

Volume 66, Issue 5

Texas

Director

May 2017

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**TFDA Convention & Expo
Make Plans for Austin
June 4-7**

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**Choosing the
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**When Surviving Family Members
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Nothing Worth Doing Is Easy

Can you believe it is May? Spring has officially arrived, and summer will be here next month! Whew, time really has flown by.

Speaking of flying by, April was such a busy month. Charlie and I spent the entire month doing the "Texas Tour" of regional meetings. We took our motor coach from Dallas to Laredo, and points in between. Thank goodness we have great employees to take care of our businesses and Charlie's sister, Charisse, and our Executive Assistant, Dawn (Super Girl) to take care of our dogs, house and personal business, in addition to our businesses.

I am sorry we did not get to make it to the Panhandle and West Texas regional meetings, but we were in Washington D.C. for the NFDA Advocacy Summit. Thank you to Charlotte Chism-Waldrum for standing in for me. I truly appreciate it and I can always count on you, Charlotte. I hear we really missed out on some great events and venues in Panhandle and

West Texas. Well done!

Kudos to John Gooback and the North Texas board for a great golf outing, dinner and meeting, and especially for the almost \$4,000 donation to PAC. You guys rock and I appreciate your passion for being "Leader of the PAC!" A special thank you to Paul Beaty and Alex Villarreal for helping us find places to park our coach. Jeff Nobles and the Southeast board did a great job with their golf, dinner and meeting; thanks for the hospitality. Same with the East Texas and South Texas boards. I also appreciate that the South Central group had their venue at Top Golf, where everyone was able to participate and have a great time.

Our trip to D.C. was great! Bill Vallie, Charlie and I met with someone from every single Texas Senator and Representative's office. There were two bills NFDA is supporting and we were presenting; one is a bill to increase basic burial benefits for veterans to \$749, and for those who passed away from a

service-related illness to \$2,000. The other bill involves the labeling and transportation of tissue and organ donations, licensing requirements of tissue banks and disciplinary actions for violating these requirements.

The convention is almost here! Our theme is *Don't Stop Believing & Take the Journey*. So all of you groovy guys and gals, dig up your 1970s disco threads and get ready for a blast. Groove Knight will be performing all of your favorite dance hits again this year.

We are selling raffle tickets, too, and the top prize is a beautiful David Yurman necklace, with matching earrings and bracelet. The stunning enhancer for the chain is by John Hardy. We also will be giving away a Walther PPQ 9mm Pistol and a signed Texas acoustic guitar by the one and only George Strait. Plus, we are giving away a \$500 and \$250 gift card. The tickets are limited to 300 and are \$50 each, so get them early. Your regional board members have been given tickets to sell, you can buy them from the TFDA office or at convention, if there are any left!

Don't forget, we have big changes happening this year at the convention in Austin. Exhibits for one day instead of two, the Gala will be on Wednesday night instead of Thursday, the 50-year award winners have their own special ceremony and we are only having one general session with a great keynote speaker you do not want to miss! Also, we will have some great continuing education on Sunday with a one day option

for registration, as well as some other great continuing education on Monday and Tuesday.

We think this will allow everyone to attend without being gone from their business so long, so mark your calendars, Don't Stop Believing and Take the Journey June 4-7 at the Hyatt Regency in Austin.

In reflection of my "almost" year of your president, I've thought about the fact that nothing worth doing is easy. This applies to all aspects of life, business, volunteerism, self-help, I could go on and on, and it occurs to me that serving on a regional board or on the Texas Funeral Directors Board is not an easy task that should be taken lightly.

However, I assure you, if you decide to serve and take it seriously, it will reward you in so many ways. As a sales director, I can assure you that sales is certainly not easy! But, if you view it that way you will never make it, and it is in some ways all about building relationships and having conversations, and what dawns on me is this is exactly how I have maximized my benefits from attending regional meetings, serving on the North Texas Board, the Texas Funeral Directors Board and now as your president. I encourage you to get involved, build relationships, have conversations and maximize your benefits too!

I leave you with this... "Quit hanging on to the handrails... Let go. Surrender. Go for the ride of your life. Do it every day."
— Melody Beattie

Have a great May and remember, "Don't Stop Believing and Take the Journey!" 🌟

CALLING ALL Grief Therapy Animals

In the last issue of *Texas Director*, we introduced Kermit, the first (that we know of) certified grief therapy dog in Texas. But it's been called to our attention that other furry creatures have been providing this service to the bereaved in our state (just without the certification).

Does your home utilize a dog or cat (or llama) for these transformative services? We'd love to hear about your helper! Send us an email at kscheberle@austin.rr.com with a short note on their career. And we'd love photos, as well!



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Legislative Update

Disposal of Fetal Remains Passes Out of House Committee

According to reporting from Alex Samuels and *The Texas Tribune*, Texas hospitals and abortion clinics would have to bury or cremate fetal remains under a measure that passed out of a House committee on Tuesday, April 18.

The rule is rooted in Texas' ongoing reproductive rights debate: While supporters said the bill has nothing to do with abortion and is about "ensuring the dignity of the deceased," opponents say it's yet another way for the state to punish women who legally terminate a pregnancy.

House Bill 35 by state Rep. Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, is the legislative counterpart to a Texas Department of State Health Services rule that was supposed to go into effect in mid-December but was delayed when a federal judge blocked it in January. A

Senate version of the bill passed the upper chamber in March. The House version now heads to the Calendars Committee, which could schedule it for a floor vote.

Some hospitals already bury fetal remains; others dispose of them in "sanitary landfills," repositories for medical waste. Both measures would subject hospitals and clinics that don't bury or cremate fetal remains after an abortion or miscarriage to fines or the loss of their license.

"We believe Texas can do better than this," Cook said when introducing his measure in early March.

State Rep. Jessica Farrar, D-Houston, said Cook's measure "has no positive public health impact for Texas women; this legislation places undue emotional and financial costs on women seeking abortion care."

"Mandating a conversation about the burial of fetal remains is an unnecessary barrier Texas should not be creating between a woman and her doctor," she added.

Cook argued the costs of the cremation or burial would not fall on women since his bill creates a registry of organizations that can help pay for the disposition. The bill also would not apply to miscarriages occurring at home.

For groups such as Abolish Abortion Texas, West Texans for Life and the Abolitionist Society of Houston, the legislation doesn't go far enough since abortion remains legal in the U.S.

"A pro-life bill would stop the murder instead of dictating how to bury the dead body," said Jim Baxa, president of West Texans for Life. ★

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When Families Hate the Decedent

By Alice Adams



victims including an ex-wife, relatives, friends, neighbors, doctors, nurses and random strangers.

At a young age, Leslie quickly became a model example of bad parenting combined with mental illness and a complete commitment to drinking, drugs, womanizing and being generally offensive. Leslie enlisted to serve in the Navy, but not so much in a brave and patriotic way but more as part of a plea deal to escape sentencing on criminal charges.

While enlisted, Leslie was the Navy boxing champion and went on to sufficiently embarrass his family and country by spending the remainder of his service in the Balboa Mental Health Hospital receiving much needed mental healthcare services.

Leslie was surprisingly intelligent, however he lacked ambition and motivation to do anything more than being reckless, wasteful, squandering the family savings and fantasizing about get rich quick schemes.

It happened in January. Suddenly an obituary on the Carnes Funeral Home (Texas City) had gone viral. Telephones at the firm began ringing. The firm's website crashed. The media was calling the funeral home as well as the writer of the obituary – the daughter of the decedent. Here's what she had written:

Leslie Ray "Popeye" Charping was born in Galveston, Texas on November 20, 1942 and passed away January 30, 2017, which was 29 years longer than expected and much longer than he deserved. Leslie battled with cancer in his latter years and lost his battle, ultimately due to being the horses ass he was known for.

He leaves behind 2 relieved children; a son Leslie Roy Charping and daughter, Sheila Smith along with six grandchildren and countless other

Leslie's hobbies included being abusive to his family, expediting trips to heaven for the beloved family pets and fishing, which he was less skilled with than the previously mentioned. Leslie's life served no other obvious purpose, he did not contribute to society or serve his community and he possessed no redeeming qualities besides quick-witted sarcasm, which was amusing during his sober days.

With Leslie's passing he will be missed only for what he never did; being a loving husband, father and good friend. No services will be held, there will be no prayers for eternal peace and no apologies to the family he tortured. Leslie's remains will be cremated and kept in the barn until "Ray," the family donkey's wood shavings run out. Leslie's passing proves that evil does, in fact, die and hopefully marks a time of healing and safety for all.

Kevin Byron, a funeral director licensed for 25 years and a Carnes employee for the past decade, recalled working with the decedent's daughter. "When she asked how to write the obituary, I referred her to the examples on our website," Byron remembered, "but when she said none of the examples applied to her dad, I counseled her to tell his story honestly, with no profanity."

"When someone dies, it is totally human to remember all the good attributes, all the good times," the director said. "Sometimes the ugly side is ignored and the resulting obit makes it sound like the decedent walked on water. Not too many folks would tell the story honestly, the way it should be."

The obituary for Leslie Charping was then published on the Carnes website, something Byron said they offer to all families. "Even if they don't send the obit to newspapers in the area, the families appreciate having an online obit published, something they can go back and read, even weeks or months after the death. Many tell us it's a part of their healing," the director said.

After writing her father's obituary, the daughter arranged a direct cremation for Mr. Charping, and Byron, the director-in-charge, said she took care of the details for the entire family. "She called several times, following the progress of the paperwork, asking for the proposed cremation date and when she could pick the remains."

Once the obit began trending on the internet, the funeral home's phones began ringing with calls from the media. The daughter was interviewed on late night talk shows, on the radio and on local television. One newspaper from the UK called, asking about the obituary and eventually interviewed the daughter.

"When our website crashed, we took the obituary down," Byron said, "but only temporarily."

"We try to accommodate all our families, try to meet all their needs. The daughter said she appreciated us encouraging her to write honestly. We really aren't in the censorship business. When she brought the obit to us, the decedent's daughter explained she had gone through a lot of years of therapy to get to this point (of being able to honestly write about her parent)."

Zach Carnley, general manager of Emerald Hills Funeral Home and Memorial Park in Kennedale, remembered a family where the children had buried their beloved mother and were then left to bury their not-so-loved step-father when he passed away.

"Basically, when we began the arrangement conference, they didn't want to do anything. They didn't want any part of memorializing him," Carnley said. "They didn't even want to come to the funeral home, so I went to their home...and after I explained the options, they ended up holding a graveside service."

Carnley said after the service, the children thanked him. "But, from their comments, I got the idea the decedent hadn't been the nicest person."

A check with the obituary department of *The Dallas Morning News* found that newspaper, while having no written do's and don'ts, wouldn't publish such an honest and straight-forward assessment of one's life as the obit for Leslie Charping his daughter wrote. "We would red flag it after the first paragraph," said the staffer who preferred anonymity.

Do Dallas funeral directors know of these boundaries?

"No," the staffer said, "but if we received a scathing obit like this, we would send it back and ask them to rewrite it."

Houston Funeral Director Bob Earthman said in his 53 years of serving Houston-area families through the Earthman Funeral Homes, there had been several instances when one or more family members had ill feelings toward the decedent. In these situations, the director attempted to understand these feelings.

"I did whatever they requested," he said, "and when there were feelings of animosity, the family didn't want any extras. If they wanted a very simple service, that's what I provided. It was not my place to make up anything to make the decedent sound nicer."

"People in families where there were bad feelings usually just did what their priest wanted, their pastor wanted...and remember, funerals were traditional until the last several years. Not until recently could we personalize tributes."

Most newspaper obituaries conform to a set formulas that incorporates listing the name of the deceased, date of passing, predeceasing and surviving relatives, and where and when services will be held.

Some families deviate from this standard by providing additional information about the departed, information that is almost always of a laudatory nature. However, every now and again one encounters a written send-off that is far from the expected loving expression of facts about the person who died.

Such was the case with the obituary of Dolores Aguilar. The obit for this 79-year-old woman ran in August 2008 in the *Vallejo [California] Times-Herald*. It was placed by one of the deceased's many daughters.

According to John Bogert of the *Daily Breeze* (a newspaper based in the South Bay area of Los Angeles), Dolores Aguilar's daughter was moved to place the notice after reviewing the obituary of a co-worker's father and noting as she read through it how little of it fit her mother.

"What struck me was how my mother was none of the things I was reading. She was never there for us, she was never good and she left no legacy. So how could I say any of the usual things about her?" said the daughter. She and her siblings, she maintained, were kept "unfed, poorly clothed and completely terrorized."

Before agreeing to run the unusual obituary, the newspaper took the additional step of requesting a copy of the death certificate, just to ensure that what they were being asked to publish wasn't a hoax. It wasn't: the woman being memorialized had passed away on August 7, 2008.

As obituaries go, this one sets a standard for brutal honesty.

Dolores Aguilar, born in 1929 in New Mexico, left us on Aug. 7, 2008. Dolores had no hobbies, made no contribution to society and rarely shared a kind word or deed in her life. I speak for the majority of her family when I say her presence will not be missed by many, very few tears will be shed and there will be no lamenting over her passing.

Her family will remember Dolores and amongst ourselves we will remember her in our own way, which were mostly sad and troubling times throughout the years. We may have some fond memories of her and perhaps we will think of those times, too. But I truly believe at the end of the day, all of us will really only miss what we never had, a good and kind mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. I hope she is finally at peace with herself. As for the rest of us left behind, I hope this is the beginning of a time of healing and learning to be a family again.

There will be no service, no prayers and no closure for the family she



Main Feature

spent a lifetime tearing apart. We cannot come together in the end to see to it that her grandchildren and great-grandchildren can say their goodbyes. So I say here for all of us, goodbye Mom.

On September 10, 2013, the Reno Gazette-Journal published a similar obituary (in both print and online) for Marianne Theresa Johnson-Reddick, who had passed away at the age of 78 and was described in her obit as having “neglected and abused her small children” and lived an “evil and violent life.”

Marianne Theresa Johnson-Reddick born Jan 4, 1935 and died alone on Aug. 30, 2013. She is survived by 6 of 8 children whom she spent her lifetime torturing in every way possible. While she neglected and abused her small children, she refused to allow anyone else to care or show compassion towards them.

When they became adults, she stalked and tortured anyone they dared to love. Everyone she met, adult or child was tortured by her cruelty and exposure to violence, criminal activity, vulgarity, and hatred of the gentle or kind human spirit.

On behalf of her children whom she so abrasively exposed to her evil and violent life, we celebrate her passing from this earth and hope she lives in the after-life reliving each gesture of violence, cruelty, and shame she delivered on her children. Her surviving children will now live the rest of their lives with the peace of knowing their nightmare finally has some form of closure.

Most of us have found peace in helping those who have been exposed to child abuse and hope this message of her final passing can revive our message that abusing children is unforgivable, shameless, and should not be tolerated in a “humane society”. Our greatest wish now, is to stimulate a national movement that mandates a purposeful and dedicated war against child abuse in the United States of America.

TFDA Past President Charlotte Chism-Waldrum, in her experience, said when there are bad feelings about the decedent or the family doesn't get along, they come in and want to be done with the remains as soon as possible and in the cheapest way possible.

Most of the time when the family doesn't like a parent, grandparent or other family member, only one or two people are designated to make arrangements. “Most of the time, if there are hard feelings, it involves a parent that has gotten divorced and the anger comes from the kids. Or the decedent has never been married and didn't get along,” the director said.

She remembered going to one service where the eulogy being delivered didn't match the legacy of the decedent. “When the preacher started talking, we didn't know who he was talking about,” she said. “The man had a high profile and was quite visible in the community. Many knew he regularly beat his wife. On one vacation, he beat her and left her for dead on the side of the road. Then he had a stroke and died. He was a big donor and highly regarded in his church. She survived the ordeal and returned to continue as the executive secretary for the superintendent of our school district.” ★



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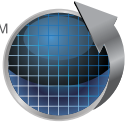
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2017 TFDA Convention & Expo



Funeral professionals should have June 4-7 on their calendars to attend this year's annual TFDA Convention & Expo. Not only does Austin offer a variety of things to do, it offers convenience! Being in the middle of

the state means it's an easy drive for most Texans (sorry El Paso!).

Come join your colleagues for food, fun and adventure. In addition, revive your passion, your friendships and your professional acumen.

All meetings and continuing education will be offered at the host hotel, the Hyatt Regency, at 208 Barton Springs Road. The Hyatt recently added a new parking garage and additional meeting spaces that make it a great central option. In addition, it is ground-zero for a variety of iconic Austin adventures, including boat tours of Lady Bird Lake, kayak rentals and access to the extension of the Hike and Bike Trail boardwalk that extends east along the south shore.

The exhibits on Wednesday, June 7, will be at the Palmer Events Center, just a few blocks down the road.

There was still availability at publication time at the Hyatt. The room rate is \$189 and the cut-off date for the TFDA room block is May 14. Call 512 477-1234 or 888-421-1442 for reservations. ★

Five (Newer) Ways to Play in Austin

Most Texans have travelled to Austin for a variety of reasons throughout the years. You're all aware of the Capitol, the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail and the more than 250 live music venues. Well, maybe you didn't know how many. Suffice it to say a lot.

So here are some new(ish) features you can give a whirl while you're enjoying Austin.

Scavenger Hunt Austin. Like walking around the Capitol grounds and downtown? Try your hand at an online scavenger hunt. You just need a cell phone and access to www.UrbanAdventureQuest.com (and to pay for the adventure). The game can be done in teams and while you are timed, if you take a mid-game stop (say, for instance at Voodoo Donuts), it's not held against you.

Segway Tours. The last five years have seen a huge uptick of Segway traffic in downtown Austin. If you prefer less walking, more moving, give it a go! A quick Google search will reveal a variety of options and tours to fit your needs and interests.

Stevie Ray Vaughan. His infamous landmark statue has been gracing the south shore of Lady Bird Lake for more than 20 years, but if you are a Stevie Ray fan, head to the Bullock Museum for a new exhibit on the guitar icon. Featuring a variety of memorabilia, the exhibit is wonderfully interactive. Play guitar and drums, listen to music or watch interviews with big brother Jimmie Vaughan. Music fans won't want to miss.

Blue Cat Café. There's always something new and exciting going on in A-Town. If you're a cat lover, come check this out! Blue Cat Café is a first-of-its-kind venture — not just for Austin, but the entire state of Texas. It brings together adorable, adoptable kitties and great food and coffee in a setting that makes you feel right at home. The store's prime objective is to find forever homes for stray and shelter cats. <https://bluecatcafe.com/>

Yeti Flagship store. You've probably run across a Yeti cooler somewhere. The Austin-based company has made a name for itself. Their brand-new flagship is just outside the Hyatt on Congress. Sure, it features Yeti products (with no price tags), but it also hosts live music and film screenings; and has a great bar. It's more than a store!

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Come for the Fun; Stay for the Speakers



Eric Dahlquist



Mark Owen



Kyle Smith



Melissa Unfred



Sarah Wambold



Ellen MacDonald



TFDA and the Convention Committee have worked hard to make sure every convention attendee who makes their way to Austin in June will be able to walk away refreshed with new ideas and training. The educational lineup will feature something for every director.

In the April issue, we profiled the speakers who will grace the Sunday agenda. Now meet our Monday and Tuesday guests.

Pre-Need Updates

Monday morning will begin with **Jesus Saucillo** and **Eric Dahlquist** sharing Pre-Need Updates with attendees.

Jesus Saucillo began his career with the Texas Department of Banking in August 2001, as a Financial Examiner for the Austin, TX region. As a Financial Examiner for the Special Audits Division (SA), his responsibilities included examining Prepaid Funeral Contract sellers, Perpetual Care Cemetery certificate holders and Money Services Business license holders. Jesus received his BBA from the University of Texas at El Paso with a major in Finance and Management.

In October 2006, he was promoted to Review Examiner for the Special Audits Division. His responsibilities as Review Examiner

include, but are not limited to, overseeing examination staff and coordinating examination schedules; reviewing applications, annual reports, and required periodic filings; and the preparation of various performance reports.

In July 2013, he earned his Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (CAMS) accreditation.

Jesus is originally from El Paso, TX and has resided in Austin, TX since 1999. He is married and has two daughters. In his free time, he enjoys mountain biking.

Eric Dahlquist is a financial examiner for the Special Audits Division of the Texas Department of Banking. He has been with the Department 14 years, specializes in the regulatory examination of prepaid funeral and perpetual care cemetery providers, and

is the senior field examiner in the division's Houston regional office. Prior to joining the Department, he was a broker-dealer consultant with the American Funds Group in San Antonio, where he earned his NASD series 6 and 63 licenses.

A distinguished 13-year Marine Corps veteran, Mr. Dahlquist holds a B.S. in Business Administration and Management from Lyon College, Batesville, Arkansas. He attended the graduate studies program at the University of Virginia and has participated in several professional development programs sponsored by the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, and the Governor's Center for Management and Development in Austin. Eric and his wife, Michele, reside in Humble, Texas.

Rules and Regulations Update

Monday mid-morning will feature a rules and regulations update from expert **Kyle Smith**. Kyle E. Smith attended UT Law School and graduated in 1995. He has worked for five different state agencies since 1997. He has been a Staff Attorney or Prosecutor with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Texas Medical Board, and Texas Real Estate Commission. He has

been the Staff Attorney for the Funeral Service Commission since September 2013.

Green Burial Panel

Monday afternoon will feature a green burial panel with **Melissa Unfred, Ellen Macdonald** and **Sarah Wambold**.

Melissa N. Unfred is a dual-licensed funeral director and embalmer, residing in Austin. She practices as a Modern Mortician, focusing on guiding families before, during, and after the time of passing with their desire for a more hands-on approach, and is a resource to those seeking greener death care options for people and pets.

Melissa is often accompanied by grief therapy and companion animal Kermit the Dog, a rescue she began training at three months of age. Together they serve the families of Central Texas in a unique and special way.

Melissa N. Unfred was voted Best Funeral Service Provider by the readers of Austin's Senior Resource guide for both 2015 and 2016. She was one of 40 selected to attend NFDAs' "Meet the Mentors" program in 2016, and later that year served as one of four judges for the 2016 Innovation Award panel. She appeared in the acclaimed National Geographic Explorer Channel's Faces of Death special, assisting in natural shrouded burial, and was recognized on Funeral Nation TV for her volunteer work.

Melissa is a current member of the Texas Funeral Directors Association (TFDA) and will be serving as (South Central) SCTFDA Secretary for the 2017-2018 term.

Ellen Macdonald owns and manages Eloise Woods Community Natural Burial Park, established in 2011. She is a volunteer with Hospice Austin, the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Texas, Meals on Wheels, and the Austin Humane Society. Dr. Macdonald earned a PhD in Neuroscience from the University of California at San Diego and did post-doctoral research at Stanford University.

Sarah Wambold is an Austin-based writer and funeral director with ten years of experience in the field of deathcare. She most recently worked at Eloise Woods Community Natural burial park in Cedar Creek, TX. Sarah has given a number of public presentations on eco-friendly ways of caring for the dead including at the University of Texas and the Death Salon of Houston. Her article on green burial, "At Rest in The Fields," was one of *Texas Observer's* top read articles of 2015 and she was recently named by Connecting Directors Magazine as one of the "Most Innovative Funeral Directors."

Ethics

Tuesday morning will kick off with **Mark Owen** and Ethics. Mark is the regional sales vice president with Funeral Directors Life. In addition to 34 years of professional sales experience, he has 17 years of leadership in the insurance industry focused on prearranged funeral planning funding with life insurance and annuities. He currently provides leadership to a team of 16 Regional Managers covering 11 states and is responsible for developing and implementing strategies and providing leadership for over 600 funeral home clients. He has served as a board member of the West Texas Funeral Directors Association (WTFDA). ❖



Jay Carnes on Sunday Panel

We listed Jay Carnes as a panelist in the April issue but didn't include his smiling face. Come see Jay as part of the Sunday panel discussion on Funeral History & Best Practices. Sorry for leaving out your photo!

Keynote Speaker:

Scott Goyette



With over twenty years of motivational speaking, life coaching, training, sales and marketing experience, Scott has built a simple step-by-step program to help you live more mindfully and be present in all that you do. The tools and tips he provides in all of his programs can help you do any of the following: become more focused, stay in balance, become a better sales person, become a healthier individual, or simply live a more stress free existence.

Join TFDA in welcoming Scott at the General Session
2:00—4:00 pm on Tuesday, June 6, 2017.

In addition to the Keynote Speaker, the General Session is the annual meeting where elections are held and TFDA business is conducted.



Continuing Education Schedule

Sunday, June 4

10:00 a.m. 2 hours

Panel Discussion – Funeral Industry History & Best Practices

Jim Kurtz, Moderator

Chris Layton/Ken Whittaker/Jimmy Lucas/Jay Carnes

1:30 p.m. 2 hours

Vital Statistics – Soo Teal

3:30 p.m. 2 hours

Social Media – Ryan Thogmartin

Monday, June 5

8:00 a.m. 2 hours

Pre-Need Updates – Jesse Saucillo / Eric Dahlquist

10:00 a.m. 2 hours

Rules and Regulations Update – Kyle Smith

1:30 p.m. 1 hour

Panel - Green Burial – Melissa Unfred/

Ellen Macdonald/Sarah Wambold

Tuesday, June 6

8:00 a.m. 2 hours

Ethics – Mark Owen

2:00 p.m. 1 hour

Keynote Speaker/General Session

Wednesday, June 7

10:00 a.m. 1 hour

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Saturday, June 3

Past Presidents & Former First Spouses Dinner (invitation only)

Sunday, June 4

Registration Open CEU - 6 hours
 Mike Honeycutt Memorial Bike Ride
 Committee Meetings
 Disaster Team Meeting
 TFDA Board Meeting
 Disaster Fund Raiser, Hill's Café

Monday, June 5

Registration Open CEU - 5 hours
 John Cathey Memorial Golf Tournament
 Falconhead Golf Club
 Wine Pairing
 Welcome Party, Punch Bowl Social

Tuesday, June 6

Registration Open CEU - 3 hours
 Services, Inc. Meeting
 Service of Remembrance

50-year Licensee Reception
 50-year Award Presentation
 Sales Club Lunch & Business Meeting
 General Session/Keynote Speaker
 Quarter Century Club Meeting
 PAC Reception
 Emerging Leaders Event

Wednesday, June 7

Registration Open CEU - 1 hour
 Ribbon Cutting
 Exhibits Open (9:00 - 4:00)
 Breakfast and Lunch in Exhibit Hall
 Kids Zone
 Idea Center Stage
 TFDA Board Meeting
 President's Reception
 Gala
 Awards Presentation
 Raffle Drawing
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C & J Financial, LLC
C & M Precast / Doric Texas
Capital Mortuary Services
Cathedral Park Urns
Classic Coach & Limousines
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service
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Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
Directors Choice Assignment Service
Dodge Company
Doric Texas
Eagle's Wings Air (EWA)
Federated Insurance
First Bank SBA
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Mortuary Lift Company, Inc.
National Funeral Directors Association
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Skyways Media
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Texas Funeral Service Commission
Texas Service Life Insurance Company
TFDA Disaster Response
TFDA Marketplace
Trust 100
Tukios Inc.
United Benefits, Inc.
Unity Financial Life
US Cremation Equipment
Vantage Products Corp.
Vaughan Specialty Automobiles
Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc.
Wise Products, Inc.

Wine Pairing



Monday, June 5, 2017

3:00–5:00 pm

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Additional Prizes:

1—\$500 and 1—\$250 Gift Card

To purchase a ticket, call your regional officers or the TFDA Office.

You may also purchase on your Pre-registration form.

Ticket Price \$50

Chance of winning a prize 1:60

No Cash Value

TFDA Disaster Team Fundraiser

Sunday, June 4, 2017
Hill's Café, 4700 S. Congress Ave.
6:30—10:30
Tickets \$40 Adults
\$10 Children 12 & Under



After a day of Continuing Education, put on your boots or dancing shoes and come for a fun night of music and good ol' Texas grub at Hill's Cafe. Hill's Cafe is a South Austin Tradition established in 1947. All proceeds from this fun event will go to the TFDA Disaster Team to help them respond to communities when mass casualties occur. Come out and support the Team!

Clifton Jansky, Christian Country Musician will be our entertainment. Sponsored by Grace Funeral Home

SPONSORS NEEDED! If you are interested contact Ann Singer (512) 442-2304 or ann@tfda.com.



Transportation provided



**TFDA Emerging Leaders
Event
7:00—10:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 6
Speakeasy, 412 Congress Ave.
Transportation Provided**

This is a free event, however, you must register in order to attend and get wrist band.



Emerging Leaders Planning Session

6:30 a.m., Tuesday, June 6

Dominican Joe

515 S. Congress Ave.



Both events are open to people who are new to the industry and those on the path to a leadership position in their career.

We need additional sponsors for the Emerging Leaders Events

Contact: Zach Carnley, zcarnley@hotmail.com

Or Ann Singer, ann@tfda.com

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Choosing the Best Materials for Gravestones

By International Southern Cemetery Gravestone Association



(Editor's note: This is the second article in a series, designed to help funeral directors and cemetery workers provide guidance to families they serve.)

Anyone wanting to mark the final resting place of a loved one will want to select a material that is durable and can survive the elements. This will ensure not only its longevity, but also its beauty.

To achieve these goals, granite and bronze are considered the best materials and stainless steel headstones, too, are becoming quite popular.

Granite gravestones: Granite is affordable, hard and a stone resistant to extreme environmental conditions. It is available in a variety of colors such as black, white, grey, blue, green, magenta, mahogany, etc. In addition, it is easily carved to include intricate artwork and beautiful epitaphs.

Some granite headstone designs are engraved by hand with the help of rubber stencils with adhesive backing. To achieve intricate designs on granite, some companies may use computer stencil-cutting machines.

The final carving process is usually done by sandblasting. Another advantage of a granite gravestone is that it is heavy, not easi-

ly stolen and not as valuable as metals. Thus, granite is definitely one of the best materials used for gravestones.

Bronze markers: Bronze markers have an elegant and sophisticated appeal. Bronze is easily cast with amazing designs, symbols, and lettering.

Bronze headstones with granite base are also available with bronze vases.

Like granite, bronze also is durable, resilient and easy to maintain. Yet they tend to be more expensive when compared to granite.

Bronze is an alloy of tin and copper. It includes lead and zinc as well. As some Texas cemetery owners will attest, bronze vases often disappear from bronze and granite markers.

Stainless steel headstones: Stylish and modern, stainless steel gravestones can last for a long time. They can feature mirror finishing, intricate designs and personalized inscriptions. Stainless steel headstones can be either mass produced or handcrafted.

Apart from the materials mentioned above, gravestones can be crafted from marble, limestone, fieldstone, sandstone, soapstone, wood, cement, cast iron, slate, and white bronze. While these materials are not as long-lasting as granite and bronze, they still last a long

time when properly maintained.

Marble: Marble is a strong material as well as aesthetic and appealing. However, the inscriptions on marble tombstones are likely to fade due to environment, especially acid rains. Limestone, too, cannot withstand extreme weather conditions.

Fieldstone: Grave markers prepared from fieldstone were quite common in early rural areas around the country and many continue to opt for durable and attractive fieldstone markers even today. It is worth noting – fieldstone is regarded as America's oldest building stone.

Sandstone: Another durable material appropriate for making gravestones is sandstone because it is easily carved. This material was most often used around 1650 to 1890.

Slate: Often used for crafting tombstones, slate is a tough and dense material with a pleasing texture but it tends to be slightly porous and susceptible to delamination (splitting apart by layers).

Wood, cast iron and other materials also have been used for marking graves. Wood always has been popular, particularly in areas where trees are plentiful and lumber businesses thrive. These materials were particularly popular in the Victorian era, but their popularity declined gradually as iron is prone to rust and decay, and wood breaks down easily.

Cement grave markers are not unusual and can be found in many cemeteries. These are especially popular for do-it-yourselfers.

SELECTING DESIGNS FOR GRAVESTONES

For anyone purchasing a gravestone, the monument dealer will probably offer a catalog featuring various styles and designs of gravestones to assist in choosing a suitable design – one which reflects the departed loved one's personality...or, the buyer may have a design they have made to memorialize the decedent.

Intricate design details and artwork often

Materials for Grave Markers



Stainless Steel



Slate



Fieldstone



Sandstone



Custom Bronze

enhance the appearance of the marker, but there are no wrong choices by the individual or family making the purchase.

More often than not, clients select rectangular, round, or decorative corners, cluster of flowers with green foliage on the corner, or flowers like roses, lilies, tulips, carnations, daisies, etc. at the top or center.

Design elements representing specific hobbies or interests of the deceased, too, can be included. For instance, a guitar design on the headstone for a loved one who loved playing music would be appropriate.

Other common designs and symbols used on gravestones are praying hands, dogwood, oak wood, weeping angels, Star of David, open book, Bible, cross, doves, religious emblems, and so on. These symbols are meaningful and traditional.

When seeking a more modern design, there are other options to choose from. For example, for a companion headstone – for a couple or partners – could incorporate entwined wedding rings to symbolize unending love and devotion.

Similarly, infant gravestones can be engraved with cherubs, teddy bears, toy trains, alphabet blocks, baby animals, and so on.

To personalize a headstone or tombstone, it is permissible – and often desirable – to get your favorite photo of your loved one to be laser-etched on the stone. Or, consider opting for a ceramic photograph as well.

You also may want to think about having the gravestone monument made in the shape of a heart, book, scroll, tear drop, teddy bear, angelic figure, etc., instead of the regular rectangular shape. Plus, you can add a variety of artwork motifs.

In addition, you may want to choose a favorite color – like black, blue, green, red, grey, and so on. Or, you may want to select a meaningful inscription or epitaph to be engraved on the stone to memorialize and honor the deceased, and then select a beautiful font style for the text.

While selecting the text and artwork,

though, make sure your design looks aesthetically pleasing and not cluttered.

Thus, keep the size and dimensions of the monument in mind while choosing the design. For example, it is better not to use oversized motifs on small markers.

If you are bothered whether the shape

and design you select can be used on the gravestone or not, then rest assured that most gravestone materials can be engraved easily. Sand-blasting is the most popular technique used for this purpose.

You can also select from a wide variety of designs when purchasing a gravestone on-



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line. Some sites even allow you to design the headstone yourself through applications that allow you to relay the textual and graphical information you want to include on the stone.

CHOOSING GRANITE FOR GRAVE MARKERS

When trying to visualize a marker or a monument to a loved one who has died, the family or individual wants to make sure the monument is not only attractive but also sturdy and able to weather the elements for many years.

As directors, our first priority is to understand these markers not only will mark a final resting place, but they also are the family's last gift, last remembrance of their loved one and something of importance to be cherished by future generations.

Monuments or markers often serve to link one generation with the next and the next, and it is often the grave marker from many decades ago that informs us of older generations of our families that have been long forgotten.

Granite stands as one of the most popular materials for creating headstones, grave

markers, or any type of memorial monument, in the funeral profession today. Why? Because granite is an excellent choice because it is long lasting and allows for most types of art and engraving.

When learning about the various types of granites, consumers are often overwhelmed by the terms used to describe various granites -- terms like "modulus of rupture," "compressive strength" and "bulk density."

Note: While this information is nice to know and nice to share, it is relatively useless to those creating a lasting memorial to a loved one. Headstone shoppers only need to know if the various types of stone classified as granite will weather the elements for centuries, to come.

So the family's only question to decide is the color -- and granite, fortunately, comes in a variety of colors -- pink, green, speckled, glistening black and white. Choices depend on personal taste and costs.

Some cemeteries have some regulations in place regarding the color of the granite that is permissible on their grounds, most consumers can make their choices of color.

Pricing of the various colors is usually based on the availability of a particular color

is. If a color is commonly found in the world, its price is going to be low. Rare colors will cost more.

Demand sometimes plays a role in the cost of a particular granite color will cost, but this is rare. For example, Moonlight Gray Granites are extremely popular, demand for this color does not affect the price because this stone is widely available.

The price of granite, generally, is usually based on its availability. The highest priced granite types are usually found in just one part of the world and, often, come from one specific quarry.

For families wanting all-granite memorials, the color choice may be a little more significant. For those seeking a large monument or a simple grave marker, the granite is usually the focal point. Therefore the next step is contacting the cemetery where the marker is to be placed to make sure there is not color restriction for the granite or to ask whether monuments are allowed. If there are no such restrictions, the color choice is entirely up to the family.

When considering purchasing a bronze on granite marker it's best to find a granite that will blend well with your plaque. "Blend," for some, means the plaque will stand out from the granite but is color coordinated. For others, blend could mean that the plaque, more or less, matches the color of the granite.

Popular color combinations are: Dark Bronze on Moonlight Gray Granite, Black Bronze on Sierra White Granite, or Red Rose Bronze on Mountain Red Granite.

Choice really comes down to the customer's taste and preference. What some call a perfect combination, others may not care for at all.

When choosing a granite color for a marker, encourage the family to decide on a plaque color and then ask if they want it to either "stand out" or "match" the granite. Then choose the granite.

Note: It is always good to solicit opinions from other family members before making a final decision on the granite color...and for granite-only memorials, it's a good idea to think about the decedent's personality. Were they cool and collected? Then a sierra white may be appropriate. Or were they a little more rambunctious or care free, in which case a warm color such as rustic mahogany may be a good selection.

Whatever the color, a granite memorial will truly stand the test of time and will bind this loved one to generations to come. ★

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Look and Look Again

By Heather Edwards Hauboldt



Editor's Note: Heather made these remarks at the graduation ceremony at the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. We thought Texas directors would enjoy hearing her reflect on the profession.

Thank you Mr. Firestone and Mr. Shoemaker for this opportunity; it is truly an honor and privilege. Class of 2017, I was here where you guys are 24 years ago as a graduate of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, so I know the relief and pride you all feel today. Congratulations!

When Mr. Shoemaker invited me to address you all today, I immediately began thinking about what I would say to you on this special day and the theme I came up with was "Look and Look Again."

I will need to give you a little background on me before I get into this for it to make sense. I grew up in this profession, literally, and I am a second-generation funeral director and embalmer, with a dad, brother and sister who are also alumni of DIFS. We lived in small town America, upstairs in the funeral home that my dad owned, from the time I was born until I was seven years old. Now, I will be honest with you, I did not have a passion for funeral service as a child. I thought it was a very confining and intrusive business that controlled our lives. What I would later learn was I had naturally been groomed to be in funeral service and I did have a passion for it, which is probably the most essential element in being a great funeral director and embalmer.

I have seen many changes in funeral ser-

vice over my lifetime and now, more than ever, providing value to our client families while planning a celebration of and for their loved one is imperative. We are a rare profession where our client families expect, and will accept nothing less than, perfection. They deserve this perfection because they are entrusting us with something very precious, their loved one.

If you truly have a passion for funeral service and you want to set yourselves apart, I encourage you to embrace the idea of "Look, and Look Again."

Regardless of whether you are going to work in the independent or corporate funeral service environment, I challenge you to take ownership of and in your position. As you perform this service, always ask yourself "would I be okay with what I am doing if it was my own loved one I was caring for?"

When you get ready in the morning for work, look in the mirror. Would you allow you to take your loved one into your care based upon your first impression? Look and Look Again.

When you show up to take someone's loved one in your care, make sure you show the upmost respect for the deceased and their family at every step. Once you have completed the transfer, look around to see what you could do to provide comfort to the family, make the bed, throw trash away, remove soiled items, wash them and return them to the family, and before you leave: Look and Look Again.

When you arrive at work, make sure the establishment is making its best impression

with the families coming there to make arrangements for their loved one. Scan the parking lot, sidewalks and bushes for trash, look for things that are in need of repair and report it to management. Would you be comfortable entrusting this facility with the care of their loved one? Look and Look Again.

As you prepare to help the family plan all the aspects of this celebration of their loved one's life, make sure you have created a comfortable environment with everything needed for the arrangement conference and the room is neat and tidy. Look and Look Again.

While making these arrangements with the family, pay attention to social cues from all of the family members, respectfully refer to their loved one as your, Mother, Father, Brother, Sister or by name and make sure all of their wishes are carried out to perfection. Look and Look Again.

If you are responsible for preparing their loved one for viewing, make every effort to prepare the best memory picture possible, regardless of the circumstances, for the family. This is one of the most meaningful things you can do. Look and Look Again.

When preparing the room for this viewing, make sure not only that their loved one is positioned comfortably and properly with everything in the room arranged in a pleasing manner, but that the room itself is clean with all the items needed and wanted by the family. Look and Look Again.

As you prepare for the celebration of life of their loved one, check to make sure you have covered all of the items requested by the family and that everything is in place to provide the absolute perfect experience that goes above their expectations. Look and Look Again.

I know this probably sounds daunting, but in reality, if you have a true passion for funeral service, this will not seem like work at all, rather it will seem like a privilege that comes with an immense amount of gratitude, making you a valued member of any team and your community.

Look and Look Again.

I wish all of you a very prosperous future at one of the most important professions in life. Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of your special day. ★

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Fountains of Experience

By Matthew D. Morian



What do you say when someone calls your funeral home to ask that most probing of questions, "How much?"

Do you quickly blurt out the answer to their inquiry or do you steel yourself with a deep breath and prepare for a long informative conversation about what they will potentially experience over the next several days?

If you answered the latter, then you will undoubtedly increase your firm's chances of serving that family regardless of "how much."

As funeral directors, we often are challenged as to what our value might be to modern society. Are we simply disposers of the dead or are we caring and skilled profession-

als, here to educate those we serve? When a family calls on your funeral home and you allow the conversation to be solely about price, you are circumventing and possibly reducing your value as a funeral professional.

Should you answer their question? Absolutely! However, as the calm voice of expertise, you should realize most callers truly don't know what else to ask. Acknowledge their concern while explaining you are here to help them with information they may need to know.

You will want to discern whether someone has passed away or if they are planning for the future. If someone has passed, in addition

to gathering prices, the caller may also need to know who else to contact before a funeral home can receive their loved one. They may also be unaware of what items a family normally gathers for an arrangement conference.

Offering to e-mail them a universal list that can be used at any funeral home shows your firm's level of care. Describe how your funeral home assists in the filing and ordering of death certificates and for what purposes they are commonly used. Explaining our undertaking to an inquisitive family is an important instrument in building their trust.

Decades of hiding death behind closed doors has left a shadowy veil over our industry, which means a large portion of people we speak to every day have little understanding of what we do or why we do it. We should consider ourselves fountains of experience and allow our knowledge to cascade to the those we serve.

A helpful tool I learned from Lacy Robinson, the director of member development for the National Funeral Directors Association, is "If a caller asks you the price of cremation, take a minute to build rapport and transition by asking if anyone has taken the time to explain what their cremation options are?"

You might be surprised to learn how many people don't realize that cremation is more than just a disposition. If you assume that every cremation price shopper is speaking of a direct cremation without asking them qualifying questions, you may be selling them short of their service expectations. If they are a direct cremation family but you still spend quality time on the phone with them, you'll have earned their favor no matter what your price is compared to your colleagues down the street.

The more time you spend answering questions and offering your professional opinion, the more comfortable the caller will be with you and your firm. If you are lucky, the family will call your competitors first and have their one and only question answered! ★

Matthew D. Morian is a TFDA Emerging Leader and manager/funeral director at Lucas Funeral Home in Grapevine.



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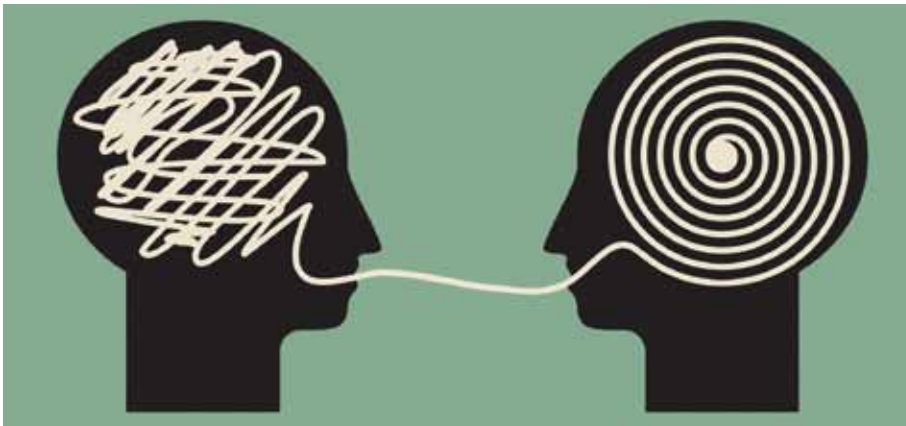
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The Six Languages We All Speak



Ever heard of perceptual languages? If not, you've at least experienced what happens with perceptual languages if you've ever had a miscommunication or failed to comprehend what someone else was trying to say.

While at Purdue University in the early 1970s, Dr. Taibi Kahler made a series of remarkable, award-winning discoveries: a process involved in verbal communication. This process was characterized by specific speech patterns that were sequential, measurable and predictable.

By listening for these patterns, he found that interactions could be identified, objectively, literally second-by-second, as being either productive (communication) or non-productive (miscommunication).

Kahler also found by listening to how someone was speaking, he could predict how they would behave under different types and levels of stress. Later research showed each of the speech and behavior patterns also was uniquely matched with a way of perceiving the world, a perceptual language, a communication style, a set of positive character traits, one or more motivational needs, and other characteristics.

According to his research, Kahler concluded each set of characteristics and behaviors constituted a unique personality type and all of these can be found in each of us with one which is predominant.

Dr. Kahler then developed the Personality Pattern Inventory (PPI), an online assessment determining the order and strength of each personality type within an individual's personality structure. From these beginnings, he built the Process Communication Model (PCM). This model equipped people to transform and improve their com-

munication and relationships.

So what are perceptual languages? Simply put, they are the different processes of how people communicate. Clinical psychologist and co-founder of the communication-coaching firm Next Element, Nate Regier explained perceptual languages like this: the way people communicate often carries more information than the words themselves.

"Perceptual languages are filters through which we interpret the world," he continued. "Six perceptual languages exist, and while we're capable of speaking all of them, a preferred order becomes set by age 7. We have a favorite, and it's called our base."

People who learn to listen for other people's perceptual languages connect better with others and improve their ability to recall information, Regier said. The way to figure out which language someone is speaking is to listen for common words and phrases. You can also download the free smartphone app PocketPCM for Apple or Android, which gives examples of perceptual languages and helps diagnose personalities.

Here are the languages, and clues for identifying each one of the perceptual languages:

1. Thoughts Language. Someone who speaks this language talks about facts, details, characteristics, and features. They ask questions about who, what, where and why, and they want things to make sense. About 25 percent of North America's population speaks this language.

How to identify Thoughts Language: The indicator is when the person starts sentences with "I think" or "research suggests." This person asks questions about data and time. They want to communicate in a way

that is orderly and systematic.

2. Opinions Language. This person is like a judge and the world is their courtroom. "Opinions are very different than thoughts because the language is based on values and judgment," said Regier. This is the base perceptual language for 10 percent of North Americans use.

How to spot speakers using the opinions language: They start sentences with "In my opinion" or "In my view." These speakers use judgment words like should, could, would, ought, and must.

3. Feelings Language. These people – 30 percent of North Americans – use their hearts to guide them. They focus on feelings and emotions.

To identify Feelings Language speakers: These people start sentences with "I feel" or "I care."

4. Reactive Language. The person who uses the reactive language doesn't think before they speak. They have no filter. "They just say stuff," said Regier. This language is the base language for about 20 percent of North Americans.

How to spot it: Using words like "awesome" or sentences that start with, "I love" or "I hate" is a dead give-away for people who use Reactive Language.

5. Action Language. These people want to know, 'What are we doing?' and 'Where are we going?' Regier explained. About five percent of the North American population use this language as their base.

To track down Action Language, Listen for phrases like, "Let's go for it" and "Cut to the chase." Life is about taking charge and getting it done.

6. Reflections Language. Ten percent of the population of North America use this language as their base. People using this perceptual language don't talk a lot, but when they do their language is passive and nebulous, Regier said.

You can identify Reflections Language: These people say things like, "Let me reflect on it," or "In my mind's eye." Their mental process is uncontrolled and completely open.

How to Communicate Across "Languages"

Now that you know how to identify someone's preferred perceptual language, use it to improve understanding. "If you have a thinker boss who asks a feeling employee what they think, the employee might respond with, 'It feels good to me,' but they're not answering

the question and there can be miscommunications or assumptions," said Regier.

When communicating an important message, translate the information into the listener's perceptual language. "Determine what content you want to convey, then adjust the process so you can deliver it within the listener's base language and your message can be understood," he said. "The languages have nothing to do with the content (what's being communicated), but the words will sound different depending on language."

For example, a thinker boss can improve team communication by tailoring the message to the listener. If she's talking to an employee who uses action language, she can change "What do you think?" to "Bring me up to speed on what's happened and what we should do next."

Focusing on perceptual languages can help you improve your memory. "It's based on what cognitive psychologists call the Baker/baker paradox," Regier said. "The more different associations your brain can make with what's being said, the more easily it can be recalled later on."

Recognizing someone's perceptual language also allows you to anticipate other things about them, such as their character

strengths, motivations, and values, says Regier. "Likewise, if we tune into the perceptual language, we can pick up on more of what the person intends and means when they are speaking, and therefore remember more of what's most relevant to them," he says.

Paying attention to and speaking the perceptual language that is the listener's base often makes the speaker appear to be a great communicator. Former President Bill Clinton is considered to be a master of using perceptual languages. Clinton studied with Taibi Kahler, who discovered the 6 Percep-

tual Languages, said Regier. "He used it all the time and really tuned into other people," he says. "Clinton and Trump have similar leadership styles, but Trump doesn't care how he affects or connects and Clinton really did."

Stephanie Vozza writes about business, productivity and employment for magazines, websites, and companies. She is the author of The Five-Minute Mom's Club: 105 Tips to Make a Mom's Life Easier and the founder of The-OrganizedParent.com, an ecommerce platform she later sold to FranklinCovey Products.



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Do Your Hiring Practices Make You Miss Out on the Best Talents?

Think About Trying These Shortcuts



When it comes time to hire new employees – due to business growth, retirement or because somebody moves to take a better offer or dies – most of us think, “Oh no. What a pain. Who do I know? Maybe I’ll call the schools.”

Some of us, we know who we are, may not want to admit it, but we may live in a hiring comfort zone, also known as a RUT. We’ve always done it this way, even though some new hires just don’t work out and leave. We’ve always done it this way, but that new director is running off business.

Keeping the above in mind, it might be a good idea to try new ideas, to get out of our hiring rut and maybe dare to leave our comfort zone. Believe it or not, there are new hiring strategies out there, and maybe

arranging a round table about hiring strategies that work would be worthwhile at your next regional meeting.

So here are a few ideas you may want to “road test” the next time you’re ready to hire someone to be responsible for your arrangements, funerals and interments or your bookkeeping, your reception and telephone or your transportation:

Get out of your comfort zone! Just because you’ve always done something a certain way doesn’t mean it’s the best way!

Erica Dhawan has written an article about hiring in the Harvard Business Review. She believes “connecting with today’s workforce no longer simply means going to the usual places and doing the usual things,” and thinks the talent pool may be better beyond using

some of the old standbys, like Facebook or LinkedIn. Instead, why not use some of the profession’s platforms, like Connecting Directors, funeralone.com and others, where professionals are having smart, relevant conversations and sharing knowledge.

Dhawan also suggested these: For millennial women funeral directors, Levo or The Muse. To venture out of funeral service, try Quora, a website hosting questions and answers on a wide variety of subjects from programming languages to fashion to Zika.

Tell them why they’d love working for you. Let’s face it. Many applicants come your way because of your reputation or the reputation of your firm...and you, of all people, understand the funeral directors’ “grapevine” of gossip runs white hot most of the time. Remember, a good percentage of a funeral director’s time is spent waiting – for a First Call, a family to come in, for details to be tied up, for death certificates to be signed, and that wait time can be converted to small talk – within or outside your firm. But the best recruiting tool is what directors have heard or what you can tell them about working at your firm. Give illustrations about why someone would want to join your team. During the interview (remember, they’re interviewing you, too), begin with the why people on your team are connected...because funeral directors are emotional, creative, autonomous creatures, who feel first and think second.

Even when you’re not hiring, build your own talent pool. Stop sitting around awaiting the arrival of the world’s greatest candidates. Instead, work at bringing the best directors to your door. Visit the state’s five mortuary schools. Invite mortuary students to regional meetings. Get to know them socially. Then give them an opportunity to show what they can do, such as during apprenticeships or micro-internships for persons of any age, thinking of going to mortuary school. Through programs and social opportunities like these, you can see how an individual will fit into your culture and can learn how they do things.



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Former District Court Judge Joins Sheehy, Ware & Pappas



Grant Dorfman, a former District Court judge in Harris County and an experienced litigator, has joined Sheehy, Ware & Pappas, P.C. as Of Counsel.

Prior to joining Sheehy, Ware & Pappas, P.C., Judge Dorfman served three years as the judge of the 334th District Court in Harris County, Texas. He is also the former judge of the 129th District Court, presiding there from 2002 to 2008.

Between judgeships, Judge Dorfman was Senior Counsel at Nabors Industries for nearly five years, where he supervised worldwide litigation for the company.

Judge Dorfman is looking forward to litigating cases again. "In nearly 10 years on the bench, I gained a deeper insight into issues facing both lawyers and litigants. I look forward to drawing on this insight in my new position with Sheehy, Ware & Pappas."

After earning an A.B. in Honors History

from Brown University, Judge Dorfman received a Master of Studies in History and Political Philosophy from Oxford University and a J.D. from Yale Law School. He clerked for the Hon. Jerry E. Smith of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals after law school. Judge Dorfman, a native Texan, has taught pretrial litigation and trial advocacy as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Houston Law Center.

Judge Dorfman and his wife, Angie, are kept busy raising their five children, between the ages of 10 and 19. When he does find spare time, Judge Dorfman enjoys playing tennis, golf and traveling.

Funeral Directors Life Named One of State's Best Places to Work

Funeral Directors Life was recently named in *Fortune Magazine* and Great Place to Work as one of the Best Workplaces in Texas, ranked as #6 overall in the state.

The Best Workplaces in Texas rankings are based on feedback from more than 1000 employees at Great Place To Work – Certified organizations with locations in Texas, including several national and multi-national companies.

In the survey, employees expressed their appreciation for Funeral Directors Life's unique culture and work environment. About 99 percent of employees said people at the company care about each other and celebrate special events regularly. One-hundred percent of employees agreed the company facilities con-

tribute to a good working environment.

Employees also enjoy several unique perks, including an on-site clinic and on-site fitness center, prayer team, mentorship programs, employee recognition program, volunteer opportunities and personal development programs, such as book studies.

In 2017, the company is offering a sabbatical program, allowing the employee to take a paid, 30-day sabbatical to rest, gain perspective and participate in a service project or mission trip.

Lisa Stange Joins Homesteaders as Chief Investment Officer

Homesteaders Life Company's Executive VP–Chief Financial Officer Steve Pick announced that Lisa Stange has joined the company as Chief Investment Officer. Stange will be taking the place of current Chief Investment Officer Kevin Kubik upon his upcoming retirement.

As Chief Investment Officer, Stange will be responsible for managing Homesteaders' investment portfolio and ensuring the company maintains the financial strength to honor the long-term promises it makes to its customers and policy holders.

Before joining Homesteaders, Stange spent 18 years at Principal Financial Group as Portfolio Manager and Strategist. Most recently, she worked for five years as the Chief Investment Officer at EMC Insurance Companies.

New Memorials Direct Expands Fingerprint Jewelry Offerings



New Memorials Direct has added new ring styles to their fingerprint line. The new styles include the Bold Heart, Elegant Round, Oval "V" Ring, and the Rectangle fingerprint ring. They come in stainless steel, sterling silver, 14k solid yellow and white gold and platinum as well as ash holding or non-ash holding versions. The only exception is the Elegant Round and Oval "V" rings which are not currently offered in stainless steel.

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Selected Independent Funeral Homes Announces New Officers for 2018



Selected Independent Funeral Homes has announced the election of new officers to lead the world's oldest association of independently-owned funeral homes. Selected's Board of Directors will be officially installed on September 13 during the 99th Annual Meeting at the Radisson Blu Aqua in Chicago.

Charles "Chip" Billow, a fifth-generation funeral professional, has been elected to serve as Selected's next president. Billow is President/CEO of Billow Funeral Homes and Crematory, a firm founded in 1875 located in Akron, Oh. He is the representative for Group 2 and his firm has been a member of Selected since 1932. Billow has a long history in funeral service leadership; his great-great-grandfather was one of the founding members of the National Funeral Directors' Association in 1892.

According to Billow, assuming this leadership role in the 100th year is especially significant because it is a time to reflect on the rich history of the association but also look to the future ahead.

Lisa Baue, a third-generation funeral professional, has been elected as Selected's next Secretary-Treasurer. She represents Group 4 and is President/CEO of Baue Funeral Homes, Crematory and Cemetery in St. Charles, Mo., a firm established in 1935.

Her vision for the future is that Selected

will continue to help members become more innovative in their business practices and find ways to fulfill the changing needs of the consumer.

The entire Board of Directors includes President Neil O'Connor, Laguna Hills, Calif., Group 6; Secretary-Treasurer Ann Ciccarelli, Saugus, Mass., Group 1; President-Elect Charles "Chip" Billow, Akron, Oh., Group 2; Secretary-Treasurer-Elect Lisa Baue, St. Charles, Mo., Group 4; Kim Farris-Luke, Abingdon, Va., Group 3; Joe Jackson Jr., Laredo, Texas, Group 5; and Ex Officio Mark T. Higgins, Durham, N.C., Group 4.

Stepanek Joins Regions Bank's Funeral Division

Regions Bank is pleased to announce that

John Michael (Jack) Stepanek has joined its Funeral and Cemetery Trust Division in February. Jack will serve as an Institutional Services Vice President, responsible for leading business development opportunities for the Funeral and Cemetery Trust Division.

Jack has more than 25 years of experience in the Death Care Industry, serving in both senior leadership operations and sales roles. He previously served as Vice President Sales and Director of Operations with Funeral Plans-Canada (FPC).

Jack received his undergraduate degree from Mt. Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and completed his MBA studies at Kellogg School of Business, Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and Carlson School of Business, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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John Marvin Kennedy

TFDA Executive Board & Staff
Heather & Charlie Hauboldt
Gary & Della Shaffer
Douglas Nobles & Jeffrey Nobles
Robby & Betty Bates
Matt Boyd – Funeral Planning Agency

Abell

Betty Jane (Bedingfield) Abell, 87, died Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in Lubbock. She is the mother of Todd Abell with Abell Funeral Home in Abernathy.

She was born August 13, 1929 in Lorenzo, TX to Paul and Layton (Hinson) Bedingfield. She married George Lyman Abell March 12, 1960 in Roswell, NM. She lived in Crosby County, TX most of her life, raising her family there. She moved to Lubbock in April of 2000. She attended Abilene Christian University and Business College in Brownwood, TX. She was employed as a hairdresser and later as the Ralls Nursing Home Administrator from 1973 until retiring in 1988. Under her administration, Ralls Nursing Home became a Superior Rated facility by the State Health Dept. For

a few years she was a member of the Seagraves Art Association Guild.

She was preceded in death by a son, Larry Jones in 1972, husband, Lyman, in 1996, brother, Earl Bedingfield and a sister, Joan Boling.

She is survived by six sons, Rick Abell and wife Sandy of Hemphill, TX, Ronnie Abell and wife Ling of Austin, TX, Mike Abell of Ralls, Mark Jones and wife Beth of Big Lake, TX, Paul Abell of Oskaloosa, KS and Todd Abell and wife Carley of Abernathy, TX, 13 grandchildren, Jennifer, Meegan, Elena, Shani, Zhenni, Amy, Casey, Keith, Kristee, Misty, Keelan, Cory and Teyler, 17 great grandchildren, Brooke, Weston, Tommy, Cassie, Finn, Wren, Rowan, Sierra, Alex, Byron, Shane, Titus, Josh, Braeden, Keelee, Corbin and Kembree and a great

great granddaughter, Dorothy, and a brother, James Paul Bedingfield and wife Nita of Stanton, TX.

The family suggests memorials be sent to High Point Village, 6223 CR 6300, Lubbock, TX 79416.

Graveside services were held April 7, 2016, in the Ralls Cemetery. Services were under the direction of Abell Funeral Home & Flower Shop of Abernathy, TX.

Kennedy

John Marvin Kennedy, 84, was born April 27, 1932 in Atlanta, Cass County, Texas and passed away April 21, 2017 at his residence. He was the son of the late Jessie Lou (Cannon) and Roy Kennedy, Sr.

Kennedy was a 1952 graduate of the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and was a licensed funeral director for 57 and a half years. He was senior funeral director at Oakley-Metcalf Funeral Home for 35 years. He proudly served as a Navy Corpsman from 1952 to 1954.

Survivors include his wife of 16½ years, Jo Kennedy; daughter, Cheryl Hillin and husband, A.J.; daughter, Connie Masters and husband, Gil; son, Dane Sullivan and wife, Kelly; son, Todd Sullivan and wife, Christi; grandchildren, Matt Moseley, Amanda Lasiter, Andrew Hillin, Lori Todd, Tarah Mangum, Ashly Scott, Cole Sullivan, Jack Cutter Sullivan, Michael Sullivan; numerous great-grandchildren; and by his canine children, Charlie and Gloria. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his wife, Maurine Kennedy; daughter, Mona Runnels; 3 brothers and granddaughter, Shelbie Cantrell.

Pallbearers included A. J. Hillin, Gil Masters, Dane Sullivan, Todd Sullivan, Matt Moseley and Cole Sullivan.

Honorary pallbearers were Robert Smiley, John Thompson, Dr. Thomas Snead, Bill Linton, Jim Masters and Bill Swearingen.

Memorials may be made to Affinity Hospice, 4000 S. Medford, Dr., Ste 9 W, Lufkin, TX 75901 or Humane Society of Angelina County, Winnie Berry Humane Society, 1102 N. John Redditt Drive, Lufkin, TX 75904.

Services for Kennedy were held April 24, 2017 in the Gipson Funeral Home Chapel with Bro. Philip Snead officiating.

Entombment followed in Garden of Memories Memorial Park. Services were placed in the trust of Gipson Funeral Home, Oakley-Metcalf Funeral Home, and James P. Hunter, III.

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ASD — Answering Service for Directors was the first answering service devoted solely to serving the needs of funeral directors and has been family-owned and operated since 1972. Many funeral directors began using this service at its inception and continue using it today. ASD maintains the highest degree of professionalism with extensive training, cutting-edge technology and an unmatched level of service. Contact Jason Bathurst at (800) 868-9950 or jason@myASD.com.

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Live Oak Bank provides financing solutions to funeral home and cemetery owners nationwide. Beginning with funeral home lending and later expanding to funeral and cemetery trust services, we are dedicated to helping funeral professionals succeed. Our team works solely with funeral home and cemetery owners allowing us to truly understand the unique needs each client faces. To learn about Live Oak Bank, visit liveoakbank.com/funeral or contact Tim Bridgers the General Manager of Funeral Home Lending at Tim.bridgers@liveoakbank.com or 910-685-7446.

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Federated Insurance Cos. is the endorsed TFDA Services, Inc., property/casualty, liability and workers' compensation insurance provider. Federated is recognized as the national leader in partnering with trade association and buying groups and has been endorsed by 29 state funeral directors associations. The company has more than 100 years' experience providing insurance and risk management services to business owners. They currently have 29 representatives in Texas to serve you. Federated offers very competitive rates.

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Full Circle Care is a unique service will provide your families with the assistance they need to finalize matters such as credit cards, bank accounts, credit bureaus, pensions, social security and much more. They make calls with the family on a three-way conference call. For more information, please call Matt Van Drimmelen, (888) 713-4625, matt@finalassistance.com

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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.

Phone "On Hold" Systems

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

Interested In Serving On A TFDA Committee?

President Elect Lee Castro is in the process of contacting individuals who are interested in serving on a TFDA Committee. Once appointments are made, you will serve from July 2017 - June 2018.

NAME: _____ FIRM: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
Phone: _____ Cell: _____
EMAIL: _____

Yes, I am interested in serving on the following TFDA committee(s):

1st Choice: _____

2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

I will serve where needed. _____

Committee choices:

Awards Committee, Bill Pierce Memorial Golf Tournament Committee, Budget Committee, Bylaws Committee, Convention Committee, Ethics Committee, John Cathey Memorial Golf Tournament Committee, Legislative Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, Media Relations Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, Programs and Education Committee, Resolutions Committee, TFDA PAC Committee

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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 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

June 4-7	TFDA Convention	Austin
July 1	South Central Team Building	Temple
August 7,8,9	TFDA Leadership	The Woodlands
September 14 28	Southeast Texas Meeting South Central Meeting	Houston TBD
October 24 Tu 25 W 29 - Nov. 1	TFDA Services, Inc. Board TFDA Board Meeting NFDA Convention	Austin Austin Boston, MA



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The Idol's Grassless Grave



When Karen M. visited the grave of country-western icon Hank Williams, she knelt for a moment, not in prayer but to pull up a clump of grass. Returning home, she placed the souvenir in a zip-lock bag and put it in her scrapbook.

But what if every fan yanked out a handful of grass as a keepsake?

As it happens, because the gravesite started showing signs of "baldness," the natural grass at his gravesite in Montgomery, Alabama, was replaced with Astroturf because of the overzealous fans plucking out a wad of grass to take home (no kidding - grass no longer will grow there). Today, bright green artificial turf around the graves of Williams and his wife, Audrey, makes them stand out at Oakwood Cemetery where the couple is buried.

The musician - affectionately known as the King of Country Music - was born Hiram King "Hank" Williams; September 17, 1923

- January 1, 1953]. An American singer-songwriter and musician, Williams got his first guitar at age eight.

When the Williams family moved to Georgiana, Hank met Rufus Payne, who gave him guitar lessons in exchange for meals or money. Payne had a major influence on Williams' later musical style, along with Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb.

Williams began entering talent contests in his teens.

During this time, Williams informally changed his name to Hank, believing it to be a better name for country music. He moved to Montgomery and began his music career in 1937, when producers at radio station WSFA hired him to perform and host a 15-minute program. He formed as backup the Drifting Cowboys band, which was managed by his mother, and dropped out of school to devote his time to his career

When several of his band

members were conscripted into military service during World War II, Williams had trouble with their replacements, and WSFA terminated his contract because of his alcohol abuse.

Williams eventually married Audrey Sheppard, who was his manager for nearly a decade. After recording "Never Again" and "Honky Tonkin" with Sterling Records, he signed a contract with MGM Records.

In 1947 he released "Move It on Over", which became a hit, and also joined the Louisiana Hayride radio program.

One year later, he released a cover of "Lovesick Blues", which carried him into the mainstream of music. After an initial rejection, Williams joined the Grand Ole Opry. He was unable to read or notate music to any significant degree. Among the hits he wrote were "Your Cheatin' Heart", "Hey, Good Lookin'", and "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry".

Several years of back pain, alcoholism, and prescription drug abuse severely damaged Williams' health. He divorced Sheppard and was dismissed by the Grand Ole Opry because of his unreliability and alcohol abuse.

Williams died on New Year's Day of 1953 at the age of 29, from heart

failure exacerbated by pills and alcohol.



Despite his short life, Williams had a major influence on 20th-century popular music, especially country music. The songs he wrote and recorded have been

covered by numerous artists and have been hits in various genres. He has been inducted into multiple music halls of fame, such as the Country Music Hall of Fame (1961), the Songwriters Hall of Fame (1970), and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1987).

Williams recorded 35 singles (five released posthumously) that reached the Top 10 of the Billboard Country & Western Best Sellers chart, including 11 that ranked number one (three posthumously).

He was buried in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex in Montgomery, Alabama, and his gravesite contains a marble replica of his signature cowboy hat, along with two white marble monuments that appear to emerge from the bright green artificial grass. His ex-wife Audrey is buried beside him.

While visiting Montgomery, you also can see the Hank Williams Museum on Commerce Street, and the life-size bronze Hank Williams statue (previously placed near his funeral site), it now resides a few blocks from the museum near the river. ★

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

Watch the Wilbert ESP video: wilbert.hmsbox.com/esp

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