

Volume 66, Issue 1

# Texas Director

January 2017

The Official Publication of the Texas Funeral Directors Association

[www.tfda.com](http://www.tfda.com)

**TFDA's 12th  
Annual Wreaths  
Across America  
Draws Patriots, Vets  
and Media**

.....  
**A LIFETIME OF SERVICE:  
Wayne Giese**

.....  
**TFDA Members  
Win Prestigious  
Awards**

**NEW YEAR  
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**Emma Livry, the Ballerina Consumed by Her Art**

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## Why It's Important to Submit Regional Meeting Reports And don't forget the pictures!

Alice Adams, Editor  
The Texas Director

As most of you know, I've been at this desk since dirt. I'm here for one reason...well, actually two if I can do the math.

The first reason is to support funeral directors and their chosen professions. I know of no other part of the American workforce that does so much for so many and is so often marginalized. For the past

umpteen years, my personal mission has been to elevate the good work of Texas directors to the next level and to give many in the general public a little insight into the daily (maybe hourly) effort – and sacrifice – directors make in order to serve their neighbors and community in a dignified and personalized manner when death occurs.

The second reason is to document the growth and direction of the funeral service profession. I believe it is part of your rich legacy to report what you do, how you do it and the changing needs of the families you serve.

Our goals at the *Texas Director* include providing you important information, news from directors around the state and national

trends when they occur. We want to profile as many as possible of today's Texas directors, write about TFDA's activities throughout the year and provide tips for making your very demanding daily tasks a bit easier.

At regional meetings – if you took a poll – you'd find most directors attend to renew and/or continue relationships with other members and our vendors. I also believe a few attend just to disconnect, if only for a few hours. Directors also

tell me they attend regional meetings to keep up with the latest information about their chosen career path.

All of these are great reasons for participating in any TFDA event.

Our next step together is to make sure we can report the business and events that occur at these meetings. This is where photos come in. One picture is still worth 1,000 words.

Regional officers are tasked with the reporting/photography part of regional meetings – and I can help make these reports. Just call me, tell me how the meeting went, how many attended and what business took

place. No need for you to pick up your pencil. Just talk to me.

Our state and local libraries are absolute treasure chests when it comes to the details of yesteryear in terms of people, places and obits. However, more often than not, when I go through their files, stories and information about funeral directors and funeral service, historically, information about directors and funeral service is miserably lacking.

I am concerned that most of the legacy of the funeral service will be lost – since we don't write many letters these days, most people don't save emails, nor do they subscribe to newspapers, as in news being printed on real paper.

A precious few of you bother to call with ideas for stories you'd like to see in this magazine. Truthfully, each funeral home should be submitting press releases regularly to hometown media, i.e., newspapers, radio stations and TV news departments. Remember, when negative publicity hits the front page, every director and every firm suffers. By offering "the good news of funeral service" – before the next "bomb" – i.e., the director who left a corpse on the doorstep of the family who did not pay, body parts trafficking, etc., we all need positive stories to balance the negative.

So, I am asking for your help. We want you to help us document the funeral profession in Texas. What happens today is tomorrow's history. No news about you and your firm is bad news.

We also want you to help us get out the word about your chosen profession. We believe, with enough positive PR, we can balance out the negatives and prove Miss Pickford's book, "The American Way of Death," is nothing but a witch hunt.

Are you with us? Can we count on you?

Thanks for reading, thinking about and participating in TFDA's history. ☆

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## TFDA Volunteer Committee Members: Membership and PAC Recognition



The business of growing, bettering or maintaining the status quo of TFDA requires a battalion of willing workers, volunteers who care about their profession in Texas and their supporting professional organization. Most work in the background, rarely feeling the spotlight of recognition. Others bear the lion's share of maintaining TFDA's fiscal stability. And still others pave the way for meaningful CE opportunities, new members, conventions and making it possible for TFDA to respond to disasters that impact funeral directors – members

and non-members across the state.

This space will be used each month to recognize the work of these volunteers and to say, "thank you" for all you do for TFDA. This issue we'll recognize the membership and PAC committee members.

### Membership Committee

According to TFDA bylaws, the regional presidents shall compose the members of this committee. Each year, the president shall appoint a chairperson. The duties of this committee are to contact the eligible candidates in their respective regions and invite them to join TFDA.

Members include: Darryl Thompson (chair), Lori Gillem Butler, Jeremy Cameron, Natalie Castillo, Cody Cox, Jeff Day, Bill Eaton, Cris Garza, John Goobeck, Rebecca Gardner, Shana D. Hass, Kevin Loftin, Jimmy Lucas, Jeffrey Nobels, Luis Mendoza, Dick Owens, Larry Payne, Matt Smith,

Blanca Vallejo, Alejandro "Alex" Villareal, and Sabrina N. Young. Administrative support is provided by Joyce Dawson.

### TFDA PAC Committee

Appointed by the president, this committee is charged with the responsibility of all PAC fundraising efforts and other duties that may be assigned. PAC Committee Members are: Charles "Chuck" Robertson (chair), Christopher Aguilar, Tiffany Aguilar, Tim Brown, James Campbell, Lee Castro, Brant Davis, Mike Dolan, Bill Eaton, Sheri D. Elkins, Colt Ellis, Jeff Friedman, Cris Garza, Jerod Glasson, John Goobeck, Caressa Hughes, Jimmy Lucas, Lois Keller Nelson, Jeffrey Nobels, Morris Overstreet, David Patterson, Erika Rader, William H. Smeltz, Gary Lee Westerman, and Jill Hefner Williams. The TFDA Lobbyist is Sen. Bill Haley and administrative support is provided by Karen Grice. ★

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## Meet the Student

# Mary M. Estrada

**Mortuary School:** She is completing her last semester at Amarillo College and works at Johnson Funeral Home in Childress.

**Hometown:** I was born in Childress, but lived and was raised in Paducah until I graduated high school. However, I currently live in Childress.

**High School:** I attended Paducah High School and graduated in 1992.

**Is this a second career?** Yes. My first career was as a dental hygienist and I am still working as a dental hygienist, but I'm pursuing my passion – the funeral profession. I have always enjoyed science and anatomy. I also have always liked forensic dentistry, which was fascinating to me. I also looked into becoming a medical examiner, but it was not a realistic goal for me.

I feel like I have been going to school all my life. I started out in nursing school (LVN) and graduated, but it was not for me. From there, I earned my Associates of Arts Degree. I hold a Bachelor's of Science in Dental Hygiene and will receive my Associates in Mortuary Science in December 2016.

**When did you decide to attend mortuary school?** I had thought about it since 2012 but didn't pursue it until the spring of 2015.

**Any hurdles to attending mortuary school?** It was definitely a trying time. Working as a dental hygienist, taking a full load of classes each semester, working on clinicals three out of four semesters and taking care of our family (three children) is often stressful. However, I am very thankful for online classes and the opportunity to do each clinical at the funeral home I currently am working in.

**What attracted you to funeral service?** The art and science of it.

**Any mentors who have encouraged you or played a role in your reaching your goal?** I give thanks to my Heavenly father,

who without Him none of this would be possible. My husband who supported me through it all and my mother, who helped me with anything I needed to accomplish my goals over this two-year span.

My preceptor, Joshua Johnson, also played a role in helping me reach my goals. Mr. Johnson has many fine qualities; he is compassionate and very caring. It is a blessing to meet Mr. Johnson. He opened his doors to me and not only allowed me to do each clinical there but also encouraged me to the end. This man cares about the people he serves. I've worked in many places and with many people throughout life. You always get to see first-hand how they work and what moves them. Mr. Johnson doesn't push his families into financial debt. He is there to direct them and take care of them. In my experiences, I have seen the importance of making a living but have also seen businesses concerned with just the financial aspect only.

Yes, money is important and we all must make a living. However, the people you serve should be your first priority. Lastly, Mr. Brant Davis, the program director of the mortuary science program at Amarillo College, always gives encouraging positive words to his students. I love how he always puts God in everything he does and how he relates to us in emails.

**In your opinion, what's been the most meaningful part of your training?** The most meaningful part of my training is always the end result...when the family does their initial private viewing of their loved one. Or at the end of a funeral at graveside, they come to say thank you. Seeing how happy they are with the services you have provided is a touching and gratifying experience.

**What has surprised you most about funeral service?** How busy it really is. I had no clue how busy it could really be.

**What makes you a strong director?** I feel being sensitive in nature, caring, empathetic and having good listening skills are what make me a strong director.

**What makes funeral service a good fit with your goals/values?** My values define me and influence me to be a better person in my personal life and in my career. I know my values and they are important to me as are my goals. Both professions – dental hygienist and funeral professional – require service to others.

Therefore, some of my top values are being demonstrated in both of my careers. In funeral service, these values fit well with my goals/values because it's who I am. I value the community, professionalism, generosity, and innovation by satisfying the needs and expectations of our families.

**Describe the first funeral you attended and can remember most?** The first funeral I attended was for someone I knew. Each family and service is different but what I remember most of that funeral is the deep sadness present during the arrangement conference and their reactions/facial expressions after they saw their loved one for the first time at the private viewing.

**In your opinion, what does the public need to know most (and don't) about the end of life and funerals, in general?** In my opinion, I feel that people should know there is tremendous planning and decisions to be made about funerals. We always make plans for all other things in life. It never occurred to me until I considered this profession how important it is to plan for your funeral. I realize it is something many people do not even want to think about but it is just as important. I think, as a funeral director, it would be wise to educate the public by having some type of seminar. One can find out a lot just by attending one. Information about life insurance, leaving a will and the final detail of a funeral arrangement.

**What course did you not have in school that would have been helpful?** I'm not sure there is a course I haven't taken. Those I have taken were helpful. I have run across things I learned in dental hygiene that were helpful in the mortuary science program.

**Anything you'd like to add?** I came into the funeral service profession with no prior experience. I've now come to realize how busy a funeral director really is. I think it is always helpful to work in a funeral home if one has the chance to do so. ✨





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# TFDA's 12th Annual Wreaths Across America Draws Patriots, Vets and Media



On December 17, 1.2 million wreaths were laid on the graves of veterans across the country. At Arlington National Cemetery, several thousand volunteers braved the rain and cold to participate in the annual Wreaths Across America tradition that began in the last century.

In Austin, several hundred patriots and funeral directors gathered on the steps of the Texas capitol on Monday, December 12 for the 12th annual ceremony and laying of wreaths on the graves of Texas military heroes.

This year's special guest was Taya Kyle

who spoke about honoring the American flag. Kyle, the widow of Chris Kyle, immortalized in the movie, "American Sniper," also led a wreath-laying at the Texas State Cemetery, where her husband is buried.

Funeral directors attending were more than impressed with her heartfelt message and her willingness to join TFDA to honor fallen veterans across the state. TFDA's leadership recommended Mrs. Kyle as a speaker for the next NFDA convention and expo. "She was more than inspirational," said President Heather Edwards Hauboldt. "We

were not only moved by her words. We were all reacquainted with the importance of our flag and its meaning."

Local contributors donated the wreaths for the ceremony at the cemetery, followed by a luncheon at TFDA headquarters.

Thanks to Charlotte Chism Waldrum, Michael Land, Gary Westerman, Brad Schott, Darryl Thompson. Thanks also to this year's sponsors Capitol Mortuary Service, Legacy Funeral Chapel, North Texas FDA, South-Central FDA, Victoria Mortuary Services and Waldman Funeral Care. ★





# Texas Funeral Director Wins the "Funeral Director of the Year"

American Funeral Director Recognizes Velma Sue De Leon with Prestigious Award

American Funeral Director magazine recently announced that Velma Sue De Leon has won its 2016 Funeral Director of the Year award.

De Leon and her husband, Leon, are founders and owners of Memorial Funeral Home, which has locations in San Juan and Edinburg, Texas. She was selected because of her efforts on behalf of the communities she serves, as well as her innovative approach to running and growing her business. She is profiled in the December issue of the magazine and was on hand to receive her award at the Eleventh Annual Funeral Service Business Plan Conference, which was held in New Orleans in early December.

De Leon, 59, has been a licensed funeral director since 1991. She now operates two funeral homes, an event center, a flower



shop, a cremation facility and a pet funeral home and crematory.

De Leon was selected from among nominations from funeral directors from throughout

the country, said Allison Sullivan, publisher of Kates-Boylston Publications, the company that publishes American Funeral Director.

"Mrs. De Leon's commitment to the communities she serves embodies what the funeral profession is all about," Sullivan said. "The De Leon's support for education and the people of Rio Grande Valley is impressive."

Judging criteria for the award included: business successes, challenges overcome, client relations and community involvement.

DeLeon is a past TFDA president, serving in 2011-2012 as the association's second female president and first Latina. Born in Edinburg on July 19, 1957, she is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service and has been an active TFDA member since 1994. ☆



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# Funeral Directors Honored with Alvin R. Payne Memorial Bridge Builders Award

By Alice Adams

WEST, TEXAS—At a November 13 banquet at St. Mary's Parish Center, the West Area Ministerial Alliance presented funeral directors Robby Payne, Janice M. Kaluza and Larry Payne of Aderhold Funeral Home with the Al Payne Memorial Bridge Builders Award, given to men and women in the community who have successfully bridged barriers for the benefit of others and the growth of the community.

The first Bridge Builders Award was presented, posthumously, in 2011, to funeral director Alvin R. Payne, owner of Aderhold Funeral Home for a lifetime of bridge building in the city of West. "It was truly an honor to receive this award, and even more meaningful receiving an award with Dad's name on it," Larry Payne told *Texas Director*.

The West Area Ministerial Alliance originally presented only one award each year, but after the explosion in West on April 17, 2013, the Alliance began recognizing more than one member of the West community for their contributions.

Al Payne was born in Fort Worth, served in World War II in the U.S. Navy, was trained and licensed at the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service in 1947 and eventually

moved to West in 1963, where he lived and worked until his death in 1996.

Throughout his time in West, he was not only dedicated to serving his neighbors in West as a funeral director, but also committed to his community in numerous other ways.

Al Payne was ordained a Deacon at Fort Worth's College Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth at age 24 and was a faithful

Commerce and was recognized as "Citizen of the Year" by the Chamber in 1978.

A member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 4819, where he served as Post Adjutant from 1968 to 1974, he also was active in the Kiwanis Club of West, serving as treasurer from 1964 to 1984. He was the recipient of the Outstanding Service Award in 1972 and went on to serve as club president, Lt. Governor, Texas/Oklahoma Chairman.

He was a life member and recipient of the George Hixon Fellowship Award in 1996.

A member of the West Band Boosters, he was a two-term president and a strong supporter of West High School Athletics, serving as the announcer for local football games for more than 11 years. Al Payne also was a member of the West League Booster Club, serving as treasurer from 1968 until 1984.

He was a trustee of the West Hospital Authority, where he was secretary-treasurer from 1979 to 1975 and president from 1975 to 1980. He was a member of the West Masonic Lodge #475, serving as Master of the Lodge in 1976 and District Deputy Grand Master to the district in 1982. He also was a member of the Karem Shrine and Waco Scottish Rite Consistory.

The late funeral director also was a trustee of the West Independent School District for nine years and served as president from 1975 to 1980.

He also found time to serve as newscaster for KHBR's West Area News for 15 years and served as Trustee and Sexton for Bold Springs Cemetery Association from 1979 until his passing.

In honor of his dedicated efforts toward the betterment of the City of West, then-Mayor A. J. Muska proclaimed July 15, 1984 as "Al Payne Day" in the City of West.

TFDA congratulates Robby, Janice and Larry on this high honor. ★



Robby Payne



Janice Kaluza



Larry Payne

Winners of the Al Payne Memorial Bridge Builders Award for this year included Robby Payne, Janice M. Kaluza and Larry Payne, all of Aderhold Funeral Home in West.

member of the First Baptist Church of West where he served in numerous positions in the Sunday School, church training and was Minister of Music from 1963 until 1984.

He proudly served his community as two-time president of the West Chamber of



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# Long-Time TFDA Member's Firm Gutted by Fire



*Editor's Note: This article is based on reporting by Ismael Perez, journalist for The Victoria Advocate, December 22 edition.*

The owner of the Victoria Mortuary and Cremation Services was asleep on his recliner December 21 after working a 36-hour shift when he awoke to popping noises and discovered his business was on fire.

Adrian Fulton left his resting area and went to the north side of his business and saw fire coming from the crematorium area.

"I woke up, and I opened the door and left. There was nothing but a big ol' ball of fire," he said.

The Victoria Fire Department responded to the call about 5:15 p.m. When heavy smoke and flames were discovered coming from the front of the structure at 1505 La Valliere St.

Fulton said he was the only one inside of the building at the time of the fire.

"I came out through the garage, and when I came outside, I called 911," he said. No in-

juries were reported.

Fulton said he thinks the fire originated in the crematorium area.

Shannon Martin, Victoria assistant fire chief, said at least 11 bodies were inside the building.

After the fire, Fulton confirmed all the remains were accounted for and safe.

Fulton said the families of the deceased had all been contacted, and none had issues with the situation.

He said he will work at his other business, Goliad Funeral Home, in the meantime.

"We will just be making progress day by day until we are doing better," Fulton said.

Fulton's business opened in August 1998 and provides the funeral business community with pickup and delivery of deceased individuals as well as mortuary and cremation services.

"I haven't had any problems," he said. "We had a minor fire a couple of years ago from some cardboard boxes, but that was about it."

Martin said at the scene that the extent of the fire damage had not yet been assessed.

However, Fulton said two vehicles inside the business were lost in the flames.

Adrian Fulton is a veteran member of TFDA, serving on several committees through the years as well as TFDA's Disaster Team. He also is an active member of the South Texas Funeral Directors Association and served as a sponsor for the recent Wreaths Across America service, honoring the state's fallen veterans. ★

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# A LIFETIME OF SERVICE:

## Wayne Giese

### Memorial Oaks Chapel, Inc. - Brenham

*Editor's Note: The Texas Director will feature a number of profiles of 2016's 50-year honorees. This article is the first of this series.*

Born on Mother's Day in 1946, Wayne Giese grew up in Brenham, where his father was employed at Blue Bell Creamery. But it was a series of events in September of 1961 that would steer the teen's career path in a new direction. Shortly after Wayne's father was promoted at Blue Bell and transferred to Houston, his grandfather passed away.

"We returned to Brenham for the visitation," Giese recalled. "Funeral homes were still running ambulance in those days and Leon Simack came in, saying there had been a bad accident 10 miles east of Brenham and would I be willing to come and help him?"

"Of course I said yes, and rode with him that day," the funeral director remembered, "and I can tell you, traveling down the highway at 80 miles per hour was pretty neat for that teenager."

After graduating from Aldine High School in 1964, the enthusiastic Giese traveled back to Brenham every weekend to visit old friends and stop by the funeral home to say hello.

For as long as he could remember, Wayne Giese had wanted to be a Texas State Trooper. "I got an application right after graduation, but when I told Mother, her rapid response was, 'As long as I'm alive, you won't be packing a gun.'"

After working at the Blue Bell Creamery during summer vacations, Giese gave some thought to following in his father's footsteps, but then fate intervened again.

During one of those trips to Brenham, Giese was chatting with Mr. Simack and Bill Buske, funeral directors and owners of the local funeral home.

"That's when Mr. Simack and Mr. Buske suggested I consider going to Commonwealth College and earn my funeral direc-



tor's license," Giese said.

When the new student arrived in Houston, he ran into Clarence Gerke, a friend from high school, who was already a student in the x-ray technology course being taught in the same building as mortuary science at Commonwealth. Soon the two boys were carpooling back and forth to Brenham every weekend.

Between classes at Commonwealth and his weekend job at the funeral home back home, Giese was becoming a funeral director. "Mr. Simack had allowed me to make removals, dress bodies, go on funerals and other odd jobs around the funeral home, so when I arrived at mortuary school, I thought those first classes were a real drag," said Giese, "but when we got into anatomy and embalming, it was a little more exciting."

Like many students in that era, Giese admired Tex Gordon, a Commonwealth instructor who, according to Giese, "never looked at a book. He was so brilliant and I considered myself fortunate because he mentored me during mortuary school."

Gordon's main advice to the young provi-

sional: "Always think ahead and be positive."

From Mr. Simack: "Be courteous to families and always be an attentive listener."

He also counts Howard Kruse of Brenham as another of his valued mentors. "Mr. Kruse developed the homemade vanilla ice cream flavor," Giese explained. "When my dad started Blue Bell – called Brenham Creamery – they only made butter and milk. Then ice cream. Howard Kruse was my Boy Scout Leader and a true mentor."

"During my time with Mr. Simack and Mr. Buske, I also learned so much by watching," the director continued. "There were four directors, four true professionals and I learned from them all. They also always chose me to go on funerals...and those were all opportunities to learn more."

Giese confesses he drove the funeral home's ambulance before he was 21 and legal, and he proudly admits to delivering five babies while driving ambulance, the first one when he was 22. "I'm glad for the experience," he said.

When Clarence came on board, the friendship between the two new directors grew...to the point that they were in each other's weddings.

When Simack and Buske were ready to retire and wanted to sell their funeral home in 1974, they went to Giese and Gerke first.

"They wanted \$100,000 but Clarence was 24 and I was 23 and with no lines of credit at the bank. While we were trying to figure out how we were going to come up with the money, we got an ambulance call from the Chairman of the Board of Bank of the Southwest. He had accidentally shot his dog through the nose and called for an ambulance to take the dog to a vet in Houston," Giese remembered. "It was through our care for his dog that we were able to put together the deal to buy the funeral home: Memorial Oaks Chapel, Inc."

But the Giese-Gerke partnership had



been developing before they purchased the funeral home, a partnership that has remained through the more than 50 years.

"I can honestly say, Clarence and I have never had an argument. We've always been a team. He can go to fundraisers and mix with the social set while I take care of the locals – together, we've built a reputation that pretty much covers Brenham. We're a team."

"The thing I admire most is his honesty," Giese said. "I always thought Mr. Simack took good care of families and I'll put Clarence right up there with him."

The other partnership that has supported Wayne Giese for the last 50 years has been with his wife, Claudia.

"She was a Brenham girl. We met on a blind date during the time I was working for the funeral home there. When we were engaged, she would go with me on ambulance runs. I remember one Christmas night when the ambulance was called to take a patient to Ben Taub Hospital in Houston. My mother-in-law wasn't too happy about that."

"When the phone rang at night, Claudia told me to be careful as she has through the years...and when I was busy helping other families, she was busy raising our family... because one minute you're at home and the next minute, you're on the highway, taking a death call. When you're a funeral director, that's what you do. Someone has to sacrifice and it's usually the funeral director."

Wayne and Claudia are the parents of two daughters and one son, as well as one grandson, who is 21 and a student at Blinn College in Brenham.

"In my office, I have a continuous photo frame, showing pictures of my family. My mother had a big bowl and when I was a baby, she'd use that big bowl for my baths. In that photo frame, I have a picture of her giving me a bath, as well as ones of my son and my grandson, taking baths in the same bowl."

He also has plaques that mark some of the highlights of his career. One plaque reads "Funeral Director of the Year."

"But by far, the biggest honor of my career was being president of TFDA and I would serve a third time if they needed me," he said. "This equals another big honor – serving the people of my community the past 50 years."

As has been his practice, he still arrives at the funeral home every morning at 8, even if he's been up all night taking First Call, and he stays until the funeral home closes. "Anytime a family calls, they'll see either Clarence

or me. That's always been how it is here," Giese said.

As a small town funeral director, Giese has experienced his share of burying long-time friends or their families. "Just recently, two of my best friends' wives died within 24 hours of each other," he said. "One, I had played freshman football with and I had worked with the other in the fire department. You know, sometimes I have no words – so all I can do is just hug'em."

"But my hardest day happened when one of my good friend's child, who had a congenital disorder, collapsed at home. Of course, I got there as soon as I could, but when it came time for me to take the child, my friend couldn't bring himself to let go. I remember crying all the way back to the funeral home."

So, how does Giese debrief, regain his focus after a traumatic death experience? "What I do – I go out to cemetery, walk and read the monuments before going to my Daddy's grave and talking to him."

"When it comes time to serve another family, we build a brick wall and get ready because every day brings families who are hurting – so we listen, they vent and we're

going to catch it," he said, and because I've been here – people seem to trust me. Funeral directors are high on the list of the most trusted people in our society."

If Wayne Giese wasn't a funeral director, what would he be doing now? "Well, I couldn't carry a gun because my Mama wouldn't allow it. She died at age 97, last July – and now I'm too old to be in DPS."

He said he's too committed to business, so he doesn't travel as much as he would like to, but he and Claudia plan to go watch their grandson play golf in Florida in February.

"I try to play golf with buddies about once a week, and I love playing golf with my daughter Erin...and I love going to TFDA conventions. I've only missed two in 50 years – one when Clarence's father died and another was when my mother had her accident."

He ends the interview with advice to anyone considering funeral service for a career: "If you're going to be in funeral service, be a funeral director. There's no such thing as 8-5. Serve your families. Be there for them, 24/7, weekdays and weekends...and if you don't want to do that, you're in the wrong business." ★

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# Emma Livry, the Ballerina Consumed by Her Art



Emma Livry (1842 – 1863) was one of the last ballerinas of the Romantic ballet era.

The ballet, *Le Papillon*, about a young woman transformed into a butterfly, is sillier than your average ballet. It's not even scientifically accurate — the climax involves a butterfly's wings burning after it flies into a torch, even though, unlike moths, butterflies aren't attracted to bright lights.

In fact, the most significant thing about the production was that its star, Emma Livry, became famous for playing the flame-injured butterfly...and for dying when she drew too close to an open flame.

The young ballerina wasn't the only one. Scores of dancers are believed to have died after gas lighting became popular in 19th-century theaters. A gas light, a flimsy tutu and — bam!

Ballerinas in Philadelphia, London and Paris perished in what was referred to as a holocaust. But Livry stands out, both as a defiant voice against change in the ballet world and as a catalyst for it.

Livry was 16 when she made her Paris Opéra debut in 1858. Plain but captivating, she swiftly became a huge star. Her career was promoted by her mother's lover at the time, Vicomte Ferdinand de Montguyon.

On October 19, 1858, at the age of sixteen, Livry made her debut with the Paris Opera Ballet at the Salle Le Peletier as the sylph in *La Sylphide*. Her talent brought her fame and she became a widely respected ballerina.



Montguyon prevailed upon the director of the Opera to change the program so that Marie Taglioni (who originated the role) would see Livry in *La Sylphide* when she visited.

Stunned by the girl's dancing, Taglioni decided to stay on in Paris to teach the girl, who reminded her of herself as a young

woman. She choreographed for Livry the title-role of *Farfalla* (Butterfly) in *Le Papillon*, the only full-length ballet composed by Jacques Offenbach.

Ballet was a deceptively dangerous profession. Not only were dancers at risk of death by fire, they were sometimes killed by over-ambitious stagecraft or crushed by falling sets.



In 1859, imperial decree demanded all sets and costumes be flameproofed as best they could via a process known as carteronizing: Tutus were immersed in a chemical bath before being worn onstage.

But the process left the delicate skirts dingy, and the ballerinas — the very people at risk of public immolation — fought the safety measures. “I insist, sir, on dancing at all first performances of the ballet in my ordinary ballet skirt,” Livry wrote to the Paris Opéra’s director in 1860 in a formal declaration of independence — one that would result in her death just two years later.

But with Livry, “the directors said, ‘No, please, you’re our labor force, we want to preserve you,’” Kelly says, noting how Livry’s refusal to wear the chemically treated tutus, while tragic and unwise, showed a certain admirable willfulness. It was an example of a dancer setting her own priorities and seizing authority as an artist, Kelly believes, rather than as the embodiment of a choreographer’s vision.

Unfortunately, it ended badly for Livry. On Nov. 15, 1862, she fluffed her skirts too close to a gas lamp and went up in flames.

In flames, she ran across the stage three times before she was caught and the fire extinguished with the help of firemen and other dancers.

Another dancer and a fireman tried to save her — the emperor later rewarded them for their bravery with cash — and managed to smother the flames by wrapping her in a blanket. But 40 percent of Livry’s body had been burned, and her corset melted into her ribs.

She spent 36 hours wrapped in bandages in her dressing room, then another eight months recuperating, before dying of blood poisoning.

Her burns were more extensive than deep. She had clasped the burning fabric to her torso out of modesty. Her face and breasts were undamaged. According to the doctor in attendance, her thighs, waist, back, shoulders and arms were burned, and her stays were burned on. She tried to pray.

Taglioni, who was watching the rehearsal, rubbed make-up grease into her wounds in the mistaken belief that it would act as ointment. She suffered for months, yet remained opposed to fire-proofed skirts:

“Yes, they are, as you say, less dangerous, but should I ever return to the stage, I would never think of wearing them — they are so ugly.”

In 1863, she was moved from her home in Paris to Neuilly-sur-Seine. However, her wounds re-opened and she did not survive.

Montguyon was with her when she died. She was only 20 years old.

After a funeral at Notre Dame de Lorette in Paris, she was buried in the Cimetière de Montmartre, Division 33.

The surviving scraps of her costume can be seen in the Musée de l’Opéra in Paris

Many dance scholars pinpoint Livry’s demise as the end of France’s dominant role in ballet. But her death also inspired safety measures: new designs for gas lamps, the invention of flame-retardant gauze and wet blankets hung in the wings just in case.

Though Livry is not remembered today, even by many in the dance world, her story, and those of other dancers like her, touch a nerve. When the skirt of French ballerina Janine Charrat caught on fire during a re-

hearsal and burned more than half of her body in 1961, she reportedly said, “Comme Emma Livry!” after the fire had been extinguished.

Luckily for Charrat, she lived, and returned to ballet. But the idea of being consumed, literally, by your art has a romantic connection to ballet, an art that over the last 100 years has become deeply dedicated to what Kelly calls “the cult of thin” — the stripping down and distilling of a dancer’s physical presence to fulfill a romantic ideal.

Dancers in Livry’s day, for all the dangers, enjoyed more autonomy. While ballerinas in the 18th and 19th centuries endured plenty of hardship, “a 20th-century ballerina could envy them,” says Kelly, “because they were much more in control of their artistic destinies.” ★



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# Mortuary School: Worst Cases and Painted Ladies

By Tommy Beggs, Retired Funeral Director, Madison, Florida

*Editor's Note: The following is Tommy Beggs' memory of his experiences while attending the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in the 1950s. Tommy is the second generation of his family to attend the school.*

By 1952, the nation had fully recovered from the limited commodities remembered during World War II. Automobiles were fancier, housing starts were skyrocketing for veterans and their families, and women's fashions, with the short, straight skirts to ration fabric during the war years, blossomed into extravagantly full and voluminous, mid-calf length versions.

Tunes hitting the radio airwaves that year included Nat Cole's "Unforgettable," "Heart & Soul" by the Four Aces and Kay Starr's "Wheel of Fortune."

With televisions in more homes, kids across America were watching "The Howdy Doody Show" and on October 7, 1952, "Bob Horn's Bandstand" had its first broadcast on a Philadelphia station. It was later renamed "American Bandstand," and Horn was injured. He was replaced by an unknown staff announcer, Dick Clark.

Amid the excitement of the times, Tommy Beggs of Madison, Florida, packed his belongings and made the trip to Cincinnati, where he enrolled in the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science at 3200 Reading Road in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Established as the Cincinnati School of Embalming in 1882 by Joseph Henry Clarke, known as the "father of American embalming schools," Mr. Charles O. Dhonau purchased the college and pursued his vision of becoming an educator to improve and expand mortuary education. In the 1920s, Dhonau pioneered an expanded curriculum and was instrumental in the organization of the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

Dhonau moved the college to its Reading Road location, where it continued until 1979. He was president when Tommy en-

rolled and remained in that position until his retirement in 1970.

Students attending the school lived in private homes, as there were no dormitories or designated student housing.

"I had to move two times," Tommy remembered. "I lived in the home of a widow when I first arrived. Her husband had been a dentist, and she planned to eventually move to Florida."

"When the dentist's widow moved, she gave me four beautiful books, published before World War I, which I still have – and cherish. Her late husband also had a beautiful bronze microscope, which I paid for – and still own."

"I have these books, filled with lithographs protected by thin tissue papers, in the Beggs' home, along with a Mathushek piano from the 1800s and a Tiffany lamp hanging over a table."

"When the dentist's widow moved, I had to move and found several roommates to share a home with. All were mortuary students and several are still active funeral directors."

This was the first time the young Floridian had been on his own so far from home and in such a big city.

"The Atlanta campus at Emory wasn't that big, probably 2,000 to 3,000 students," he said. "And when I was at the Oxford campus, well it was very small."

"We took our meals at a little diner that gave Cincinnati students a special discount, so we could eat for a dollar or maybe a little more. The food they served was good ol' home cooking, and an entire meal was probably no more than \$1.50."

"Occasionally, one of my roommates could get a car and we would all go to a ballgame or to concerts. One I remember was going to hear Patrice Munsel, the American coloratura soprano and youngest singer who ever starred at the Metropolitan Opera (she was 17), who toured and later starred in her own TV show, The Patrice Munsel Show.

"One of funniest things that happened to

me while I was a mortuary student involved a blind date," remembered Tommy. "One of my roommates was going to set me up on a date. He was from Jacksonville – Eldridge Grace – and he set me up with a girl I had never met. She was a beautiful lady. She had been Miss Kentucky, was very tall and wore a lot of make-up."

"While she was nice enough, she was definitely too over-made for me," he recalled. "I struggled through that date and didn't let my roommate set me up ever again."

Tommy said the students at Cincinnati College did their embalming practical experience in Cincinnati General Hospital's morgue under the direction of Prof. Paul Allison. "We had to pull so many hours' duty at the morgue and usually were given the worst cases, like people who had drowned in the river," he said. "One girl had jumped out of building, and we spent hours restoring her face and head."

Francis Stanley, one of Tommy's classmates, was a young man whose father had a funeral home. "He had never been in the embalming room, and here he was in mortuary school because he was the only heir to the funeral home...and he had to start with these cases from the hospital, which weren't the greatest. But Francis was smart, so he quickly learned the practical procedures."

Because he was already registered with the State of Florida as an apprentice (during this time, a funeral director had to serve a two- to three-year apprenticeship before sitting for the licensing exam) and because he previously had taken all the science courses pre-med students at Emory University were required to complete, Tommy said he probably aced every exam while in mortuary school. "When I left, I had the highest average in my class."

When Tommy finished in 1953, he was shipped into the military. That same year, Elizabeth II was crowned Queen of England.

Tommy retired after 50 years as a funeral director. Her majesty is still working. ★

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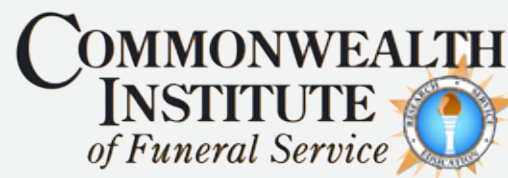
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# Preserving the Legacy

## A Florida Undertaker's Family T.J. Beggs Museum of History

By Alice Adams



The T.J. Beggs General Merchandise Store had occupied a corner of the town's main street – 106 NW Range Street – across from the Madison County Courthouse since Oct. 28, 1886 when Tom Beggs incorporated T.J. Beggs & Co. It had been established by his father-in-law around mid-century.

The stars aligned just right that day in October because it also marked the dedication of the Statue of Liberty, the founding of Coca Cola Co., and Sears, Roebuck and Co., began business.

Madison, Florida, located just off Interstate 10, 20 miles south of Valdosta, Georgia and halfway between Jacksonville and Tallahassee, was settled by cotton planters in 1838. Madison County, however, came to life 11 years earlier, and by 1850, more than 5,000 people called the area “home.”

In the heart of downtown Madison is a verdant city park. Its centerpiece is a statuary of the Four Freedoms, which stands

as a monument to the memory of hometown boy Colin Kelly. Kelly, a West Point graduate and the first hero of World War II, died Dec. 10, 1941 when his B-17 was shot down during bombing runs against the Japanese Navy.

Kelly's remains were hastily interred at Clark Field and then returned amid great fanfare to Madison in 1946 and reburied in Oak Ridge Cemetery with full military honors.

“I helped with that funeral after the war,” remembered Tommy Beggs, a third-generation funeral director. “In high school, I helped with just about everything at the funeral home while I was in high school. People who couldn't get into the church lined the streets. The governor attended Kelly's service.”

“President Roosevelt wanted to put the monument honoring Kelly in Tallahassee, but my uncle, Turner Davis, had served in Florida's state senate and told Roosevelt the

soldier's family and the people of Madison wanted the monument here. That's why the Four Freedoms, depicted by four angels, is in our city park. Some of Kelly's family still live here and his nephew works for us.”

Born in 1863 as the Civil War reached its midpoint, T.J. Beggs Sr., better known as “Tom,” began his young career, clerking in a general store owned by W.L. Parramore. The store, which sold everything from soup to nuts as general mercantile stores did in that time, also sold caskets.

“My great-grandfather began the business in the 1860s,” said current owner Tommy Beggs, who has transformed the building into the Beggs Family Museum in 1989, replete with some of the store's original fixtures and merchandise through the years.

“Parramore's was like a commissary,” he said, “and upstairs was the casket shop, where my grandfather stocked caskets, casket linings, coffins and hardware – whatever was needed to build a casket.”

“When my grandfather, T.J. “Tom” Beggs, Sr., had run the business for several years, he chose to become an undertaker,” the funeral director for 50 years, said. “He had no license, but he was a charter member of the Florida Funeral Directors Association, which was established in 1895.”

Tommy displays a 1918 photograph of his dad with the association on the 23rd anniversary of the group.

Shortly after his marriage to Mr. Parramore's beautiful daughter – Miss Helen, Beggs bought out his father-in-law's stake in the store and incorporated the business in his name.

“Tom” and Helen Beggs had four children: Helen, Ann, Tom Jr. – called ‘Little Tom’ – and Dot.

Little Tom – Tommy's father – attended The Citadel until he was called to serve in World War I, and when he returned home, he entered the family business.

Shortly thereafter, he earned his embalmers and funeral directors license from Cincinnati College of Embalmers in 1919,



becoming one of the State of Florida's first licensed embalmers.

"I remember my father traveling to other cities and counties to perform embalmings," said Tommy. "It seemed he was called out-of-town with some regularity in addition to running his own undertaking parlor and later, the Beggs Funeral Home on Main Street."

Being the only funeral home in Madison, Beggs served the entire community, regardless of faith or color. "Nobody thought anything of it because that's the way it always had been – and when two black funeral homes opened in Madison, we still served a majority of the African-American community because we had been entrusted with arrangements over the generations," Tommy said.

In 1920, T.J. "Little Tom" Beggs, Jr., married Miss Frances Wadsworth and to them were born five children: Frances, Ann, Tommy, Ashley and Billy.

Tommy Beggs, born Feb. 22, 1931, at home in the same bedroom as were all five of Little Tom's and Frances' children, was only a few years old when his grandfather – "Tom" died in 1933. Little Tom continued to run the family business and 20 years later, in 1953 he oversaw the building of its present location at 235 NW Orange Ave in Madison.

Beginning his work experience in the mercantile store early on, Tommy delivered merchandise on his bike, stocked shelves, swept floors and waited on customers, learning the business, literally, from the ground up.

"My dad had a deal. We could work in the store, and when we became 14, we could work in the funeral home."

Tommy credits his father with his personal drive, work ethic and his willingness to begin new enterprises. "My father loved farming, and along with the general merchandise store and his funeral home, he also grew shade tobacco, sweet potatoes and raised pigeons," he said. "Dad had a standing order for his squabs from Seaboard Railroad."

Being a product of the Beggs gene pool with a propensity toward entrepreneurship, when Tommy was 12 and World War II had begun, he planted a victory garden to help feed the area's poor, bred chickens and sold eggs to customers all over town. His mother drove him in the family sedan to deliver his fragile merchandise.

"I also bred and sold rabbits," he said.



"Our preacher knew a lot about animal husbandry, so he showed me how to raise rabbits and keep them healthy. He also taught me how to breed them to give birth about eight weeks before Easter so I would have a bunch of cute little bunnies to sell, which my father gave me permission to display in one of the store's show windows."

Money from his various enterprises went to buy stamps to support the war effort. He and his brothers also sang patriotic songs at War Bond Rallies, and on Saturdays, collected scrap metals with his Boy Scout Troop. "We all wanted to do our part to win the war," he said.

A portion of the museum, including his father's uniform from World War I, is dedicated to the war and Madison during wartime.

Tommy was valedictorian of his high school graduating class, played sports and was an all-around student, earning a scholarship to Emory University.

"My family kept saying, 'You need to be a doctor,' so I took all the pre-med courses, but when my dad was stricken with polio in 1954, during the Tallahassee epidemic, the

disease paralyzed him, although with much therapy, he became strong enough to walk with the help of a walker," the funeral director remembered.

This made Tommy's decision easy. Finishing his degree, he returned to Madison and began helping his father, earning his license from the Cincinnati School of Embalming. That next year – 1955 – they opened their new location, the second or third facility in the state built specifically as a mortuary and chapel.

"Our business is now 130 years old and my brothers each own two firms," said Tommy, who after 50 years as a funeral director now divides his time between his other holdings and the family museum.

By 1956, all three of Little Tom's boys were back in the business with their father. Around 1973, Tommy, Ashley and Billy bought out their father's interest and became a Professional Association.

Tommy remembers when he first saw his wife, Mary Jane, across the room at a college fraternity party, he told a frat brother, "That's the girl I'm going to marry."

Obviously love at first sight – at least for Tommy – the two dated for 10 years. "She got a job at Delta Airlines while I was in the service for two years, and we married in 1961," he said.

Looking back over his career, Tommy sums it up this way: "From my experience, I find funeral directors to be like psychologists, dealing with all kinds of people. I have lots of stories and a few 'burning bush stories' – things that happened during my half-century as a funeral director I couldn't believe," the veteran funeral director said.

"I've been called upon to arrange and direct the services of several governors, but we've also always served everybody, from poor folks to the middle classes and society's elite. It has always been our belief, which dates back to our grandfather, that everyone, whatever their social or financial status, deserves a fine funeral service...and we continue to train new directors to carry on that tradition in our funeral homes."

"I feel like if you're a funeral director and focused on serving others, you'll be fulfilled if the family is satisfied," the funeral director concluded. "Funerals aren't expensive. There are many ways to memorialize...to pay tribute to a life. You begin by first letting the Lord lead you and then listen to the family. Death impacts every person differently. We can help each other through grief." ★

# Welcome to the Beggs Family Museum

By Alice Adams



As you pass through the doors of Tommy Beggs' Family Museum in Madison, Florida – an area where counties were named after presidents – you truly revisit the days of yesteryear, where stores had mezzanines and women wore corsets, when caskets were made out of the sight of customers and people bought on credit before the age of credit cards.

Retired funeral director Tommy Beggs of Madison, Florida, was the fortunate heir of the family's general store...and much more than the building. "When merchandise didn't sell in season, it was boxed and stored," Beggs said, "so when the store closed, it was full of merchandise."

The museum's initial inventory uncovered financial records reflecting business transactions dating back to the 1800s. "From these records, we learned my great grandfather bought Sea Island long staple cotton, a variety of cotton with a longer fiber, used to make fine men's shirts, bedding and other linens. Until harvest, farmers often ran short of money, so Tom Sr., gave farmers credit and then bought their cotton. These records are now part of the museum."

With the help of his niece Alene Mostel (yes, that Mostel. She married Tobias, son of actor Zero Mostel), Tommy has been

able to organize the museum, reflecting the various eras of Madison's history and the part his family's businesses played.

"My niece, who is nothing short of amazing, moved to Florida 15 years ago to be near her mother, who is my sister," Tommy explained. "She has been invaluable in helping me categorize so much of the memorabilia and in explaining each part of the store."

The museum is the home of a 1918 Dodge hearse, the first motorized hearse in Florida. "It came from St. Louis, Missouri's Williams Brothers Motor Car Company and is built on a Dodge chassis with a Rolls Royce engine."

"When the new hearse arrived, employees helped Tom Jr., uncrate it and roll it out, only to realize nobody knew how to run it," Tommy explained. "At that time, Dr. Yates owned the only other motor car in Madison, so he was called to come and show Tom Jr., how to put gas in it and crank it."

When the old hearse was replaced with new rolling stock, it was stored in an old garage with the firm's ambulance. "That became our favorite place to play," the director said. "The hearse was moved to an old tobacco barn when the new Beggs Funeral Home was built."

"After it was restored and we were ready to move it into the museum, about 10 years ago, we had to remove one of the store's show windows to get it into the building," he added.

Another exhibit pays tribute the lives of Tommy's Great Aunt Cora and Great Uncle, Counsel Black Ashley, a graduate of The Citadel in Charleston, who was murdered in 1914 by a disgruntled client. "My aunt took over their mortgages and buildings, which were eventually bequeathed to his grandmother. With my father's help, my aunt made it through the Great Depression and went on with her life."

But for funeral directors visiting the museum, the attic is a treasure trove of memorabilia and surprises, a veritable feast for the eyes from the Beggs' early undertaking business and their early days in funeral service – from intricate ladies' burial gowns to the veils once placed over open caskets, plentiful casket hardware and coffin parts from the casket shop. If you can name anything connected with the early days of funeral service, you'll probably find it here.

There are also old layout beds and shrouds, very simple and very inexpensive for those who had nothing decent to be buried in...and there are fur coats from the store, marked to sell at \$25, knee-length wool men's bathing suits and similar suits for women. Tommy said he thought it would be difficult to swim in them as the wool absorbed water.

Confessing to a long-standing love of history, Beggs has surrounded himself with the buildings and sometime ghosts of Madison's





history. He and wife Mary Jane live in his great-grandparents' home, a Queen Anne Victorian built in 1895, listed on the National Historical Register – one of four in Madison. He and his son office in the old Beggs home, which they both believe has a resident ghost.

“We can't figure out who it is, but on two different occasions, I heard someone coming up the stairs, and when I said, 'Who's there?' no one answered,” the director said. “We suspect it might be Mama King, a retired school teacher who lived behind my parents' home in a small cottage. I remember, she used to just come in, like it was her house, so we kinda feel like it's her ghost. We've also had things fall off shelves, like a



whole sack of flour.”

While browsing this most interesting and little-known chronicle of past history, visitors to the Beggs Family Museum may hear a musical soundtrack wafting around the museum as the familiar aroma of Grandma's freshly

baked bread. This unobtrusive musical background was composed by Tommy's nephew William Winter, also a resident of Madison.

“This museum is my way of honoring our ancestors,” Tommy said modestly. “Everything we know is because they taught us.” ★

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## Be Prepared! Active Shooter Situation Information

### Run, Hide, Fight

As you may have witnessed on television news accounts, active shooter incidents are often unpredictable and evolve quickly. In the midst of the chaos, anyone can play an integral role in mitigating the impacts of an active shooter incident.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) aims to enhance preparedness through a “whole community” approach by providing products, tools, and resources to help you prepare for and respond to an active shooter incident.

**Overview:** An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

- Victims are selected at random.
- Event is unpredictable and evolves quickly.
- Knowing what to do can save lives.

All employees can help prevent and prepare for potential active shooter situations. The purpose of this article is to provide guidance to individuals, including managers and employees, so that they can prepare to respond to an active shooter situation.

This material provides information on recommended actions for non-law enforce-

ment employees to take should they be confronted with an active shooter situation.

Your Options: When an active shooter is in your area, you must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with the situation. You have three options:

#### 1. RUN

- Have an escape route and a plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- If possible, help others to escape.
- Do not attempt to move the wounded.
- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

#### 2. HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter’s view.
- Lock door or block entry to your hiding place.
- Silence your cell phone, including the vibrate mode, and remain quiet.

#### 3. FIGHT

- Fight as a last resort and only when

you are in imminent danger.

- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with as much physical aggression as possible.
- Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter.
- Commit to your actions...your life depends on it.

#### When Law Enforcement Arrives:

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Drop items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets)
- Raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding onto them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling.
- Do not ask questions when evacuating.

#### Information to provide when you call 911:

- Location of the active shooter.
- Number of shooters.
- Physical description of shooters.
- Number and types of weapons shooter has.
- Number of potential victims at the location.

**Additional Information:** The first law officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove the injured.

Once you have reached a safe location, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the area until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

To learn more, go to <https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-workshop-participant>. There you will find links to two videos – “Options for Consideration” and “Conducting Security Assessments: A Guide For Schools and Houses of Worship.”

Want to learn more? Set up Active Shooter Training through Homeland Security in your area or the FBI. ★

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## Equipping Your Transport Vehicles



For out-of-town trips of any length in any season, funeral service transport vehicles should be equipped for unexpected situations. This is the responsibility of the individual driver as well as the firm's manager /owner. Recommended for inclusion in an emergency kit are:

### Sanitation

- Toilet paper
- Trash bags
- Baby wipes
- Odor Neutralizer
- Disinfecting wipes
- Sustenance

- High calorie energy bars
- Bottled water
- Jerky

### Survival

- LED flashlight and/or headlamp
- Rain poncho
- Work gloves
- Fire-starters, such as waterproof matches
- Multi-tool and small pair of scissors
- Binoculars
- High quality first-aid kit
- Duct tape (There's always a use for duct tape.)

- Fleece blanket(s)
- Paracord. 50 yards, or more – a light-weight nylon, general purpose utility rope
- Hand/foot warmers
- Sunblock and lip balm
- Personal prescription medications – doses for two days
- Insect repellent

### Security

- Whistle
- Cash, coins. Power outages take out ATM machines. Having cash for gas, a meal or hotel room might put you ahead of those with only debit/credit cards
- Pepper spray
- Emergency phone numbers programmed into cell phone
- Cell phone and charger

### Sanity

- Deck of cards
- Paperback
- Small journal/pen or pencil
- Battery-powered fan and extra batteries

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## ASD Implements Suicide Prevention Call Support System To Help Distressed Callers



Imagine a scenario where a call to a funeral home could actually save a life. It may sound illogical, until you consider the fact that every 12 minutes a person in the United States chooses to commit suicide. When someone is feeling hopeless or alone, there is no telling who they might contact, and in some cases they will reach out to a funeral home.

ASD – Answering Service for Directors is known for taking “life’s most difficult calls.” Due to situations that have occurred in the past, the company wanted to do its part to help when a call is answered at ASD from someone who indicates that they are considering taking their own life. ASD created the Suicide Prevention Call Support System to give its operators a way to seamlessly connect with suicide hotline operators 24/7.

ASD Call Specialists can now press an emergency button on their keyboard to immediately alert a Suicide Hotline in the funeral home’s local area when they are speaking to someone in crisis. The call can be made to the hotline without the ASD Call Specialist interrupting the caller or placing him or her on hold. The hotline operator will hear a recording alerting them that a distressed and possibly suicidal person is on the line speaking to an ASD Call Specialist. This alert will instruct the hotline operator to press any key to be 3-way connected into the call.

Although this is a rare situation, these calls have occurred at ASD. In the past, Call Specialists have been deeply affected and troubled by conversations they have had with those who stated they were contemplating suicide. Now, ASD’s staff does not have to shoulder this burden alone and have greater peace of mind knowing they have standby support 24/7 from experienced suicide hotline operators. This new, unparalleled solution ensures that callers in a suicidal crisis will receive the emotional support and help they need without any delays.

“It is an unfortunate fact that more than 100 suicides occur every day in the United States, and between 50 and 75 percent of people who attempt suicide talk about their thoughts and feelings before the act,” says ASD Vice President and Family-Member Owner, Kevin Czachor. “If ASD’s Suicide Prevention Call Support System can make

a difference for even just one of those cases, all of our efforts creating this system will be worth it. By linking ASD staff to qualified, suicide prevention operators, we can help ensure that those who are suffering receive immediate counseling, guidance and support.”

## Ultimate 1000 Lift Increases Productivity at Ferncliff Crematory



Ferncliff Cemetery, Arboretum & Crematory announces the installation of the Ultimate 1000 Lift™, manufactured by Mortuary Lift Co. Ferncliff, which added cremation services to its 153-year-old organization in 2012, is experiencing dual benefits from the addition: increased efficiency as well as injury prevention among its staff.

“We should have installed the lift six months ago,” comments Stan Spittler, Superintendent at Ferncliff, who quickly recognized the advantages of the Ultimate 1000. “In just a month, it has simplified the loading of cremation cases into the retort, making the process not only physically easier but also faster, safer and more efficient.”

The safety of its employees was a key consideration in choosing the Mortuary Lift Co. product. “Our work is physical and strenuous, often requiring several employees. Now, lifting even an oversized case can be done simply by one person.” Spittler points out the convenience of the remote control function, the ease of removing a case from a casket directly into a cremation container or retort and the practical benefit of the lift’s ability to handle up to 1,000 pounds.



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Member TFDA & NFDA

## Stairway Lending Partners with TFDA

Stairway Lending has announced that the Texas Funeral Directors Association (TFDA) has endorsed Stairway Lending's model as the ideal consumer financing solution for any out of pocket expense related to the loss of a loved one. Stairway's online lending exchange connects consumers and small businesses to its network of specialized lenders who provide installment loans from \$500 to \$100,000 with terms from 1 year to 7 years through an online application, allowing the consumer to receive multiple monthly payment options in less than one minute.

"We are excited about the partnership with Stairway Lending and the value they will add to our funeral home members and their consumer clients. Stairway's automated multi-lender funding model will allow our members to serve the majority of their consumer clients with varying credit profiles with a monthly payment plan on the out of pocket expenses they have through an installment loan. Stairway's compliance team has vetted every lender on their platform through their third-party vendor overview process allowing us to know that the consumer clients are getting connected with the right lenders," said Joyce Dawson, Director of Member Services for TFDA.

Stairway Lending's process is simple, fast and allows the consumer to fill out a very basic online application, which is launched off the funeral home website directly integrated with Stairway's technology platform. In less than a minute, the consumer receives loan offers that are emailed and displayed over their web browser requesting them to complete the application. Assuming the basic info is accurate, funds are direct deposited into their checking account within a day. In addition, loans are sourced through a large pool of online lenders serving the full spectrum of credit (from lower to excellent credit profiles - 550 FICO to 850 FICO), not just one single financial institution but a multitude of specialized lenders, which increases the odds of the loan being funded. Rates are competitive, starting as low as 3%, and are priced off the individual risk of each borrower.

The association members will be able to seamlessly deploy a branded "white labeled" credit application on their individual website or guide their families to visit stairwaylending.com if they choose. Each funeral home

will have their own internal dashboard, which will allow them to see real time the application process of its clients and when the funds are deposited into the consumer's bank account knowing that they are credit worthy for the services to be provided.

For any specific details regarding this partnership please contact Josh Holloway (jholloway@stairwaylending.com 205-572-5640), Cary Cooper (ccooper@stairwaylending.com 205-901-4614) or Joyce Dawson (joyce@tfda.com).

## New Memorials Direct Introduces Petite Charms to Their Jewelry Line

New Memorials Direct is excited to announce their new line of Petite Charms. They are an option for those who would



prefer to keep treasured memorabilia of their loved ones a little more versatile or low key. Although smaller in size, they are just as substantial in quality as the traditional line of fingerprint/image engraved jewelry. They can accommodate fingerprint, photo, custom writing or just basic text engravings. They are the perfect size to be worn on charm bracelets yet hang as an elegant pendant, as

well. Additionally, the charms can pair with just about any style or other jewelry making them an ideal memorial one can always keep close to them.

Petite charms are not only simple to customize, they also come in a variety of commonly requested shapes including oval, round, heart and dog tag styles. Families can choose between sterling silver or gold plated and ash-holding or non-ash-holding. The charms are at a lower price point, as well.

For more information call 877-995-8767 or visit [www.newmemorialsdirect.com](http://www.newmemorialsdirect.com)

## SCI Sponsors Donate Life Float at the 128th Rose Parade

Service Corporation International and its brand, Dignity Memorial, served as a major sponsor for the ninth year of the Donate Life float that appeared in the 128th Rose Parade on Jan. 2, 2017.

Since 2009, SCI has participated in Donate Life's annual tribute to organ, eye and tissue donors, and helped 43 client families honor a loved one with a memorial portrait featured on the Donate Life float. These portraits, called "floragraphs," are made primarily of flowers, seeds and other natural materials.

This year's floragraphs included one from Texas, honoring donor Philip John (P.J.) Wolf, age 8, from Arlington, sponsored by Moore Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens.

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## Temple Funeral Home Hosts Rally of Peace



In the wake of recent turmoil, with political differences boiling over in a variety of settings, public service stakeholders in Temple, Texas came together to host a “Rally of Peace.”

Hosted by Harper-Talasek Funeral Homes, the event drew together representatives from the police and fire departments,

churches, and Temple citizens.

Pastors from various churches spoke about what they could offer. The funeral home spoke to supporting those who are grieving. The police department delivered a message that they will defend and protect everyone in Temple.

“All the citizens gathered into a circle with

the fire department and police department surrounding them as a sign of protection,” said Sabrina Young, managing director and embalmer. “It was a sight to see – all races, all cultures, all classes to have joined for a greater good and make a stand that Temple will not be a part of what they rest of the world is doing.”



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### Harold George "Danny" Daniels, Jr.

Harold George (Danny) Daniels, Jr. was born in San Antonio on December 17, 1932, to Harold George, Sr. and Margaret Bradbury Daniels. He passed away December 12, 2016.

He is the father of Hunter Daniels with Batesville Casket Company in Corpus Christi. A memorial service was held December 16 at the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest. Arrangements were at the direction of Piersall Funeral Directors.

Danny was a University of Texas Alumni and a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity where he made many close relationships. After college he returned to Abilene, Texas and opened Abilene Business Equipment where he served as president from 1954-2013 when he retired. Danny married wife Judy on March 4, 1969. While serving as president, Danny received many distinguished awards for his achievements in sales and service in his industry. He was also a long standing member of the men's club Interact where he enjoyed connecting with other Abilene business professionals. Danny was always a passionate businessman but his greatest passion was for his family and friends.

Danny enjoyed hunting, traveling, and watching his children and grandchildren play sports. He loved life and shared life with those dearest to him. Those closest would describe him as being patient, caring, sweet, and honest. Danny will be greatly missed, and he will never be forgotten.

He was preceded in death by his parents Margaret and H.G. Daniels Sr. Danny is survived by his wife Judy and their three

children, Kim Carleton and husband Phil of Midland and their children McKenzie, Madison and Sam. Son Brad Daniels and his wife Tara of Aledo and their children Will, Brooks, and Hunt, and Hunter Daniels and wife Betsy of Corpus Christi and their children Margaret and Archer.

Many positive attributes have been passed on to his children and grandchildren. They will continue to celebrate and carry on his quiet simplistic way of enjoying life to the fullest.

The family would like to give special thanks to the nurses Glenna Glover, Leslie Boggess, Donna Masters, and Theresa Sides of Kinder Hearts Hospice Care. Their comfort and compassion over the last year was above and beyond reproach.

The family would like to request donations be made to the Gerhart Hall, Church of the Heavenly Rest.

Condolences may be offered to the family online at [www.pbfuneraldirectors.com](http://www.pbfuneraldirectors.com).

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## Business Insurance

Federated Insurance Cos. is the endorsed TFDA Services, Inc., property/casualty, liability and workers' compensation insurance provider. Federated is recognized as the national leader in partnering with trade association and buying groups and has been endorsed by 29 state funeral directors associations. The company has more than 100 years' experience providing insurance and risk management services to business owners. They currently have 29 representatives in Texas to serve you. Federated offers very competitive rates. For a comparison of your present coverage, please contact Michael Cox at (800) 633-6040.

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be taken to their website where you can sign up for CE hours. TFSC has approved all the continuing education modules. It is possible to get all 16 hours, including the required hours, through this program. You may study the modules and take the tests online, or order the modules through the website and have them mailed to you. The cost is reasonable and the process user-friendly.

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## Online Newsletters

MultiView produces and provides a weekly email newsletter, Funeral Trends, to the TFDA membership. The information in the newsletter is industry related covering a variety of news stories from across the country. They also sell advertising on the TFDA website. Members have the opportunity to purchase advertisements in the newsletter or on the website. For information on advertising rates, please contact Geoffrey Forneret at (469) 420-2629 or email [gforneret@multibriefs.com](mailto:gforneret@multibriefs.com).

## Phone "On Hold" Systems

HEAR HERE "On Hold" Systems offers customized music and message "on hold" service to TFDA and its members. They can help you project your professional image each time you find it necessary to place a caller "on hold" by creating custom productions especially for your business. They are proud to offer their services without any equipment to buy or contracts to sign. You can hear a sample of their service by calling the TFDA office. For more information about this great image enhancing marketing tool, call Vince at (800) 613-3197 or visit them online at [www.hearhere.net](http://www.hearhere.net).

“Partnering with Legacy has provided us with an incredible amount of resources and knowledge. Legacy gave us the freedom to do more with the business. You cannot ask for a better group of people to work with.”



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*For questions on how to join our family of professionals or to find other opportunities to advance in the funeral care industry, please visit our website.*



# TFDA Services, Inc.

## Executive Officers



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**Larry W. Payne, CFSP**  
West



**Christopher Ramsey**  
Fort Worth

## MEMBER SERVICES These services are provided to TFDA members only.

**AT&T Discounted Cell Phone Service** TFDA members are eligible for a 10 percent discount. This is for personal accounts under users' social security numbers. Business accounts are not eligible. They offer some great specials not available anywhere else. To access the link, you must go to the Members Only portion of the TFDA website and log-in. You may also take your membership card to any AT&T store to verify eligibility.

**TFDA Job Bank** assists funeral homes, commercial embalming establishments and crematories looking for personnel. Information is posted to the TFDA website for 90 days unless otherwise stated. Using the TFDA job bank significantly increases your applicants and shortens your search time. Licensed funeral directors and embalmers are encouraged to email their resumes to [joyce@tfda.com](mailto:joyce@tfda.com) so that potential employers can contact them. Contact the TFDA office at (512) 442-2304 for more information.

**Verizon Wireless Service** TFDA members (all existing and new customer Verizon accounts) will receive an 8 percent discount off their monthly bill along with discounts of up to 25 percent off all accessories. This discount applies to business accounts and personal accounts. All activation fees will be waived for new services provided, along with early termination fees up to \$350. All agreements will be for a duration of two years. Apple products will not receive discounts. To initiate your account, contact Will Godfrey (832) 349-5106, [will.godfrey@cellularsales.com](mailto:will.godfrey@cellularsales.com).

**El Dorado Motor Group** offers TFDA members and their employees the ability to purchase GM vehicles at fleet pricing. El Dorado Motors will sell all eligible vehicles at GM Supplier Pricing as detailed on the manufacturer's invoice. This is truly a "no hassles/no haggle" process. For each vehicle purchased, they will donate \$50 to the Colin Owens Memorial Scholarship Fund. Contact Tom Bresnahan in McKinney, Texas, at (972) 569-0101.

**Funeral Service Credit Union**, located in Springfield, Illinois, is a state-chartered credit union established in 1983 that provides financial services to funeral service professionals, their employees and immediate families. This credit union is endorsed by NFDA, many other national funeral service organizations and state funeral directors associations. They offer many services and very competitive rates. For more information, visit [www.fscunet.org](http://www.fscunet.org) or call toll-free (866) 701-3728 or (217) 546-5480.

**Music Licensing** TFDA members are eligible for the same low rate for music licensing as is available to NFDA members. NFDA allows members of the state associations to receive a discounted music license. The 2017 music license is \$246. This is a considerable discount over the price you would pay to become licensed directly with each agency (ASCAP, BMI and SESAC). For a copy of the 2017 NFDA music license renewal form, go to [www.tfda.com](http://www.tfda.com) and click on "Helpful Forms." Failure to obtain an annual license may result in substantial fines.

**Men's Wearhouse** Men's Wearhouse is the go-to menswear store for funeral directors of all ages. Superior suit selection is broad on styles and brand names. To get discounts go to [www.tfda.com](http://www.tfda.com), then Members Only.

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## 2017 TFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Month	Date	Event	Location
January	17 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
	18 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
	18 W	Membership Committee Mtg.	Austin
	18 W	Membership Phone-A-Thon	Austin
	19 Th	Membership Phone-A-Thon	Austin
February	4 Sa	NFDA Crematory Training	San Antonio College
March	30 Th	South Central Meeting	TBD
April	6 Th	Southeast Texas Meeting	College Station
	18 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
	19 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
June	4-7	TFDA Convention	Austin
October	24 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
	25 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
	29 - Nov 1	NFDA Convention	Boston, MA



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# STOP the Worry Habit TODAY

By Dr. Kathleen Hall



We can worry ourselves sick over everything from our bank account balance to our kids picking up some strange disease or worse yet, strange friends. The reality is more than 90 percent of our worries never happen. It's when our concerns become constant worry that they can lead to anxiety, depression, and incredible stress in our lives.

Are you one of those worriers who runs through hundreds of "what if" scenarios? If so, take note. You can learn to let go of what worries you. 7 Tips to stop worry NOW!

**Discover your joy.** Find three things you love and commit to doing them. Play online games at Pogo.com. Learn to meditate. Go for a run at your favorite park, plan a picnic, see a funny

movie or volunteer at a pet shelter. Filling your life with things you love helps increase happiness and reduces stress and worry.

**Write down worries.**

Look at the worst and best case scenarios to any problem so you can face the reality of your situation and deal with it. Or put your worries away in a worry box. Discipline your mind. Tell yourself that you will not think about it again. Once a day, open the box and begin to make choices.

**See your solutions.**

You'll see the possible choices or solutions to resolve your problem when you create a plan. Realize you have the ability to turn obstacles into opportunities for success. At home or at

work you can take steps to overcoming a crisis.

**Bare your burdens.**

Your spouse and your friends need to be aware of what's going on in your life. Agree to unload your worries to them when it lasts 24 hours or more. Tell them by phone or email. Sharing your worries helps diffuse it and creates healing hormones in the body that begin to calm and heal you.

**Listen clearly.**

What are you thinking and saying? If it's negative, stop yourself, and repeat a positive affirmation, such as "I am strong" or "all is well." Repeat this simple phrase over as you slowly breathe in and out. Studies show stress reduction practices help you worry less.

**Be aware of blessings.**

When you begin to worry, stop and smile and be aware of the blessings in your life: a friend, a pet, a job, or your health. Studies tell us daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, and energy.

**Detect danger and substitute serenity.**

Be aware when worry begins to take over your thoughts and learn your worry triggers. Instead of letting worry run rampant, chose to surround yourself with the sun, the ocean, or whatever is pleasing to you through guided imagery. Practice Pilates, Yoga, tai chi, or chi gong to center yourself and clear your mind of worries. Studies show serenity practices produce a more positive perspective on life. ★

*Kathleen Hall is a world-renowned stress and mindful living expert. In addition to her corporate spokesperson roles, she has appeared on CNN, FOX News, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Oprah, and many other lifestyle programs and publications. Author of four books, her latest Mindful Living Everyday, guides readers in achieving a daily practice of mindfulness.*



# Cross over to a better future



Wilbert ESP is more than a cloud-based application for funeral professionals. It's a flexible, customized program that facilitates education and the selection of a burial vault for families.

Through slides, video and funeral professional guidance, families concisely learn about burial vaults and personalization options. An on-screen display of the specific Wilbert vaults that you offer - along with your funeral home's retail pricing - guides families through the selection process. At the end, a summary of the selection and other details such as service dates and times for at-need arrangements is generated and stored.

Isn't it time to cross over to a better Educated Selection Process?

**Watch the Wilbert ESP video: [wilbert.hmsbox.com/esp](http://wilbert.hmsbox.com/esp)**

**Contact your Wilbert Funeral Services representative today!**

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Regional Marketing Manager  
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[alee@wilbert.com](mailto:alee@wilbert.com)

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