

April 2018

# Texas Director

Volume 67, Issue 4

The Official Publication of the Texas Funeral Directors Association

www.tfda.com



*It's Almost  
Island Time!*

**Make Tracks to the  
TFDA Annual Convention & Expo  
June 10-13**

*Plus*

**Engaging Family  
Members at the  
Arrangement  
Conference, Part 2**

**Three Ways a  
Business Leader Gets  
People to Follow**

**Remembering  
Stephen Hawking**



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Volume 67, Issue 4



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**Lee Castro**

# Make Plans Now to Join Us for Island Time in Galveston

If you haven't seen this year's crop of wildflowers along the highways of Texas, you've really missed enjoying spring's awakening – and as we've traveled to the various regions, your TFDA officers have witnessed the natural beauty of the changing seasons.

We've recently put the finishing touches on this year's convention, and while the Convention Committee is making a Herculean effort to cut out unnecessary costs and keep pricing affordable, we still need convention sponsors and there's always room for more exhibitors at our Expo.

I don't know about you, but I'm hearing from directors in other states who tell me the attendance for their conventions has continually gone down. While no one can put a finger on the whys of this downturn, I'm

hoping all of you will make an extra effort to join us in Galveston, June 10-13. We think we're offering something for everyone...and I want to encourage as many as possible to be in attendance at our General Session, as some big changes are in the offing and we want your input.

As I mentioned earlier, we are taking a hard look at our spending, and your board is finding some areas where we can either rein in expenses or get more return on our existing fixed costs (investments).

Some of these changes involve job descriptions for officers while others require some belt-tightening all around. Our end goal is updating our operations and living within our means.

I also want to remind all of you about your part in recruit-

ing new members. Of course, we want as many members as possible, but we want to focus on students, licensed directors, owners and firms. This emphasis in our recruitment is an attempt to diversify the voices of our members and, at the same time, improving the service TFDA offers everyone – from crematory owners to vendors, individually-owned firms, combination firms, group owners and cemeterians.

As a reminder: you can contribute to TFDA's Political Action Committee (PAC) in a number of ways. One of the easiest is signing up for our bank draft program. That way you can specify a monthly donation without making out a check every month.

You also can play in one of our annual golf tournaments. As TFDA continues into the 21st

century, it is important to translate "because we've always done it this way" into operational policy, job descriptions, chain of command and accountability.

The other day someone asked a question about whom to ask about a certain issue. After asking around, it was obvious no one knew – and that situation was a wake-up call – yes, written policy would be a good idea before we journey much further into this second century of our existence.

Please share your ideas about streamlining and clarifying our operations. I believe if we all add our best thoughts and ideas, we can strengthen our association together.

It's not too early to begin planning to attend our 2018 Convention in Galveston, June 10-13. That's island time!

## WELCOME

### New TFDA Members

#### FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Ceballos Funeral Home, McAllen  
Crofts Funeral Home, Johnson City  
Jones-Walker & Son, Commerce  
Bremond Memorial Funeral Home, Bremond  
Wade Family Funeral Home, Arlington

#### COMMERCIAL EMBALMING ESTABLISHMENTS

Lonestar Mortuary and Cremation, Houston

#### INDIVIDUALS

Ayala, Teresa - Texas Service Life Insurance Co., Rockwall  
Bower, Glenn - Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, Houston  
DiCamillo, Jennifer - Wilbert Funeral Service/Pierce, San Antonio

Gambill, John - Anderson-Clayton-Gonzalez FH, Mesquite  
Garza, Meghan - Gipson Funeral Home, Lufkin  
Henderson, Shannon - Commonwealth Institute of FS, Houston  
Hernandez, Amie - Harrell Funeral Home, Martindale  
Lloyd, Natalie - Callaway-Jones Funeral Home, Bryan  
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# Getting Political

## TFDA Needs Members to Get to Know their State Representatives

Visiting with your representative or senator in the Texas Legislature, face-to-face, is the most effective way to actually influence them – and the best time to visit them is while they are in their district offices, before the session begins in 2019.

Because the Texas Funeral Service Commission is due for review by the Sunset Commission, personal visits by constituents to district offices of members of the legislature may be enough to convince undecided legislators, more than any other strategy for communicating with them.

Funeral directors in each legislative district may make individual contact or coordinate with other directors in their district to visitor representatives and senators as a group. To find out when your Senator or Representative will be in their local office, you can: call their local office, check their website and, by all means, get on their mailing list. Whether you arrange to meet with your elected officials in Austin or their local offices, here are some rules to follow:

### Make an Appointment

This is just common sense and courtesy. All representatives and senators offices across the state require an appointment request. Some will make appointments by phone or may prefer email. Some prefer faxed requests for appointments. Some offer “walk-in” meeting times in their local offices, but an appointment is still highly recommended. A written appointment request should be short and simple. Here are some template:

### Sample Phone “Script” for Making a Legislative Appointment

Hi! I’m \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_, I will be in Austin (or local office location) on (date) and would like an appointment to meet with Senator \_\_\_\_\_/ Representative \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss (the upcoming issue you want to discuss).

I would be more than happy to meet with the legislative assistant who works on (your issue) if the (elected official) is unavailable. Is someone available the afternoon of the (date of your visit)? If no one is available, I would like to drop by the office anyway to leave some information for the (elected official) to review.



### SAMPLE WRITTEN REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT

*[Your Address] [Date]*

*The Honorable [full name] U.S. Senate (or U.S. House of Representatives) Washington, DC 20510 (20515 for House)*

*Dear Senator (or Representative) [last name]:*

*I am writing to request an appointment with you on [date]. I am a member of the Texas Funeral Directors Association. I am a funeral director in [your city], and I'm concerned about [issue].*

*I realize your schedule is difficult to project at this point, but it would be ideal if we could meet between [time] and [time].*

*I believe [issue] is important because [1-2 sentences].*

*My address is [address]. I can also be reached by phone at [phone number, cell number] or email at [email address]. I will contact your office during the week of [1-2 weeks before the visit] to confirm the details of the appointment.*

*Thank you for considering my request.*

*Sincerely, [name]*

### Prepare for the Meeting

Plan to discuss no more than your top issues.

Learn everything you can about your issue. (If you need information on the Sunset issue, check with the TFDA legislative committee)

Learn everything you can about points in

opposition to your standpoint and be ready to argue against them.

If you have any supporting handouts, charts or graphics, bring them with you. Consider taking extra copies in case staff members request them.

### At the Meeting

Arrive about 10 minutes before the appointment time. Dress neatly and conservatively. Be courteous and respectful. Relax.

Do not be upset if you end up meeting with the legislator’s staff. They are often more knowledgeable of individual issues than the legislators themselves, and they WILL inform the legislator of your views and requests.

Introduce yourself to the legislator or their staff members: tell them who you are and where you live. Warm them up: Try to start by complimenting something the legislator has done recently; their vote on an issue, a bill they sponsored, etc. After a minute or two of “small talk,” state your standpoint on the issue(s) you came to discuss. No matter how passionately you feel about the issue, do not “rant-and-rave.” Nothing diminishes your credibility more than an “in your face” demeanor.

Be ready to answer questions and discuss your points in detail.

If the legislator disagrees with you, stand up for yourself, your profession. Emphasize your talking points (these are available from your legislative committee) but do not become over-argumentative. Keep emphasizing the positives of your standpoint. Always try to end the conversation on a positive note.

### After the Meeting

Always send a follow-up letter on business letterhead. Mail or fax this thanking your legislator or the staff members you met with. Emails don’t count.

Also include any additional information you may have in support of your issue. The follow-up message is important because it confirms your commitment to your cause and helps build a valuable relationship between you and your representative.

To find your State Representative, visit <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/>.



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# *It's Almost Island Time!*

## Turn off your phones, pack your swimsuits for TFDA's Annual Convention & Expo June 10-13 in Galveston at Moody Gardens Hotel & Expo Center



What better place than Galveston? Whether you come to play golf, learn, renew friendships, hang out with your family or simply enjoy a day at the beach, it's all on the island... plus so much more.

This year's convention kicks off with an Island Crawl, beginning at 6 p.m. on Sunday. On Monday, get your tee-time for the annual John Cathey Golf Tournament, benefitting TFDA's PAC. Throughout the day, CEs are offered and a board meeting is scheduled at 3 p.m.

A Wine Pairing is set for 4:30 p.m., where you can get to know your way around a sumptuous collection of Texas wines. Emerging Leaders will gather for their event at 7 p.m.

Highlighting this year's convention at 10 a.m., Tuesday, will be keynote speaker Dr. Alan Wolfelt, author, educator, and grief counselor, appearing thanks to the generosity of Legacy Funeral Group and Michael Soper. Those attending will earn 2 CE credits.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his professional experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him.

Perhaps best known for his model of

“companioning” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well.

Founder and Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, Dr. Wolfelt presents numerous educational workshops each year for hospices, hospitals, schools, universities, funeral homes, community groups, and a variety of other organizations. He also teaches the bereavement caregiver trainings at the retreat center in beautiful Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dr. Wolfelt is a popular media resource who regularly provides his expertise to many television shows, newspapers, and magazines. A past recipient of the Association for Death Education and Counseling's Death Educator Award, Dr. Wolfelt is also a faculty member of the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine.

A prolific author, Dr. Wolfelt is the author of many books, a regular contributor to several journals and the developer of the popular “Helping Series.”

Dr. Wolfelt and his wife, Sue, a family physician, are parents of three children and live in the foothills of the beautiful Rocky Mountains next door to the Center for Loss and Life Transition.

“Mourning in our culture isn't always easy. Normal thoughts and feelings connected to loss are typically seen as unnecessary

and even shameful. Instead of encouraging mourners to express themselves, our culture's unstated rules would have them avoid their hurt and ‘be strong.’ But grief is not a disease. Instead, it's the normal, healthy process of embracing the mystery of the death of someone loved. If mourners see themselves as active participants in their healing, they will experience a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in life.”

On Tuesday at 11:30 a.m., the sales club will host their luncheon and business meeting. All 50-year licensees will be honored with a luncheon at 12 noon, and all living past presidents and their spouses/partners will be TFDA's guests for lunch at noon.

50-Year Licensed Honorees will be recognized at 1 p.m., and at 2 p.m., we'll gather for our annual Service of Remembrance, another tradition of TFDA conventions.

The all-important General Session will be held at 3:30 p.m., followed by a gathering of the Quarter-Century Club...and at 5:30 p.m., a PAC Reception is on tap.

A Welcome Party is planned at 6 p.m., followed by an Expo review.

Exhibits will be open Wednesday and an Exhibit Hall Lunch will be served at noon.

At 3 p.m., the TFDA Board of Directors will meet, and there will be time to put your feet up, take a swim or walk along the beach before the President's Reception is held, followed by the Gala and Awards Banquet, which includes a live and silent auction.

Galveston offers a variety of shops, water sports, antique-hunting and historic standouts reminiscent of this former port of entry followed by the Gala and Awards Banquet, which includes a live and silent auction.

Make plans now to come and be part of this annual gathering of funeral directors, their spouses and partners. Show your support and your pride in your chosen profession!



# Exhibitors

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Aftermath Services . . . . .	417	Full Circle Care . . . . .	411	Precoa . . . . .	309
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Classic Coach & Limousine . . . . .	I	Life Gift . . . . .	809	Southwest Cargo . . . . .	906
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service . . . . .	508	Live Oak Bank . . . . .	615	Southwest Professional Vehicles, Inc. . . . .	J
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Crossroads Mortuary Services . . . . .	406	Messenger . . . . .	401	Star of Texas Casket Co. . . . .	H
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Each year, the TFDA Convention Committee works hard to present a panel of speakers that can speak to funeral directors' every day needs. While you are in Galveston, connecting with your peers (and perhaps beaching and playing with your family), make sure to make time for this array of speakers who are there to help you step it up in your day-to-day business.

### Monday, June 11

TxEVER – The New TER, 8 a.m.

Soo Teal graduated from Texas Women's

University in Denton, Texas with a Bachelors in Sociology and Social Work. She has been with the Vital Statistics Section (VSS) for over 6 years. Prior to her position in Field Services, she worked as an early education teacher in North Texas, investigated abuse for the Department of Family Protective Services, and has worked for the State of Texas for over eight years.

### Decoding the Generations, 10 a.m.

Angelique Simpson takes a deep dive with each of the five active generations so we can

all better understand why we behave certain ways and why we see the world a little differently. Participants will walk away with a deeper understanding of how each of these generations prefer to see information and how to present information towards the preferences of each.

Angelique has been a sought-after speaker, trainer and personal development coach for individuals, teams and corporations for the past 25 years. Angelique is well known for her high energy and dynamic training programs that express learning in an exciting way.


Angelique's journey as a trainer started in the healthcare industry, but through the years she has supported training for the real estate industry, the medical field, funeral service and legal firms to name a few.

Angelique happily joined the Matthews Aurora team in 2016 where she gets to share her positive energy and true passion for professional development.

Angelique is a UCLA graduate and she lives in Seal Beach, California with her husband, Michael, and her daughter, Bethany.

### Practical Embalming Techniques for Treating the Cavity, Edema and Dehydration, 1 p.m.

David Hicks' program explores the treatment of the cavity of the dead human body.



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Processes and techniques employed by the Egyptians, 18th Century Anatomists, to modern embalmers will be discussed. Items covered include aspiration techniques and 4/9 Region Plan, injection of cavity fluid, treating the cavity of full and partial autopsies, and organ donor cavity treatment.

David G. Hicks has been involved in funeral service since 1992. David is a Pierce Chemical Sales Representative for Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia. He is a graduate of the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, where he earned a Bachelor's of Mortuary Science and also holds a Master's of Science in Education from Capella University. Hicks is licensed in both Ohio and Kentucky. He worked at two prominent Cincinnati funeral homes as a funeral director/ embalmer before accepting the position as the Clinical Lab Manager at CCMS in 2002. From 2008 until 2011 Hicks was the Chair of Embalming Sciences at CCMS where he taught in the areas of embalming theory, restorative art, clinical labs and various other science courses. David also served as an editorial consultant to Robert G. Mayer, Jr. with the 5th Ed of *Embalming – History, Theory and Practice*. From May–October 2013, Hicks served as an adjunct faculty member at Mid America College of Funeral Service where he taught Restorative Art I-IV. Hicks also keeps busy as a speaker, having presented all over the Midwest and South.

David is a member of The Ohio Embalmers Association, where he serves as Secretary. He also served two terms as Chairman of the British Institute of Embalmers North American Division. He is also a member of the Michigan Embalmers Society. David is a past president of the Greater Cincinnati Funeral Service Association– District #5 OFDA. David is an avid N Scale Model Rail Roader. He is married to his wife, Julie, and they

have three boys, and two spoiled Dachshunds. David and his family reside in Cincinnati.

**Tuesday, June 12**  
**Round Table Discussions, 8 a.m.**  
**Moderators – Jimmy Lucas & Jay Carnes**

Jay Carnes owns Carnes Funeral Home Texas City, Carnes Funeral Home South Houston, Bay Area Funeral Directors Texas City, and Cremate Texas Crematory South



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Houston. Carnes Funeral Home ranks at the top of the largest funeral organizations in Texas handling 4,000 cases each year. Carnes Funeral Home holds the State of Texas TDCJ contract, Harris County Indigent Services contract, multiple whole body donation contracts and many county medical examiner contracts.

Jay graduated in 1989 from Stephen F. Austin State University with a BBA in Management and Marketing. He graduated in 1999 from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service. He began working in the funeral in-

dustry at a young age with his brothers Rusty and Michael Carnes who own Carnes Brothers Funeral Home in Galveston. In 2002, Jay and his wife, Lori, opened their own funeral service operations.

The Texas City couple have been married for 25 years. They have a 10-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, who is the joy of their lives.

**Jimmy Lucas** graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and worked for Child Protective Services for several years prior to joining his family's funeral

and cremation business. The Lucas family owns and operates 18 funeral homes, 2 crematories, manages one cemetery and most recently began a start-up online cremation company, Simple Cremation.org. Jimmy is a member of ICCFA, CANA, NFDA, TFDA, the North Texas Funeral Directors Association and other prestigious organizations. He is very active in the Keller community and donates his time and gifts to many local and nonprofit charities.

### The WHY of Meaningful Funerals: Helping Families Make Transformations, 10 a.m.

*SPONSORED BY Legacy Funeral Group, Michael Soper*

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. **Alan Wolfelt** is known across North America for his inspirational teaching gifts. His compassionate messages about healing in grief—based on his own personal losses as well as his professional experience supporting children, teens, adults, and families over the last three decades—speak not only to the intellect but to the hearts of all who hear him. Perhaps best known for his model of “companioning” versus “treating” mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well.

Founder and Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, Dr. Wolfelt presents numerous educational workshops each year for hospices, hospitals, schools, universities, funeral homes, community groups, and a variety of other organizations. He also teaches the bereavement caregiver trainings described on this website in beautiful Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dr. Wolfelt is a popular media resource who regularly provides his expertise to many top-tier television shows, newspapers, and magazines. A past recipient of the Association for Death Education and Counseling's Death Educator Award, Dr. Wolfelt is also a faculty member of the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine.

A prolific author, Dr. Wolfelt is a regular contributor to several journals. Dr. Wolfelt and his wife, Sue, a family physician, are parents to three children. They live in the foothills of the beautiful Rocky Mountains next door to the Center for Loss and Life Transition. This course is ideal for social workers and LPCs that you work with or are acquainted to. Please invite them to attend this course worth two hours of continuing education credit. FREE attendance for HOSPICE & LPCs invited.

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# Convention at a Glance

## SUNDAY June 10

Island Crawl

## MONDAY June 11

Registration Open CEU - 6 hours  
John Cathey Memorial Golf Tournament  
*Moody Gardens Golf Course*  
TFDA Board Meeting  
Wine Pairing  
Emerging Leaders Event

## TUESDAY June 12

Registration Open CEU - 5 hours  
Keynote Speaker, Dr. Alan Wolfelt  
Sales Club Lunch & Business Mtg.  
50-year Licensee Lunch & Awards Presentation  
Past Presidents & Former First Spouses Lunch  
Service of Remembrance  
General Session  
Quarter Century Club Reception

Leader of the PAC Reception  
Welcome Party & Expo Preview

- Entertainment: The Spazmatics
- Silent Auction
- 50/50 Raffle Drawing

## WEDNESDAY June 13

Registration Open CEU - 1 hour  
Ribbon Cutting  
Exhibits Open (9:00 - 2:00)

- Lunch in Exhibit Hall
- Kids Zone
- Silent Auction

TFDA Board Meeting  
President's Reception  
Gala

- Awards Presentation
- Silent & Live Auction

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- Company name listed on main convention signage
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# Emerging LEADERS

Dylan Stopher



“Make no mistake, friends, the future isn’t going to be about the business of the past.”  
 What makes an “emerging leader,” you might ask? Frankly, the list is too long to cover in total. But the main focal point that I’d like to discuss is that we, as a group, are unafraid of change. I know, I know, that makes all of those who taught us shiver when we talk about change and our willingness to embrace it... but make no mistake, friends, the future isn’t going to be about the business of the past.

So why do I bring this up now? Well, put simply, I want to encourage the leadership (both owners and managers) of every firm in our great state of Texas to identify one emerging leader in their team. It could be the owner or manager, or it could be the student or apprentice. It doesn’t really matter who it is, just as long as there is one on the team who is willing to come in and throw ideas around

to make the entire profession better in Texas. And, again, don’t confuse the truth behind it all... the goal is to improve service to the families we are all privileged to meet.

With that in mind, let’s talk about a few things that makes this group great for your firm, and why you should send one or more representative (schedule and services permitting, of course) to meet with us. First of all,

and likely the strongest reason I could ever provide, is the network. The network of professionals I have amassed in my almost 20 years in this profession is extensive, and when I need assistance with something I never need the Redbook (sorry, Redbook guys). I have a list of cell phone numbers for directors, managers, owners, apprentices, students, vendors, lawyers, consultants, all in my cell phone, and I can call on these people for direct insight. They, in turn, can call on me. And what is paramount about this, in my opinion, is that I know their philosophy and the heart behind why they serve. I trust them. I know that if I need to turn a family over to them, they will care for that family in the same way that I would. I have zero doubt about the outcome, because the handoff is a solid one. In the same vein, if all I’m calling for is advice, I know that their ego isn’t coming into play at all. They’ll tell me the truth, whether I like it or not, and they’ll help guide me to the best possible outcome for the family’s benefit. THAT is what the network of Emerging Leaders does for me, and I guarantee you, it’s the best network you can allow your team access to. Who doesn’t want to be able to call someone they know when there’s an issue? A face with a name is how our profession started. It’s how it grew. It’s likely how many of the successful independent owners still thrive. So let’s keep that tradition going, and make sure we can create the best network possible to serve every family, every time, all across the great state of Texas!

Second, we need to look at the knowledge that comes from the network. It’s no secret, we’ve all been licensed for different amounts of time, but we’ve all got a license. Does that mean, though, that every one of us got the exact same education? That we have the same experiences? That we’ve all faced the same cases? That we all know everything? NO!

I’m here to tell you, as I’m certain you’ve either said or heard many times in your career already, the day you stop learning is the day you should probably leave. We never stop learning. And we never stop teaching. That’s why we NEED to know each other on a personal level, so that we can continue to absorb and grow and serve to higher and higher levels. Stagnation makes us weak, and pride stops us from being willing to listen. We need to share, and we need a place to do that. You never know who will benefit from the experience you just had, and I would venture



to guess that even as you read this article, right now, you can think of something you just learned from some family you recently had the privilege to serve.

That knowledge, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant it may be, is going to matter to someone. And it is in that spirit and for that reason that I hold up the sharing of knowledge as an enormous benefit to our organization. Story swapping matters, friends, because those stories help us all grow.

To expand on that thought, our third big reason has to do with competition. I know that word sounds odd given the juxtaposition against all the friendly sharing and back-patting above, but really think on this one. Competition is healthy. Competition is good for you. Competition is good for the family. And I'm not talking about price lists or profit margins. I'm talking about different and innovative things that can be done to serve a family, the next level being reached, the bar being raised and then raised again. And as we sit and share these stories with each other about what we've done, and we build the network, share wisdom, share knowledge, we also see what our team across the state is doing.

Let's take cremation as an example (oh man, I brought up the C-word!) of how we can use this particular point to benefit all of our firms. Cremation isn't going away. If you disagree, you should probably just sell or close your doors, because you're incorrect. Given the direction it's headed, we need to be ready to embrace it. The mentality that people only choose it for cost is also wrong. They choose it for options, and anyone who's been paying attention in the last decade knows that. So when we hear about different products, higher levels of service, a concierge-style focus on cremation, we should be listening.

And would you like to know who it is that comes up with these ideas? Hang on for this, because it's gonna floor you. It's the families we serve! I know, you thought I was going say the young funeral directors. Nope, that's wrong. However, it IS the young funeral directors who allow and encourage the employment of the new ideas. They have no bias against them, no stigma, no fear. And THAT is where our profession grows by leaps and bounds. Those ideas then become practice, and that practice then becomes policy, and then I'm sitting at a table hearing about something that someone at XYZ Funeral Professionals does in No One Likes To Drive That Far, Texas, and guess what, I'm excited! I'm excited to hear all about something different and how it worked.

Moments like that are where we grow, as I hear about what I could do to set myself apart from my local competitor, and thereby offer a higher level of service to the families I am privileged to meet.

One last note. I know that most of you reading this equate the Emerging Leaders with people under 40. Let me assure you, though, as a man who is active in the group and will be 39 this year, I have no intention of stepping out of the group after my 40th birthday. We have people who are beyond that age bracket, and they provide excellent insight. The group is about knowledge and growth, not about youth. So please do not be intimidated or feel unwelcome if you're not in the "young professional" classification any longer. Some of the best ideas I've ever heard have

come from the professionals who taught me how to serve, and they were all in their 50s and up when I met them 20 years ago.

In short, I believe in our team. I'm an active part of it, and I believe that it should gain some additional focus. I believe that every region in the state would do well to have someone come and stand in the group to share what's happening in their area. And I believe that together, we can isolate and identify the best practices and greatest ideas to put forward for the whole of the profession, in Texas and beyond, so that every family who loses a loved one will receive the highest level of service to which we are capable.

And then we'll raise the bar again and serve higher... because that's what emerging leaders do.



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# Steps to Engaging FAMILY MEMBERS at the *Arrangement Conference*

(Second in a 3-part series)

By Alice Adams



**A**s a funeral director, you are already well aware that family satisfaction and family loyalty are the lifeblood of your firm and its success. That's why it's important that you engage them when making arrangements for their loved one. You may be saying to yourself: "What the @\$%\$#? Of course I engage my families!"

Really? Are you sure?

Let's begin with some definitions because "engagement" is often confused with "alignment."

"Alignment" is knowing what to do...and everybody knows what to do when a loved one dies. A visit to the funeral home is required. But engagement?

"Engagement" is wanting to do it...and how many families want to plan a service? If you answered "zero," you are absolutely correct.

So engaging the family is an entirely new

wrinkle in funeral service – one that involves educating, reassuring and shepherding. Let's go through the engagement process, step-by-step, because the rewards of engagement are huge.

All too often, funeral directors rely on an arrangement conference sequence they learned in mortuary school...the one that begins with, "Tell me about your father/mother." And from there, you fill out the death certificate, right? You've been doing it for years.

But to ENGAGE your families:

**Step One:** Begin the arrangement conference by laying out your expectations about what this conference will achieve (planning a celebration of life for the deceased that reflects that life), explaining each step and encouraging the family to make this service an event they will remember, where those attending can learn more about this special individual and their life and a gathering they know their loved one would have enjoyed attending.

Let the family know they are now part of a team – a team that includes you and your entire staff – all focused on paying tribute to the life of their loved one with honor and dignity. You are all there to respond to the family's every suggestion and every need.

**Step Two:** Because their loved one was a unique individual, tell them they have choices. In fact, they should forget about other funerals they've attended so they can make this celebration all about their loved one, beginning with the place they want to hold the service to the kind of casket they choose, the speaker or speakers they select, the music they'd like to include, and the food they may serve at the reception.

**Step Three:** Share examples of personalized arrangements you know about.

The avid hiker's family who organized a short hike to a favorite place or vista for the service after interment or cremation.

The family of the wonderful dessert maker that arranged a service around a catered remembrance, featuring some of mom's favorite hymns/country/jazz numbers, favorite desserts, brief testimonials from friends, prayers and coffee.

The car club member who loved classic cars. Her family served a picnic lunch after testimonials from fellow car lovers, a favorite scripture and prayer, all held in a park next to a lot where classic cars were on view.

The purpose of sharing these examples is to give the family permission to think beyond the boundaries of the box and personalize their choices beyond the usual elements of a funeral.

**Step Four:** Complete the Death Certificate during this step. This also is the time to encourage questions. Remember, the family did not come to your firm to be told "no" for any request, so as long as a request is moral and legal, your job as a funeral director is to figure out how the request can be fulfilled.

Share more outside-the-box stories:

When the young decedent's parents said he was a Star Wars fan, the director not only found an artist to paint a metal casket like a space ship but also accommodated pallbearers who were in Storm Trooper costumes and found Star Wars tee-shirts for the entire staff to wear during the service.

When the new widow wanted to invite her late husband's golf club to serve as an honor guard, crossing their clubs for the casket to be carried through at the cemetery, followed by a reception nearby with beer, peanuts and a hole-in-one game with prizes and a video of the entire event.

Funeral directors have parked favorite cars and motorcycles next to caskets during visitation, called Bingo at the service to remember an avid games player, invited an Elvis impersonator to sing some of the decedent's favorite songs, distributed Kazoos for a congregational play-along.

At the family's request, a director has screened a favorite clip from a favorite movie, found a mule-drawn cart for the trip to the nearby cemetery, located an opera singer to perform a favorite aria, allowed a motorcycle club's member (a clergy) to lead the service

and the club's president to organize the procession to the cemetery, dig the grave before the interment and fill the grave afterwards... even allowed a favorite bull to stand by the casket during a cowboy's funeral service.

**Step Five:** Be the hub, not the spokes of this arrangement. Assist the family still numb from days at the bedside or a long hospital stay in planning an appropriate memorial.

If the family has a difficult time getting started with ideas, invite them to think about memorabilia for a display and ask what they would want the centerpiece to be: is it a rodeo belt buckle? a signed soccer ball from a former team? a painting by the decedent? his cello? her rifle and a preserved deer head from a hunt? a scrapbook from high school baseball? a picture of a family ski trip?

Then use these to pivot to suggestions and ideas, such as a favorite pair of skis, maybe some favorite winter songs.

A rodeo rider? Gather saddles, ropes, the decedent's hat and boots. Ask the mourners to wear western clothing to the service. Find a singer who knows cowboy songs or ask about the loved one's favorite songs, whether they are western or not. Find hay bales. If possible,

use mounted pallbearers at the cemetery. Use bandanas for decorations. Let the family contribute ideas. Get them involved in the planning. Engage them.

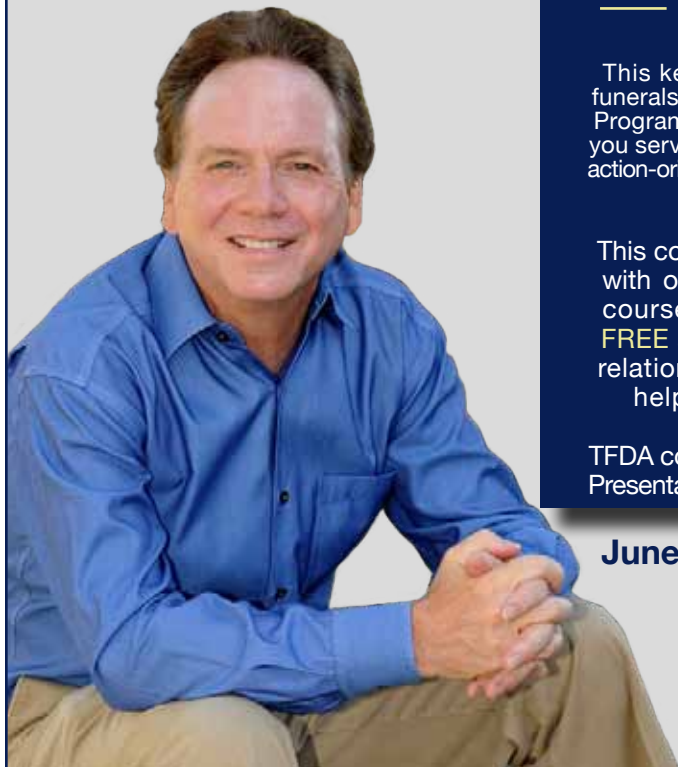
Was the decedent a baseball player, coach or fan? How about serving peanuts, hot dogs and beer and holding the visitation or service at a local baseball diamond.

Engaged families are those who are active participants in planning the arrangements, excited about remembering their loved one in a special way. Engaged families also look forward to experiencing this last gift they have planned for their loved one.

Having satisfied families is no longer enough to succeed in funeral service. Providing a service filled with joyful memory pictures, one that is personalized so everyone leaves knowing more about the decedent and the family enjoying this special time, surrounded by extended family and friends as they all remembered and celebrated the life that was lived.

Don't be the director who merely follows the order of a cookie-cutter funeral service. Be the director who went over-and-above the family's expectations by providing a service they will never forget because they were engaged.

**Dr. Wolfelt**  
Psychologist • Grief Counselor  
Educator • Author



## The "WHY" of Meaningful Funerals: Helping Families Make Transformations

— *Dr. Alan Wolfelt* —

This keynote presentation will explore the WHYs of meaningful funerals in ways that allow participants to discover a cause for action. Program content will include current trends influencing the families you serve, a definition of the concept of "transformation," and specific action-oriented steps you can take to not only survive, but thrive into the future.

This course is ideal for social workers and LPC's that you work with or are acquainted to. Please invite them to attend this course worth two hours of continuing education credit. **FREE attendance for HOSPICE & LPC's invited.** Foster your relationship with professional caregivers and hospice while helping them stay current with their certifications.

TFDA convention fees apply to Funeral Directors wishing to attend. Presentation will be held in the hotel, 10 AM-12 PM June 12th, 2018.

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# 3 Ways

## *A Business Leader Gets*

# PEOPLE TO FOLLOW



**T**o get the most out of their workforce, today's business leaders may need to look at their own role – and their workers – a bit differently than leaders did decades ago.

"A strong and effective leader certainly stands at the top of a hierarchy, but great leaders today don't act hierarchically," says Don Rheem, author of *Thrive By Design: The Neuroscience that Drives High-Performance Cultures*, and CEO of E3 Solutions ([www.e3solutions.com](http://www.e3solutions.com)), a provider of employee workplace metrics and manager training.

"While people thrive under great leaders, in today's business world they are also looking for a safe haven work environment where respect, trust and encouragement are bedrocks of the work culture."

Rheem suggests three ways a company leader can get people to follow, and do so without being punitive and domineering:

**Don't treat employees like children.** The level of complexity and the pace of change that leaders at all levels face today is unprecedented. The pressure for achievement is intense and when mistakes are made, or when staff show up disengaged, tempers can flare.

"Frustration and anger are powerful emotions, and when leaders get flooded with these feelings they typically fall into a model of leadership and accountability deeply embedded in their memories – parenting. So they demote their employees to the role of children," Rheem says. "But most adults do not want to be patronized or treated like children. Those ways don't inspire employees to thrive in their work environment or put forth their best effort. Employees today, especially among the current generation entering the workplace, are far more likely to quit or deliberately underperform under those conditions. That's

bad for morale, damages the culture, and encourages turnover."

**Be positive.** A leader who cultivates a positive culture can reap myriad benefits. Research of 16 different industries, conducted by Dr. Kim Cameron at the University of Michigan's Stephen M. Ross School of Business, found a significant relationship between "virtuousness" in the workplace – forgiveness, compassion, optimism and trustworthiness – and improvements in everything from profitability and productivity to quality, innovation, customer satisfaction and employee retention. "Leaders need to move away from the CPO template, where they are the Chief Punishment Officer, and instead move to more brain-friendly modes as mentors, coaches, good listeners and captains of positive recognition," Rheem says.

**Don't be subverted by subcultures.** A company's top leader needs to ensure the next layers of leadership are consistently echoing the company's ethos at every level throughout the enterprise. "Hold managers and supervisors accountable for communicating the corporate culture and living the organization's values," Rheem says. "Don't let divergent micro-cultures or siloed departments hijack the enterprise's culture. Having strong and effective leaders as managers and supervisors creates the consistent conditions essential to healthy and sustainable workplace cultures."

"There is a very high emotional cost in making difficult choices that affect other people's lives," Rheem says. "Most of us would prefer having those decisions made by someone we trust and have faith in, not someone who brandishes a title or threats of punitive consequences in order to achieve authority. The most successful leaders in the new era of work now underway will balance strength and determination with empathy and understanding."

*Don Rheem, author of Thrive By Design: The Neuroscience that Drives High-Performance Cultures, is CEO of E3 Solutions ([www.e3solutions.com](http://www.e3solutions.com)), a provider of employee workplace metrics and manager training that allow organizations to build engaged, high-performance cultures. Rheem, one of the nation's principle authorities on leadership science, uses empirically validated research to consult with leaders at all levels within an organization. He is a former science advisor to Congress and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

“My wife Elizabeth and I are very pleased that we chose Legacy Funeral Group to purchase our funeral homes. We will celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2019 serving Beeville, George West and Three Rivers, Texas.

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## Funeral Directors Life Named to List of Best Companies to Work for in Texas

Funeral Directors Life was named as one of the top 10 medium-sized companies on the 100 Best Companies to Work for in Texas list for 2018. The company rankings were published by *Texas Monthly*.

The Best Companies Group statewide survey and awards program was designed to identify, recognize and honor the best places of employment in Texas, benefiting the state's economy, workforce and businesses. The awards program is a project of Texas Monthly, the Texas Association of Business, Texas SHRM and Best Companies Group.

To determine the Best Companies to Work for in Texas, companies are evaluated on workplace policies, systems, philosophies, practices, and demographics. Plus, an employee survey is conducted to measure the employee experience.

## Shoemaker Retires from Dallas Institute After 38 Years of Service

James Shoemaker, president of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, Dallas, Texas, will re-

tire in May from the college which he first joined in 1980 as an instructor. He has served as President since 1992.

All are invited to a President Retirement Open House Reception at Dallas Institute on Sunday, May 6, 2018 from 2:00 - 5:00 PM to celebrate with Jim and wish him well.

Shoemaker was himself a 1976 graduate of Dallas Institute, known then as Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science. During his studies he commuted while interning at the Christian Funeral Home in Decatur, Texas where he remained after earning his license. In 1978, he returned to Dallas where he served as manager and embalmer at Dallas Morticians Service until taking an instructional position at Dallas Institute in 1980.

"Jim Shoemaker has touched so many lives and positively influenced countless numbers of funeral professionals both within and outside the walls of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service," said Jill Karn, Chief Operating Officer of Pierce Mortuary Colleges. "His com-

mitment to the industry has been demonstrated through his service on the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), the National Associated Colleges of Mortuary Science (NACMS), the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) and several state and local funeral directors' associations."

Jim is looking forward to spending more time with Laura, his wife of over thirty years, who herself is known by many as she has often worked with Jim at funeral industry conventions. A deacon at his church, Jim together with Laura plan to continue their active participation in church missions.

"I am told that more things will come along when others discover that I am retired," remarked Jim, "but I know that I will miss those I have taught, worked with or met during my years at Dallas Institute. I have been honored to be associated with this excellent institution and I hope my leadership lived up to the ideals that Dallas Institute was founded upon."



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For more information on the Retirement Open House on May 6, call (214) 388-5466.

### Neutrolene Named Endorsed Provider for TFDA Members

Michael Land, CFSP and president of TFDA's Services, Inc., has announced the appointment of NeutrOlene, LLC., as an Endorsed Provider for members of the Texas Funeral Directors Association.

Co-owners Tony Riddle and Chet Robbins said they were honored to receive the endorsement and thrilled to become part of the Services Inc. family of endorsed providers.

"The enthusiastic reception NeutrOlene has received by funeral directors across North America, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia speaks to the quality, versatility and effectiveness of the NeutrOlene product line," Robbins pointed out, "and we look forward to meeting and providing the highest quality of service to funeral directors around the state of Texas."

The NeutrOlene family of products was developed in an effort to address the various organic odor problems encountered by funeral directors in all parts of the profession.

"NeutrOlene's chemical formulation is safe for humans and animals as well as environmentally friendly," said Robbins, "and because of the care we took with its composition, it also has the ability to clean certain stains on fabrics and floor-coverings as well as automotive upholstery and carpeting while neutralizing any odors."

Like fellow Endorsed Providers, NeutrOlene customers who are members of Texas Funeral Directors Association will receive a discount on every purchase. "We believe once a funeral

home has used NeutrOlene products in the prep room, restrooms, removal vehicles, coaches and other rolling stock, they won't want to be without it," Robbins said.

"Some of our current customers now travel with bottles of NeutrOlene in every vehicle, making the business of keeping them minty fresh, no matter what's required," he continued, "and many of our customers also buy NeutrOlene for their homes for use in kids' gym bags, athletic shoes, in the laundry, on sofas, upholstered chairs and in their cars, in case



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Odor Universe, a sister pet line become a popular and effective tool for pet funeral homes, cremation centers and pet cemeteries around the country and overseas.

“We believe, when it comes to neutralizing odors, NeutrOlene is the best in the world,” Robbins said, “and we haven’t had any disagreement from our customers.”

To learn more about NeutrOlene’s family of products, go to [www.neutrolene.com](http://www.neutrolene.com). To order, go online or call 816-589-8729.

## Sauder Funeral Products Hires New Sales & Marketing Director

Sauder Funeral Products recently selected industry veteran Mark Klingenberger to lead its sales and marketing efforts.

Klingenberger previously served Wilbert Funeral Services as a vice president in a number of sales and marketing roles. He is positioned to help Sauder Funeral Products expand its market share by continuing to meet the changing needs of U.S. distributors.

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milling of lumber and plywood. This material is eco-friendly as well as economical.

Visit [www.sauderfuneralproducts.com](http://www.sauderfuneralproducts.com) for more information.

## Dr. Alan Wolfelt Authors New Book on Complicated Grief

Companion Press announces the publication of a new book entitled *When Grief is Complicated: A Model for Therapists to Understand, Identify, and Companion Grievers Lost in the Wilderness of Complicated Grief* by renowned grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

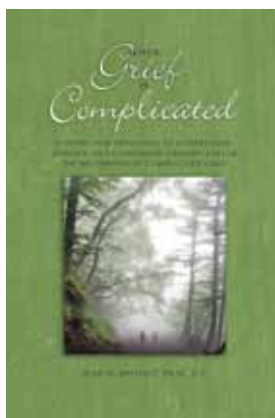
After a significant loss, grief is normal and necessary. But sometimes a mourner’s grief becomes naturally heightened, stuck, or made more complex by especially difficult circumstances, such as suicide, homicide, or multiple losses within a short time period. This is called “complicated grief.”

In this primer, Dr. Wolfelt helps caregivers understand the various factors that often

contribute to complicated grief. He presents a model for identifying complicated grief symptoms and, through real-life examples, offers guidance for companioning mourners through their challenging grief journeys. This book rounds out Dr. Wolfelt’s resources on the companioning philosophy of grief care, making it an essential addition to any caregiver’s professional library.

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado. The author of *Understanding Your Grief*, *Companioning the Bereaved*, and many other books for grief caregivers and mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well.

*When Grief is Complicated* is priced at \$24.95 U.S. To order and to learn more about Dr. Wolfelt’s books on grief and



loss, visit [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com) or call (970) 226-6050.

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**Fay**

Chandler, Arizona – Andrew Allan Fay passed away January 3, 2018 at his home. He was 58.

Allan was born in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada on July 8, 1959 to Reginald Edward Fay and Grace Esbell (Waugh) Fay. He was a member, for many years, of the Salvation Army Church. That is where he developed his love of music and went on to play the trumpet, trombone and drums. Of course, the drums were his favorite and he played for years in the church and in his father's band, The Wanderers. Allan would listen to anything, but especially loved country music and especially loved it loud.

He was super athletic and loved playing every sport. In junior high and high school he played baseball and excelled at the game. Later in life, he loved any sport; volleyball, baseball, basketball. Any sport that would challenge him physically

and that brought out his competitive nature. Later in his years, one of his more leisurely pastimes, and among his favorites, was rafting down the river with family and friends. He never missed a chance to load up his river gear and head out.

Allan loved his job at Vistar in Chandler and he rarely missed a day of work. His colleagues and co-workers were like family to him. He also rarely missed a Dallas Cowboy football game. He loved his cowboys and, win or lose, was always a dedicated fan. If you didn't know where he was during a Dallas Cowboy game, you only had to look for the nearest television.

Allan loved all his family equally and unconditionally, but he especially loved spending time with his only grandson, Ethan. He rarely missed a baseball practice or game of his and his eyes would sparkle by the mention of Ethan's name. He was a proud grandpa. In fact, in almost every photo, he wasn't looking

at the camera, but at his beautiful grandson.

Those who were blessed to know Allan, knew he was a kind soul. He would give anything, to anyone, anytime they needed it. His kind and gentle nature toward the underdog was what made him remarkable. He was always there to lend a hand – even to a total stranger. That soul quality is what those who loved him will miss the most.

He is preceded in death by his parents: Reginald Edward Fay and Grace Esbell (Waugh) Fay and his running buddy and partner in crime, Michael Honeycutt.

Survivors include his loving wife: Terri Lynn (Bennett) Fay; daughters: Christi Elese (Kevin) Ketcham and Amy Melissa Fay; sons: Anthony Allan Fay and Jeffery Andrew (Nicki) Fay; sisters: Reginlind Ann (Mike) Mathews, Debra Jean Thompson, Cynthia Jane (Brian) Fawcett and Lisa Maria Honeycutt (Glenn Kliebert); brother: John Edward (Wanda) Fay; grandchildren: Shiann Herrick, Kaitlyn Elese Creamer and Kyla Mae Ketcham, Ethan Allan Fay and Hannah Elese Fay.

Allan is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at Falconer Funeral Home in Gilbert, Arizona on January 9, 2018. Interment was private. Guestbook available at [www.falconerfuneralhome.com](http://www.falconerfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements and care entrusted to Falconer Funeral Home, Gilbert.

**Waltrip**

Claire H. Waltrip, 85, passed away on March 15, 2018 in Houston. Claire will be best remembered for the love and care she bestowed on those around her. She was a devoted wife, affectionate mother, adoring grandmother, great grandmother, and a loyal friend to many. She held a deep love for the Lord, and at the age of 21, dedicated her life to Christ. From that young age until her passing, she remained a dedicated servant to her church and local com-



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munity. She was the wife of Robert Waltrip, Sr., founder and chairman emeritus of SCI.

Born on the October 21, 1932 in Mount Pleasant, Texas, Claire graduated from Ball High School in Galveston and later attended the University of Houston. In 1952, she married Robert L. Waltrip, and over the course of their nearly 66-year marriage, the couple raised three children. An active parent, Claire supported her children in many ways. She was a constant cheerleader at their sporting events, an advocate for their school and church involvement, and a caretaker for the family's beloved pets. Together, the family enjoyed many summers at their ranch in Colorado.

Claire was also a supportive wife, and shared in her husband's success and pride as he developed Service Corporation International into a thriving multinational business.

Claire will be greatly missed by her husband, Bob; children, Robert L. Waltrip, Jr. and wife, Lucy D. Waltrip, William Blair Waltrip, and Holly Waltrip Long and husband, Mike Long; grandchildren Robert L. Waltrip, III and wife, Aimee Waltrip, Elizabeth B. Brossa and husband, Barry Brossa, Catherine L. Lesch and husband, Thomas Lesch, Victoria L. Persichetti and husband, Aaron B. Persi-

chetti, David T.A. Waltrip, Kaitlin N. Howell and husband, Logan Howell; as well as her six great-grandchildren.

A service in celebration of the life of Claire was conducted on March 19 at Berachah Church with Pastor Robert Thieme

III, officiating.

In lieu of customary remembrances, memorial contributions in Claire's honor may be directed to Berachah Church, 2815 Sage Road, Houston, Texas, 77056. Arrangements were at the direction of Geo. H. Lewis & Sons.

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## Business Insurance

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## Continuing Education

APEX Continuing Education Solutions is now partnering with TFDA to help you meet your continuing education needs. To qualify for the TFDA partnership, simply go to [TFDA.com](http://TFDA.com) and click on "Continuing Education" and then on the Apex link. You will 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).

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# A Vision for the Next Generation

## Develop Talent Now for a Successful Future

While incentives such as bonuses and profit sharing are important, recognizing achievements and building self-esteem are priceless.

Some business owners procrastinate or avoid communicating their succession plans because they fear how family members and employees might react. However, their silence may actually create more stress and cause harm to the business. Most employees—including family members—will feel more secure about the future if they know what to expect and how they will fit in.

It's never too late to develop a business succession plan. But the earlier you start, the better. Estate planning experts agree that long-term plans to transfer businesses are generally much more successful than those "patched together" following the unexpected death or disability of an owner.

Business succession actually begins with each employee's first day on the job

Think about it, whether he or she is one of your children or a high school student working part-time, that young person could someday be the head of the company.

Experts agree—succession planning includes creating an environment that motivates employees to use their talents and skills to reach their full potential and contribute to the success of the business. Sounds simple, but how do you accomplish it?

Perhaps a mentor program or an apprenticeship is a good start. Talented young people are more likely to stay with the company if they feel involved in something bigger than their own job. It is wise to provide opportunities by matching experienced workers with newer employees to guide them as they grow

in their jobs.

As employees gain experience, they become assets to your business and their value increases. Providing key employees opportunities to gain well-rounded business experience through cross-functional training and experience is admirable. This no doubt helps them become dependable managers who can make good decisions and take initiatives to improve operations.

*This article is courtesy of Federated Insurance. It is for general information and risk prevention recommendations only and should not be considered legal, coverage, financial, tax or medical advice. The information may be subject to regulations and restrictions in your state. There is no guarantee following these recommendations will help reduce or eliminate losses.*



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**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.



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## 2018 TFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Month	Event	Location
<b>April</b>	12	West Texas Funeral Directors
	17	TFDA Services, Inc.
	18	TFDA Board Meeting
	24	Panhandle Funeral Directors
	25-27	NFDA Advocacy
	26	Southeast Texas Meeting
<b>June</b>	10-13	TFDA Convention
	19	Texas Funeral Service Commission
<b>July</b>	8-11	NFDA Leadership Conference
	30 – August 1	TFDA Leadership Conference
<b>September</b>	11	Texas Funeral Service Commission
	30 – October 2	Emerging Leaders University
<b>October</b>	14-17	NFDA Convention
	23	TFDA Services, Inc.
	24	TFDA Board Meeting
<b>December</b>	11	Texas Funeral Service Commission

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# Stephen Hawking

## 1942-2018

"The universe has lost its brightest star"



Stephen Hawking, the brilliant British theoretical physicist who overcame a debilitating disease to publish popular books based on his research into the mysteries of the universe, died March 13, 2018. He was 76.

Considered by many to be the world's greatest living scientist, Hawking also was a cosmologist, astronomer, mathematician and author of numerous books including the landmark "A Brief History of Time," which sold more than 10 million copies.

With fellow physicist Roger Penrose, Hawking merged Einstein's theory of relativity with quantum theory to suggest that space and time would begin with the Big Bang and end in black holes. Hawking also discovered black holes were not completely black but emit radiation and would likely eventually evaporate and disappear.

Hawking suffered from ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), a neurodegenerative disease also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, which is

usually fatal within a few years. He was diagnosed in 1963, when he was a 21-year-old doctoral student, and doctors initially told him he probably wouldn't live long enough to finish his doctoral thesis.

The disease left Hawking paralyzed. He was able to move only a few fingers on one hand and was completely dependent on others or technology for virtually everything – bathing, dressing, eating, even speech. Hawking used a speech synthesizer, allowing him to speak in a computerized voice with an American accent.

"I try to lead as normal a life as possible, and not think about my condition, or regret the things it prevents me from doing, which are not that many," he wrote on his website. "I have been lucky that my condition has progressed more slowly than is often the case. But it shows one need not lose hope."

Hawking was born in Oxford, England, on what

an auspicious date: January 8, 1942 – the 300th anniversary of the death of astronomer and physicist Galileo Galilei.

In an October 2008 interview, Hawking said if humans can survive the next 200 years and learn to live in space, our future will be bright. "I believe the long-term future of the human race must be in space," Hawking said.

"It will be difficult enough to avoid disaster on planet Earth in the next 100 years, let alone the next thousand, or million. The human race shouldn't have all its eggs in one basket, or on one planet. Let's hope we can avoid dropping the basket until we have spread the load."

At Cambridge, he was Lucasian Professor of Mathematics – the prestigious post previously held by Sir Isaac Newton, widely considered one of the greatest scientists in modern history – for 30 years until 2009. Yet Hawking once said if he had the chance to meet either Newton or Marilyn Monroe, he would opt for the movie star.

Hawking became a hero to math and science geeks and a pop-culture figure, guest-starring as himself on "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and "The Simpsons." His life was dramatized in the 2014 movie, "The Theory of Everything." He had at least 12 honorary degrees and was awarded the CBE in 1982. A CBE, or Commander in the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, is considered a major honor for a British citizen and is one

rank below knighthood. He also was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the US's highest civilian honor by President Barack Obama in 2009.

"His passing has left an intellectual vacuum in his wake," tweeted Neil deGrasse Tyson. "But it's not empty. Think of it as a kind of vacuum energy permeating the fabric of spacetime that defies measure."

Hawking's private funeral was held March 31 at the University Church of St. Mary the Great, a Cambridge church near the university college that was his academic home for more than 50 years. Actor Eddie Redmayne, who played Hawking in the "The Theory of Everything," gave a reading during the service. His ashes will be interred later in the year at Westminster Abbey, next to Sir Isaac Newton's.

The dean of Westminster, the Very Rev Dr John Hall, said: "It is entirely fitting that the remains of Prof Stephen Hawking are to be buried in the abbey, near those of distinguished fellow scientists. Sir Isaac Newton was buried in the abbey in 1727. Charles Darwin was buried beside Isaac Newton in 1882.

Other famous scientists are buried or memorialized nearby, the most recent burials being those of atomic physicists Ernest Rutherford in 1937 and Joseph John Thomson in 1940. We believe it to be vital that science and religion work together to seek to answer the great questions of the mystery of life and of the universe."



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