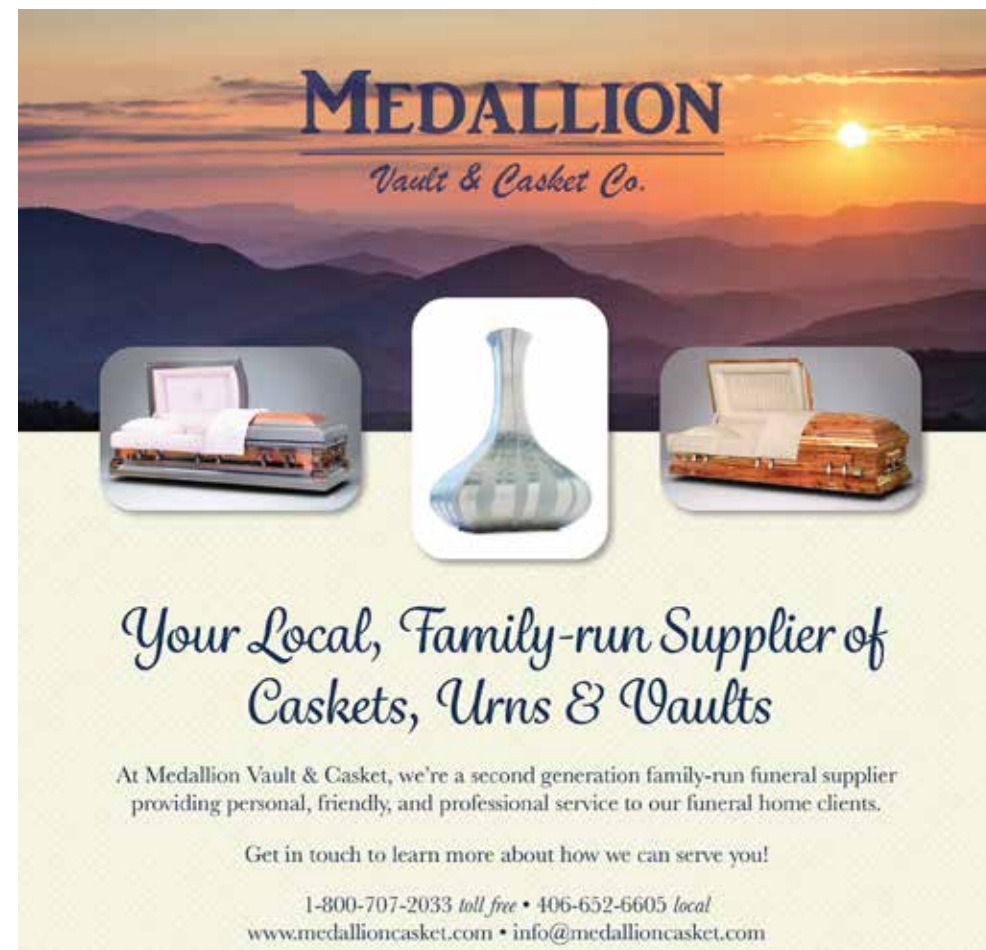
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MFDA Convention Speaker Cremation Packaging

Steve Jones

Steve Jones is the Director of Strategic Business Solutions for Matthew Aurora Funeral Solutions and has worked in the funeral industry for over 40 years and is one of the company's primary sources for cremation knowledge. Steve has extensive experience consulting on issues relating to merchandising, communications, and innovative consumer presentation. He also is well trained in business strategies of the funeral industry and has led presentations relating to the many jobs involved with a career as a funeral director. Steve conducts seminars and lectures to many professional groups and individual firms across the United States on a regular basis.

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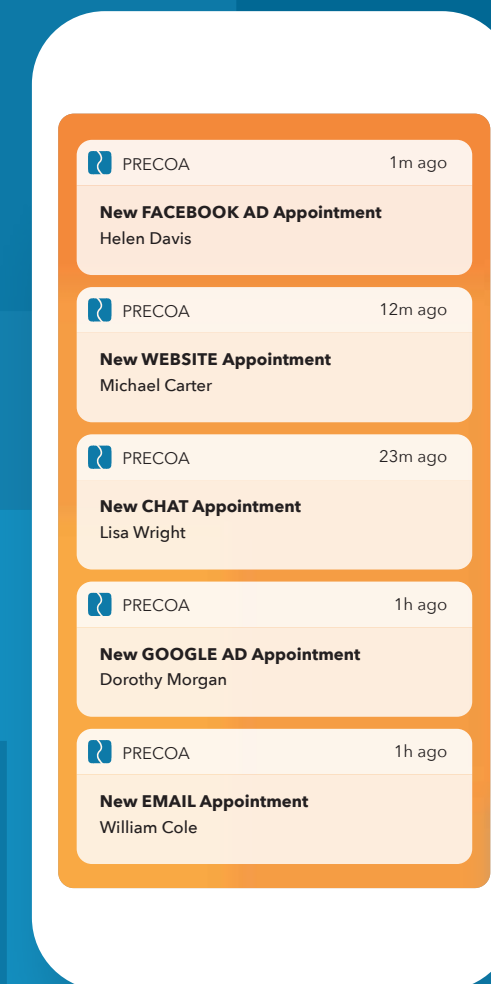
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT BY JAMES BROWN

As the Chinese saying goes, “may you live in interesting times.” We are certainly living in some interesting times, i.e. the period of Covid-19.

My, how the world has changed since the beginning of March of 2020. As of March 1st, the economy was humming, the stock market was climbing, and the number of unemployed was dropping. And, then, in the blink of an eye, we have all become acquainted with the terms ‘social distancing’ and ‘flattening the curve’.

The last few weeks have been challenging for every American and every American business. This is true for those who work in the funeral industry as well. During the last few weeks, we have seen our colleagues in other areas of the country, such as New York City and New Orleans, be on the front lines of mass death events. We have also seen a call go out from our national organization, NFDA, for morticians to volunteer their time to those ‘hot spot’ areas.

Here in Montana, the Governor issued a ‘shelter-in-place’ order, effectively closing ‘non-essential’ businesses throughout the State. Wisely, Governor Bullock’s order deemed funeral homes and providers as essential businesses. This order came on the heels of the MFDA sending a letter to the Governor in early March requesting that, should the Governor issue a shelter-in-place order, he designate funeral providers as critical workers.

Also, anticipating a possible shortfall in personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the Covid-19 situation, the Association sent another letter to the Governor requesting that he ensure that our membership is placed toward the front of the line in obtaining PPE should there be a shortage. Further, in conjunction with Dr. Kurtzman, Montana’s Chief Medical Examiner, the Association helped develop triage charts for postmortem COVID-19 testing and

provided those charts to the MFDA membership.

As you are aware from running your own business, for the last few weeks, MFDA has had to adjust and adapt to rapidly changing conditions. To protect our membership and the public in general, the Association canceled the spring in-person district meetings set for May. In lieu, the Association changed the spring district meetings into an on-line format and hosted the web-based event on April 30th. Further, the National Funeral Directors Association canceled the annual DC policy summit, which was slated to be held at the end of

As of the date I write this in early April, the Association is still planning to host its annual convention and trade show. The convention will be held in Butte this year from June 11th-14th.

During this challenging time, we are reminded once again of the value of Montana’s funeral industry – from helping families who have experienced loss to working with the State of Montana on public health and safety measures. The value of your profession is recognized by the fact that funeral providers have been deemed as essential workers all across this great country.

There is a great bit of uncertainty as to what the future holds for this country, for Montana, and our nation’s businesses. But, there is no uncertainty for our profession. There will always be a need for the service of death care professionals.

We here at MFDA wish you and your loved ones the best and hope that you can remain safe and healthy during the Covid-19 Pandemic. And, we all look forward to this era being put in the rearview mirror and to returning to the familiar and normal.

Thank you for all you do. We here at MFDA appreciate you.



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Daniel Dahl bought the Havre and Malta locations in 2019

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Montana Funeral Directors Association
SERVING MONTANA SINCE 1912

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PO BOX 4267
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Terri James
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DANIEL DAHL



Daniel Dahl grew up in Wasilla Alaska, where he played football and basketball in high school, received an Eagle Scout Award in 2006, and served an LDS mission in Las Vegas NV for two years. In 2009 he was asked to "pick up dead people" after normal business hours for a funeral home in Palmer, Alaska. This led to his career in the Funeral Industry. Daniel married the love of his life Kadie Wilderness, in 2010. In 2012 Daniel got his Alaskan Funeral Directors License and welcomed his first born son Daniel Boone Wilderness Dahl in July of the same year. In 2014 Daniel Graduated from Arapahoe Community College with an Associates in Mortuary Science degree, and also welcomed his 2nd son Rutledge Clay Dahl. Daniel was manager for Legacy Funeral Homes before bringing his family to Chinook MT. In 2016 Daniel and Kadie welcomed their daughter Alice Ann Dahl. Wanting to serve people Daniel found that funeral service was the best way to do so. Daniel wants to continue with Marvin's Legacy by honoring and servicing the families of the High-Line communities.

CHINOOK



The Funeral home was built in 1937 by the Schellin family. Over the years the Funeral Home has had some changes and upgrades but overall the building is still the same. This building has been serving families for over 80 years.



Edwards Funeral Home was constructed in 1932 by Herman Kuper who owned and operated the business for over 30 years. In 1972 Marvin Edwards moved to Chinook after receiving his mortuary science degree from Mt. Hood Community College and having served apprenticeships under Bell Mortuary in Glasgow, Montana, and worked alongside Mr. Eliason in the Chinook funeral home. Marvin purchased the business from Leon Eliason in 1973. Marvin's wife, Cherie Edwards' family has a long-standing tradition in the funeral business as Cherie's father, grandfather and brother were or are currently funeral directors in north central Montana for nearly a century having owned mortuaries in Malta and Glasgow, Montana. Edwards Funeral Home, located near downtown Chinook Montana, serves the communities of Chinook, Harlem, Turner, Fort Belknap, Hays, Havre, Rocky Boy, Big Sandy and other nearby regions. The company has been operated continuously by the Edwards family since 1973, when Marvin Edwards purchased the business from Leon Eliason. Marvin was the sole owner and operator of the funeral home for over 38 years until his passing in the summer of 2011. The Dahl family bought the funeral home in 2017 and changed the name to Wilderness Funeral Home.

Board of Funeral Services Update

Grace Berger, Executive Officer

I have been asked by MFDA to provide a brief update on the activities of the Board of Funeral Services. As I sit at my dining room table, working from home during the shelter in place order, I contemplate where to begin. I guess an introduction is first.

I began with the Board January 1, taking over from Lucy Richards. Lucy remains at the Division and is a tremendous asset to me as I learn these new ropes. I have work with regulatory boards for more than 35 years so I'm no stranger to the concept, but each profession holds its own challenges. I currently work with two other regulatory boards.

The Board met in March and voted to adopt proposed rule amendment ARM 24-147-40 with some changes to the original notice. In addition to updating and simplifying rules, the changes implemented recently passed legislation allowing for a student clinical practicum without licensing but requiring oversight by a mortician-in-charge, and amended the education requirement for initial licensing.

The Board also considered a fee increase. The original proposal called for a 60% increase of all Board fees. Discussions with the Division during the meeting determined that the absolute smallest increase that would provide adequate revenue to allow the Board to fulfil its legal mandate of protection of the public was a 45% increase. The Board voted to amend the original proposed fee increase from 60% to 45% and adopt as amended.

The rule adoption was filed with the Secretary of State and became effective April 18. You can find both the proposed amendments and the adoption notice under the Regulations tab on the Board website.

All of the recent changes mandate we rethink our old ways of doing business and how we communicate. Please reach out to us if you require any information or assistance. Email is always the best way to get a response as phones are not always available. For questions about the progress of an application or renewal, contact dlibsdlhelp@mt.gov. If you have scope of practice questions or general board communications, you can contact dlibsdfnr@mt.gov. We always encourage you to visit the Board website.

I appreciate your patience as we navigate these unusual times of social distancing and working remotely as I learn the workings of this profession.





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Burials without funerals, grief without hugs: Coronavirus is changing how we say goodbye

Peter D. Kramer
NorthJersey.com

Maggie Farley wants to remember the way her father lived – the Denver probate lawyer's sense of humor, integrity and decades fighting for affordable housing – not how he died of COVID-19 with no family permitted at his hospital bedside.

"I don't feel like he died with regrets and I don't feel like we left anything unsaid, but I really would have liked to have been there to hold his hand," said Farley, of Bethesda, Maryland. "It's an essential human fear that we don't want to die alone, and the worst part of it for our family was knowing that he was in the hospital alone."

More than 4,000 Americans have died in the outbreak, according to the Johns Hopkins coronavirus database. Federal estimates put the ultimate death toll somewhere between 100,000 and 240,000. That's in addition to the normal mortality rate in the country.

All of those deaths will require some sort of final rite.

For many, a funeral is a ritual of loss and connection where we remember the dead and comfort the living. But the coronavirus outbreak has altered that ritual and changed the way we say goodbye: the loss remains, the connections change.

Gone are huge public funerals and wakes in funeral homes filled with mourners who cry and laugh, linger and reminisce. In their place across much of the country are family-only funeral home visitations of 10 or fewer, livestreamed memorials and plans to gather when the world gets back to normal.

Farley said she's grateful to the nurses at Denver's Swedish Medical Center who tended to her father and set up FaceTime sessions so the family could talk to him and, two days later, see last rites administered.

Mike Farley died March 23 at 87.

"Dying alone is the hardest part, but it's also really hard to grieve alone," Farley said. "People think that doing a video conference or talking to the friends on Zoom or

Zoom cocktail hour is awkward and alienating, but grieving alone is really isolating."

A glimpse at any newspaper's obituary pages tells the story.

"In light of the recent worldwide occurrences dealing with the outbreak of COVID-19, the family would like to have hours of visitation and burial services reserved for immediate family," reads one.

Another: "A celebration of her life will be held at a later date."

Dizzying change

The outbreak has brought dizzying, near-daily changes to funerals over the past three weeks, said Mark Flower, a third-generation funeral director and owner of Flower Funeral Home in Yonkers, New York.

"We went from having open funerals to having a (maximum) of 50 or 50% of the chapel size, to now where it's private only for family members, and, only up to 10 people," he said.

"The situation is so fluid," Flower said. "I've never seen anything like this before. We're basically winging it. When you do funerals, you always have to be flexible. But how we handle things is so different than the norm of a traditional funeral."

Flower oversaw the entombment of Robert Terraforte Sr., a native New Yorker who died March 21 in Tennessee, where he was living with his son, Robert Jr.

The arrangements included flying his remains back to New York, a task made more difficult by airlines reducing their flight schedules amid the outbreak. Some Florida funeral homes have opted to ship bodies via ground transportation.

There was no funeral, which would have drawn dozens of Terraforte friends and family from across Westchester County, where the coronavirus first took root in New York.

2020 MFDA CONVENTION!

Golf Tournament June 12th in
Butte MT at the 2020 MFDA



- * Get out and stretch your legs and get some fresh air!
- * Spend time with great members of the MFDA!
- * Compete for great prizes!
- * Walk away with some awesome golf gear and goodies!

Updated Information!!

Tee Time: 11:30 AM

Golf Course: Highland View

Cost: \$40.00 (includes golf and cart)

Prizes: Lots and Lots of Prizes!

Fun: Had by all! (Scramble)

Snacks and Treats: Absolutely!



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Dennis Beverlin
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Terri James
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Terri James - MFDA

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Terrafortes live a long time, Robert Terraforte Jr. explained, and no one wanted to have his father’s sisters, age 95 and 93, and his 91-year-old brother possibly exposed to the coronavirus. The family will gather in the late summer or fall, he said.

Funerals without hugs

There have been other changes brought on by the outbreak:

- The Archdiocese of New York and the Archdiocese of Newark in New Jersey – in the country’s hardest-hit area – have canceled all funerals and now limit the number of graveside mourners to the state-mandated 10 people who must keep their distance as the priest offers a blessing at the grave. All services must be in the open air.
- Cemeteries are setting rules for graveside behavior, with mourners kept at a distance until the burial is complete and cemetery workers leave.
- With airline travel at a near standstill and mourners reluctant to travel, funeral homes are livestreaming funerals to connect far-flung mourners.
- Funeral homes are using digital DocuSign to complete official documents, and handling arrangements over the phone or via email.
- In funeral home chapels, chairs have been removed from rows of seats to keep mourners at a distance.
- In many locales, the number of mourners has been set to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations: just immediate family of no more than 10 people at a time.

A toll on businesses

Funerals are big business.

The National Directory of Morticians Redbook reports there were 19,136 funeral homes in the U.S. last year, making up a sizable part of the \$16.3 billion industry that includes funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories.

Nearly 90% of the country’s funeral homes are privately owned by families or individuals, according to the National Funeral Directors Association.

Dutch Nie, the group’s secretary, owns Nie Family Fu-

neral Home & Cremation Service in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where gatherings statewide have been limited to groups of 50 or fewer.

He said funeral directors are having to get creative when it comes to crowd control, asking mourners to stagger when they arrive for visitation and not to linger once they’ve offered their condolences.

"People are scheduling out the memorial service at a later date," Nie said. "We probably have 12 of them scheduled in June and July, I think our latest one is in September, where they will be able to come back together and have the memorial service at that point."

Keith Taylor, owner of Hannemann Funeral Home in Nyack, New York, said the outbreak will take an economic toll far beyond the funeral homes.

"When you have a funeral, people want flowers. Here, there's no flowers," he said. "Then, between the early and late visitations, there's a break where they'll go to a restaurant with the family and have a little reception. That's all cut out. Then after the funeral the next day, they usually have a get together at the house and have a caterer come in or they have it at a restaurant. And that's all cut out."

Taylor said the social distancing rules have turned him and his staff into "funeral director police," tasked with gently reminding mourners of the new reality, one that pits tradition and emotion against a pandemic.

The pandemic is winning.

Smaller and smaller gatherings

State mandates are shifting constantly, reducing the number of permitted gatherings.

When Jonnie B. Wilson Sr., of Newark, Delaware, died March 6, the state’s gathering limit was 100.

Wilson ran a Wilmington lighting business for 40 years. The Army veteran was a father of four and the youngest of 11 siblings. Limiting the memorial to 100 would be hard. Then, days before the service, the gathering limit dropped to 50.

The family made phone calls, prioritized the closest family, culled mourners from the sanctuary.

"They knew it wasn't personal, but I'm sure it hurt many of them," said Wilson's son Jermaine.

The veteran's cemetery halted military honors the day before the service: no flag-draped casket, no ceremonial salute. Mourners sat in their cars as "Taps" played to an empty cemetery.

"There was no other service," Jermaine Wilson said. "I'm going to try to not let that bother me."

Honoring the dead via Facebook Live

Technology is helping to fill the void, though never completely.

At Holloway Funeral Home in Salisbury, Maryland, Jonathan Holloway said his customers historically have not embraced webcasting of funerals. The coronavirus could change that.

"Webcasting is a way we can still tell someone's story through funeral service, even under the current restrictions," Holloway said. His and other funeral homes across the country have turned to social media amid social distancing, using Facebook Live to honor the dead.

He said Facebook is better than the proprietary software they had been using: The video is automatically archived on the funeral home's Facebook page and video quality is downgraded automatically to accommodate slow connections, meaning Holloway's high-definition broadcast can be seen almost anywhere, even if in a lower quality.

Still, said Michele Howell, associate executive director of the Independent Funeral Directors of Florida, technology can only do so much.

"It's difficult. At a time when someone loses a loved one, there's nothing more that they want than to hold hands or give a hug, and it's made it really difficult on families," she said.

'Some people will have to mourn in silence'

In Corpus Christi, Texas, Wayne Jackson grieved the loss of his brother, Howlis "Magic" Scott, with a much smaller group than he would have anticipated.

"You just got to accept what's going on now. It's reality," Jackson said. "Some people will just have to mourn in silence, like everybody else around the country right now."

In Corpus Christi, memorial services are livestreamed free of charge.

"This isn't anything that anybody planned on," said Noe Lopez Jr., a funeral director and co-owner of the Saxet Funeral Home in Corpus Christi. "It's not the family's fault

that this happened to them. So, we're doing the best we can to utilize our resources and our staff to try to help everybody get through this dark time."

There are other high-tech accommodations: Additional mourners can watch the service on a closed-circuit TV in other rooms; register books are fitted with disinfecting UV light; families can use DocuSign for digital signatures.

Then there's the low-tech: removing two out of three chairs in a row and sanitizing register pens after each use. Lopez's staff placed masking-tape X's six feet apart on the floor of the chapel, to reinforce social distance rules. And the casket is covered in a glass dome so visitors can't touch it.

In Oklahoma, state funeral board director Chris Ferguson said the full extent of the coronavirus outbreak is still the great unknown.

"It's hard to say what's going to happen when those bodies start appearing in mass numbers," Ferguson said.

Sitting shiva via Zoom

Jewish and Muslim burial customs, which include more intimate washings and preparations for bodies, are typically performed within 24 hours of a person's death.

When a member of Temple Beth Shalom in Melbourne, Florida, died recently, Rabbi Craig Mayers told the deceased's out-of-state family members they could watch the graveside burial over the video-conferencing app Zoom.

"There will be just a few of us at the gravesite. We'll do a proper memorial later," Mayers said, adding that traditional meal of consolation that follows would not be held.

The Jewish custom of sitting shiva, where mourners visit the family in their home, was also conducted via Zoom.

"No meal of consolation, no sitting shiva ... these things are suspended for health and safety right now," Mayers said. "It's very sad but at the same time we are blessed to live in an age where we have this technology that allows us to still be a community."

The funeral director at The Madonna Multinational Home for Funerals in Passaic, New Jersey, who goes by the name Madonna, said that families are devastated about the minimal personal interaction allowed.

"With the rules coming from the governor, we are doing everything one size fits all," she said. "It doesn't matter

- This is a unique time. It may be wise to consider offering the family the opportunity to hold an additional service after the current restrictions are lifted. In doing this, I assure you they will be forever grateful. Does this mean more work for you and your staff? Yes, but it will also help secure your future and the future of funeral service.
- Encourage families to realize that despite the current challenges with the COVID-19 virus, they need and deserve support at this time. Encourage them to talk to other people impacted by their loved one's death on the phone or via text. Help them know how to access and use Facetime or Skype-type apps so they can see facial expressions and approximate physical closeness. Invite them to consider writing old-fashioned letters, to share memories, express feelings, and offer condolences to each other.
- If the family has carried out a small, private service (and feel that is all they want to do related to ceremony), still encourage them to plan a get-together (particularly with those who were unable to attend) as soon as the restrictions are lifted. Help them understand that this additional gathering is an excellent way to honor the life of their loved one and activate their longer-term support systems.
- Those who cannot attend the funeral can be encouraged to still hold a small ceremony in their own place of residence. Something as simple as having a candle-lighting and sharing some memories will help them begin to allow their grief to become mourning.

Remember that right now you are the key! You and your funeral home staff are in the position to help families do at least some form of ceremony, despite the current challenge's secondary to the virus. Through education and by you modeling calm in the midst of this storm, you can – and will – help families make decisions that are good for them. I hope my reflections have been helpful to you. If you have any questions or unique challenges I can help with, do not hesitate to email me (DrWolfelt@CenterforLoss.com) or phone me on my direct line at 970.217.7069.

GUEST SPEAKER MFDA CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

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Dominick Astorino

I believe that the viewing of our dead is the single most important facet of funeral service and an integral part of the grieving process for individuals, families, and communities. Unfortunately, the education provided in the area of advanced restorative art and reconstructive embalming is all but extinct; most mortuary schools in the United States offer one or two semesters of restorative art in which students learn the basics of facial proportions, color theory and modeling-- with little to no lessons given on practical application or actual restoration/reconstruction of trauma or difficult cases. For generations, students of mortuary schools across the country have graduated and gone out to serve their communities without any further education in advanced methods.

Many seminars currently offered on this topic are nothing more than a sales pitch for products or events, exploiting and wasting your time and money. The result, over the decades, has been less and less embalmers that possess the confidence or skills to provide open casket viewings in cases of trauma; the closed casket has become the expectation for trauma cases for the public and professionals alike. I do not believe this is rooted in laziness, but rather, a lack of confidence that stems from the lack of education.

My philosophy is simple: provide the education that will instill the confidence. Confidence breeds action and action yields change.



Dealing with Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D., C.T.
Center for Loss and Life Transition

Acknowledging the Current Reality – Implications for Families

As you consider how to approach funeral planning during this global pandemic, don't forget:

1. Anything that delays a funeral delays the natural mourning and healing process.
2. You can't push "pause" on grief. People will continue to feel their grief but will have fewer options to express it and be supported.

For many people, it can be disorienting to be separated from the body of a loved one who has died. We naturally benefit from spending time with the body and having a chance to pay respects and say hello on the path to goodbye. The forced need to separate loved ones and friends from each other at a time of death makes it much more difficult for individuals to experience the forward movement that funerals are intended to meet – reality, recall, support, expression and meaning.

As you know, meaningful funerals are "rites of initiation." They help survivors start the process of taking their grief, the "internal response to loss," and allowing it to become mourning, the

"shared response to loss." When people cannot participate in ceremony they often feel as if their mourning is "on hold."

We live in a culture that is de-ritualizing around death. Many people, through no fault of their own, have never been taught why funerals are so important. So, some people who experience a death in their family at this time will find the coronavirus as good reason to take the path of least resistance – a direct disposition. Obviously, this makes your role in providing them a meaningful funeral even more challenging.

Implications for You: Potential Actions You Can Take

- In the midst of these incredible challenges, stay calm and assure families you are there to help them at this difficult time. If they sense anxiety from you, they will have an instinct to want to distance themselves from you and the services you are able to offer.
- This is an ideal time to teach families why funerals are so important. I suggest you theme everything you do with education.
 - Assure families that while this is a challenging time, you are able to help them have an initial service (even though limited in scope and the number of participants who can attend).
 - Help them understand that a service will help them acknowledge the significance of the death and remember the life.
 - Gently help them realize that if they do nothing it will impact their ability get the needed support from family and friends.
 - Don't hesitate to supportively challenge those who project... "Well, in this situation we just won't do anything." Step into your role as a gatekeeper surrounding the importance of meaningful funerals.
- If you have the technical capability, offer to stream the service. If not (or in addition), offer to record the service to enable people who cannot attend an opportunity to view it later.



the faith or race, everyone is the same and the cemetery is treating people the same way."

Longer than 9/11

Jason Toale, vice president of operations for Robert Toale and Sons Funeral Home in Sarasota, Florida, has been in the industry for 52 years and has seen tumultuous times before, but this pandemic stands apart.

"After 9/11 there was a lot of upheaval, but that was a short time frame and this is looking like a longer time frame to get back to normalcy," he said.

At Brunswick Memorial Funeral Home in East Brunswick, New Jersey, owner Michael Kulbacki said the changes in funeral arrangements must strike a balance.

"Our first priority is always the safety of the living. That's fundamentally what we're dealing with here. Sanctity of the deceased is a priority but we're not going to put the living at risk in order to do that," Kulbacki said.

Together, apart

Maggie Farley has joined her grieving mother in Denver to help her navigate a new reality. They are together,

apart.

"She's technically quarantined and I can't even hug her because we're supposed to stay six feet apart," Farley said. "And that's excruciating."

When they can hug again, she said, "It's going to be a good one. We've earned that one."

This article is re-printed with permission of the author. See complete article at


<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/04/02/funerals-during-coronavirus-pandemic-no-hugs-big-gatherings/5102855002/>



MEMORIAL

— MONUMENTS —

2020 CONVENTION SCHEDULE



NFDA Cremation Certification

NFDA NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

EDUCATES

A must-have certification for everyone offering cremation to the families they serve

Save the Date! June 11, 2019

Hosted by: Montana Funeral Directors Association
Copper King Inn
Butte, Montana

Contact info: Info@montanafda.org



The recognized standard for funeral service professionals, NFDA's Cremation Certification Program covers cremation ethics, crematory operations and maintenance, safety, compliance and liability issues, cremation customer service and much more.

Whether you currently own or operate a crematory, are thinking of opening one, or want to evaluate a third-party crematory, this training is necessary for your success.

Learn the best practices for safe, proper and ethical crematory operations and for excellence in service to cremation families!

Seminar presenter brings unique experience you won't find with any other program!
Mike Nicodemus, NFDA Vice President, Cremation Services

Approved for up to 7 CE hours by APFSP and many state funeral licensing boards.

Visit nfda.org/cremationcertification and click Program Schedule and registration.

With support from  

Thursday, June 11-7CE's

7:30-8:30 am registration

8 am- 4 pm Cremation Certification

6:30-8:00 pm Welcome Reception/MFDA Car Show honoring past Presidents

Friday, June 12-3 CE's

7:30-8:00 Continental Breakfast

8 am-12 pm MFDA Board Meeting

7 am-1:30 pm registration

8 am-10 am-Jay Nelson MT Law Enforcement Academy Admin. Emergency situation training/active shooter

10:10-11:15 am Jeff Zealley Where to Draw the Line **1 CE**

11:30 am Pick up Boxed lunches

11:30 am guests depart for activities

5:00 pm-7 pm registration

6:30 pm- 8 pm- Vendor Welcome Reception

Saturday, June 13-7.5 CE's

8 am Breakfast buffet with vendors

8:45 am Opening Ceremonies presenting the colors/honor guard

9-11:45 am Dominick Astorino- Scientific Approach to Common Embalming Problems **3CE**

12:00-12:45 pm Vendor Luncheon and Trade Show **Ballroom**

1-1:30 pm- DC Legg- Texting & Driving Funeral Home Liability **.05 CE Copper Room**

1:45-4:30 pm- Cameron Axelson-Caring for the Caregivers/ Compassion Fatigue **3 CE Copper Room**

6:00-8:30 pm Officer Installation Dinner- Randy Anderson NFDA President-Elect

Awards keynote speaker- Darin L. Gaub (Lieutenant Colonel, USA, Retired) **Arlington National Cemetery/**

Military Burials- Ballroom

Honoring our Military funeral directors

Sunday June 10-4 CE's

8 am breakfast

8:30-9:15 am Service of Remembrance-ballroom

9:30 am- 11:30 am-Steve Jones Cremation Packaging **2 CE Copper**

9:30 am-Vendor Meeting

11:45—1:45 pm- Membership Meeting/ Melissa Sargilis guest speaker on Montana Trust, Election, NFDA speaker **2 CE** boxed lunch served

Artwork from MSU, Montana Veterans, on display through the convention.