


July 2018

Volume 67, Issue 7

Texas Director

The Official Publication of the Texas Funeral Directors Association

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The
*Two Faces
of Suicide in
Funeral Service*

Plus

**Breaking the
Silence of Suicide**

**Registrar
Patsy Moreno a
Godmother to
Hundreds of Mortuary
Students**

**Common Mistakes
Employers Make
with At-Will
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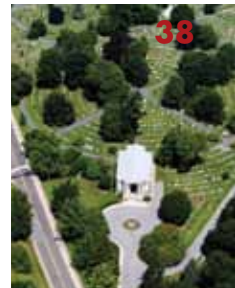
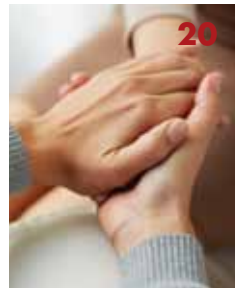
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CONTENTS

July 2018
Volume 67, Issue 7



HIGHLIGHTS

- 14** The Two Faces of Suicide in Funeral Service
- 18** Breaking the Silence of Suicide
- 20** The Compassionate Friends Conference
- 22** Patsy Moreno Profile
Registrar at Commonwealth and Godmother to Hundreds of Mortuary Students.
- 24** Common Mistakes Employers Make with At-Will Employment in Texas
- 26** Is Print Advertising Right for Your Business?
- 28** Why You Should be Listening to Tim Ferriss
- 38** REMEMBERING A LIFE: West Point Cemetery

DEPARTMENTS

- 4** President's Message | **8** TFDA Leadership | **10** Bravos, Bouquets & Blessings
- 12** TFDA News | **30** Vendor News | **32** Community News
- 34** Endorsed Providers | **36** TFDA Services | **37** Calendar of Events
- 37** Advertiser Index



Let's Get to Work

Chuck Robertson

Let's make this association grow into something bigger and better.

For those who do not know me, I know you may be thinking, "This man is 33 years old! I don't know how this is going to go down this year."

Well, I want to assure ya'll that I'm here wanting to give 110% and make this association bigger and better than ever. Yes, I am 485 miles away from our own state capital and our TFDA office. When I served on the Panhandle board, I made every meeting and I do attend everything that is offered because I am passionate about this association. I have done a lot of traveling and still have many miles ahead this year, but I'm ready.



Get the TFDA App!

We have launched the new TFDA app, and I encourage everyone to download the app for FREE! It doesn't cost you a penny. We will start using this tool to communicate and interact with each of you members – and it will be a great thing for our future.

Folks, we have a lot of work ahead of us. The number one thing this year that we all have to tackle together is SUNSET. For those of you who don't know what that means, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission makes

a regular assessment of the continuing need for a state agency or program to exist. If the Commission recommends an agency be elim-

Continued on page 6.

Chuck Robertson's Guide to Leadership Amarillo

Hey folks!

It's Amarillo by Morning coming soon!

Growing up in the area as I have (and knowing some of you haven't had the pleasure of visiting Amarillo – or haven't been in years) here are some things to see and do while you are in the Amarillo area.

A MUST SEE is the **Cadillac Ranch** west of Amarillo. Make sure you bring your spray paint to leave your mark! There isn't a gift shop there or anything, but it is an icon of Amarillo.

Also, historic **Route 66** ran through Amarillo and several historic sites near the hotel we are staying at for Leadership. We are, of course, going to see the play "**Texas**" at **Palo Duro Canyon** and that you won't want to miss!

We also are planning to get together Monday evening at the historic and world famous **Big Texan Steak Ranch**, home of the 72 oz. Steak. The food is okay and just the atmosphere is something to go and see.

Now, here are some suggestions of local food options while in Amarillo:

- Napoli's (Downtown Amarillo, best Italian food in my opinion)
- Acapulco's (Downtown Amarillo, Mexican Food)
- Ember's Steakhouse (Virginia Circle)

- Scott's Oyster Bar (Hole in the wall place -- great food)
- Coyote Bluff (Hole in the wall hamburger joint, cash only)
- Crazy Larry's BBQ
- Red River Steakhouse
- The Plaza (Mexican Food)
- Sharky's Burrito Company
- Dyer's BBQ

We also have most chain restaurants but the ones above are local and highly recommended.

If you're going to be staying in the area past leadership and want to check out the Panhandle, I would suggest to go see the Cross at Groom, Texas – the biggest Cross in the Western Hemisphere.

Check out the Goodnight Historical Center in Goodnight, Texas, where legendary Col. Charles Goodnight homestead is located.

Clarendon, my hometown, is the 3rd oldest in the Panhandle with several historical markers throughout town (20).

Shamrock, Texas, where we have a location, has the U-Drop Inn, which was featured in the movie Cars. There's more than you think here in rural America. These are just my suggestions only.

Thanks again,
Chuck



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Continued from page 4.

inated, then it could mean that the sun will set on that agency.

Texas Funeral Directors Association advocates and educates. We MUST advocate diligently for the Texas Funeral Service Commission. I'm sure some of you think it may be a "good thing" for the commission to go away, but I have news for you. My dad, Patrick, served on the Texas Funeral Service Commission for three years. We must back our state agency or we will be in same shape as Colorado.

I'm sorry I'm about to be blunt, but I worked too dang hard for the blue license that is proudly displayed in my funeral homes to see it put under an agency such as TDLR (Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation). TDLR oversees Electricians, Plumbers, Cosmetologists, manicurists and nail artists, etc.

I'm sorry, but funeral directors are looked at in the community with the same esteem as doctors, lawyers, and bankers. We are PROFESSIONALS. I do not want someone from TDLR to come walking through my funeral home who doesn't have a clue about what they are inspecting. Folks, that's who will be inspecting our funeral homes if we do not back the Commission.

The Texas Funeral Service Commission keeps us all in check and holds us to the highest standard in providing the best service to families who come through our doors. So, we must come together – independents and corporately-owned – and fight together to keep our State Commission intact.

I encourage EACH OF YOU who know your state senators and/or state representatives to reach out to them and tell them that the Texas Funeral Service Commission needs to continue to be a stand-alone agency for the future of funeral service in Texas.

This can either make us or break us. I'm asking members and the legislative committee to work together over the summer and the rest of the year to take our message to local lawmakers.

Next, let's make this association bigger and better than ever before. This association has a bright, bright future! We just have to reach out and grab it.

There are so many tools that we have in place now that we can improve on. Yep, I believe there's always room for improvement.

We also are wanting to do some updating to our website and we will work on that this coming year. Yes, and we have many other plans to help make this association grow.

Now to shift gears. Job One this year – we must grow our membership. I have heard from different colleagues who aren't members of our association. They're asking, "WHY SHOULD I BE A MEMBER OF TFDA?"

That's a million-dollar question.

I tell them there are several benefits. Mainly Advocate and Educate plus much more.

Realistically, TFDA – our association – has much room to grow in membership. We want new members and we want to retain you for the future. Stay tuned for more ideas for our membership to grow.

I want to applaud Zach Carnley and the Emerging Leaders, who are offering the TFDA University, coming up in September. Owners and managers, I encourage you to sign up all of your "fresh" funeral directors to attend this amazing event.

Speaking of Emerging Leaders, they are officially a committee of TFDA, and we are introducing a Special Events Committee that will tailor to the needs of Wreaths Across America as well as First Responders. I'm very excited about this change, as well.

We'll be introducing many new projects

and initiatives to make our esteemed association grow.

I also want to tell you that if there is anything that we can do or if you have ideas you'd like to share, feel free to reach out to me. My tag team partner Gene Allen said this and I agree with him, If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got.

Dear friends, be open minded about some of the changes we are wanting to implement or are implementing. That's the only way we will grow. And Gene, I'm looking forward to more traveling with you this year. It's going to be a blast along with Troy Murray.

Lastly, Leadership is coming up July 30–August 1 in Amarillo at the Embassy Suites Downtown. This is the first time we will be going to Amarillo.

I know some of you haven't liked the idea of going to Amarillo, but let me assure you we will have a great time and I'll be proud to show you the area I grew up in.

If you are interested in serving on any committee please reach out to me or the TFDA office. And speaking of TFDA office, I'm really looking forward to working more closely with Ann, Joyce, Mary, and Debbie. It's going to be a great year.

Finally, to my other compadre, Lee. Dearest Lee, I have enjoyed all the traveling we have done the past several years and I will cherish those memories forever. I'm looking forward to some more trips together this coming up year. Thank you for being a great friend to my wife and myself.

As I begin my service as president of TFDA, I have one last thank-you to my dad and granddad who aren't with us and my mom who is still here and, as always, supportive of my every endeavor.

They always told me to dream big and follow your dreams. This has been a dream of mine for several years and it's coming true – to be President of this association. Thank you, Mom, Dad, and Pops for always pushing me to be better.

To my best friend and my supportive wife, Amanda, thank you for also standing alongside me. You are always doing the same thing – to push me to be better. You have been so supportive of me in this endeavor and every one I choose. So thank you, I love you.

Dear Friends, my wife Amanda and I look forward to meeting some new faces and seeing our close friends and colleagues this coming year. We are looking forward to it!

Let's get to work, people!
Love to all and God Bless.



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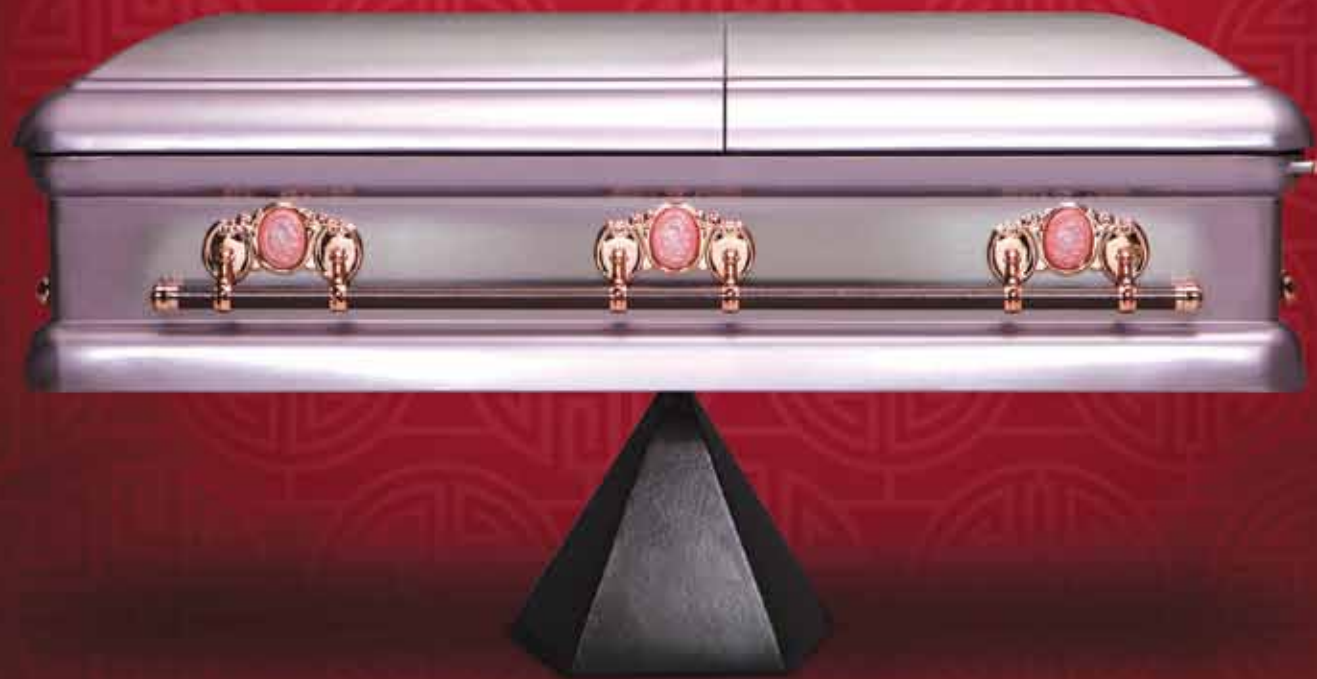
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BRAVOS, BOUQUETS & BLESSINGS

Take a bow, **Zack Carnley** and **Mark Morian** for your new column on Millennial funeral directors, now appearing on *Funeral Home and Cemetery News*. Well-written and informative for directors and owners of all ages, this column shouldn't be missed! Great job, guys!

Belated 84th birthday wishes to **Jerry Edwards** – and many more. This young man is responsible for an amazing family in funeral service! Remember, Jerry, there are never too many candles on that cake!

Bouquets to **Jennifer and Scott Smith**, in the crowd at Texas Tech's graduation ceremony, watching daughter **Alex Schuler** graduate. An accomplishment all can be proud of. Go Raiders!

Blessings to the **Tres Hewell family** on the marriage of son **Hunter Hewell** to **Katy Liller**. May their journey from the altar be filled with beautiful memories and many years of happiness and love.

Chet and Jean Kay Robbins also have been busy as proud parents and grandparents. Grandson **Sloan Selmon**, a Class of 2018

Summa Cum Laude graduate of Cypress Ridge High School, will attend Tarleton State University on a football/academic scholarship and will major in business. In the fall, look for him on the gridiron, playing tight end for Tarleton State, weighing in at 250 pounds at 6'4". Go Texans!



Jean Kay and Chet were also on hand to see daughter Tracey Selmon receive "Teacher of the Year" honors from Cy-Fair Schools, the third largest school district in the state. A teacher for the past 10 years, Tracey teaches language arts at Salyards Middle School. Excellence runs in this family!

Ryan Allen and family haven't stopped beaming since cheering from the stands as **Brody** joined Tyler's Robert E. Lee High School Class of 2018 in graduation ceremonies. As every family knows, graduation day brings a mix of emotions and, at the same time, lasting memories. Congratulations all! Go Raiders!

A heartfelt "THANK YOU" to **David, Carol and Jennifer McCoskey** for their many years of volunteering for our annual Service of Remembrance at the convention. As all of us who have ever attended has experienced, this family creates a beautiful and lifelong memory of loved ones who have passed away during the previous year. The McCoskey's dot all the "I's" and cross all the "t's" so that every service is perfected to the last detail.

Bouquets, too, go to **Jennifer Branton**, CEO of **Woven Remembrance**, someone who works behind the scenes, but someone who provides the amazing throws distributed during the Service of Remembrance. She supplies – in large part – a vehicle for healing that makes the journey through grief a little easier after receiving her beautiful and artful representation of each loved one and the many aspects of their lives.

Jennifer's team at Woven Remembrance designs and creates a memorial that can be hung as a tapestry, used as a throw or a blanket or simply held as a tangible comfort during those early days of grief. Thank you, Jennifer, for all you do for TFDA. Your contribution extends the comfort of the annual Service of Remem-

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brance far beyond the closing prayer and, for those who mourn, through even the darkest hours.

Kudos to **Dr. Alan Wolfelt**, who was this year's convention keynote speaker, thanks to Michael Soper and Legacy Funeral Group's generous sponsorship. Dr. Wolfelt's latest book, *The Mourner's Book of Faith*, the third title in the "Mourner's Book Of..." series, offers a month's worth of one-a-day thoughts on finding and nurturing faith in times of grief. As Dr. Wolfelt explains, the essential need to mourn and question the meaning of life and death is not inconsistent with faith but instead is a reflection of an ongoing and ever-deepening relationship with God.

In *Healing Your Grieving Heart After Stillbirth*, Dr. Wolfelt and psychologist coauthor Dr. Raelynn Maloney explore the common feelings of shock, anger, guilt, and sadness that accompany a stillborn baby, offering suggestions for expressing feelings, remembering the child, and healing as a family.

To **Glenn Bower**, newly-appointed president of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Ser-

vice, Houston. Bower comes to Houston after leading the mortuary science department at Cypress College, the only one of its kind at a community college in Southern California, one of just two such programs in the state. Pri-

or to serving in academia, Bower was a new-hire trainer at various mortuaries. Bower has instructed funeral-service professionals now working in Orange County, Europe, Asia and South America.

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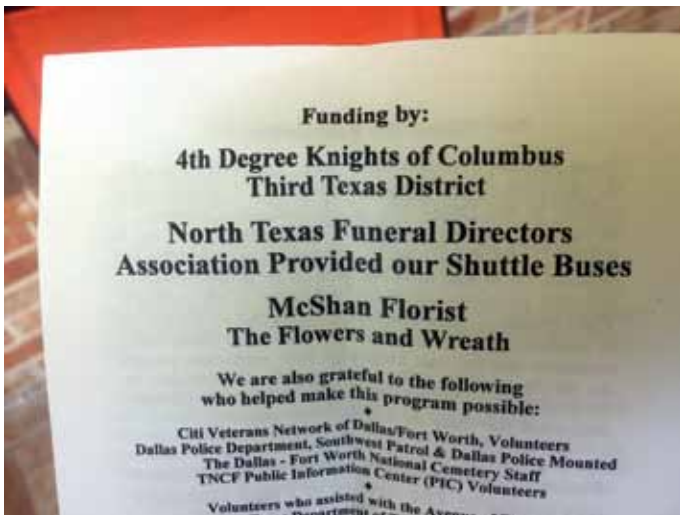



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North Texas Funeral Directors Respond to A Call for Help on Memorial Day



In May, members of TFDA's North Texas Funeral Directors Association participated in Memorial Day ceremonies at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery ceremonies, including sponsoring the fifteen 56-passenger motor coaches needed to transport those wanting to attend the ceremonies. Wheelchair accessible buses were provided by the VA.

"Our coaches were staged at the nearby Potter's House, where all cars would be parked. All the motor coaches were in sleek, classic black livery," said Jim Kurtz, NTFDA president.

Three weeks earlier, Kurtz was contacted by Michael Hurtt of West-Hurtt Funeral Home in DeSoto. "Michael said the cemetery needed some help and asked if we would be

interested in helping," Kurtz shared.

The North Texas President then contacted Ken Watterston at the National Cemetery. Watterston said crowds had grown in the 15 years since the Memorial Day observance had begun, and for the first time in 15 years, they needed help with off-site parking and transportation because they had no funding.

"I saw this as an opportunity for North Texas directors to give back to the community," Kurtz explained. "All of us have buried veterans and active duty military at the national cemetery, and this was a way to continue to serve their families and honor our heroes as we assisted the military."

The NTFDA board decided to move forward with the project, selling bus sponsor-

ships for \$500 to members, including Dignity Memorial firms in North Texas, who bought four sponsorships.

"Being part of this tribute to the protectors of our freedoms was both an honor and a privilege for all of us...and, as was pointed out to me, our sponsorship of the transportation relieved the cemetery from the difficult situation created by the large number of cars and the traffic problems they created."

On the day of the ceremony, volunteers from the North Texas Funeral Directors Association stationed themselves at the Potter's House and assisted in the logistics of loading passengers on the motor coaches as they arrived. "Our volunteers included the coordinator from the bus company, Gary Westerman,



my wife Lindy and my son-in-law, Jamison Ballmer,” Kurtz said.

Each bus had six onboard TV screens, showing all sponsoring firms on a continuous loop, providing them with a lot of exposure. Loving Memory provided this onboard advertising support.

Sponsoring firms included: Allen Family Funerals, Chamberland Funeral Home and Cremations in Garland, Greenwood Funeral Homes in Fort Worth and Arlington, DeSoto Lincoln Funeral Home and Memorial Parks, Resthaven Funeral Homes and Memorial Park in Rockwall and West-Hurt Funeral Home in DeSoto.

As passengers emerged from the buses, many expressed their appreciation for the ease of parking their cars off-site and riding the bus in comfort, to the ceremonies and back to the parking lot. One of those passengers was Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, who praised North Texas directors for providing the buses and doing such a great service for the 5,000-plus families, friends and citizens who attended.

Kurtz, who initially declined a seat on the stage, finally relented and, to his surprise, was called to accept one of two awards presented during the Memorial Day observance at the

cemetery. The second presentation was made to a Naval officer.

“Our organization received a lot of exposure that day, and I was pleased to accept a plaque of appreciation from the cemetery on behalf of our association,” said Kurtz, who also received recognition for NTFDA privately on behalf of the association from the planning leaders and participants before the ceremony.

“All of this recognition was unexpected.”

Kurtz encourages funeral directors in other parts of Texas to continue participating in community events as a continuation of their service to their families and to community organizations.

“We have been asked to help out the national cemetery again next year, and instead of three weeks, NTFDA will have an entire year to plan,” he added.

The *Two Faces* of *Suicide* in FUNERAL SERVICE

By Alice Adams



In the week you read this magazine, 16,000 Americans will take their lives. In 2017, more people died of suicide than in traffic accidents. In the first week of June this year, we witnessed what mental experts call “a suicide contagion”—first fashion designer Kate Spade and then celebrity foodie Anthony Bourdain.

As funeral directors, you are the first go-to for families trying to understand how a loved one could take their lives as they make arrangements for their funeral services and dispositions. You are the first families look to with the “why’s” or “what did we do wrong?”

In the funeral service profession, suicide takes on two faces. The first is that of the victims you bring into your prep room and the people who loved them waiting for your guidance in the arrangement conference.

The second face is the one you see among your friends, family members or co-workers suffering a change of luck, a loss or clinical depression...or the second face of suicide may even be the one you see in the mirror each morning, a family situation causing stress or a family member under stress, mental illness or a social disconnect.

In early June, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report all funeral directors need to know about.

The CDC reported suicide rates rose in all but one state between 1999 and 2016, with increases seen across age, gender, race and ethnicity. In more than half of all deaths in 27 states, the people had no known mental health condition when they ended their lives.

In North Dakota, the rate jumped more than 57 percent. In the most recent period studied (2014 to 2016), the rate was highest in Montana, at 29.2 per 100,000 residents, compared

with the national average of 13.4 per 100,000. Suicide rates are on the rise across the nation but nowhere more so than in rural counties.

Only Nevada recorded a decline — of 1 percent — for the overall period, although its rate remained higher than the national average.

Increasingly, suicide is being viewed not only as a mental health problem but a public health one. Nearly 45,000 suicides occurred in the United States in 2016 — more than twice the number of homicides — making it the 10th-leading cause of death. Among people ages 15 to 34, suicide is the second-leading cause of death.

The most common method used across all groups was firearms.

“Anne Schuchat, the CDC’s principal deputy director, called this data disturbing. “The widespread nature of the increase, in every state but one, really suggests this is a national problem hitting most communities.”

It is hitting many places especially hard. In half of the states, suicide among people age 10 and older increased more than 30 percent.

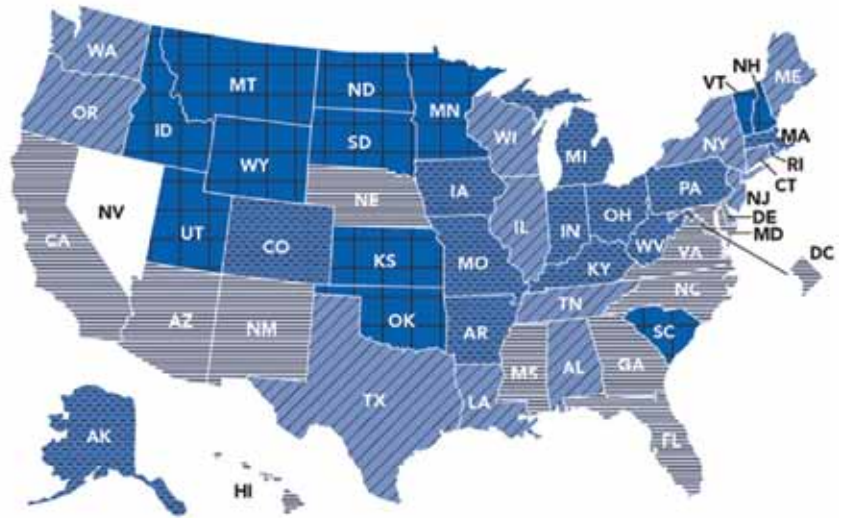
“At what point is it a crisis?” asked Nadine Kaslow, a past president of the American Psychological Association. “Suicide is a public health crisis when you look at the numbers, and they keep going up. It’s up everywhere. And we know that the rates are actually higher than what’s reported. But homicides still get more attention.”

Mental health professionals as well as economists, sociologists and epidemiologists, say one of the contributing factors to this surge in suicide deaths is the Great Recession of 2008. A 2017 study in the journal *Social Science and Medicine* found a rise in the foreclosure rate during that concussive downturn was associated with an overall, though marginal, increase in suicide rates. The increase was higher for white males than any other race or gender group, however.

Those social and health science disciplines that research causes of death have found a strong connection between economic downturns and an increase in suicide deaths. One only has to look back to 1929 and the stock market crash that year to find wealthy Americans throwing themselves from upper story windows once they learned their accumulation of wealth was now worthless.

In addition, the CDC calculates suicides from opioid overdoses almost doubled between 1999 and 2014, and data from a 2014 national survey showed individuals addicted to prescription opioids had a 40 percent to 60 percent higher

Suicide rates rose across the US from 1999 to 2016.



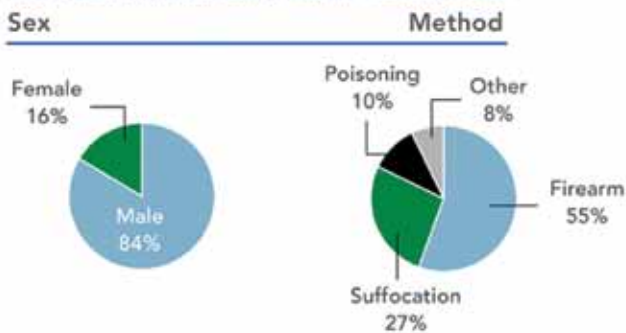
SOURCE: CDC's National Vital Statistics System; CDC Vital Signs, June 2018.

* Per 100,000 population, Age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population. Percent change in annual suicide rate* by state, from 1999-2001 to 2014-2016 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

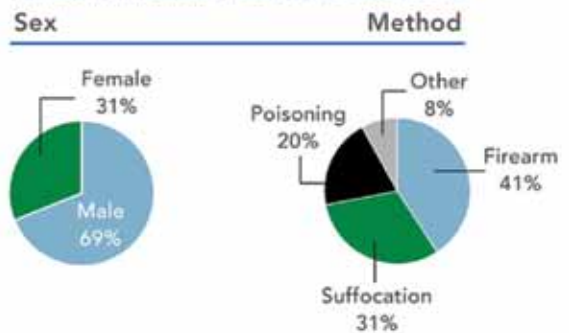
Differences exist among those with and without mental health conditions.

People without known mental health conditions were more likely to be male and to die by firearm.

No known mental health conditions



Known mental health conditions



People without known mental health conditions were more likely to be male and to die by firearm. (CDC)

risk of contemplating suicide. Habitual users of opioids were twice as likely to attempt suicide as people who did not use them.

The American Psychological Association's Kaslow said she is particularly concerned about what has emerged with suicide among women. The report's findings came just two days after 55-year-old fashion designer Kate Spade took her own life in New York — action her husband attributed to the severe depression she had been battling.

"Historically, men had higher death rates than women," Kaslow noted. "That's equalizing not because men are [committing suicide] less but women are doing it more. That is very, very troublesome."

Among the stark numbers in the CDC report was the one signaling a high number of suicides among people with no diagnosed mental health condition.

In the 27 states that use the National Violent Death Reporting System, 54 percent of suicides fell into this category. But Joshua Gordon, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said that statistic must be viewed in context. "When you do a psychological autopsy and go and look carefully at medical records and talk to family members of the victims," he said, "90 percent will have evidence of a mental health condition." That indicates a large portion weren't diagnosed, "which suggests to me that they're not getting the help they need," he said.

Our society's attitudes toward the expected roles of men and women as well as the stigma carried by mental illness also may play a role in these data. Those without a known mental health condition, according to the report, were more likely to be male and belong to a racial or ethnic minority.

"The data supports what we know about that notion," Gordon said. "Men and Hispanics especially are less likely to seek help."

The problems most frequently associated with suicide, according to the study, are:

- strained relationships;
- life stressors, often involving work or finances;
- substance use problems;
- physical health conditions; and,
- recent or impending crises.

The most important takeaway for funeral directors and the rest of society? Suicide is an issue not only for the mentally ill but for anyone struggling with serious lifestyle problems.

"I think this gets back to what do we need to be teaching people — how to manage breakups, job stresses," said Christine Moutier, medical director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. "What are we doing

as a nation to help people to manage these things? Because anybody can experience those stresses. Anybody.”

The rates of suicide for all states and the District of Columbia were calculated using data from the National Vital Statistics System. Information about contributing circumstances for those who died by suicide was obtained via the National Violent Death Reporting System, which is relatively new and in place in only 27 states.

“If you think of [suicide] as other leading causes of death, like AIDS and cancer, with the public health approach, mortality rates decline,” Moutier said. “We know that same approach can work with suicide.”

In every case, experts say one of the best in-

terventions for someone thinking about self-harm takes a page from personal security in the face of terrorist activities and active shooter situation. It’s the SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.

If you see a change, such as social withdrawal, ongoing sadness or moodiness, in a family member or co-worker, ask them if they are depressed. If they are, ask them if they are thinking about suicide. Don’t be afraid to use the word. If they say they’ve thought about suicide, ask if they have a plan – and if they do, get help...take them to the emergency room (there are now medications that can dissolve depression in 30 minutes).

Encourage them to talk. Stay with them and call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

1-800-273-8255. This hotline is available 24/7.

Specialists say one of the best interventions is to talk about it – and in this day of texted or email communications, some people fall through the cracks because texts and emails cannot reflect someone’s mindset or other signs of mental health issues like face-to-face communications or a phone call.

In previous decades, there were many more vendors making calls to funeral homes of all sizes. Funeral directors visited each other – to discuss issues, plan collaborations for large services or simply to “chew the fat.”

Today it is entirely possible for a rural funeral director to go weeks, even months without personal contact with a supplier or another director, other than by text messaging or email.

What NOT TO SAY to the family of a suicide victim

These responses were from suicide survivors surveyed by contributor Dawn Anderson to the Christian Post.

Minimizing the loss: “At least you have other children.” “You’re strong; you can handle it.” “You have so much to be grateful for.” “Well he was bipolar, right? Could have seen that coming.”

These types of comments only add to the pain because they attempt to reduce the loss and make it seem less painful, rather than recognizing the deep suffering the suicide survivor is experiencing.

Giving unsolicited advice: “You need to get over it and move on.” “Be strong.” “You’ll find a new girl.” A grieving person needs to feel sad in the present and not think about the future right now.

Spiritualizing the loss: “God doesn’t give you more than you can handle.” “Everything happens for a reason.” “You know she’s in hell, don’t you?” “He is in a better place.”

No major religion teaches that death by suicide automatically means hell, but this merciless thought persists, inferring God punishes people for being sick.

Some grieving people have turned away from God as their ultimate source of comfort because of such misguided beliefs. Similarly, assuring someone that their loved one is in heaven is not helpful to a survivor in early grief when the mindset is: “BUT I WANT HIM HERE WITH ME!”

Asking painful personal questions: “Why do you think he did this?” “How did she do it?” “Did she leave a note?” “Did you have to clean up?”

Implying blame: “Did you see this coming?” “What is going on in your family? This sounds hereditary.” “Probably [something the survivor did] is what sent him over the edge.”

To suggest that any of the people left behind by a suicide contributed to that death in any way is cruel. Suicide survivors almost universally struggle with thoughts like, “If I had only [fill in the blank], my loved one might still be alive.”

Saying negative things about the person who died: “What a selfish thing to do.” “She chose to leave you.” “It’s too bad his faith wasn’t strong enough.”

Although anger toward the one who died is often part of the grieving process, it is never appropriate to say negative things

about the deceased to the grieving family. Any comment that implies suicide was a choice, rational or not, lacks understanding. A person who dies by suicide sees death as the only alternative to unbearable torment — not as a “choice.”

If there was one change I could make in the way we talk about suicide, it would be to remove the word COMMITTED from the usual vocabulary. The word “committed” invokes language usually reserved for crimes. Most survivors prefer saying “died by suicide,” to honor their loved one’s illness in a more appropriate way.

No one would dream of saying to a diabetic, “If you prayed harder, you wouldn’t have high blood sugar.” But it’s amazing how often people of faith at least suggest to those suffering from mental disorders that a stronger faith will “cure” them.

What TO say: These are words suicide survivors said, on survey, were the most helpful:

“Tell me a good memory you have of my loved one.”

“I can’t imagine how much pain you’re in. We hurt, too, because we loved him.”

“My prayers are with you.”

“What a terrible loss for your family.”

“The best thing someone could have said was NOTHING!”

“He had value; he will be missed; he was a good person.”

“Focus on the way they lived and loved, not the way they died.”

“How can I help you today?” (Following through with errands, grocery shopping, cleaning, going to church with them, etc.)

“I am so sorry for your loss. Words fail.”

“I’m here.”

And even better, many of the survivors surveyed mentioned the best reaction was not words at all, but a hug (use your best judgment here). They talked about being comforted by the caring presence of friends, and the assurance that others were praying for them.

The best advice to anyone who wants to comfort a suicide survivor is: “Show up, let them see you care, and respect the griever’s right to feel bad for a while (guilt, anger, sadness, etc.).



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BREAKING THE *Silence of Suicide*



Editor's note: The following is a letter written by Bradley R. Shotts and Brooke N. Miller with Wayne Boze Funeral Home in Waxahachie to their constituents. However, their words can certainly be directed at funeral directors, who shoulder the community's grief in a very profound way. If they are talking to you, please seek help and counsel. Additionally, consider reaching out to your community in a similar way.

As a funeral director for almost 25 years, I have had a front row seat to a tremendous amount of tragedy, agonizing heartbreak and hurt to families – moms and dads, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and other close family members and friends.

I could tell you story after story of horrible things countless families have had to endure, see and go through.

Today, I want to talk about something that no one wants to talk about. When it happens, very little is usually said...and it is the absolute worse thing for any family to endure.

What I speak of is suicide.

Approximately 45,000 Americans die each year from suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. For every

suicide, 25 have already been attempted. These numbers are staggering.

In addition, 22 veterans commit suicide every day. www.22kill.com The suicide rate among first responders is on the rise as well. Most recently, one of my friends lost her son-in-law. He left behind a wife and two small children. Just as tragically, Designer Kate Spade recently took her own life and then just a few days later, Chef Anthony Bourdain ended his.

It is my hope and prayer someone will read this who has been thinking of taking their life and because they read this article, they pause and choose to seek help instead of doing this heartbreaking act.

To anyone thinking of taking your own life:

I'm the person who sees your family after you commit suicide. I'm the one who sees the

look in their eyes and the look on their faces, that as long as I live, I will never forget.

I'm unable to put into words the hurt they feel from losing you. I'm unable to describe the pain and tremendous loss this causes your family, a loss they will feel forever.

I can tell you this; if you were able to be by my side and see your family's hurt, the look in their eyes, and you were to be able to hear their cries of anguish, I can promise you, you would never ever do this devastating act. You would immediately seek help and do everything possible to prevent this from happening – and you would definitely run to your family and tell them how much you love them.

I know you hurt. I know you need help, but you might not know where or who to turn to. Please believe me when I say, that help is here! Help is out there! I promise you it is. There is nothing wrong with asking for help. There are people who care and love you, please know this.

Other than your relationship with God, family is the most important thing in your life, and if you don't have family, I'm sure you have close friends you might consider as family. You have people in your life who love you and would do anything for you, even if you don't think you do.

Let me share some facts with you. For those who take their own life, they hand their family a life sentence of sorrow, guilt and deep hurt that they can never recover from.

Every birthday, yours and theirs, are forever ruined. Christmas, Thanksgiving and holidays also all ruined. Every single day, they get up and guess what the first thing is they think of when the sun rises? You! When they close their eyes at night and try to sleep, they lie awake, trying to figure out what they did wrong and what they could have done different to prevent you from thinking suicide was your only answer to the problems in your life.

You are loved! God loves you most and is eagerly wanting to help you. (Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is near the broken-hearted; He delivers those who are discouraged.") Your family and friends love you and would do anything to prevent coming to your funeral service, under these circumstances.

If you have read this far, thank you – and I encourage you – please go to someone and talk to them. Share how you feel. There are so many people who would love to help you.

Please don't feel ashamed of needing help. Everyone, including me, have needed help at

some point in our lives. It doesn't make you weak or a coward, it shows your strength to stand up to the depression, pain and bad thoughts you have going through your mind. Fight back! Your family and friends who love you, need you to "Fight Back!"

There are thousands of people who depend on some kind of medication to help them cope with day-to-day problems, and there is nothing wrong with that! It could make all the difference in the world!

And if you cannot find anyone to talk to, you can always come here to the funeral home or call anonymously, and I promise you, I will be happy to talk with you and listen and pray with you. (972-923-2700) I'll do anything within my power to help you. Sometimes talking to a stranger makes it easier to express how you really feel without fear of judgement or having to tell other family members or friends.

Whatever is going on in your life that is causing you to have thoughts of taking your own life, I assure you, this can all be worked out. Please do not make this a permanent solution to a temporary problem. (Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.")

This article is dedicated to the Mother of Tanya, who in 1995 killed herself at her parents' home. After I arrived at 3:00 a.m. to remove her body, her mom cried and cried in my arms, saying, "She was my baby, my only child", over and over.

I dedicate this article to the young wife with her 2 little girls under the age of 10, sitting at the graveside under the tent after everyone had left. They were sitting on the front row of seats, looking at the casket of her husband and her children's father. One of the little girls looked over at her mom and said, "Mommy, what are we going to do now?"

I dedicate this article to the little boy, whose mother committed suicide. When this 8-year-old arrived at the funeral home to view his mother's body, his agonizing screams and cries - "I want my Momma, I want my Momma!" - still haunt me to this day.

Lastly, this article is dedicated to the mom who stopped the cot we were wheeling out of her son's bedroom, who laid her head on the cot cover and cried out, "I just didn't know, I just didn't know you were hurting! I am so sorry!"

The truth is, no one wants to commit suicide. They just want the pain to stop.

The first step for you is to put everything

on hold and find someone to talk to!

If you want the pain to stop, please seek help and please search for that help until you find it. Please do not give your family a life sentence of sorrow and heartbreak.

For immediate assistance, you may call 800-273-TALK - The National Suicide Prevention Hotline, or you can also go to <https://suicidpreventionlifeline.org>

Talk to your family or friends. If it's too hard to "talk" to them, try writing a letter to express the feelings you are having. They would do anything to help you if only they knew. Talk to God. Talk to your Pastor. Talk with whoever you would feel comfortable with, so you don't become another statistic.

Help is out there. Please know you are loved...and you are not alone!



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The *Compassionate Friends* CONFERENCE

A review by Sabrina N.Young



Editor's Note: This article was submitted by Sabrina Young last summer after she attended the Compassionate Friends Conference in late July in Orlando. This year's conference will be held July 27-29 in St. Louis, Missouri. If you are interested, visit www.compassionatefriends.org for information.

The Compassionate Friends was founded by Simon Stephens. The words together in the name resonate with those who have come to The Compassionate Friends, hoping to find a purpose in a life that suddenly seems so empty.

Whether your families have had a child die (at any age, from any cause) or you are trying to help those who have gone through this life-altering experience and/or siblings who encounter their own unique style of grief, The Compassionate Friends exists to provide friendship, understanding, and hope to those going through the natural grieving process.

I was called by a Scott & White Hospital representative, asking if we had a grief group specific for the loss of children. Many parents need a place to go. I was then approached by a community member, asking if I would like to help her start a Compassionate Friend's chapter.

I was honored and if two requests come in, then certainly it's the Lord instructing me to take on another task...so we did and The Blue

Bonnet chapter began in Temple, Texas.

Our board thought it was a great idea to attend The Compassionate Friends annual conference, and boy was it! There were 104 workshops to choose from. Guest speakers from all over the nation came to volunteer their time and experience.

We were escorted to our beautiful rooms then to the registration area. On our badges it had your name, and the name of your loved one that you have lost, along with a butterfly to signal it was our first time to the conference. Photo buttons were made with your loved one's picture to wear.

Sweet picture frames with various backgrounds could be ordered to display for the parents and siblings. We experienced a wonderful acceptance from all the members, who were eager to share and taught me, as a funeral director, so much!

Grief is not something time will heal. And, as I learned, many don't want to heal because

that pain makes them who they are today. They came to this conference as a yearly vacation to honor and celebrate those lives lost.

A Candlelight Ceremonial Dinner was held, where each of us received a candle to raise up for our loved ones. I honored my brother, Jeffery Portugal, who died in an automobile accident over 20 years ago. I have been blessed to not have experienced the loss of a child...and I can honestly admit, in my career I have struggled with identifying with that grief.

Coming to this Conference and hearing the stories grounded my understanding.

In Temple, I now host grief meetings, which are usually led by community pastors, local hospice chaplains and even authors like Sue Hamby. She is a dear friend who attended the conference with me and she has created her own book about how to turn your scars into stars in honor. Sue's son was murdered in Temple.

Many of the people I met at the conference came to share not only their loved one's name, but how they continue to live through the experiences.

I was sitting in a class about infant loss, either in the womb or stillborn. I asked several questions: one was about any regrets with the funeral home.

The responses: "I wish I would have had a service!" "I wish the death certificate would not read, 'Spontaneous Abortion or Fetal Demise.'"

These terms may not seem so bad but meant a lot to the 30+ people in that class. After that meeting, it was my goal – as soon as I came back home – to talk with my local hospital and ask them for other terminology.

I also asked the group at the conference about how helpful the hospitals were. Many replied they were just wonderful, but their experience was a blur at the funeral home.

We as directors need to make it memorable, by utilizing organizations that are there to help, like 'Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep Foundation,' which takes photos of parents and stillborn or babies who are terminal; getting the funeral gowns from Healing Hands or 1000 Stitches, to give them a memorable service.

I sat in another class that was called, "Grief 101." This class was excellent in explaining that Elizabeth Kubler-Ross did not write for those who are already In grief. She wrote about the stages of dying. She wanted to make

sure everyone understood that grief is its own journey. We do not have to walk it alone.

This group shared ideas and one in particular was about how parents who have lost a child continue to share their child's legacy. One story: A child died in a boating accident and where the boat washed up shore is now a memorial bench. Another has the local bakery make a monthly cake in honor of their loved one for everyone to eat. They spend \$30 a month to share for those who come into the store.

Others brings doughnuts to work with a sign that says, "In honor of (child's name). Please eat. The parents described the results: It's amazing at first. I was like many, thinking I wouldn't eat doughnuts if I were working at that office, and certainly wouldn't want to bring the morale down in the workplace by honoring the lost child. However, after spending time with this group, in the future I will eat, share and pass on whatever it is they want me to do. My heart broke each day, ashamed I wasn't providing everything I could to these griever's."

I want to encourage everyone please attend next year's conference in St. Louis, Missouri. I promise...you will not be the same afterwards.

We concluded the conference with a walk. Lawn posters for each person lost lined the

resort. The moment you saw the name of your loved one, you immediately felt a sense of comfort, heartache and promise.

I truly hope you, as a funeral director, will

join me next year as I will be front and center, greeting all these wonderful people. If you would like any more information please reach out to me.

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PATSY MORENO:

Registrar at Commonwealth and Godmother to Hundreds of Mortuary Students

By Alice Adams



Born in Brownsville, Texas, Patricia Ann Tamayo Moreno graduated from Commonwealth College of Sciences in 1980 and began her apprenticeship with Brownsville's Darling Mouser Funeral Home. Her husband Jesse (they married in 1994 and are the parents of four children) also graduated from Commonwealth College of Sciences.

"My first funeral memories occurred when I was six years old," she remembered. "When

my grandfathers died, our parents took us to the church where the services were held, but we had to wait outside. I think it was the custom...for the grandchildren to wait outside until they brought the casket out of the church."

During her junior year in high school, she took a part-time job at the funeral home her godfather owned in Brownsville. "I worked there until I graduated."

Because her parents wanted her to be sure of her decision to pursue a career in funeral service, they suggested Patsy take a job in another field, just to make sure she was making the right choice.

"I found another job in the local tax office and district clerk's office," she said, "but something always brought me back to the funeral profession."

When it became obvious Patsy's heart was in funeral service, she enrolled – with her parents' full support – at Commonwealth College in Houston, joining a class that included seven women (four were licensed) and graduated in 1980. She was licensed in 1982.

Patsy completed her apprenticeship at Heights Funeral Home in Houston and began working at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in 1981.

"I was excited when I was offered a position at Commonwealth Institute because I knew what students go through, especially if they're away from home for the first time, know no one and are, basically, on their own," she said. "I also saw the position as an opportunity to work with students at the school, grooming them for the profession," she pointed out.

In her role as registrar, Patsy is often a prospective student's first contact with the Institute...and during her tenure, she has become the student body's "go-to" resource, not only for academic issues but also for personal and relationship problems, car trouble, roommate conflicts, a shoulder to cry on or a friend to listen.

"One of the best parts of my job, aside from the great people I work with, is seeing our students become successful," she added.

As a member of TFDA the past 25 years, Patsy has been actively working on various committees and currently serves on the programs and education committee and is a member of the disaster team, along with husband Jesse.

"My husband is a member of DMORT

(Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team – a government agency, deployed to assist in mass natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding, and multi-fatality man-made disasters, such as the collapse of the Twin Towers in 2001 and the Oklahoma City bombing) and I have sometimes gone with him on some DMORT deployments,” she explained. “That’s how I became interested in TFDA’s disaster team.”

As a DMORT wife, Patsy is part of a phone tree and support group with other DMORT spouses. “I also learned how to pack a bag for deployment and keep one packed for Jesse because deployments provide little time for preparation and, least of all, packing.”

After joining TFDA’s disaster team and attending training, she has spent the past seven years preparing TFDA and State of Texas emergency trailers and deploying to various disasters around the state, where she and her husband work as a team.

“Our TFDA disaster team always stands ready to respond to disasters anywhere, for whatever happens,” Patsy said. “We are there to help the local funeral directors and assist the community, from providing refrigeration during a power failure to assisting fellow funeral directors wherever they need help the most and serving a community going through grief.”

She said the TFDA team hosts two trainings annually to update the skills of senior members and help hone the skills of newer members. “We are there, too, to share what we’ve learned in our own experiences during deployments with interested new team members.”

During her career as mortuary school registrar, Patsy has witnessed many changes. “We’re seeing more adults who are changing careers, seeking more opportunities to serve others,” she said.

Patsy said she also was excited to see TFDA’s Emerging Leaders University beginning in September. “Our students can start preparing to take on leadership roles in their careers,” she pointed out.

Aside from the opportunities funeral directors have to earn CE credits during the annual convention (Patsy serves on the education/program committee for the convention), she also schedules continuing education speakers in the fields of embalming and funeral direction at the October Commonwealth Institute Alumni Association continuing education convocation.

“The best changes in funeral service in the

past 25 years is seeing men and women working together more professionally and with mutual respect,” she said. “Back when I first started, men didn’t want women involved unless they were wives. As funeral directors, we women had to show we were in it for the long haul. I am grateful women in funeral service are more accepted now – by coworkers and by families.”

She also sees technology in making it possible for directors to take more time to work with families. “Everything now is done by computer,” she said. “At least a majority of it. We used to always rush to complete the obit so we could physically deliver it to the newspaper. Now, we have electronic death certificates. Now we’re showing caskets on video or on the internet.”

She said she believes more effort toward personalization of the service has balanced out the more impersonal technology of funeral service in some ways. “Now funeral homes regularly make videos to be part of the service, and many times, families or friends serve as moderators where various mourners share

memories of the decedent as part of the service,” she said.

“When I began my funeral service career, few directors wanted to embrace cremation,” Patsy continued. “But it’s still here and roughly 40 percent of our families want cremation – and that number keeps creeping up on us. Before we know it, it’ll be 60 percent...which is why we need to create a service around cremation. It is a service. It – like burial – should be an adjunct to visitation, to a service with or without the body present. Maybe, like interment, we need to be more ceremonial about disposition by cremation?” she asked rhetorically.

Patsy is a member of the National Funeral Service Honor Society; president of Commonwealth Institute Alumni Association; member of Texas Funeral Directors Association; and past-president of the Houston Metropolitan Funeral Directors Association in 2002. She was nominated as Funeral Director of the Year by the Southeast Texas Funeral Directors Association in 2011-2012. She has been a member of TFDA the past 25 years.



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Common Mistakes Employers Make with At-Will Employment in Texas

By David Oliver and Laura Fowler



Texas law permits private employers and nonprofit organizations to offer at-will employment – a term used to refer to an employment arrangement in which either party may terminate the relationship at any time without cause. Unfortunately, some employers make mistakes that make it difficult for them to enforce at-will employment relationships.

One of the most common errors businesses make when creating an initial job offer letter or agreement is to state an annual salary. This creates an issue in an at-will arrangement because a business can become liable for the

full annual salary if it chooses to terminate the relationship early. The best way to avoid this is to outline pay by the hourly or daily rate or monthly salary payment.

Some employers also encounter problems

when extending an opportunity with a period of time referred to as a probationary period. Under such agreements, employees are often afforded additional rights at the completion of the outlined period. It is important to minimize wording of probationary periods in a job offer letter and legal assistance is suggested to ensure your offer letter is compliant with the laws. Employee hand books are the proper place for such discussions, not written offer letters.

Another common area of misunderstanding in at-will employment is protected class status. At-will employment agreements do not give an employer the right to discharge an employee on the basis of protected class status such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, etc. A business can face serious consequences if an employee can prove that she or he was fired solely for being classified in one or more of these groups.

The Texas Workforce Commission provides a sample job offer letter for small private employers to utilize as well as other recommended forms and policy language that can prove helpful for small businesses to ensure they are in compliance with Texas law when hiring. For additional help, you can consult an attorney that specializes in employment law.

David Oliver serves as The Fowler Law Firm PC—Georgetown Managing Attorney. He counsels many private employers daily and represents them in trial.

Laura Fowler is the Managing Shareholder of The Fowler Law Firm PC. She is a regular speaker on a variety of business related topics. Email her at lfowler@thefowlerlawfirm.com to receive updates on dates, topics and sponsors of upcoming discussions.

Receipt of this article does not establish or constitute an attorney-client relationship. This information is not intended as a substitute for careful review by legal counsel of your own choosing. As with any legal issue, please consult your attorney with questions.



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Is Print Advertising Right for Your Business?



As the world becomes more digitally oriented, it's easy to assume that print is dead and useless when it comes to marketing. That couldn't be farther from the truth. Even though digital marketing is an extremely successful way to market your business, you should consider a few things if you're planning to cut print from your plan. Marketing is a balancing act and knowing where to invest can either spell out success or failure for your strategy.

Who are you trying to reach?

Knowing your audience is a crucial aspect of deciding where you should invest your marketing budget. Do you cater to an older demographic that reads the newspaper instead of a Facebook feed? If so, choosing print advertising may be a better option for you. Do your research after you've determined your target audience so you can figure out where

your marketing efforts will have the most impact. Hint: according to the PEW Research Center, 48 percent of Americans 65 years and older get their news most often from print newspapers, while 50 percent of those ages 18 to 29 go online.

What are your customers saying?

When was the last time you had a meet-

ing with staff who communicate with your customers? They are your best way to find out what your customers are saying about your marketing efforts. Maybe a few customers mentioned that they saw your ad on the back of the community bus, which is why they decided to visit, or they mentioned the Facebook ad you've been running. Listen to your customers, especially the new ones, to find out where they heard about your business and why they decided to visit.

Where is your audience located?

Is your audience mainly living in an area where the internet connection is less than ideal? This may be something to take into consideration. If your target audience is primarily rural, finding a way to reach them is important. Maybe they regularly visit the small diner where the Coffee News is readily available. Perhaps that's something to experiment with as you try to determine how best to reach your unplugged audience.

When are you advertising?

Putting an ad on a bus in the middle of the summer may not be effective in Texas, when it's too hot to be outside much and the idea of filling up for the winter is far removed. Using digital mediums during certain times of the year, or even certain times of day, may be a more effective way to reach your audience. For example, Facebook advertising has a feature that allows you to select the time of day an ad is shown. Do your research first and find out when your audience is most likely to be on Facebook, then cater your ads accordingly.

Why do you advertise?

The purpose of your advertising can oftentimes help you decide where best to put your marketing budget. Are you aiming for online transactions? Asking for those in print advertising will probably not be as effective as a Facebook ad leading to your website. Consider what your end goal is and move backward to determine how people would reach that goal in the most efficient way.

Are you planning to use print advertising for your business? Consider these things as you form your plan, and then decide which platforms are best for you.

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Why You Should be Listening to Tim Ferriss

Editor's note: If you've never taken time to listen to a TED Talk, I hope to convince you to listen to Tim Ferriss' TED Talk. He has bi-polar disorder and was seconds away from committing suicide in college. Later, Ferriss developed a strategy for dealing with his fears. His talk, along with others, is available at www.ted.com.

Timothy "Tim" Ferriss (born July 20, 1977) is an American author, entrepreneur, self-proclaimed "human guinea pig", and public speaker. He has written a number of self-help books on the "4-hour" theme, some of which have appeared on the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and USA Today bestseller lists, starting with The 4-Hour Workweek.

Ferriss is also an investor, an advisor to Facebook, Twitter, StumbleUpon, Evernote, and Uber, among other companies. He's also host of the popular podcast, The Tim Ferriss Show.



After graduation, Ferriss worked in sales at a data storage company and began building his own Internet business, BrainQUICKEN, while still employed at the company.

BrainQUICKEN, an online nutritional supplements company which made a product that was marketed as both BodyQuick and Brain Quicken. It was claimed that this

product would dramatically increase short term memory and reaction speed, taking effect within 60 minutes.

In 2010, he sold the company to a London-based private equity firm. It was the experiences Ferriss had running BrainQUICKEN that led him to write The 4-Hour Workweek.

His story about how his life changed because of his trip to England is unique. I am not sure I have ever heard anything quite like this. He certainly made the right decision.

That decision was not based on his goals, but on his fears. He overcame his fear, and that completely changed his life, which was far more important than sitting down to make a list of goals and priorities.

His strategy on fear-setting is sensible. If you know your fears have interfered with your success in life, then you may want to follow his advice and learn his techniques in the video.

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Homesteaders Releases Fifth Edition of 'Pre-Need Motivators'

Homesteaders Life Company, a pre-need funeral funding company, has released the fifth edition of "Pre-need Motivators." This publication provides information about the demographics, behavior and experiences of people who arrange and fund funerals in advance.

In addition to providing results from a biennial survey of policy owners who prearranged and funded funerals with Homesteaders, this edition of "Pre-need Motivators" includes information from a new survey of funeral directors. This study provides feedback about funeral directors' experiences when pre-need arrangements become at-need funerals, as well as their perceptions about their client families' motivations for prearranging.

The publication is available as a free download at homesteaderslife.com/motivators. Funeral professionals may request a printed copy of the publication by contacting their Homesteaders account executive.

C&J Financial Acquires Beta Capital Corp.

C&J Financial LLC, through its affiliate, Security National Financial Corp., has an-

nounced the acquisition of Beta Capital Corp. of Portsmouth, Virginia. Beta Capital has been operating in the assignment factoring business for over 22 years and has strong brand recognition in the industry. The transaction closed June 1, 2018.

Beta Capital has more than 200 funeral home clients across the United States and funds over \$30 million of insurance assignments annually. Beta Capital's presence is especially strong in the Mid-Atlantic and Mid-West regions of the United States, areas that complement C&J's existing network of clients.

For more information on C&J, visit www.cjf.com.

FTC Tweaks Funeral Rule Enforcement Process

Typically, when a funeral home has been shopped by an undercover enforcement agent twice and found to be in violation of the Funeral Rule on both occasions, it receives a letter from the FTC stating when they were shopped and the nature of the alleged violations with which they are being charged. The letter also details their options: chiefly face a lawsuit in federal court or en-

roll in the remedial three-year Funeral Rule Offender Program.

Historically, these letters have not included – nor has the FTC been willing to disclose – the name(s) of the employee(s) who dealt with the undercover shoppers.

NFDA has now learned that the FTC will, upon request, disclose the names of employee(s) who dealt with the undercover shoppers.

NFDA members who have questions may contact NFDA's General Counsel Scott Gilligan, 800-228-6332.

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Bower

Harriet Elizabeth Bower, age 85, passed away May 9, 2018. She is the mother of Glenn Bower, president of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston. Funeral services were held at the King of Glory Lutheran Church in Fountain Valley, California, followed by a private committal. Donations in her honor may be made to the King of Glory Lutheran Church, 10280 Slater Ave, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.

Wilcox

Bill Berry "Butch" Wilcox, age 76, of Burnet passed away May 28, 2018, in Round Rock. Bill was born March 31, 1942, in Cisco, to G.W. Wilcox and Faye Rowe Wilcox. Bill graduated Cisco High School with the Class of 1960. He went on to attend and graduate from Gupton-Jones School of Mortuary Science in Dallas. He and his wife Janice, along with their two daughters Ginger and Melissa, moved to Burnet when they purchased the funeral home from Gene Clements in 1969. Later the funeral home was built in 1975 in Marble Falls. Bill was a Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer in the State of Texas for over fifty years and was very proud to have received his fifty-year pin from the Texas Fu-

neral Directors Association a few years ago.

Along with his professional accomplishments Bill was active in his community. He served two terms as the Mayor of the City of Burnet, as well as terms on the Burnet City Council. While serving as Mayor he was instrumental in getting Delaware Springs Golf Course built as well as the construction of the Ellen Halbert Unit that would later employ many in the Burnet area. Bill was a former member and past President of the Burnet Chamber of Commerce, former member and director of the Burnet County Fair and Rodeo Association and one of the organizers of the first Burnet All Class Reunion held now every five years. Bill was a member of Valley Lodge #175 A.F. and A.M. and Vanderveer Street Church of Christ. During the past few years Bill was passionate in the honoring and recalling the life of J.V. "Pinky" Wilson, author and composer of the Texas Aggie War Hymn. He and Aggie friends worked long and hard to raise funds for the erection of a statue and monument honoring Pinky's life.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, one sister Betty Russ and one brother Bill Stratton. He is survived by his wife of 54 years Janice Wilcox of Burnet, daughters Ginger Wilcox-Riley and fiancé Chris Wilson of Burnet and Melissa

Blaylock and son-in-law Wilson of Hammond, LA., grandson Ty Riley of Burnet and his son by choice Eddie Snider of Burnet. He is also survived by three sisters- in- law Tiffani Bolin and spouse Belinda Sessions of Alaska, Phyllis Howard of Burnet and Carol Brown of Magnolia, TX. There are also numerous cousins, other relatives, and friends who mourn his passing.

The funeral service was held June 1, 2018, in the chapel of Clements-Wilcox Funeral Home in Burnet with Mr. Tim Denton officiating. A private family entombment followed at the Wilcox Family Mausoleum at Post Mountain Cemetery in Burnet.

In place of usual remembrances, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made to the Hill Country Community Foundation in memory of Bill Wilcox, P.O. Box 848, Burnet, TX 78611. Services were under the direction of Clements-Wilcox Funeral Home in Burnet.

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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.

Business Insurance

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

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 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.

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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.



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INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

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 ASD Inc. **11**
 Austin Mortuary Service, LLC **6**
 B-Mobile Inc **8**
 C & J Financial, LLC **27**
 Capital Mortuary Services **24**
 Commonwealth
 Institute of Funeral Service **31**
 Doric Texas **28**
 Express Funeral Funding **25**
 Federated Insurance **33**
 Funeral Directors Life **7**
 Kirk Mortuary Service of Houston **10**
 Legacy Funeral Group **17**
 Metro Mortuary & Crematory **23**
 Metropolitan Funeral Service **37**
 Miller & Sons **11, 30**
 Miller Mortuary
 and Crematory Services **26**
 Security National
 Financial Corporation **21**
 Shields Southeast Sales Inc. **BC**
 Sich Casket Company Ltd. **9**
 Southwest
 Professional Vehicles, Inc. **29**
 Texas Mortuary Service **13**
 Texas Service Life **IFC**
 Twin Wood Mortuary **5**
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2018 TFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 8-11 30 – August 1	NFDA Leadership Conference TFDA Leadership Conference	Asheville, NC Amarillo
September 11 13 30 – October 2	Texas Funeral Service Commission North Texas Meeting Emerging Leaders University	Austin TBD Austin
October 14-17 23 24	NFDA Convention TFDA Services, Inc. TFDA Board Meeting	Salt Lake City Austin Austin
December 11	Texas Funeral Service Commission	Austin



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DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

WEST POINT CEMETERY



The mission of the West Point Post Cemetery is to deliver the FINAL SALUTE to those members of the US Corps of Cadets, its Faculty, Staff and those West Point Graduates who have dedicated their lives in the service of the United States of America.

"We strive to commemorate these Graduates and to care for their final resting place in perpetuity. May it be said, "Well done; Be thou at peace."

The West Point Cemetery, America's oldest military post cemetery, has become a national historic landmark. It is located at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY on the Hudson River.

Before becoming a military cemetery in 1817, the grounds were used by local residents for burials, and the graves of Soldiers from as far back as the Revolutionary War can be found here.

Within the West Point Cemetery's hallowed gates are memorials to some of America's most storied military leaders and historic figures including General Norman Schwarzkopf, Major General Daniel Butterfield, Lieutenant Colonel George Custer, and Revolutionary War heroine Margaret Corbin along with other notable heroes, astronauts, and 18 Medal of Honor recipients.

Protocol for Directors: The

United States Military Academy's Memorial Affairs Office is located at 329 Washington Road, West Point, NY, 10996., inside the Memorial Affairs Building. To call: 845-938-2504. Or email: USMACemetery@usma.edu. The Cemetery's office is open Mondays through Fridays except federal holidays, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Famous Residents

Hundreds of heroes – protectors of America's freedoms – are buried at the cemetery on the campus of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Below are only a few:

- Lieutenant General James Maurice Gavin, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division during World War II
- John Gavin, actor and diplomat
- Major General Frederick Dent Grant, son of President Ulysses S. Grant
- Major General William H. Hay, commander of the 28th Infantry Division in World War I
- Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Mexican-American War veteran, Lincoln's special advisor during the Civil War
- Brigadier General Ranald S. Mackenzie, Civil War veteran, commander of Buffalo Soldiers during the Indian Wars
- Colonel David «Mickey» Marcus, Israel's first general, only American buried here who died fighting under a foreign flag
- Major General Wesley Merritt, Civil War veteran, Military Governor of the Philippines
- Major General Thomas H. Ruger, Civil War veteran, United States Military Academy Superintendent
- Major General Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf, the first superintendent of the New Jersey State Police.
- General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., commander of coalition forces in the Gulf War.
- Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, longest serving American general (1813–1861), commanded the U.S. Army, 1841-1861.
- Brigadier General Sylvanus Thayer, known as «The Father of the U.S. Military Academy» for the strict regimens implemented at his direction
- Brigadier General John T. Thompson, inventor of the Thompson submachine gun
- Ensign Dominick Trant, a native of Cork, Ireland and a soldier in the Ninth Massachusetts Regiment in the Continental Army, died at West Point in 1782. His grave is the oldest in the cemetery.
- Col. Theodore S. Westhusing, highest-ranking officer to die in Iraq War, 2005, «Multi-national Security Transition Command – Iraq».
- General William Westmoreland, Army Chief of Staff, Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy, Commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam from 1964–1968.
- Lieutenant Colonel Ed White, first American to make a spacewalk, killed in the Apollo 1 fire on 27 January 1967.

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