

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

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Montana Funeral Directors Association



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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

WINTER 2020



ARE YOU A MFDA MEMBER & A VETERAN?

PLEASE CONTACT MFDA OFFICE

We would like to honor you for your service in the next issue of the Director's Digest and at the 2020 Convention & Trade Show

2019-2020 MFDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



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Terri James
Association Assistant
info@montanafda.org

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.*

Because of your support and partnership,
recipients like Jason have a clearer, brighter future.



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 © Tora Cervantes

sightlife.org

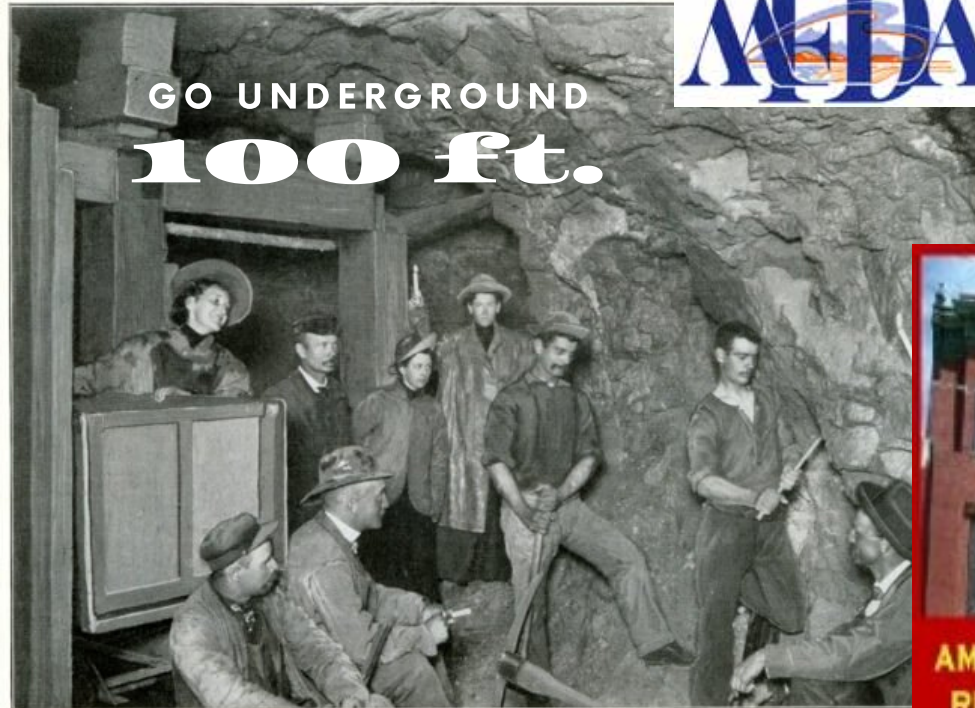
Thank you, MFDA!



Montana Funeral Trust
Contact Information
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mft@mtfuneraltrust.org

MINING CITY TOUR

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\$55.00

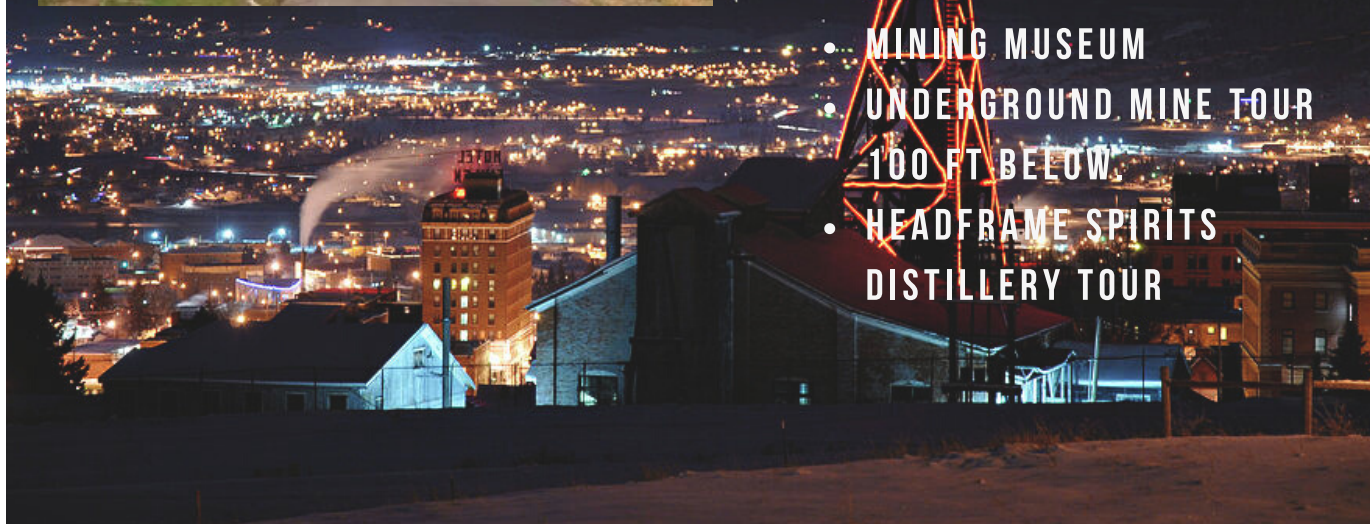


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- MINING MUSEUM
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- HEADFRAME SPIRITS DISTILLERY TOUR



Limited Seating Available

MFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

District Meetings - Updated
 May 18, 2020 Miles City
 May 19, 2020 Billings
 May 20, 2020 Bozeman
 May 21, 2020 Missoula
 May 22, 2020 Great Falls

June 11, 2020-Butte Copper King Inn
 Cremation Certification Course

June 11-14-MFDA Convention & Trade Show
 Butte Copper King Inn

June 12 MFDA Annual Golf Tournament
 Highland View Golf Course

June 12 MFDA Underground Mine & Bus Tour

August 2-5- NFDA Leadership Conference
 Charleston, SC

October 18-21-NFDA Convention
 New Orleans

2020 MFDA CONVENTION



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT BY FRANK ARB

At a recent funeral, I watched as hundreds of people of all ages walked by the casket of a teenage boy we had the honor of providing our services for. It was very touching to watch the emotions as people viewed him and said their goodbyes. The young man died in a very traumatic way and the restoration took countless hours. All those hours of tedious work were rewarded as we watched his friends and family hug him and tell him goodbye. I had Stephanie an intern with me that day. As we watched this, I commented to her can you imagine the difference in what we would be seeing right now if that was an Urn instead of his body in a Casket?

As Funeral Directors we have a chance to make a difference in the way families deal with the darkest time of their life. I hope you all take time once in a while to reflect and remember why you started in this profession. Don't forget the importance of what we can share with families by educating them on the value of open-casket viewing.

We will again this year be devoting the majority of our educational sessions to embalming, restoration, and open casket viewing in our summer convention in Butte this June.

As you have seen by now this year we will be able to attend the cremation certification course the Thursday before the convention. After taking the class and taking a short test you will be able to add CCO (certified crematory operator) designation to your name. All of you know the litigious society we live in. If you are going to be experiencing legal action it is most likely regarding a cremation service. This class shows how to avoid mistakes and offers legal forms for your protection.

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) has partnered with GM to deliver up to \$13,000 in savings on the purchase or lease of select 2020 Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, and GMC vehicles. We're delighted to offer members this fantastic new benefit," said NFDA President R. Bryant Hightower Jr., CFSP. "Whether they're in the market for a vehicle for their personal use or looking to replace a vehicle in their rolling stock, the GM Competitive Assistance Program will result in valuable savings for members." This is just one more reason to be a member of NFDA. The savings are available to anyone that is a member of NFDA. You do not need to buy the vehicle for business use.

We had a very productive and intense Board Retreat last month in Butte. There were a lot of discussions and decisions that were made for the betterment of the Association and you, the members. I am happy to tell you that MFDA is stronger financially than it has been in years thanks to good stewardship by the board and the efforts of Jim and Terri in the office. You can rest assured that we, the officers and board, always have the best interest of this Association in hand.

Two main topics highlighted the agendas for the national convention. One directly affects every funeral home in the country. That is, finding the right people and retaining them! We are all faced with this building dilemma on how to not only find the best people to represent our business but also how to keep them for the long term. The NFDA has created an advisory council to study what we as small businesses can do to ease the burden of finding good, qualified people. Overall, the number of students in mortuary schools across the country has dropped drastically over the last ten years and there is no reason to believe that it will increase anytime soon. We, as owners, managers, and staff, must become more involved in finding the right people on our local levels and get them interested in becoming licensed. This is most likely the only way we will be able to sustain this shortage of qualified, dependable people in the coming future. The other hot topic, somewhat went along with the first, was to push for the creation of a "Courtesy Card" system, that would allow individuals that have passed the national board exam and received a dual license to be able to practice across state lines without having to obtain

a license from that state. Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia have met and developed a model courtesy card law to provide a permit that out-of-state funeral directors could apply for to perform designated services in a border state. The card allows funeral directors from out-of-state to apply for the card permit through the state board of funeral service and would allow them to perform removals, funeral services, and interments in the state issuing the permit.



As your President, I can say that I and the rest MFDA Board are here for you, to assist and address any concerns that you may have. Remember, this is your Association and we are your elected leaders. We are here for you! Please do hesitate to contact me, the Office, or anyone of our board members about your concerns or ideas. In closing, I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your President and the trust and confidence you have in myself, my fellow officers and this great association. It is not taken lightly as we strive to always enhance the environment in which our Members operate and to promote the Highest Standards of Funeral Service to the great state of Montana.

MFDA President



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.

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LEGAL CORNER: IS IT LEGAL TO SERVE ALCOHOL IN FUNERAL HOMES?

MCA 16-6-306 authorizes businesses, such as yours, to allow families to bring in beverages for events, so long as the alcohol is not sold or a fee is not charged to get into the event or to serve the alcohol.

16-6-306. Bottle clubs prohibited. The operation of alcoholic beverage bottle clubs is hereby prohibited by any person, persons, partnership, firm, corporation, or association. A bottle club is defined as any person, persons, partnership, firm, corporation, or association maintaining premises not licensed for the sale of alcoholic beverages, for a fee or other consideration, including the sale of food, mixes, ice, or any other fluids for alcoholic beverages, or otherwise furnishing premises for such purposes and from which they would derive revenue.

*The definition of a **bottle club** is a social meeting place where customers are served drinks from their own liquor bottles. An example of a bottle club is a fraternal organization pouring alcohol in their clubhouse where there is not a licensed bar or a bar is not allowed.*

Funeral homes are advised to acquire event insurance in case of any legal issues which may a result of alcohol being served at your place of business.



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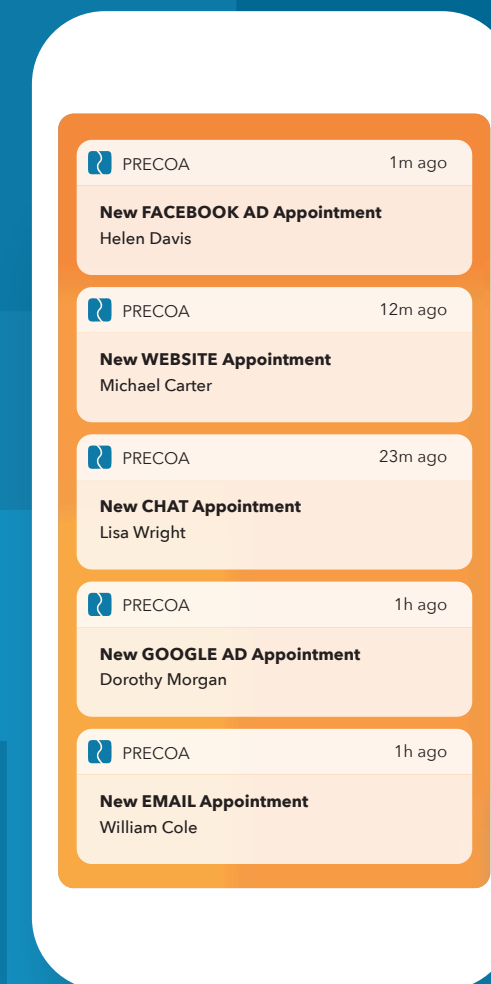
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2019 has come to a close and a new decade has started.

Here is the quote that captures well my thoughts on this new year and on the last New Year's Eve celebration of the 2010s decade:

"Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to." ~Bill Vaughn

One of my favorite classic Hollywood films is 'White Christmas.' This time of year, as sung by Bing Crosby in that wonderful film: "We count our blessings instead of sheep". However, this may not be true for my sheep industry clients who are literally counting sheep at this time of year.

For Montana' funeral industry there were a lot of blessings to count in 2019; chief among them is that the industry continues to be a profitable one – despite the rise in cremations. It is projected that, for the last five years, industry revenue nationwide has increased at an annualized rate of 0.9% to \$16.5 billion. This despite a projected drop of 0.2% in industry revenue for 2019.

But, it was not all rosy news. As we moved through 2019, as noted, according to the NFDA, cremations continued to rise. The cremation rate is estimated to be some 54% of all dispositions and that climbing trend is expected to continue – reaching an estimated cremation rate of 80% by 2035. Further, the number of funeral homes in the U.S. continues to drop – sitting at roughly 19,000 homes. In 2004, there were an estimated 21,500 facilities.

Turning back to the year in review for Montana's funeral industry. In 2019, the Association hosted another great state convention and trade show. The Association's event was held in Billings this past year, which was the first time the Association had hosted its annual convention in the "Magic City" for over a decade. We received much great feedback in terms of the quality of our speakers. In addition, the Association once again hosted its annual fall and spring district meetings, which were well attended. Further, we had record attendance at our Montana dinner held during the NFDA national convention, which was hosted in Chicago this year.

2019 also saw the association grow in terms our associate membership and sponsorship. Our industry partners continue to expand and that increased supports shows in our convention and event attendance. We also had multiple Montanans win MFDA education scholarships.

With the start of 2020, the Association enters its 113th year of existence. While the firm member names and the board members and officers are always evolving, the mission of the Association remains constant and timeless. The MFDA has one mission, and one mission only – to help Montana's funeral providers prosper so that that their businesses can help their local communities and customers prosper.

In 2019, a large focus of the Association's efforts on its members behalf related to ensuring the health of the Montana Board of Funeral Services (BFS). The Association continued to advocate in front of the Montana legislature for dollars to be directed to the Board to help it offset the high and ever-increasing cost of hearing and deciding board complaints. We also weighed in on the BFS's rule change proposals. Finally, we advocate for passage of legislation to revise the education criteria to be licensed to practice in Montana – an effort that will help firms recruit new and qualified people to work in the Treasure State.

A new decade means now opportunities for you, your business, and the funeral industry. A new year also provides an opportunity to recognize and reflect on the magical formula that makes Montana's funeral providers successful – that formula being your customer-first focus. Underlying the economic success of the industry for the last several years is the ability of MFDA's members to adapt to and prosper in changing times while continuing to make the customer the highest priority.

It is my hope that 2020 is the best year yet for you and that you don't break your new year's resolution(s) – at least not before the end of February. My personal new year's wish for the year 2020 is that everyone has a happy holiday season and enjoys the time spent with their family, friends, and loved ones.

I am excited to be a part of another productive year for MFDA and its members and associate member partners. On behalf of MFDA's board and its staff, thank you for being a member of our small, but thriving Association. See you soon in this new year!




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info@MontanaFDA.org
montanafda.org

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!



Register Today!

Dennis Beverlin
208-629-6754 (Cell)
dennisb@precoa.com

Terri James
406-449-7244 (office)
info@montanafda.org

Register today to lock in your spot and help us know what to plan for!



ALICE JOY SEYMOUR

Alice Joy Seymour passed away in butte on december 7, 2019, after a long battle with Alzheimer's decease. Alice truly loved life and filled every room with laughter. She will be deeply missed by her friends, family, and community. Born in Belgrade to Charles and Edna Sayers, Alice was the youngest of seven children.

At the age of five, the Sayers family moved to Butte where Alice resided for the rest of her life. During the second grade at the Webster Garfield, Alice met a "cool boy" from Timber Butte, Martin "Joe" Seymour. Alice and Joe married at the Boulder Hot Springs on December 22, 1952. Joe and Alice's marriage was a wonderful example of what a selfless marriage with a firm foundation of friendship looked like to their children and grandchildren. Alice and Joe were blessed with 62 years of marriage and friendship before joe passed away in 2014 from Parkinson's disease.

Alice's favorite place was in Wise River next to alder creek. Alice hosted parties, reunions, and even weddings at the Seymour cabin in Wise River. Whether she hosted hundreds of attendees at the Sayers and Seymour family reunions or a dozen family members around the table at weekly Sunday dinners, all that mattered to Alice was that her family was around her.

Alice loved exploring the Pioneer mountains by snowmobile, atv, or Sunday drives with joe, her family, and her friends. Alice also enjoyed painting ceramics, sewing, cooking, and caring for her home and garden.

In the 2000 Sayers family reunion book she wrote:

"Life has been a great adventure. But, the greatest adventure of all has been lots of fun and laughter with family. It doesn't get better than that."

Alice is survived by her five children: Joe (Judy) Seymour, Steve (Marcia) Seymour, Terri (Mark) James, Maureen Seymour, Tim (Teresa) Seymour, and twelve grandchildren: Jason (Jamie) Seymour, Jamie (Chris) Rask, Jordan (Jesse) Tracy, Chris (Mark) Noel, Steve (Dawn) Seymour, Sean (Priscilla) Seymour, Austin (Rose) James, Taylor (Justin Howell) James, Jesse (Stephanie) Sheehy, Kelly Sheehy, Drew (Kristen Cole) Sheehy, Tim Seymour, and 13 great-grandchildren.

Alice was preceded in death by her husband, her parents, and her siblings. In addition to her children and grandchildren, Alice is survived by her brothers and sisters-in-law, Dan (Terri) Seymour, Jim (Marie) Seymour, Bev Monahan of Butte, Barb (Bob) Richards, Leo Calcaterra, of Helena, and many nieces and nephews.

Alice's family would like to thank the Springs of Butte for the love and care given to Alice during her residence, with special thanks to Shelly Allison and Loren Kippen.

Memorial donations may be made to Senior Solutions Hospice care or to our Lady of the Rockies.



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FTC Seeks Public Comment as Part of its Review of the Funeral Rule

The Federal Trade Commission is seeking public comment on whether to make changes to its Funeral Rule as part of the agency's systematic review of all current FTC rules and guides.

The Funeral Rule, enacted in 1982, protects consumers from unfair and deceptive practices in the sale of funeral products and services. Consumers in the market for such products or services often are under significant emotional strain and tight time constraints.

The Rule, formally known as the Funeral Industry Practices Rule, requires funeral providers to give consumers itemized price information up front, and to provide additional information about the price of caskets and burial vaults when discussing or showing those items. The Rule also gives consumers the right to buy just the funeral goods and services they want and need from the provider. Funeral providers must allow customers to purchase caskets elsewhere, and cannot charge "handling fees" when customers do so. The Rule also prohibits funeral providers from making certain misrepresentations, such as stating that embalming is required when it is not, and prohibits funeral providers from embalming remains for a fee without authorization from the customer.

In a Federal Register notice, the FTC is seeking comment on a wide range of questions, including:

- whether consumers have benefitted from the Rule;
- whether the Rule imposes any significant costs on funeral providers;
- whether changes in technology or the economy require changes to the Rule;
- whether new unfair or deceptive industry practices exist that could be addressed by changes to the Rule;
- whether providers should be required to post their itemized price lists online; and

- whether itemized price lists should have a standard format to help consumers compare prices between providers and help providers comply with the Rule.

The Commission vote to approve the Federal Register notice was 5-0. Commissioner Rohit Chopra issued a separate statement and Commissioner Rebecca Kelly Slaughter issued a concurring statement. The notice will be published in the Federal Register soon. Instructions for filing comments appear in the notice. Comments must be received 60 days after publication and will be posted on regulations.gov.

More information for consumers about shopping for funeral services and for businesses about complying with the Funeral Rule are on the FTC's website.

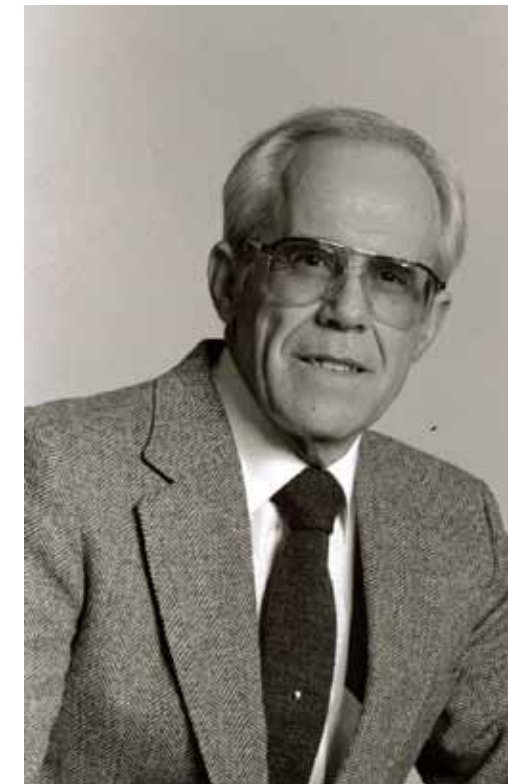
The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and protect and educate consumers. You can learn more about consumer topics and file a consumer complaint online or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, read our blogs, and subscribe to press releases for the latest FTC news and resources.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT FOR CONSUMERS: Consumer Response Center 877-382-4357

CONTACT FOR NEWS MEDIA: Jay Mayfield
Office of Public Affairs 202-326-2656

STAFF CONTACT: Patti Poss Bureau of
Consumer Protection 202



Fred Nelson, 91, longtime Montana music educator and Missoula resident, died Thursday (Dec. 5) at Libby, Montana.

Fred was born November 28, 1928 at Kalispell, Montana to Raymond Nelson and Martha O'Brien Nelson; he and his sister Evelyn attended grade school at Kalispell. At the time of their mother's death in 1940, the family moved to Polson and then to Anaconda where he attended junior high and high school, graduating from Anaconda High in 1947.

Following high school, he worked at the Anaconda Company Smelter and later, for the BA&P (Butte Anaconda Pacific) Railroad and, being an excellent trumpet player, played numerous dance jobs throughout the area. Following his lifelong passion for music, he enrolled at the University of Montana in 1948 where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music. During his earlier musical foray in high school, he noticed the piano player in the dance band, a pretty Anaconda girl named Marlene Murray. They were married on St. Patrick's Day 1951 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Missoula; this loving relationship would last for 61 years until her death in 2012.

They remained in Missoula where Fred finished his degree and worked part-time for the Montgomery Ward company. He also had a dance band (The Moon Moods) that was well known throughout the Missoula area; Fred and the band's drummer Mel Rice would remain lifelong friends.

He served in the U.S. Army, serving stateside and overseas in Japan with the post-WWII occupational forces. Following his discharge from active duty in 1954, he accepted his first teaching job as band director at Polson Public Schools. During this time, he also earned his Masters Degree from U of M.

He came to Libby in 1957, accepting the position as director of bands and music department supervisor for Libby Public Schools. He remained there during a period of student growth years with baby boomers and the influx from Libby Dam construction. During this time, Libby became a AA school with student participation in music growing from 50 to nearly 500 students.

In the fall of 1971 he returned to Missoula, accepting the position as director of bands at Sentinel High School, continuing his passion for teaching music until retiring in June of 1987. He remained in Missoula where he was employed by Morgenroth Music Center as a sales representative throughout western Montana. He stayed actively involved in music education as guest conductor and adjudicator at many music festivals throughout the area and, for many years, as a private music teacher. He and Marlene enjoyed traveling both here and abroad during this time, much of it with good friends Mel and Charlotte Rice.

In the later 1980's Fred, along with several other alumni of the UM School of Fine Arts, founded the U of M Alumni Band which remains a very large part of every homecoming celebration.

In November of 2013, he married Karina Hatch; they enjoyed dancing, traveling and many other adventures until her death in October of 2016. During his later years, he enjoyed residing at Grizzly Peak and the wonderful friendships he had with all who resided there.

Throughout his life, he remained a doting grandfather to Dale, Chris, Lisa, Jennifer, Caitlyn, Lindsey and Eduardo and great-grandfather to Lauren, Jesse, Eric, Isaiah, Zoey, Sophia and Sophie.

He was preceded in death by his wives and his sister Evelyn in 2012. Surviving him are his sons, Niles Nelson and wife Bobbie of Libby; Dale Nelson of Polson; and Grant Nelson and wife Marybeth of El Cajon, CA.

A visitation for former students and friends in Libby will be Wednesday (12-11) from 3-8 p.m. at the Schnackenberg Funeral Home.

Funeral services will be Friday (12-13) at 11:00 a.m. at Garden City Funeral Home in Missoula with a reception immediately following in the funeral home hospitality center. Committal service will follow at 2:00 p.m. at Missoula Cemetery. Condolences and memories may be shared online by visiting www.schnackenbergfh.com (in Libby) or www.gardencityfh.com (in Missoula).

IN MEMORY: JOHN EVERETT BULLIS



John Everett Bullis, 96, passed away on November 22, 2019 at the Big Horn County Memorial Hospital in Hardin, Montana. He was born to John Wellington and Lucilla (Stinard) Bullis on March 14, 1923 in the family home. Everett graduated from Hardin High School in 1941 where he was a member of the basketball team, drama club, played saxophone in the band and was the president of the class of 1941. He attended the University of Montana before enlisting in the US Army serving in the 114 th Army Airways Communications System during WWII in North Africa. Following his discharge, he attended St. Louis University School of Mortuary Science graduating in 1947. He returned to Hardin and worked with his father at Bullis Mortuary. He met Beatrice Zelenka at the Billings Railway Depot and the couple married on August 9, 1947 in Lewistown. They made their home in Hardin and celebrated 70 years of marriage in 2017.

He was truly dedicated to his life's work as a funeral director and put the needs of the families he served first. He served as Big Horn County Coroner for 50 years. Everett was recognized in June 2018 by the Montana Funeral Directors' Association (MFDA) for his 70 years as a licensed funeral director. He was elected MFDA President in 1968 and was proud of Bullis Mortuary's "by invitation only" acceptance into the Selected Independent Funeral Homes organization. Everett loved Hardin and all of Big Horn County and gave his time and energy to many organizations. He was a lifelong member of the Hardin First United Methodist Church, a member of the Hardin Kiwanis Club, St. Johns Lodge #82 AF & AM, the Al Bedoo Shriners where he was a member of the brass band, served on the school board for School

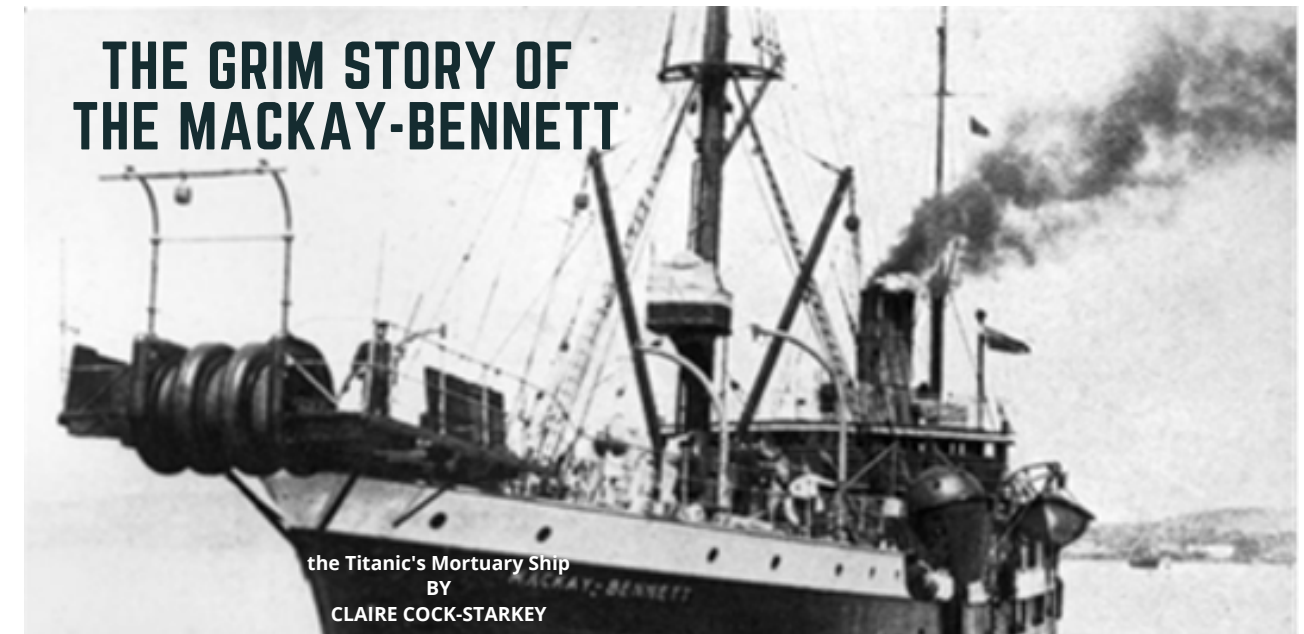
Districts 17H and 1 and participated in the Hardin Area Chamber of Commerce for many years. Everett actively supported the Big Horn County Museum and for many years was a docent giving the most informative tours. He was proud of military service and was a member of the American Legion and into his late 80's he served on the burial honor guard.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Bea, his sisters Inez Bullis, Helen Scott; his brothers Ed, M.L. "Vern" and Lowell Bullis. He is survived by his son, Terry (Punki) Bullis; his daughters Carol (William T.) Rhoads of Butte and Linda (Mark) Schriber of Gillette, Wyoming; his sisters-in-law Jean Hassler of Lewistown and Fran Zelenka of Helena; his grandchildren Kristi (Patrick) Greenfield of Hardin, Kent (Jenn) Bullis of Rutherford, NJ; Sarah Rhoads of Shoreline, WA, Allison (Brandon) Sutton of Poulosbo, WA, Kellie (Travis) Newton of Vancouver, WA, Janna Schriber (Patrick Mason) of Minneapolis, MN, and Kaycee Schriber of Billings; great grandchildren Jonathan Bazinet, Hunter and Ty Greenfield, Elliott and Addison Bullis and Reece, Sloan and Averie Newton, Rosie and Porter Sutton; and great great grandson Rhett Greenfield; numerous nieces and nephews. A special thank you to the care givers at Big Horn Senior Living and nursing and medical staff at the Big Horn Memorial Hospital.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 am Monday, November 25 th at the Bullis Funeral Chapel. Interment with military honors will follow at the Hardin Fairview Cemetery with a reception following at the Bullis Family Center. Should friends desire, memorial contributions may be made to the Big Horn County Historical Museum, 1163 3 rd St. E, Hardin or the Big Horn County Council Aging Meals Fund 317 N. Center Ave., Hardin or to a charity of one's choice. Bullis Mortuary is entrusted with the arrangements.

Montana Funeral Directors Association President 1968

TITANIC'S MORTUARY SHIP



"The Mackay-Bennett carried all the embalming fluid available in Halifax, approximately 100 wooden coffins, 100 tons of ice, and 12 tons of iron bars to weigh down bodies to be buried at sea. But it wouldn't be enough to cope with the huge number of Titanic victims."



In total, around 1,500 of the Titanic's passengers are still unaccounted for, with relatives of some victims still searching for clues today.

At 11:40 p.m. on April 14, 1912, the RMS Titanic hit an iceberg about 375 miles off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. The supposedly unsinkable ocean liner was four days into her journey from Southampton, England, to New York when the call to abandon ship rang out. All too soon, more than 2200 souls aboard the Titanic realized the odds of survival were stacked against them:

The ship's lifeboats, launched into the icy Atlantic, had space for only half the passengers and crew. The first ship to reach the scene of the disaster, the RMS Carpathia, arrived at about 3:30 a.m. After half an hour of searching in the dark, a crew member spotted a flare from one of the drifting lifeboats, and the rescue mission commenced. By 8:30 a.m., all survivors—705 women, men, and children—were brought up from the lifeboats, and the Carpathia steamed for New York. Now, the task became recovery of the dead.

Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, was the closest major port to the site of the disaster. A Halifax-based cable ship, the CS Mackay-Bennett, was quickly fitted out as a "morgue ship" and dispatched to where the Titanic had sunk two days earlier, more than 800 statute miles away. The Mackay-Bennett carried all the embalming fluid available in Halifax, approximately 100 wooden coffins, 100 tons of ice, and 12 tons of iron bars to weigh down bodies to be buried at sea. But it wouldn't be enough to cope with the huge number of Titanic victims.

IN MEMORY: JOHN JOSEPH MICHELOTTI

The Mackay-Bennett arrived on the evening of April 19. By the next morning, the crew was ready to start recovering bodies. Captain Frederick Harold Larnder found far more victims in the icy waters than he expected. "We saw them scattered over the surface, looking like a flock of seagulls," he later told The Washington Times. Boats with five or six crew and room for eight bodies were lowered into the water to begin the recovery.

On that first day, 51 victims were retrieved; most were wearing life-jackets and floating upright. Their heads and shoulders showed bruises from the chaotic sinking of the ship.

The rescue mission had to pause at nightfall with the sea still dotted with bodies. The following day, April 21, fewer were recovered, but 119 were hauled aboard on April 22.

Captain Larnder said that "We found no two bodies together, all floating separately. No two were clasped in each other's arms."

Chief embalmer John R. Snow, Jr., of Nova Scotia's largest undertakers, took care of the bodies to be transported back to Halifax. Each one pulled from the water was given a number, and their personal effects were placed in a small canvas bag marked with the same number. After Snow ran out of embalming fluid and caskets, he began wrapping victims in canvas and placing them on ice in the hold, but they quickly filled the available space.

Larnder made the difficult decision to begin burying some of the victims at sea—regulations required that only embalmed persons could be brought ashore. Most of the bodies to be buried at sea could be identified by their clothing as the Titanic's crew or third-class passengers.

"The undertaker didn't think these bodies would keep more than three days at sea, and as we expected to be out more than two weeks, we had to bury them," Larnder told The Washington Times. The bodies selected were wrapped in canvas, weighed down with iron bars, and dropped over the side three at a time as an Anglican minister delivered the service.

On April 23, another steamship, the Minia, arrived on the scene and delivered more embalming fluid so bodies could once more be preserved for burial on land.

After seven days of searching, the Mackay-Bennett had recovered 306 Titanic victims, and 116 were buried at sea (only 56 had been identified); the remaining 190 were transported to Halifax.

The ship arrived on April 30 while church bells tolled at minute intervals. Curious locals and desperate relatives rushed to the docks. Undertakers lined up on the jetty while their black-draped hearses stood ready to take the bodies away to the temporary mortuary set up at Halifax's Mayflower Curling Rink. While the bodies were dressed for burial, workers brought a covered gangway up to the deck of the Mackay-Bennett and began unloading its grim cargo as Red Cross volunteers sprayed disinfectant.

Three other ships were also tasked with recovering victims of the Titanic sinking: the Minia, CGS Montmagny, and SS Algerine. The Minia found 17, two of which were crew members who were then buried at sea; the Montmagny retrieved four bodies in May and buried one of them at sea. The final victim, identified as saloon steward James McGrady, was found by the Algerine at the end of May. In Halifax, all were processed at the temporary morgue with the Mackay-Bennett's victims. Fifty-nine bodies were eventually taken elsewhere for burial, and 150 were interred across three cemeteries in Halifax—121 at the nondenominational Fairview Lawn Cemetery, 19 at Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery, and 10 at the Baron de Hirsch Jewish Cemetery. Forty-three remain unidentified. Their simple granite gravestones bear a number and the date of the disaster: April 15, 1912.



"After seven days of searching, the Mackay-Bennett had recovered 306 Titanic victims, and 116 were buried at sea (only 56 had been identified); the remaining 190 were transported to Halifax."



John Joseph Michelotti, 64, of Billings, passed away Monday afternoon, Nov. 18, 2019, surrounded by his family.

John was born on Feb. 4, 1955, in Billings. He attended military high school at Marmion Academy outside of Chicago. Following his graduation from high school, he attended the University of San Diego and obtained his Mortuary Science degree in Los Angeles. In 1976, John returned to Billings to continue the legacy of the funeral home started by his father and John Sawyers.

In 1998, John served as President of Selected Independent Funeral Homes. He played a vital role in opening the door for funeral directors of all races, nationalities and countries. Later that year, he opened Yellowstone Valley Memorial Park. A statue and kidney-shaped pond were built to commemorate his father, who passed away from kidney disease shortly after opening.

From Kamchatka, Russia, to Nunavut, Canada, John immersed himself in local cultures and religions while pursuing his true passion of hunting. His motto was: "Don't surround yourself with yourself." John cherished time spent with family and friends at his cabin just outside of Glacier National Park. He enjoyed photography, golf, playing pool, classic rock and cheering on the Boston Bruins. And he was always down for a good banter!

John was preceded in death by his father, Bob. He is survived by his mother, Helen; brother, Jock (Connie); children, Ali and Seve, and Alida and Ceci; the love of his life, Alison; and his dog, Lucca.

The vigil will be at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 25, at Michelotti-Sawyers Mortuary, 1001 Alderson Ave. Funeral mass will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26, at St. Pius X Church, 717 18th St. West, followed by a burial at Yellowstone Valley Memorial Park.

Condolences may be made at www.michelottisawyers.com.

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.

Situation Update: Wuhan Coronavirus



CDC Issues Post Mortem Guidance

February 27, 2020

NFDA has just received a document from the CDC outlining guidance for handling individuals who have died or are suspected to have died from COVID-19 (coronavirus). While the guidance focuses on collecting specimens and conducting autopsies for PUI, the CDC notes, "The guidance can be utilized by medical examiners, coroners, pathologists, [and] other workers involved in postmortem care." (PUI refers to persons under investigation for coronavirus.)

Visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-postmortem-specimens.html>

Any funeral home staff coming in contact with a decedent with confirmed or suspected coronavirus will want to pay particular attention to the section titled "Autopsy Procedures," which would most closely apply to embalming. This section includes guidance on safe work practices, engineering controls and PPE usage.

Funeral directors will also want to review the section "Cleaning and Waste Disposal Recommendations" for guidance on how to properly clean and disinfect their embalming room and instruments.

This guidance also contains contact information for the CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The staff at the EOC is best equipped to answer questions about how funeral homes can safely care for an individual with confirmed or suspected coronavirus.



A diary kept by one of the Mackay-Bennett's crew, 24-year-old Clifford Crease, is preserved in the Nova Scotia Archives. The account by the craftsman trainee is mostly factual, recording the weather and number of bodies found each day. On April 21, he noted, "Bodies in good state but badly bruised by being knocked about in the water."

His granddaughter, Rabia Wilcox, told Global News in 2012 about Crease's shock after recovering the body of a child. "He never fully recovered. He told our father it was the worst thing that ever happened to [him]," she recalled. Moved by the tragedy, the crew of the Mackay-Bennett placed a brass plaque, engraved with the words "our babe," on the unidentified toddler's coffin when he was buried in Halifax's Fairview Lawn Cemetery with 120 other Titanic victims. In 2007, DNA testing identified the unknown child as 19-month-old Sidney Leslie Goodwin, a third-class passenger who drowned with his parents and five older brothers and sisters.

The Mackay-Bennett soon returned to its regular job carrying cable for maintenance work on the France-Canada cable link. The vessel was retired from service in 1922, and finally scrapped in 1963. The name might be little remembered, but history preserves the Mackay-Bennett's role in the Titanic's sad aftermath.



MEMORIAL

— MONUMENTS —

CONGRATULATIONS

\$7,500.00 in Scholarships for Montana Students

Two Montana students studying Mortuary Science have earned \$7,500.00 in scholarship awards through the Montana Funeral Directors Association and the National Funeral Directors Association.



Richard Hall of Billings won the highest scholarship available through NFDA, the Foundation '45 \$5,000.00 award. Hall is a student studying online at the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and working as an assistant at Dahl

Funeral Chapel in Billings. "After occasionally working services, I soon realized that I desired to become more involved in helping families on a daily basis. In May 2018, I started working full-time as a Funeral Assistant and have enjoyed becoming continuously more involved in the field. Balancing work, school, and family has been demanding and I cannot thank the MFDA, NFDA, and the Funeral Service Foundation enough for awarding me this scholarship. It is reassuring to know that there are professionals out there who are actively supporting the next generation. Thank you to everyone for the support!" Hall will graduate in June 2020.

Jessie Billquist-Jette, of Anaconda won the Dennis Schoepp Memorial Scholarship of \$2,500.00. Dennis Schoepp was a former



President of MFDA and the memorial scholarship was set up in his name by his wife.

Jesse holds a Master's Degree in Physical Therapy

from the University of Montana and a Bachelor's Degree in Occupational Safety and Health – Applied Health Option from Montana Tech. She has extended studies training from Chico State California, the University of Montana – Western, and the University of North Dakota. She has worked in the medical field as a Pediatric Physical Therapist since 2001. Jessie is also a faculty member at Montana Tech. She joined the Anaconda Deer Lodge County Coroner's Department in 2011 working as the Deputy County Coroner and was appointed as County Coroner in April 2017. Jessie instructs at the Montana Coroner's Basic Academy yearly. She is a member of the Montana Coroner's Association and serves as a board member for the MCA. She is also a member of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners. Through her work as a coroner, Jessie found a love for the funeral industry and this passion has led her to pursue her degree in Mortuary Science at Arapahoe Community College. She is a student member of the Montana Funeral Directors Association and the National Funeral Directors Association. Jessie was born and raised in Anaconda, Montana where she currently resides and is the proud mom of 5 amazing children.

For more information on becoming a funeral director in Montana and seeking a scholarship visit the MFDA website at www.montanafda.org.

Scholarships through MFDA/NFDA are awarded two times a year with the next application process opening February 15-March 31.



<https://www.funeralservicefoundation.org/academic/scholarships/>

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