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Texas Director

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Our Very
Best Friend**

.....

**Where the...
Circus is Buried**

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Welcome to 2017 Everyone!



I hope you all enjoyed (and survived) the holiday season and are looking forward to a great year. I am not one for New Year's resolutions, but I do like to set goals this time of year, both personally and professionally, and this year I have some goals I would like to share with you in regards to our association.

We always have the goal of having great attendance at our annual convention, and for our members and suppliers to walk away feeling more knowledgeable, refreshed, and up to date on what is new in the funeral profession. Of course, I am no different than the previous past presidents, I want my convention to be the BEST, so be sure and mark your calendars for June 4-7 and come see for yourself.

We also have membership goals and this year the membership committee is working hard to encourage our non-members to get involved in TFDA and see what it has to offer them.

To all of our members, we appreciate your support and commitment. I would like to share some numbers with you that might surprise you. As of October 1, 2016 we had 528 member firms, 20 embalmers, 156 individual members and 116 associate members for a total of 821 members of TFDA in 2016, which was up 49 members from 2015.

So you are probably thinking, "Great news, we are up in membership", which is absolutely true, but it is not a drop in the bucket compared to the

number of funeral homes and funeral directors in this great state of Texas. I say all of this only to encourage you to take out your TFDA Directory, look at the towns surrounding you and identify which firms are members of the association (they are listed in bold print), and call them and thank them for being involved.

Also, at the same time, why not identify the firms that are not members and invite them to your Spring Regional Meeting and our Annual TFDA Convention?

If each of TFDA's members would commit to doing this in our surrounding area, imagine the impact it could have for all of us and our association. We also have goals for our TFDA PAC Fund, and as all of you should know by now -- because it's all over the news -- the Texas Legislature is back in session, which makes our fundraising efforts for PAC even more important.

This being said, I encourage all of the regions to focus their efforts this spring on raising money for PAC and being the "Leader of the PAC" at the convention in June, where I will host them in my suite for a reception.

Speaking of the legislature, we have several bills that have been introduced that will either directly or indirectly impact our profession that we are watching closely and will keep you updated as they navigate through the legislative process. Be prepared, we may need to call on you to contact your local representatives and share with them your concerns as things move along.

I want to say a personal thank you to Senator Bill Haley for all the hard work he is doing on our behalf, and if you have not been to the State Capitol with him, I encourage you to go. It is quite an experience.

Finally, this being the month of "love", I wanted to share with you something that is new in

FAMIC's "Talk of a Lifetime" campaign, which debuted at the NFDA Convention, the "Have the Talk of a Lifetime Conversation Cards." This is a deck of 50 cards with 50 different questions designed to create conversations among family and friends about important things about their lives, special memories, favorite moments, etc.

The decks of cards are \$5.00 per box and I encourage all of you to get a few decks and share them with your families, friends, at civic organizations, with hospice groups, assisted living event coordinators...the opportunities are endless. What a great way to start the conversation and learn priceless information about our friends and family.

I look forward to seeing all of you in the months ahead at your spring regional meetings. Don't forget those special partners on Valentine's Day, or take the opportunity to surprise someone with a little love this month! ☆



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Sabrina Young, CFSP

**Managing Director and Embalmer,
Harper Talasek Funeral Home, Temple**

Hometown: I was born and raised in Warren, Michigan

Marital Status: Married to Justin E. Young in 2008

High School: I graduated from Warren Mott High School, 2005. I was state champion for Public Speaking in Health Occupations Students of America.

When did you know you wanted to become a funeral director and what encouraged that choice? I was drawn to the science of pathology from high school when I was able to witness my first autopsy. After high school, I joined the US. Army, as a military police officer while serving in the OIF/OEF era. During my deployment, I lost a few of my comrades. I was asked by families was there something I could have done? When the platoon got together to have a memorial service I saw all the grief. I knew I wanted to help but didn't know how exactly.

After I completed my commitment in military service, I enrolled at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor in the Bachelors of Science in Nursing, and while volunteering for hospice I met a funeral director and inquired about the profession. She said all I do is help families. I changed my major to funeral service and completed my BA in Funeral Science from the University of Central Oklahoma in 2014.

When were you licensed? 2012

Who have been your mentors? My father, Ronald Portugal, who taught me what hard work is. My leadership currently, Doug Ray and those who support me.

Where did you complete your provisional requirement? Under the guidance of Lucia Dickinson, at Bill Merritt Funeral Home in Bethany, Oklahoma.

What surprised you most in mortuary



school? What surprised me most about mortuary school was the diversity of the students and educational standards in the U.S.

What mortuary school class do you wish you had but didn't? I was and still am an over achiever. So if it was offered, I took it.

What fulfills you most in funeral service? Each day is a new opportunity to learn, connect and make a difference!

What makes you a good funeral director? I believe a good director must have a passion of a servant's heart. I cherish my families even long after I have served them. Many of my families invite me to their homes, children's birthdays and holiday functions. I am blessed with joining everyone in my community to be part of my family.

What do you see as the greatest challenge for funeral directors today? I believe the greatest challenge for funeral directors today is not being able to CHANGE! We have been a profession with very minor change. Funeral directors need to be able to adapt to the new funerals being offered. Continue to find relevance, importance and acceptance. Change is a good thing! I say embrace it.

Complete this sentence: If I had more time, I'd...spend it with my family and two

dogs outdoors with no cell phone.

When did you join TFDA...and why? I transferred from the OFDA and enjoyed the feeling of being a part of the decision-making for our profession. I moved to Temple, Texas in 2013, went to my first meeting, met Charlie Haubault and signed up for everything I could. TFDA welcomed me with open arms! It felt like a home where I could learn and make a difference.

What do you get from TFDA? Besides the continuing education, what I get is being part of a great association that values each other. Members support one another, call upon other directors during times of need and overall friendship. How many times have you had a friend who wasn't in the profession that you were and burnt out from work talk? Can I get an AMEN!

What else can TFDA offer young directors it is not offering now? TFDA distributes information that helps young professionals develop ourselves. I enjoy the meetups and would like to see more education strategies to help overcome business antics, i.e., Classes on Low-Cost marketing, understanding P&L, classes on Gun Control, How to gain market share, Entrepreneur start-ups. The "Do's and "Don't's.. etc.

If I hadn't chosen funeral service as my profession, I would have been... in the medical field or criminal justice/law enforcement.

For fun, I like to...travel on family vacations and lie on the couch with my husband, four daughters Kayla, Kelsea, Zaydriana, Valora and our two dogs, to watch our TV shows.

Anything else you'd like to add? I am the Founding secretary member of the Temple Belton Ladies Lions Club. I also am a member of the VFW, Harker Heights, the Community Emergency Response of Temple, a graduate of the Temple Fire Citizens Academy and a Certified Funeral Service Professional. ★



Federal Court Stops Enforcement of New Overtime Rule

On November 22, 2016, U.S. District Court Judge Amos Mazzant granted an Emergency Motion for Preliminary Injunction and thereby enjoined the Department of Labor from implementing and enforcing the Overtime Final Rule on December 1, 2016.

The case was heard in the United States District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division (State of Nevada ET AL v. United States Department of Labor

ET AL No: 4:16-CV-00731). The rule updated the standard salary level and provided a method to keep the salary level current to better effectuate Congress's intent to exempt bona fide white collar workers from overtime protections.

On December 1, 2016, the Department of Justice on behalf of the Department of Labor filed a notice to appeal the preliminary injunction to the U.S. Circuit Court

of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The Department has moved to expedite the appeal, which was approved by the Court.

Information on the provisions in the rule were published in the July 2016 issue of *Texas Director* and are additionally available to NFDA members on their website at www.nfda.org.

No date for the appeal on the injunction is available yet. ★

Did You Know?

TFDA's Ethics Committee

According to TFDA's By-laws, the Ethics Committee shall consist of a minimum of nine members appointed by the president with the review and the approval of the executive board. The nine members include a chairperson, an appointed member from each of the seven TFDA regions and one appointed member-at-large.

The duties of the committee are to provide the public and the profession with a balanced forum for creating and implementing the importance of ethical practices in all matters related to funeral service. Its commitment is to provide a venue to the public as well as Texas funeral directors to convey the message of funeral services, including but not limited to death care options, funeral arrangement information, pre-financed funerals and the overall ethical purposes of the funeral profession.

Our thanks to the members of the Ethics Committee for all their work on behalf of the members of TFDA and funeral service in Texas.

Chairing the committee is E. Gene Allen, CFSP. Members include Jennifer Rountree Braun, Tim Brown, Truett Calvert, Jeremy Cameron, Gary Cooper and Sheri D. Elkins, CFSP.

Also serving are Jack Fuqua, R. Emken Linton, Sr., David L. McCoskey, CFSP, Lois Keller Nelson, Michelle R. Nowak, Morris Overstreet, Sherry Rountree and

Brad Shotts.

Additional members of the committee are Dylan Stopher, Shannon Sturms, Jimmy Don Taylor, Darryl Thompson

and Marcellus Wesley.

Lara Price is legal counsel for the committee and administrative support is provided by Ann Singer. ★

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Legislative Update

Run-Down of Bills, Issues That are Currently Under Consideration

Fetal Remains Rule

Where It Stands

This rule was temporarily blocked from going into effect until January 27.

Bills to Watch

The TFDA Legislative committee met on January 17 and the TFDA Board met on January 18 to hear about upcoming legislation under consideration by the Legislature. The following were discussed:

SB 65 - Zaffirini (gives penalties to cemetery organizations which discriminates by race, color or national origin.)

HB 994/SB 513 - Wray/Rodriguez (relating to disposition of remains and anatomical gifts.) - TFDA concerns – substituting a notary for two witnesses – repealing Chapter 692 of the Health and Safety Code)

HB 535 - Longoria - re the Crime Vic-

tims Compensation Act. Adds real property damage to list of compensations, adds a cap of \$50,000. Fund has recently increased funeral compensation to \$6500 (not a part of this bill)

SB125 - Huffines - requiring the Texas Funeral Service Commission to live stream all meetings. The TFSC is willing to comply if law is passed, but it will be costly to the agency due to upgrades to internet systems required to comply

SB336 - West. Relates to release of bodies (and body parts) after an autopsy. This bill “codifies prevailing practice in the Dallas Medical Examiners office” Concerns relating to releasing body parts to Organ Procurement Organizations, and releasing funeral homes of responsibility if Medical Examiner keeps tissue or body parts

HB1155 -Davis, Sarah- Relating to Alkaline Hydrolysis. This bill was not posted

prior to the meetings. However, we knew it was being filed. Committee nor board wanted to oppose this bill

SB81/HB63 - Nelson/Davis, Sarah - Relating to Cancer Prevention and Research. The Texas Funeral Service Commission is listed as one of the agencies to be included.

SB 561- Hancock - Relating to unclaimed insurance or annuities (including for pre-paid funerals). Creates a Master Death File. This bill was filed after our meetings.

SB238 - Huffines/ **SB 258** - Huffines/ **SB 406** - Hall - all related to fetal tissue/abortion in some manner. The feeling was these bills (if passed) will be challenged to the Supreme Court. ★

To follow these and other bills go to <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>.



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Valentine's Greetings from PAC-Man (a.k.a. Chuck Robertson, TFDA's Secretary-Treasurer)

For all of you newcomers to TFDA, we have what is known as a PAC, which stands for Political Action Committee (PAC). Our PAC was organized years ago so we could raise enough money to make contributions to support lawmakers who have our best interests at heart.

PACs have been around since 1944, when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) formed the first one to raise money for the re-election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The PAC's money came from voluntary contributions from union members rather than union treasuries, so it did not violate the Smith Connally Act of 1943, which forbade unions from contributing to federal candidates.

Although commonly called PACs, federal election law refers to these accounts as "separate segregated funds" because money contributed to a PAC is kept in a bank ac-



count separate from the association's general treasury.

A PAC must register with the FEC within 10 days of its formation (we did), providing name and address for the PAC, its treasurer and any connected organizations.

Which brings us to now – today. The Texas 85th Legislature has been in session for approximately one month. The first two days were spent debating the need for Lt. Governor Patrick's SB6, also known as the "bathroom bill."

So, both the House and Senate are just getting warmed up and, if you haven't signed up for our automatic bank draft or haven't made your PAC contribution this year, now's the time. Former Senator Bill Haley, our lobbyist, is monitoring the activities on "the hill" and works closely with our legislative committee. Your presence may be needed down the line, but in the meantime, support our profession's future by supporting our TFDA PAC.

Later in the year, we'll be having golf tournaments and other PAC-related benefits, so be sure to get involved. Happy Valentine's Day! ★



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The Fringe Benefits

By Deborah Schlottman



It was a typical training day for my new apprentice. A new day, with a new topic to learn about. This day was devoted to dressing and cosmetics. So why wasn't my (forty-something, male) apprentice exuding excitement for the tasks at hand? I mean, come on, we are working with cosmetics and hair. Doesn't everyone share my excitement for this topic?

The first decedent of the day happened to be male. That's good news! My apprentice would get to start off with an "easy one." "No problem," I said. The condition of this deceased was pretty much textbook perfect. Decedent dressed? Check! The necktie is tied Double Windsor? Check! The pocket square folded and placed? Check! Highlight cosmetic applied? Check!

Then I said, "OK, apprentice, let's work on this man's hair." My apprentice proceeded to grab the first hair tool he came across – a hair pick. Umm, that's an interesting choice of hair tool, I thought to myself. This particular decedent had a typical older male hairstyle, a part on the side, combed over with slight volume to it. I asked my apprentice to style this man's hair the way he thought it should be according to the photograph provided. He then stood behind the decedent's head with the hair pick in his hand and a blank stare on

his face. Noticing that he looked completely lost, I began to guide him and tell him the necessary steps.

First we needed to wet the decedent's hair and apply hair gel to the hair before styling it with the hairdryer. "So, go ahead and apply the gel," I said. "And then I will show you the technique of styling to achieve the lift that his particular style requires."

Again, my apprentice looked like a deer in the headlights. "What's wrong?" I asked. To which he replied, "I don't know what hair gel is or what you do with it." In shock I thought, "How could this be?" He then pointed to his own bald head and said to me, "I don't use hair products or tools."

I chuckled and realized with a hairline like his, he wouldn't. At that time, my apprentice's hair reality was foreign to me. After all, I have been interested in all things about hair and makeup ever since I can remember.

Eventually, my apprentice mastered the art of the "roller set" hairstyle like nobody's business. Now, he is not only competent in all things regarding hair and makeup, he has become quite the expert.

Sadly though, throughout the 20+ years of my career as an embalmer and licensed cosmetologist, I have found that my apprentice's lack of knowledge about hair preparation is more the norm (of even experienced embalmers) than the exception.

Hopefully, those of you who share this apprentice's insecurities on the subject of hair preparation will find some useful tips and techniques in this article. Let's start with the basics of hair care as it pertains to our job as an embalmer.

Have you ever winced as you opened the body bag of a decedent that you were about to embalm and found that they had a head full of long hair? "Ugh!" you sighed as you realized this hair could easily add a half an hour or more to your embalming process. You tried your best to keep the hair from mingling with the exiting body fluids or getting tangled up amongst your instruments. Well, this doesn't need to be an issue if you treat the hair prior to injection.

Simply wash the hair with shampoo, rinse, and apply a generous amount of conditioner, or spray the entire head of hair with a leave-



in conditioner. After doing this, section the hair into four parts. Twist each section into a bun and clamp it with a hair clip or claw. If the scalp has been autopsied, remove the sutures prior to cleansing the hair. Section the hair into two sections, top and bottom, and secure each section into the hair clamp. This will also aid in suturing the scalp together at the end of the embalming without the hair interfering and getting caught in the suturing process.

Important: Do not rinse the conditioner from the hair until the end of the embalming process. By treating the hair first, you are making your job easier by preventing the hair from collecting blood clots and debris from the embalming procedure. This technique also allows the hair to absorb the conditioner and soften the strands. Softer strands allow you to comb the hair without it tangling up and causing hair loss and frustration.

Once the embalming is complete and the table has been cleaned, remove the hair clamps and rinse the conditioner out of the hair. At this point it is best to use a wide tooth comb for the combing process. To avoid hair breakage/loss, always begin combing from the bottom of the strands, making your way to the top of the head. With each new stroke you are grabbing a higher section, eventually making your way to the top of the head, with a full stroke combing the entire length of the hair. This method will alleviate knotting as well as breakage.

It isn't enough to just wash the hair and comb it straight back. Have you ever tried to style a woman's bangs but instead found you were fighting a stubborn cowlick, trying to make it stay down on the forehead? Of course you have. Save yourself and the person responsible for cosmetizing the decedent a lot of frustration. Take the decedent's hairstyle (man or woman) into consideration as you are combing out the hair after embalming. Examine the hair and its different lengths. If the hair is shorter around the forehead, you can assume this person had some sort of bang or fringe around their face. If it's possible to see a photograph prior to this point, that's ideal. Comb the wet hair in the direction of the style. As the hair dries it will set in the direction in which it is meant to be styled. Embalming will set the hair follicles in the direction you comb the hair after the embalming process. The same holds true with men as with women. If they have a part in their hair, comb the wet hair in the direction of his preferred part. These simple details will make your job a little more enjoyable and less stressful.

Got roots? Yes? No problem! The family brought in hair color in a box for you to use. Easy, right? No! First and foremost, if the funeral home staff that collected the hair dye from the family didn't explain the possible outcome of using the hair dye, then you, as a trained embalmer, need to explain to the family the following important information. The single most important thing that hair dye requires to achieve its desired effect is body heat. A dead body no longer has the



ability to activate the coloring chemical. Sure, you can apply the dye, but it is my recommendation to always make the family aware that they might not see the results they had anticipated.

However, covering roots is still possible. There are so many products available to us. You should visit a beauty supply store. There is a wide variety of color touch-up sprays, creams, wands, and rinses that are specifically designed to cover roots of both men and women. Purchase these supplies and have a variety of types and colors at your hair station. They are easy to use and easy to apply.

So you didn't make it to the beauty supply store or you're not comfortable in a store like that? No problem. You certainly must have a tube of mascara, a palette of eyeshadow, or a Dodge Cosmetic Kit. All of these products can create an illusion of hair dye. Sometimes our profession is "smoke and mirrors." We use whatever we can to achieve an illusion of a "self-like" decedent. Use a stippling brush coated with any of these products and stipple the color into the scalp from the root to the end of demarcation. Comb the roots with the mascara wand, like you would an eyelash. Thinking outside the box will do wonders.

Speaking of wonders, do you have a decedent with missing hair? Do you worry about how you are going to create hair where there is none? Is this concept so overwhelming that it is just easier to tell the family to bring in a hat for their loved one? Is it laziness or lack of skill and confidence that causes us to opt for a hat or scarf and not even try to restore what is missing? If by chance you are great at hair restoration that is wonderful. I am in no way an expert but I have done enough hair restorations to share some tips on this subject. Before doing anything, it is best to get the family's permission to perform a hair restoration procedure. Next, if it is possible to use the decedent's own hair, always



go for that option. Removing hair from the back, or the lower part of the scalp is desirable. This is the area that is covered by the pillow.

Again, the beauty supply store is a great resource to you. You can purchase all types of hair, such as wigs, bags of hair, hair extensions, curly hair, straight hair, fake pony tails and even clip-on bangs. All of these hair accessories can be altered and cut to fit your needs. Once you have determined what procedure you will do, first apply a base color. Typically, you would want to use the same color as the hair. This allows any sparse areas to appear covered once the hair is applied. Next, you want to apply a thin coat of some sort of adhesive to the scalp. It is best to apply the adhesive, like wax, or Aron Alpha, or Perma Seel, a section at a time. Starting at the bottom of the bald area, attach the hair in rows, like you would shingles on a roof. Don't let the task overwhelm you. You are the artist. Take your time to create your masterpiece. Your efforts will be what sets you apart from the person who just earns their paycheck. You will be the one who earns the trust and appreciation of a grieving family.

Lastly, if you are sentimental, this next bit might seem like a no-brainer. However, I am a married woman and know all too well that the obvious to me isn't always the obvious to a person who shares the same space and routine as me. So for the sake of the non-sentimental person, I'd like to share my ideas on a topic that is near and dear to my heart: keepsakes. Death is so final. One is gone forever. There is

a viewing scheduled. The family attends and all the while is trying to grasp the finality of it, but yet they are still able to see, touch, and feel the one who is supposed to be gone forever.

Then the final day comes: burial or cremation. Boom! It's done, it's final, they are gone forever. No more seeing them, no more touching them, no more feeling them. Now, it is REAL! Thankfully in a week or so, when they are ready, the family will look through the bag of cards, the memorial book, and the literature that the funeral home presented to them at that final moment. As the family sifts through the contents of the bag, and are able to process their loss, they come across a keepsake. A beautifully packaged lock or locks of their loved one's hair. Hair that was prepared by the thoughtful funeral director/embalmer who had the heart to know to ask the family during the process of making the funeral arrangements, if they would like a lock of hair as a keepsake, and the wisdom to know that down the line this special gesture would serve as the glue to keeping a grieving person's sanity. Never underestimate the value and effect of having a tangible piece of a loved one to hold, touch and feel at any moment when they need them close.

Simply put: pay attention to the fringe and you will reap the benefits.

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Organizations That Support our Profession

By Sabrina Young, CFSP

How many stepping stones do you offer while walking on a grief journey with a family?

When I started my journey as a funeral director I came across families that needed more assistance than I could provide.

I know I am the first step on a family's grief journey and I, personally, did not feel I had all my stepping stones in a row. Families I served needed help financially and emotionally with grief support. Mothers needed help with decision-making for their child whom they lost and veterans who were misinformed needed burial assistance. I had to research and discover extra stepping stones to offer so I could better help my families complete their journey. I am proud to share my research and my

stepping stones if you need them to help you serve your families.

The veteran's stone is a very common one. As I am a veteran, too, I have a soft spot for my fellow comrades. **No Stone Left Un-Turned** www.nostoneleftun-turned.com came to me, asking if I had any veteran markers that could not be placed due to the cost of setting. I had two markers and, with their support along with the families' consent they were placed out at the cemetery where they stand proudly. No Stone Left Un-Turned covers the state of Texas and they're looking to branch out to Louisiana. This organization I found was extremely gracious and came out very quickly.

Each state and region has a **Patriot**

Guard Riders Leader. <https://patriot-guard.org/> The PGR are veterans who come out at no cost to stand proudly and hold flags of the veteran's service which surrounds the area of the service in which it is being held. I encourage you – if you are not using their services – to reach out to your local branch and request a mission.

The local **VFW Bell Post #1820** has an emergency relief fund set up to potentially help with funeral costs upon approval of an application. This fund is generated by veterans and civilians who donate to this cause. Once the Quarter Master approves the request, funds will be awarded to the funeral home for funeral assistance.

Stepping stones come in various shapes

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and sizes. Many organizations have developed due to loss of an infant or a child. I remember when I first became employed with a funeral home it was taboo to have a Baby or Child section displayed in a selection room. I saw the need in my first year. Families who have lost children need to see the merchandise on hand displayed. We have a large hospital near our funeral home that often needs our immediate assistance. I am proud to have our Child/Baby section in our selection room with two sizes of caskets and various urns on display. I feel I have acquired many stepping stones to help parents in their time of need.

Keepsake stones has become a necessity to our profession.

A national program called **Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep** gives photography support as a gift of remembrance for a family with very sick infants or stillborns. This organization is comprised of local photographers who come out to the hospital and take photos for a keepsake for the family. Many times, the mother wasn't ready for the photo to be taken and they chose to have it at our funeral home during the visitation.

Babies – especially premies – are often hard to find clothing but with **1000 Stitches**, an organization which helps clothe infants and children with tiny, hand-crafted and crocheted clothing. **Angel Gowns** is an organization that takes donated wedding dresses and turns them into baby gowns.

The financial burden can be expensive. Parents not prepared to lose a child nor have the means to pay for it brought about **Skyler's Gift Foundation**, www.skylersgift.org, which provides financial assistance for funeral services. With an online application process, waiting 48 hours and with basic information regarding the parents and child, this organization tries to help in the time of need. Another financial assisting group is **Angel Names Organization** www.angel-names.org, which is dedicated to supporting parents of stillborn children through financial assistance, counseling assistance and research.

Ronald McDonald House of Austin has a program called **Healing Hearts**, which serves Travis and neighboring counties. The application for funeral assistance would be received from their local hospital social worker or a victim service rep. The program allows for up to \$300 for stillborn and \$700 for children up to 21 years of age and under with financial assistance.

I am located in Bell County and because many of families we serve come from all over Texas, it was great to hear that if you are serving a loved one from Travis County, there is additional assistance.

Some stones don't cost money but require an ear or place to share. Grief Support is still a need. We at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home host grief meetings every third Monday at 6:00 pm. A group known as the **Warm Place** assists with children and sibling grief support. www.thewarmplace.org. This organization assists children from 3 ½ to 18 and have recently branched out to young adults, ages 19-25.

I encourage you to fill your stepping stone bucket with stones to help the families in your area. When you find an orga-

nization that can be shared, please message the South-Central TFDA Facebook with your discoveries or feel free to email me at Syoun@legacyfuneralgroup.com. We are here to work for the greater good of all and especially our families. I know having these stones and their emails on hand gives me an opportunity to go the extra mile for my families and, ultimately, the satisfaction of knowing I helped a family with more than arranging and directing the funeral. ★

Sabrina Young, managing director of Harper-Talasek Funeral Home in Temple, is a member of TFDA and the Emerging Leaders contingent. She also is president of the South-Central Regional Funeral Directors Association and serves on several TFDA committees.



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Stress... Our Very Best Friend

By Dylan Stopher



“That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.”
~ Friedrich Nietzsche

I know, I know... you're thinking to yourself that I must be crazy to propose that stress could be our "very best friend" in our chosen profession. But give me a few moments, and I'll explain why I see it that way. I promise, I'm only a little crazy.

For starters, let's clear the air and establish that I am not speaking about chronic stress; that would be unrelenting demands and pressures that never seem to have an end. These stressors are constant, and awful and painful. These are not your best friend. Further, we have chosen a profession where we, as licensed funeral professionals, will be the face of either the good or the bad. And it doesn't matter if it's actually "our fault," because the family will always come back to the funeral director. That's the choice we've made.

What I want to talk about is acute stress. This is momentary, and comes from any number of sources, and I promise you it is definitely your best friend. Know why? Because when you are under stress due to the pressures of the family you are currently serving, you rise to the occasion and exceed expectations. That's the wonderful pressure-cooker of a profession-of-choice, and it's not for the faint of heart.

So let's examine the first thing about serving families that we all know is a stressful subject... deadlines! We all have them and we all know them. However, the families we serve are not aware there is a time past which the obituary will not run in tomorrow's edition. There is also a time frame in which a DVD can be produced, and the family may not know or understand that. Nor should they, unless their funeral professional educates them clearly on that topic. (Remember, we do between one and four funerals and/or arrangements each day, and the families we serve may make arrangements three times in their entire life.)

It is in this way that we must learn the finesse of explaining an absolute time to a family in a state that is somewhat devoid of time as they struggle to understand their loss. Granted, not all families have the same level of struggle. But grief is real for every one of them, and in almost 20 years I've never met a family who makes every single deadline with every single item...because "something" always comes up.

Second, how about we look at the other major stressor for funeral directors -- our own mistakes. Don't shake your head like that. You definitely have made at least one of every possible mistake if you've been in our profession for longer than a year. I have heard about directors who absolutely

have cut clothing up the front (including a \$500 ladies sweater), buried jewelry, shaved facial hair that shouldn't have been removed, placed people in incorrect caskets (corrected before visitation, before anyone ever saw them, but still), cremated before getting fingerprints or hair samples, etc. Trust me, we've all been there in almost any scenario you can imagine. However, there's a truth about moments like this in funeral services... you either learn from them or you leave.

Some directors cannot handle the stress, and they bail in the face of huge mistakes and embarrassment. The rest of us (I'm including you, because since you're reading this, I assume you stuck it out) take that situation and learn from it. I tell people all the time I have made every mistake you can imagine, but I've only made them once. If you learn from these stressful moments, you will be the better professional.

And last, let's also look at a truth we need to understand about ourselves. There are two types of people when it comes to stress in general... those who suffer under it and those who thrive. I know both types of people, and I have served with both types of people.

I cannot speak to the suffering under the stress side, because I am not that person. For me, the stress in acute situations brings a laser-focus on the right steps to accomplish the same goal that existed before, but now with a course correction. This is how we're trained to think.

One of my former professors used to tell us -- when a mistake happens, you need to slow down and breathe. Don't rush. Think for a moment. And he would reiterate this in every class, all the time. Consequently, everyone who is still in the business from my graduating class will always apply this method when an error arises. I encourage you to remember, you need to know yourself. If you're not sharpened by stress, then you need someone to ask, to lean on so mistakes won't be piled upon other mistakes.

And to touch on one small idea, the finesse I mentioned earlier is a necessary skill to develop. You see, in the face of giant

mistakes or tiny and almost unnoticeable error, someone has to explain to the family what is happening and why... and what will be done about it. That someone, a funeral professional, is you. It's me. It's all of us at one time or another, and it is imperative we remain the picture of absolute calm confidence as we explain what has happened and what will happen going forward.

The family will lean on that confidence, and that is what will get them through in most situations. In other situations, prepare to be dressed down in full view of multiple people. And you stand there and take it because you are the big shoulders, the face of the firm, the one responsible for the successes and the failures, whether you earned them or not.

Here's the thing. People always talk about stress, and every one of us understands what that means in our daily lives. We all know why we're a little crazy, and we also know why we sometimes just need to cry for a second. Stress is real. Stress is common, and in the case of acute stress, I will advocate that it is the best friend and companion of the licensed funeral professional. Would you like to know why I believe this?

Because it makes you better for the next

family... every single time. ★

The author, Dylan Stopher, is the regional sales representative for Wilbert Vaults, based in Houston. A funeral director for the past 13 years, he graduated from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in 2002. Dylan is

a member of TFDA as well as the Emerging Leaders group. He also serves on six TFDA committees. He resides in Friendswood with his wife, Mollie, and three children. He has enjoyed writing his entire life, and has published three books (all found on Amazon) and multiple industry-related articles.

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Where the Circus is Buried



If you visit Woodlawn Cemetery at the intersection of Cermak Road and Des Plaines Avenue in Forest Park, Illinois, (on the outskirts of Chicago), the first thing you'll see is a large plot marked by elephant statues. Engraved at the base of one large elephant are the words "Showmen's League of America."

On the gravestones within the plot, the dates of death are all marked June 22, 1918. Beneath is a mass grave containing the remains of clowns, trapeze artists, strongmen and other circus performers.

Forest Park is a town of cemeteries, marking the historical fringe of the metropolitan area. Public transportation terminated here, so why not Chicago's deceased populace? While strip malls and fast food have crept in, endless fields of monuments still silently greet the Forest Park visitor.

In the early hours of Saturday June 22, 1918, the 26-car Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus train – an engine, four sleepers, five stock cars, 15 flat cars and a caboose – was heading from Illinois into Hammond, Indiana, with 400 performers and roustabouts asleep in the rear cars. The train had stopped on the Michigan Central tracks near Ivanhoe to fix an overheated axle box.

The flagman went back on the main track and set fuses as a warning of danger. The circus train had been moved onto a siding to await clearance to proceed onto the line to Hammond where the circus was due to

perform. The rear of the train, however, had not cleared the mainline tracks.

Around 3:56 a.m., Alonzo K. Sargent, a 16-year veteran engineer for the Michigan Central Railroad, fell asleep at the wheel of an empty military troop train. His sleep could have been the result of lack of sleep, several heavy meals, some kidney pills and the gentle, rolling vibration of his locomotive.

He never saw the danger on the tracks ahead as his 21-car train plowed into the rear of the stationary circus train at 60 mph.

Despite the warning signals, lanterns and flares blanketing the track leading up to the circus train, 86 people died and 127 were injured. Many bodies were recovered from the burned-out wreckage of the wooden circus train's gas-lit passenger cars. The runaway train finally came to a grinding halt atop the fourth car from the rear in a deafening cacophony of metal and splintered wood.

Most of the 86 fatalities perished within the first 30 seconds of the wreck. Then, just as the nightmare seemed to be over, the train caught fire.

Fire, fed by the gas-lighting system of the circus train, quickly engulfed it. As the first responders reached the scene, the entire wreckage was a blazing inferno. Clowns, bareback riders, trapeze performers and acrobats – many of them veterans of the circus world – perished instantly while others suffocated or burned to death.

The Gary Fire Department was further hamstrung in their rescue attempts because of a lack of water supply. Survivors struggled about the wreck, screaming frantically for relatives or friends. Many had to be physically restrained from rushing back into the blazing wreckage.

Hours after the crash, bodies were still being recovered from the smoldering debris. There were numerous pitiful scenes at the wreck and later, in the hospitals. Joe Coyle, a clown, convulsed on a stretcher and wept bitterly beside the bodies of his wife and two babies who had been crushed to death just inches away from him inside one of the sleeping cars.

Adding to the chaos, rumors raced through the area, alleging several lions, tigers, elephants and bears had escaped from the train into the woods south of the wreck. Circus authorities explained there were no wild animals on the train. Another report claimed a demented circus woman had run from the train, evaded doctors and disappeared into the woods. It's easy to imagine the wild rumors that must have swept that small town after a tragedy of this magnitude.

The troop train's engineer Alonzo K. Sargent was arrested that same night and charged with multiple counts of manslaughter. The headlines of the local papers explained the tragedy in detailed, sometimes colorful, terms:

"Sixty Heroes of the Sawdust Ring Perish in Flaming Wreck as Train Cuts Thru Cars"

"Somebody's Blunder Costs in Killed and Injured 189 Casualties of Wallace-Hagenback Circus"

"Performers Weakened by Crash to Die in Flames"

"Families Long Known to Public as Favorites are Decimated or Swept to Eternity"

The Interstate Commerce Commission's report concluded, "This accident was caused by Engine-man Sargent being asleep, and from this cause, failing to observe the stop indication of automatic signal 2581, and the warnings of the flagman of the circus train, and to be governed by them."

The report was also critical of the older wooden cars, whose oil lamps may have ignited the fire immediately after the collision.

Sargent and his fireman, Gustave Klauss, were criminally charged in Lake County, In-

diana. Following a trial, the jury found itself deadlocked, and a mistrial was declared. Prosecutors declined to re-try the case, and the men were acquitted on June 9, 1920.

The other circus train, carrying the animals and some people was about 90 minutes ahead of them. They would not hear of the disaster until they pulled into Hammond that morning and solemnly gathered for roll call to determine who was missing.

Thirty-eight bodies were taken to Gary undertakers, 22 were taken to Hammond. Later, more bodies were pulled from the wreckage and still more died in the hospital afterwards.

Services for the circus train tragedy were held five days after the train wreck. The identity of many victims of the wreck was unknown; some were roustabouts and temporary workers hired just hours or days before.

Survivors gathered at Woodlawn Cemetery, where the Showmen's League of America had just recently selected a burial plot for members, never imagining that it would be used so soon. The Showmen's League of America was formed in 1913 with Buffalo Bill Cody as its first president.

Only a dozen or so of the headstones have



names, most of the markers note "unidentified male" (or female). Some carried only the victim's show names, such as the one is marked "Smiley," another marked "Baldy," and "4 Horse Driver." The Flying Wards, a trapeze act, lost a member, Jennie Ward Todd. Every one of the McDhu Sisters, who rode elephants and did aerial stunts, died... and Arthur Dierckx and Max Nietzborn of the Great Dierckx Brothers, a strongman act, perished in the wreckage.

Showmen's Rest continues to fill up today, with more than 750 deceased showmen performing at that biggest of Big Tops.

Following the wreck, the Hagenbeck-

Wallace Circus had to cancel only two performances: the one in Hammond, Indiana and its next stop Monroe, Wisconsin. This was due, in part, to assistance from many of the show's so-called competitors. Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, for example, lent equipment and performers so the show could go on.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, formed in 1907 and headquartered in Peru, Ind. (now the site of the International Circus Hall of Fame), had become one of the most popular circuses in the country. Famed lion tamer Clyde Beatty was a member. So was a young Red Skelton, tagging alongside his

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father, a Hagenbeck-Wallace clown.

The city of Hammond also joined in to help the surviving circus performers and workers. Many of the city's residents and shopkeepers gave food and clothing as well. The five elephant statues each have a foot raised with a ball underneath, and the trunks lowered. (Raised trunks are a symbol of joy and excitement; lowered trunks symbolize mourning.)

The base of the large central elephant is inscribed with "Showmen's League of

America." On the others are the words "Showmen's Rest." Some nearby residents say the trumpeting sounds of ghostly elephants can often be heard at night, even though there were no elephants buried there and the statues weren't added until years after the train wreck. And for those looking for an explanation for the sounds, Brookfield Zoo is only a few miles away.

The history of the train wreck is a mix of the good, sad and curious. The accident

led to regulations mandating sleep for train crews. Oddly, nine years later, a passenger train moving through Aurora, Indiana (near Cincinnati, Ohio) hit a herd of elephants being loaded onto another Hagenbeck-Wallace train. There was one fatality, a handler riding one of the elephants was thrown to the ground and crushed to death when the animal tumbled.

One rumor, perpetuated by generations of Illinois schoolchildren and spread through classrooms all over the Midwest, is that five elephants were killed in the train wreck. The elephants tried in vain to use their trunks to extinguish the burning circus cars, only to die for their efforts. The pachyderm heroes were too heavy to be moved and were buried near the spot where they fell. Contrarily, the statues actually outline the site of the mass grave containing the mortal remains of the unfortunate Hagenbeck-Wallace circus employees killed on the circus train in the early days of World War I.

Today, original circus wagons from the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus can be seen at Circus World in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Their winter headquarters in Peru, Indiana is now the International Circus Hall of Fame. ★



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In the Beginning was the Word ...and the Word was Action!



As you might imagine, today's leaders are facing larger challenges and they're coming faster than ever before. Without the right strategies in mind, often developed by quickly thinking on their feet, these firms would eventually fall by the wayside. Therefore, one of the first actions of a new leader – whether director, embalmer, service owner, vendor or consultant – is creating a vision that includes reliable strategies to use when working through challenges.

Some strategies may be tactical. Others are designed to deal with big-picture issues – like taking action when the way forward is cloudy. Here are a few observations and strategies for today's leaders and prospective leaders to consider.

1. Make communications efficient. Mondays in the work world are the worst when it comes to being productive. Why? Because there are meetings followed by meetings...and, generally speaking, meetings are

the worst when it comes to communicating, between staff members or between funeral home and cemetery and/or crematory.

At their best, meetings should be short. Leaders should have the facts gathered before the meeting and the meeting is most efficient when it is used to discuss solutions to problems...and if those attending don't come away from a meeting with a list of deliverables (fixes for problems) with deadlines or action items, you've wasted the time you spent in the meeting.

Note: If you're calling a meeting to get the rest of your team up to speed, you're wasting their time. Send an email outlining all they need to know. Then, if there needs to be debate or discussion before a decision (solution) is made, call the meeting...but keep it short. Four-minute meetings are optimal.

If you are leading the meeting and it ends without a list of action items and notes about comments, you've wasted your time and everyone else's.

2. Make tough decisions, even if your decision is wrong. Being the team leader, manager or CEO, you'll probably never be asked to make an easy decision. That's because you've hired people who can do that, themselves.

As the leader, your employees and/or team members will leave the tough decisions to you. That's why you're making the big bucks, right?

So, because these big decisions don't give you time to get input from your team, you make a final call...and it may generate controversy, even ill feelings. But, the bottom line is this: As the leader, manager or CEO, you not only make the big decisions, but you also must have the courage to make the big decisions and the strength to be responsible for it when the day of reckoning comes...and the insight to make tweaks or corrections if your decision turns out to be the wrong one.

The trick? Don't hesitate to take action using your best decision. This is called the "first mover advantage" and with this decision comes opening the doors for opportunity.

Just keep the firm, the team, the funeral home moving forward, even if your strategy is not fully formed when the big decision is made.

3. Quit coordinating without purpose. The most decisive action often comes from the front lines – those in the trenches. If decisions have to be passed down from the CEO, then opportunities are lost. To avoid this, empower front-line managers to make decisions independently.

Sometimes coordination can be counterproductive. Example: If your firm's teams don't share common goals, don't try to align them. That's like harnessing two horses and then expecting them to go in opposite directions.

Make work assignments as straightforward as possible. If an issue can be resolved by one individual or one team, there's no need to involve a second.

4. Be willing to change. One example of how a single innovation can change everything is the cellphone. The future is no longer invented by analyzing the past. Today's

leaders have to be fearless in questioning what we think we know. True innovation has no past, only a future.

But think about re-arranging your firm's existing components in order to create new ways to meet the expectations of your families, vendors and clients. Restructuring is not simply adding or subtracting. It's about restructuring how you operate so you can bring something new, something more.

The funeral service landscape is no longer about merely meeting customers' needs. Today it's about creating new value in how you can help, and to do that, firms need to find new ways to find and stimulate yet-to-be-discovered demand.

5. It's not about the numbers. Many of you may have worked for firms where casket averages were imposed. Or perhaps the firm where you worked was owned by a publicly-traded entity and stock prices were a daily discussion.

But instead of obsessing on case numbers, casket averages or stock prices, today's leaders need to spread the gospel of having faith that a firm's true success lies in the long-term value it is creating among the families it serves, and this long-term value can't be fully demonstrated or characterized by a single number.

6. Never stop dreaming! According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, human sleep is increasingly being recognized as important to public health, with sleep insufficiency linked to motor vehicle crashes, industrial disasters, and medical and other occupational errors.

People experiencing sleep insufficiency also are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, depression and obesity, as well as cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity. An estimated 50-70 million U.S. adults have sleep or wakefulness disorder. Notably, snoring (yours or your partner's) is a major indicator of obstructive sleep apnea.

Surprise, surprise! One of your competitive advantages is getting enough sleep and your ability to fall sleep no matter what. Yet, especially if you've been awakened to make a removal at midnight, you still need to somehow make up for that sleep loss with good quality sleep so you can sustain your clarity and energy to make tough decisions, look toward the future of your firm and dream big. ★



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What's Your Secret Sauce?



One summer about five years ago, Harry decided to head down to Mexico for a long weekend. He had read about a cool little fishing village on the coast that sounded idyllic and wanted to check it out.

The place was as nice as advertised, with several great bars and food options, but interestingly, he found himself in the same little restaurant every morning...and he wasn't the only one. The place was always bustling with locals and expats alike.

Why was that? Sure, they had great huevos rancheros, one of Harry's favorite dishes, but it was also something else.

The restaurant was the only place in town offering free wi-fi.

Indeed, throughout the town there were flyers for the restaurant that prominently mentioned the free wi-fi factor. People came for the wi-fi and stayed for the food.

That little restaurant figured out what many funeral directors miss, namely, if you want to succeed, you have to set yourself apart from the crowd.

In that sleepy, little fishing village there was no shortage of cantinas and restaurants, and it would have been easy (if a losing proposition) for the owners to compete on price or food or whatever. But the little restaurant's owner figured out something different, something that set his business apart from the rest.

They had a secret sauce.

You remember the old McDonald's commercial?

"Two all beef patties, secret sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun."

That term "secret sauce" has come to mean that thing you do that's unique, different, and special.

Throughout entire careers, directors are eager to embrace one marketing scheme or another, all with the hope of capturing the magic we see in other, more successful firms. New directors seek mentors, emulate strong role models and study, strive – all to find the real recipe for success.

Ultimately, this secret is not necessarily a matter of talent, intelligence, creativity or strategy. The absolute highest-achieving firms and their leadership continually mix three main ingredients into their secret sauce. They are:

- Sharpen their Focus,
- Build their Competence and
- Ignite their Passion.

Although these three ingredients form a timeless recipe for success, real success is found in how each of us mixes these ingredients with our unique experiences to create our own secret sauce.

For example, Hannah Teeter, 2006 Olympic gold medalist in the half-pipe snowboarding event, was always trying to keep up with her four older brothers. She learned whatever they were willing to teach her about snowboarding, and they urged her to push higher and go big.

After standing atop the highest step on the medalists' podium in Torino, Italy, Hanna was interviewed by a television commentator who asked her, "To what do you attribute your gold medal performance at the young age of 19?"

"My 'secret sauce,'" she said, "is my brothers, having great parents and being able to stay positive about anything and everything that's come my way. Keeping a positive outlook is definitely key to success on a snowboard or in any competition."

That's Hannah's secret sauce.

You can find your secret sauce at the intersection of your answers to these two questions:

1. What am I absolutely passionate about?
2. What tasks am I naturally gifted at? ★

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New Memorials Direct Released New Line of Birthstone Charms



Birthstone charms are the newest addition to memorial pendants at New Memorials Direct. They are designed to hang alongside most of the pendants offered, and lay such that the two pieces look unified together. Alternatively, if one decided they would prefer to pair it with another piece, or simply wear it alone, it is easy to do that as well.

They are available in all twelve birthstone colors and the bail's opening is large enough to fit around most any common chain size. Families can also choose to order them with a sterling silver or gold plated bail.

Birthstone charms offer yet another way to honor loved one's unique identity. The turn-around time is only 24 hours and satis-

faction is guaranteed. For more information call 877-995-8767 or visit www.newmemorialsdirect.com.

Industry Veteran Wolfelt to Speak to International Audiences

Author, educator, and well-known consultant to funeral service Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., will share his critical message of the importance of meaningful funerals in several locations internationally in 2017.

Dr. Wolfelt will be the keynote speaker for the Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand on March 1 in Rotorua, New Zealand. His presentation is titled "The Why of Meaningful Funerals: Exploring a New Model Being Used in North America."

He will then travel to Melbourne, Australia, on March 19, where he will present to the Australian Funeral Directors Association. In addition, while in Melbourne he will be working with the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust to help them with strategy and community education about the value of meaningful memorialization.

Next Dr. Wolfelt will travel north to the Queensland Funeral Directors Association, where on March 24-26 he will serve as keynote speaker as well as provide a community workshop for caregivers on the importance of meaningful funeral experiences.

Summer will find Dr. Wolfelt in Brazil, where on June 30 he will keynote the Brazil Funeral Directors Association convention, again emphasizing "The Why of Meaning-

ful Funerals."

Dr. Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado. He is the author of numerous books, including *A Tale of Two Funerals*, *Creating Meaningful Funeral Experiences* and *Funeral Home Customer Service A to Z*.

Visit www.centerforloss.com for additional information on Dr. Wolfelt.

Capsule Urn Featured in New Film "The Book of Love"



Recently released movie "The Book of Love" features prominently an urn created by Capsule Urn (www.capsuleproject.com). The movie features Maisie Williams, Jessica Biel, Jason Sudeikis, Mary Steenburgen, Orlando Jones, and Paul Reiser.

Capsule Urn was invited to participate in the production by providing a modern funeral urn for the main character. Capsule believes it will raise awareness of their contemporary memorials and the meaning they can offer to families who have lost a loved one.

Henry (Jason Sudeikis) is a widowed architect who strikes up a friendship with Millie (Maisie Williams), an independent but troubled teen. Hoping to find her long-lost father, Millie asks Henry to build her a raft that can sail across the ocean. After agreeing to do so, the unlikely duo embark on an incredible adventure that deepens their bond and lifts their spirits.

The film was recently featured at the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival.



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Bradshaw

Raymond Napoleon Bradshaw, 84, died in Houston, Texas on January 11, 2017. He is the father of Raymond Bradshaw of Bradshaw-Carter Memorial & Funeral Services in Houston.

Born on January 20, 1932 in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, he was one of 18 children born to Joseph Napoleon Bradshaw and Marie Jacobs. He lived the later part of his life in Houston, Texas.

Raymond is preceded in death by his parents, beloved wife Florence Mercure Bradshaw and son, Ronald Francis Bradshaw. Raymond is survived by his two sons

Raymond Joseph Bradshaw of Houston and Robert Bradshaw and his wife Melissa and their daughter McKenzie of Cranston, Rhode Island, as well as his extended family Tripp Carter and Martha (Mrs. Robert) Carter of Houston.

Ray worked hard his entire life, providing a wonderful life for his wife and children. He was a loving husband, father, brother, friend to many, and proud that he served his country in the Korean War.

Funeral services were under the direction of Bradshaw-Carter Funeral Home. A private burial took place at Glenwood Cemetery.

Bowers

Mr. Delbert Duane Bowers age 87, of Harker Heights passed away peacefully with his family and friends at his side in a Harker Heights Hospital on Monday, December 26, 2016.

Mr. Bowers was born on November 20, 1929 in Barada, Nebraska to Delbert L. and Daisy Kirkendall Bowers. He was the oldest child of their marriage.

He grew up and was educated in Nebraska and was a graduate of the University of Nebraska in Omaha.

He entered the U.S. Army, where he served for 27 years, until his retirement in 1974 at the rank of CW4. After retirement he had a second career as a funeral director. He and his business partner William "Bill" Crawford began Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Killeen in 1972 and Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Copperas Cove in 1988. Through the years, Mr. Bowers touched many people's lives in both communities. They sold the business in 1989 to Service Corporation International and Mr. Bowers remained active as a consultant until the time of his passing. He always felt it was an honor to be able to serve the people in a time of their life when they needed it most.

Besides being a successful business leader he was also very dedicated to many civic organizations. He was a Life Member of VFW Post 3892 in Harker Heights, a Life Member of DAV Post 147 in Killeen, a Life Member of American Legion Post 223 in Killeen, a Member of the Elks Lodge of Falls City, Nebraska since 1950, the Killeen Evening Lions Club, the Killeen Chamber of Commerce, the Harker Heights Chamber of Commerce and the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Bowers was a long time active member of Skyline Baptist Church in Killeen. He enjoyed spending time with his family, working out at his place in Triple 7, playing golf and working at the funeral home.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife of 66 years, Jean Bowers of Harker Heights; a son, Brent Bowers of Nashville, TN; a daughter, Debra Hand and her husband Dr. Lee Hand of El Paso; a brother, Delmar Bowers and his wife Shirley of Mt. Home, Arkansas; a sister, Delores Stanfield of Falls City, Nebraska; four grandchildren, Shelly Bowers, Ryan Harper, Whitney Harper, Nathan Bowers and eight great grandchildren.

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Funeral services were held at Skyline Baptist Church in Killeen. Interment followed with full military honors in the Killeen City Cemetery.

Pallbearers were the United States Army. Honorary pallbearers included the Deacons of Skyline Baptist Church in Killeen and the staff from Crawford-Bowers Funeral Homes in Killeen, Copperas Cove and Temple.

For those who desire, memorial contributions may be made to Skyline Baptist Church, 906 Trimmier Road, Killeen, Texas, 76541 or to Friends of Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery (for the Wreaths), 100 W CTE, Suite 302, Harker Heights, Texas 76548 or online at www.wreathforvets.org.

Funeral Services were entrusted to Crawford-Bowers Funeral Homes.

Hampton

William "Bill" Reaves Hampton passed away December 26, 2016. He is the father of Randy Hampton, with Midlothian Funeral Home.

He was born September 26, 1936, to Clela Reaves and William Raby Hampton in Wichita Falls, Texas. He graduated from Wichita Falls High School 1954 then went to college at Texas A&M graduating in the Fighting Texas Aggie Class of 1958. He then attended Dallas School of Mortuary Science before going to work at the family funeral home Hampton-Vaughn in Wichita Falls, Texas from 1960-1962.

He married Barbara Craven on January 19, 1962. Longing to "live the good life" the newlyweds moved with their first son Ronnie to the family Rockin' H Ranch in Coryell County. Bill loved ranching and raising his boys in the wholesome country. He and Barbara had two more sons, Randy and Rusty.

In 1971, they opened W.R. Hampton Bookkeeping & Tax Service in Lampasas, and a second location in Copperas Cove. The pair retired in 2008 and moved to Midlothian to be close to their grandchildren Taylor, Raby and Riley, and to help his son Randy with the family business Midlothian Funeral Home. Bill loved to watch his grandsons play baseball, and eat popcorn and watch westerns with them. He instilled a passion for education into each of their children and grandchildren always encouraging them in their academic pursuits. He and Barbara could always be found sitting in their chairs with a book in hand and you better believe Bill had an article of maroon

clothing on always honoring A&M.

He loved to travel and seek adventure. He and Barbara attended Aggie games at Kyle Field and traveled all over the country with his Corp of Cadets Classmates. This past November he boarded a bus with the many cousins he loved dearly and they went to Branson, Missouri.

Bill believed in family and God, and defied all odds with the love and support of his family and his faith in God.

He is survived by: sons Ronnie Hampton and wife Penne, Randy Hampton and wife Michele, Rusty Hampton and husband Buddy Mercer; grandchildren: Joseph Hampton and wife Katie, Benjamin Hampton, Taylor Shirley and husband Thomas, W. Raby Hampton II, Riley Hampton; greatgrandchild Samuel Hampton; brother Bob Hampton and wife Vera Jo. Bill had an enormous, large, loving family of cousins and their families.

Funeral direction was provided by Midlothian Funeral Home. Hampton was interred at the Pearl Cemetery in Pearl, Texas.

Snyder

On Saturday, December 24, 2016, Joanne Elizabeth Snyder, 50 years of age, beloved wife, treasured colleague, and caring community member, died in Bryan, Texas, after a courageous battle with diabetes-related health issues, which she battled for over ten years. She served for 15 years as the crema-

tory manager for Callaway-Jones Funeral Home in Bryan-College Station.

Joanne was born on January 13, 1966, in Wood Ridge, New Jersey, to Hugh and Donna (Long) Williams. Joanne was destined to be a citizen of the world. As a child, she lived in Holland and other parts of Europe and then returned to the United States, locating first in New Orleans, Louisiana, then to Kingwood, Texas, where she graduated from Kingwood High School in 1984. As a child, Joanne loved playing soccer and softball, and she was an active swimmer. She enjoyed these outdoor sports, especially with her father as her coach.

Choosing Texas A&M for her collegiate studies, when Joanne moved to College Station, she knew she would be an Aggie forever, feeling entirely at home in her newest community. Joanne graduated with her bachelor's degree in Computer Science (minor in accounting) from Texas A&M University on May 13, 1988.

In life, Joanne was determined, persistent, kind, caring and very independent. She'd always had many friends, but she was destined to meet her future best friend, and husband, almost by accident. One day when they were both helping a mutual friend, a young man named Randy Snyder saw her, and immediately asked her out. Joanne said 'No'. It took three requests before Joanne said 'Yes'. It was likely clear to Randy on their first date at Pizza Hut, that he was going to have

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her say 'Yes' at least one more time—at their future wedding. He was determined!

Joanne and Randy married on October 14 in 1989 and shared 27 years together. They opened their home and shared the joy of parenting several beloved pets, including Rio (a black Labrador), Shadow, Clyde, and Casey. The couple enjoyed all their time together, as well as with friends and family, especially at Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

She had the ability to take time out of a day and truly relax, whether it was watching cooking shows, cooking for Randy and others. As a kid in Kingwood, she enjoyed fishing with hot dogs on a string. She also enjoyed more outdoor fun on occasional fishing trips. Joanne had a love and special skill for working on her Volkswagen Beetle. Her determination and persistence to offer families comfort and reassurance, as part of her work life, was beautifully balanced, as she'd completely relax when watching favorite TV shows, including "Star Trek" or "Touched by an Angel." She was always a woman at peace with life.

Joanne was a devoted and treasured part of the Callaway-Jones Funeral and Cremation Centers in Bryan-College Station. Her professional career with Callaway-Jones

began in 1993 when she began working at their Rest-Ever Memorial Park Cemetery in north Bryan, and later earning a position as cemetery manager. In 2001, she also became operating manager of the Callaway-Jones Crematory where she worked loyally for over 15 years.

Her parents, Donna Long Williams and Hugh Williams, as well as her mother-in-law, Jean Snyder Fisher, preceded Joanne in death. She is survived by her husband, Randy Snyder of College Station; sister Kim Williams; brother, Bruce Williams; and her step-dad Ralph Fisher and brother-in-laws Todd and Rick Snyder along with her nieces and nephews; and is highly regarded by a host of friends, particularly her Callaway-Jones family.

Visitation was held Dec. 28 at Callaway-Jones Funeral Home and Cremation Centers Bryan-College Station, and her funeral service was Dec. 29 also at Callaway-Jones, with burial at Rest-Ever Memorial Park Cemetery in Bryan.

Gifts in memory of Joanne can be made to the American Diabetes Association, PO Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312, or to Hospice Brazos Valley at 502 W. 26th St., Bryan, TX 77803.

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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 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.

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 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 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, then Members Only.

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2017 TFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

4 Sa

NFDA Crematory Training
 Convention Committee Mtg.

San Antonio College
 Austin

21 Tu

March

21 Tu

Texas Funeral Service Commission
 South Central Meeting

Austin
 Austin

30 Th

April

6 Th

Southeast Texas Meeting
 TFDA Services, Inc. Board

College Station
 Austin

18 Tu

TFDA Board Meeting

Austin

19 W

North Texas Meeting

TBA

20 Th

South Texas Meeting

Laredo

26-27

Advocacy Summit

Washington, DC

26,27,28

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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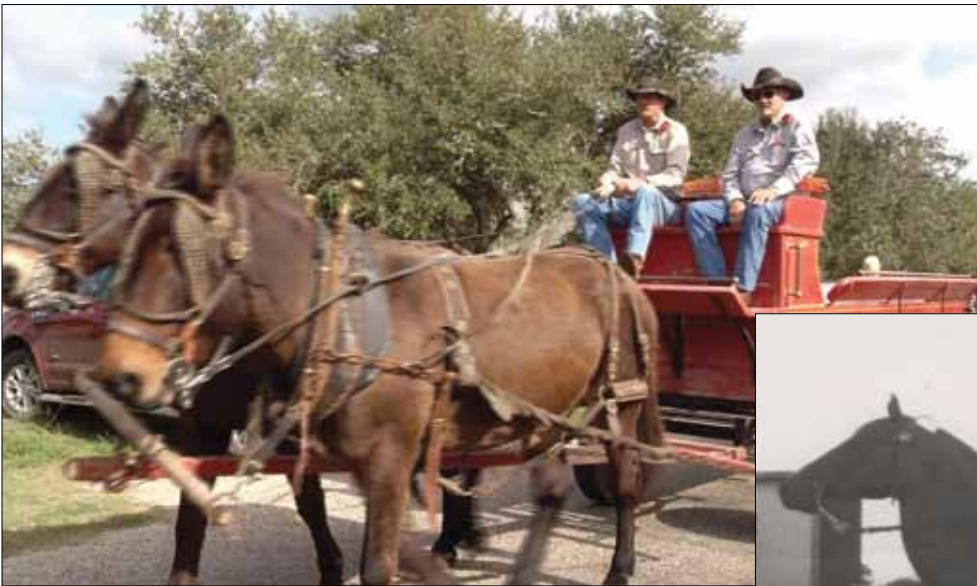
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Trail Ride Tribute for Ona Wright Van Dorn, South Texas Trail Riders Founder



Ona Wright Van Dorn, co-founder of the South Texas Trail Riders, passed away on December 20. She was 96 years old.

The group held a fitting tribute for its founder during her funeral services. She was escorted on a trail ride to her final resting place in Sandia Cemetery west of Corpus Christi. Her loved ones say it's just the type of farewell she would want.

"She never missed a ride. She loved the trail ride. She loved the people. She always had a smile and a twinkle in her eyes," said Carolyn Young, historian for STTR.

Van Dorn and her first husband, Jim Wright, founded the South Texas Trail Riders in 1959. The group still travels every year from Corpus Christi to the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo. Terry Reichel, an ex-trail boss, has been there since the beginning. He was ten years old for the first ride, and was sponsored by Van Dorn and her husband. Reichel recalled about Van Dorn, "The last six years, I've been taking her with me. She went every year. She quit riding horses but, however, she got on the wagons every day."

Van Dorn had a passion for mentoring other young men.

She and her husband also owned J & J Dude Ranch in Annville for 18 years. She used that business to foster boys who were runaways or had problems with their families.

Around that time, Van Dorn also owned Mott's Restaurant which boasted some famous clientele. Reichel said, "The likes of Johnny Cash and all of them - they would come during the night and eat, and then they would

end up performing." But arguably, Van Dorn's largest legacy will be the South Texas Trail Riders. Members tell us the annual ride will continue in the founder's honor.

The South Texas Trail Riders say the group's next trail ride to the San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo will be dedicated to the memory of Ona Wright Van Dorn. The trail ride runs from February 2-11, 2017. ❖

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