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Texas Director

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**Zika: New Reality Means
Directors Should Be
Prepared for Handling**

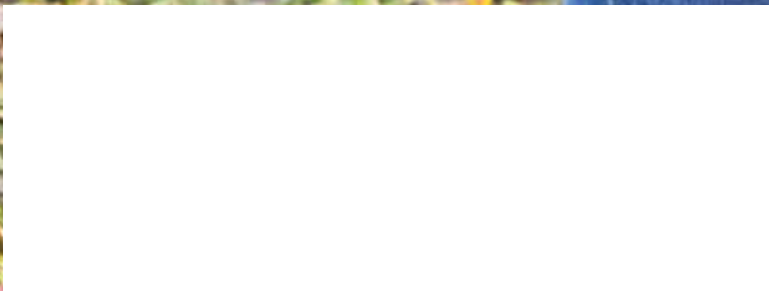
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**Influence of Rising
Cremation Rates
on the U.S. Funeral Service
Industry**

.....

**Missouri Director's
Priceless Collection
Heading for Texas**

**Challenges of
Caring for the Young
Decedent's Family
and Friends**



The Death and Funeral for UT's First Mascot—Pig Belmont



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Start Gearing Up for 2017 Legislative Session

"If you really want to be happy, the only person that can stop you is you. Don't strive to be happy. Be happy. Wake up each morning. Smile. Look for the good in the day. Choose to act happy. Find the good in others. Work toward something larger than yourself. Do the best you can in any endeavor."

Glen Van Ekeren

Well, another successful, well attended Leadership Conference is behind us now. I hope those of you who attended came away with new information and ideas to take back to your regions and encourage more to join TFDA.

I have to call myself out—at first I was really concerned about the hotel and the location for this conference; whether or not things would flow well, if the rooms were adequate, etc. I was so proven wrong by the hotel and the membership! The staff was very attentive to us, the food was excellent and the location seemed to please everyone. I am so glad my concerns were for nothing; I stand impressed!

I also want to mention the beautiful Falconhead Golf Club.

Not everyone (including myself) is a golfer, but this course was just gorgeous. The 8th hole is considered their "signature hole", and it is outstanding. The landscaping is awesome and they treated us very well. We are also entertaining the idea of going back there for the John Cathey Memorial Golf Tournament on June 5, 2017.

Hey, speaking of golf, if you know Lance Ray of Wilbert-Pierce you will want to congratulate him on his hole in one. Unfortunately for Charlie, this is the third hole in one he has had to witness someone else make. Sorry Charlie, and BIG congratulations to you Lance! Job well done.

The committee meetings were well attended, lots of new ideas were discussed and I really feel like we have set the framework for a very good year and another great convention for 2017. Our convention committee was hard at work getting the agenda set. It will be a little different this year, but we have been talking about change for awhile and this will be the first year the big change will go into effect.

One of the biggest changes is the convention will be shorter by a day, and the exhibits will only be one full day instead of two half days.

If you were unable to attend, you really missed out on hearing a wonderful speaker. Mr. Positive, Jim Gentil, was our guest speaker. He promotes Positive People Power and publishes a weekly email every Tuesday. I encourage you to subscribe to it. It has a lot of snippets on how to become more positive and facing your day with a positive attitude. Plus, this guy is very funny!

The year 2017 is going to be an active legislative year and it is very important you know who your representatives are. If you don't know or are unsure of who represents you, contact Senator Bill Haley or Karen at the TFDA office they will help you.

There are so many changes and issues to be decided, so the bigger the voice we have the better our chances are of having an effect on how our government decides things in our funeral industry's favor. Just to mention a few are the Sunset Review, which could possibly come up in 2017 but most definitely in 2019. Also there is increase in financial assistance for the victims of violent crimes, and the rule proposed by the Dept. of State Health Services stating that all aborted fetuses must be buried or cremated. That rule is set to take effect on September 1, 2016, and we have already been requesting meetings with the Governor's office to discuss the logistics of this and who will be covering the charges.

This is the time of year when the regional meetings are beginning to happen. I am so looking forward to going and seeing everyone. Charlie claims he is going to be known as the Past President who travels the least, but we all know that isn't going to be the case. You know he would not be able to stand not going and seeing everyone. I also want to encourage all of the regional presidents to be sure to invite potential members to attend the meetings. I feel like they would have a very good time and learn about what TFDA can do for them. Remember, real change happens at the regional level!

Again, I really want to thank everyone for coming to the Leadership Conference. Your time and dedication to making TFDA great is so appreciated.

I am going to end this article with one of the things Jim wrote about in this week's email RESPECT means.....

Recognize the inherent worth of all human beings.

Eliminate derogatory words and phrases from your vocabulary.

Speak with people – not at them....or about them.

Practice empathy. Walk awhile in others' shoes.

Earn the respect of others through your behaviors.

Consider others' feelings before speaking and acting.

Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy.

Have a wonderful month, and I look forward to seeing you at the regional meetings. ★

CONTEST: Submit Ideas for TFDA 2017 Convention and Expo Theme!

TFDA is going to be in Austin and we will need a theme befitting our location. I encourage you to think about it and submit your ideas. The deadline is October 1, 2016 and you can send your ideas to me at hhauboldt@tflc.com or to ann@tfda.com. The winner will be announced in the magazine and will receive two tickets (\$200 value) to the Gala. Come on everyone, submit your ideas and claim your ticket to fame.



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Dylan Stopher



Funeral Home None currently. Regional Sales Representative for Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC; licensed funeral director and embalmer in Texas and Louisiana.

Age, place of birth 37 years old; born in Beaumont... but I grew up in Sulphur, La.

High school and year of graduation Sulphur High School, 1997

Mortuary school and year you were licensed Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service; graduated in 2002; Louisiana license in 2003, reciprocated to Texas in 2010.

Why did you choose funeral service? Funny thing... I didn't really choose it. It chose me in a time when I needed a job. I ended up answering phones at Hixson Funeral Home in Lake Charles, La., and began my career in funeral service.

Memorable mentor So many: Rob Shalvey, Scott Foreman, Bubba Brasseaux, Gordon Crow, Charla Berry, Mike McClain, Rene Salinas, Barry Lambert, Brett Henery. It's really hard to narrow it down to just one.

What would you add to what you learned in mortuary school? I would love to have a class or seminar on how to wait on a family in the practical sense. What order you move through the information, how to not get side-tracked, how to prep a file, etc. It took me a few dozen families to figure that out and develop a system.

Service you'll never forget? The one that made me curious about the funeral profession was for my friend Kevin Cox. We were 19, and his accidental death was tragic. But the way the funeral home handled everything was amazing.

Biggest surprise about funeral service? I was shocked by how normal everyone is. Every single funeral director I know is a regular person with a family, hobbies, friends. And every one of us laughs uproariously when the opportunity comes, because we understand mortality. Every one of us has moments when we just need to be alone and process what has gone on that day, but every one of us is a normal person. We don't have clammy skin, we're not all pale, we don't fear the sun, we do have social skills, and we all are driven by an extreme desire to serve at all costs. Sometimes we try too hard. Sometimes we fail. Sometimes it hurts a lot. But we keep going.

Why you joined TFDA? The networking opportunities are immense... and involvement in the association gives me a voice in what happens with the association.

Favorite sport, hobby or pastime? I'm a husband, father, musician, small group leader, author, and poet. In my free time, you'll find me doing one or more of those things.

What you see as the greatest reward of being a director? The opportunity to provide one final service to any given family is the greatest reward any of us could ask for. It is so heavy a blessing and privilege to oversee a literal once-in-a-lifetime moment. And we have only one shot with each family to make it (in their eyes) perfect. That moment when we do it right, and we do it well, and we exceed their expectations... the moment that

they grab us and thank us for making the impossible possible for them... that is true service to another person in need, and there is no greater reward on earth than to serve those in need.

Greatest challenge facing directors today? I think the greatest challenge is burnout. A good funeral director really cares, and pours himself/herself into every family. It is a huge risk, every single time, because if the funeral director doesn't recharge properly or rest enough, if they don't have a solid support system outside the funeral home, burnout can be a very dangerous and frightening thing.

Married/single? Children? Married... will have our 15th anniversary this December! Three children: Brody (boy, 12), Finley (girl, 9), and Rowdy (boy, 8).

Community memberships, volunteerism, activities? Member of the TFDA and SE TFDA; member at First Baptist Church of Friendswood, TX; serve as a worship team member (drums, guitar, vocals, leader if needed), small group leader to high school boys, Bible Study teacher to college class, parent sponsor to Pre-Teen Camp; international missionary with World Hope Ministries International (South Africa, primarily); volunteer with FAST Swim Team in Friendswood; private lesson teacher (percussion).

What I get most out of from being a member of TFDA? As I said above, the greatest part of TFDA is the network and the voice I have in the organization. I've met and connected with amazing professionals in all aspects of our business, and I am able to reach out and get assistance in almost any arena, in every area of the state, and I don't have to use the Red Book to find someone. I have their number, and I know who I'm calling. 🌟

Know an Emerging Leader?
We would like to interview folks new to the funeral profession. Email us their name and contact information and we can feature them in *Texas Director*.
Email Kimberly Scheberle at kscheberle@austin.rr.com.



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Seven Texas Funeral Homes Earn NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Awards

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is pleased to announce that more than 160 funeral homes have earned the 2016 Pursuit of Excellence Award. This award is presented by NFDA annually to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities.

To earn an NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home must demonstrate proficiency in key areas of funeral service, such as compliance with state and federal regulations; providing ongoing education and professional development opportunities for staff; offering outstanding programs and resources to bereaved families; maintaining an active level of involvement in the community; participating and actively serving in the

funeral service profession; and promoting funeral home services through a variety of marketing, advertising and public relations programs. Participants are also required to adhere to a Pledge of Ethical Practices.

NFDA will honor the 2016 Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients on October 24 during the All-Star Recognition Cere-

mony, which will take place during the 2016 NFDA International Convention & Expo in Philadelphia.

Information about the NFDA Pursuit of Excellence program can be found by visiting www.nfda.org/pursuitofexcellence. Registration and application materials for 2017 will be available in late-October 2016. ★

Seven Texas funeral homes were included on the list of 2016 award winners:

- Bates Family Funeral Home, De Kalb
- Emerald Hills Funeral Home and Memorial Park, Kennedale
- Hughes Family Tribute Center, Dallas
- Kerrville Funeral Home, Kerrville
- Kimble Funeral Home, Junction
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PAC-Man's Corner

By Chuck Robertson, TFDA Secretary-Treasurer

Howdy, ya'll

For those who missed the TFDA Leadership Conference, you missed a great conference, but I, PAC-MAN (AKA Chuck Robertson, TFDA secretary-treasurer) am here to talk to you about PAC.

TFDA's PAC, for those of ya'll that don't know – is the heartbeat of this great association. Funds from the PAC are used to smooth the often bumpy road we must travel, legislatively, during the biennial legislative sessions.

For the upcoming session, which gavels to order January 10, 2017, Sunset laws – to shutter the Texas Funeral Service Commission (our current state regulating agency) has been mentioned and is definitely coming up by 2018, whether we like it or not.

TFDA PAC funds help go to bat for legislation...meaning PAC funds help with legislation to keep TFSC going. If TFSC goes

away, our profession may be regulated and our firms may be monitored by another agency...such as the agency that licenses plumbers, electricians, barbers and beauticians.

Now I know there are some who wish we didn't have a state board, but let it be known that we do need the TFSC, more than ever before. I know that I and many other directors and owners around the state DO NOT want the same licensure regulation as Plumbers, Electricians, and Cosmetologists. We want our stand-alone agency to make our licenses valuable.

We are very fortunate to have the TFSC...and TFDA PAC works for all of us, goes to bat for you, your firm and your profession.

At TFDA Leadership, I challenged every region to raise at least \$3,000 for the entire year \$1,500 each meeting. That's \$21,000 total and would put our PAC fund around \$90,000...

and I would love for it to be \$100,000 so that way we have more power when we go see your state representatives, senators, etc.

As your PAC-MAN, I challenge each of you to help to make the \$90,000 goal. We need it more than ever. You can sign up for a TFDA PAC Bank Draft for as little as \$5 a month and every little bit helps.

Lee Castro started this campaign, and if you set up a draft of \$25 or more, you are automatically eligible to win a cruise for two! The drawing will be held in December, so what are you waiting for.

Sign up please! If not good, the ol' PAC-MAN will be hitting you up at your regional meetings.

This is your chance to give back to this profession for what it has given to you.

Yep, Texas is a great state to be a funeral director. Let's go, people!

THE PAC-MAN ★

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Challenges of Caring for the Young Decedent's Family and Friends

By Dylan Stopher



In one second, in one freak accident, he was gone.

I had attended many funerals, but never one like this. The chapel was packed to capacity plus, and the overflow took up every available space to stand – in the aisles, along the sides and in the center.

The entire lobby, standing room only, and in the front of the chapel, we watched as our teachers and principal, our friends, and finally his parents spoke about what an amazing young man he was.

I promise you, there was not a dry eye in the house.

The crazy part was my stepdad, the funeral director who embalmed my friend, told me about it inadvertently over dinner. You see, when you have a funeral professional in the family, you talk about all kinds of things at the dinner table. It's normal. It's not taboo. And I heard all about the extraordinary efforts to embalm my friend before I knew it was him. So when I saw him, having knowledge that no one else had, I was enthralled.

Mortality. It's real.

This was a lesson the Class of 1997 learned far sooner than we wanted to as we watched one of our closest friend's casket close. He had been a member of the leadership of our student council, had friends in every single group or clique you could find and was among the smartest of us.

I ended up joining my stepdad at work in the funeral home soon after, and I began an apprenticeship. I went to school, finished the apprenticeship, and received my license in both embalming and funeral directing.

From that time, I've somehow ended up with almost every service for someone between the ages of 15 and 22 in every firm I've worked

for, and I can tell you, my friend's death and the experience at his funeral taught me a lot.

Before I get into specifics, let me state one thing very clearly: Every single funeral is a once-in-a-lifetime event. With that said, the funerals of those gone too soon are events that shouldn't have happened yet, and therefore this once-in-a-lifetime event is amplified to the rafters. Read everything that follows with that mentality.

First, in this age group, almost any funeral is going to be large... huge... monstrous sometimes. So the selection of the day for the service includes thoughts of chapel availability and other services that day – for parking concerns. There is also the discussion of extra seating indoors, proper accommodations at the graveside with extra tents and chairs, additional programs/prayer cards, etc. Every guest must be cared for.

Second, there's something to be said for additional means of signatures. At every single service I assisted with, I proposed the family allow me to get two photographs blown up to poster size on hard foam backing. I bought sharpies, paid for the photo enlargement, and then set them up for the decedent's contemporaries to sign.

These photos, in most cases, hang in the homes of the decedent's parents. They show a physical manifestation of the number of people their child touched. It's a simple thing, but it speaks volumes, beyond imagination, when you look at them.

Third, the music can sometimes be different with a younger person's service. The requests can seem odd. "Home Sweet Home" by Motley Crue and "Momma, I'm Coming Home" by Ozzy Osbourne, have been paired with religious favorites in many of these services.

Given the amplified nature of the service, if the song skips... if it starts late... if it's the wrong version... the entire moment will be ruined. This cannot happen. Check, double-check, and download the iTunes or Google Play version onto your own phone to be absolutely certain there are no CD imperfections. Ensure perfection in this, as the music chosen is ALWAYS a reflection of the deceased, and if it goes bad... nothing will erase this glitch from the minds of the mourners, especially the younger people.

Fourth, there is potential for excessive personalization and extra photo albums. Let me be clear: Provide as many tables as are needed, move those tables into whatever configuration is requested and display every single picture and personal item that is brought in.

I have, in my career, placed a rack of guitars; a Harley; fishing gear; hunting trophies; a fully-functional duck blind, with working decoy and skiff; clothing; anything you can imagine. I've said "yes" and rear-



anged whatever was needed to make it happen.

And last, probably the most important, the pass-by and the receiving line that the parents wish to form will be crucial. Hear me very clearly on this one: The pass-by will NOT happen in a few moments. It will be long. It's supposed to be long. There is a young person who is gone sooner than anyone would've thought, and there is hurt and pain flowing through the room. Do. Not. Rush.

To sum up, please know I was fascinated by the way the funeral home handled our friend when he passed away. Please know I feel as though I am blessed to handle these types of services through that experience – and please know I have made the mistakes that led to these points of knowledge about these services, and I will never forget them, just like every mistake every director makes.

All I can ever say about any service for the young is have patience, poise and flexibility. These attributes are needed the most. A professional will be patient as he/she listens to the family; a professional will retain poise as all requests and questions come up; and a professional will be flexible and flow smoothly through each and every obstacle (because they'll come, people... believe that).

This level of professionalism will show the family, more than any promise you can make, that you are there for them, and they will believe in your ability to deliver a once-in-a-lifetime service that will honor the life of their young loved one.

And one more thing: It will be the hardest earned, greatest blessing of your life ... every single time. ★

Dylan Stopher is a member of Texas Funeral Directors Association and is an Emerging Leader. He is a funeral director and regional sales representative in the Greater Houston Area for Wilbert Vaults of Houston.

Zika: New Reality Means Directors Should Be Prepared for Handling



Zika. It's a charming name, really. For such an alarming virus. Americans have had the luxury of learning about the virus from a continent away, as first Brazil, and then other countries and islands, dealt with the mosquito-fueled chaos. For instance, Puerto Rico is now in Zika crisis mode.

But this veil of protection has disappeared over the last month as Zika officially broached our continental divide, and it's been confirmed that mosquitoes in Miami have tested positive for the virus.

With 130 cases of travel-related Zika virus in Texas (as of August 26), the state is working closely with federal and local partners to minimize the impact of Zika on the state.

Texas received approval of just over \$6 million in federal funding to assist with Zika preparedness and response efforts, including funding for Zika response teams, epidemiology and laboratory capacity and birth defects surveillance.

While funeral directors are always well versed in handling blood-borne pathogens, it is important that we understand the Zika virus, how it is spread, and our exposure to it.

About the Virus

Zika virus is primarily spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can become infected when they bite infected

persons and can then spread the Zika virus to other persons they subsequently bite.

Zika virus historically has been found in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. The first case was identified in the Zika Forest in Uganda in 1947. In 2015, cases of Zika virus infection emerged in the Americas and the Caribbean.

Zika virus has the potential to spread anywhere that mosquitoes capable of spreading the Zika virus are found. *Aedes* species mosquitoes are a principal vector (i.e., carrier) of Zika virus in the U.S. *Aedes aegypti* (commonly known as yellow fever mosquitoes) are typically concentrated in the southern U.S. as well as parts of the Southwest. Another vector for Zika virus is *Aedes albopictus* (commonly known as Asian Tiger mosquitoes), which are found in much of the southern and eastern part of the U.S. *Aedes* mosquitoes can also carry other arboviruses, including dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, and West Nile. CDC provides information about surveillance of *Aedes* mosquitoes in the U.S on their website.

OSHA Recommendations

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

(NIOSH) are monitoring the Zika virus outbreak spreading through Central and South America, Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean, including U.S. territories. For the most up-to-date information, check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Zika website frequently.

Some U.S. states have mosquitoes that can become infected with and spread Zika virus, and travel-associated Zika virus infections in U.S. states may result in local spread of the virus. Visit the CDC Areas with Zika website to learn where there is current transmission.

Workers who are exposed on the job to mosquitoes or the blood or other body fluids of infected individuals may be at risk for occupationally acquired Zika virus infection. This interim guidance provides employers and workers with information and guidance on preventing occupational exposure to the Zika virus. The guidance may be updated as additional information becomes available. (These are not new standards or regulations, and it creates no new legal obligations.)

Information for Directors

Employers and workers in healthcare settings (including mortuaries) should follow good infection control and biosafety practices (including universal precautions) as appropriate, to prevent or minimize the risk of transmission of infectious agents (e.g., Zika virus). Always follow universal precautions for potential BBP exposures, as described in OSHA's BBP standard (29 CFR 1910.1030).

In healthcare, standard precautions can be used to expand the universal precautions required by the BBP standard by adding several protections (including expanded PPE) not covered by BBP. Standard precautions include, but are not limited to, hand hygiene and the use of PPE to avoid direct contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials, including laboratory specimens/samples. PPE may include gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection.

Hand hygiene consists of washing with

soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol. Soap and water are best for hands that are visibly soiled. Perform hand hygiene before and after any contact with a patient, after any contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and upon removing PPE, including gloves.

Additionally, employers should ensure that workers:

Follow workplace standard operating procedures (e.g., workplace exposure control plans) and use the engineering controls and work practices available in the workplace to prevent exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Do NOT bend, recap, or remove contaminated needles or other contaminated sharps. Properly dispose of these items in closable, puncture-resistant, leakproof, and labeled or color-coded containers.

Use sharps with engineered sharps injury protection (SESIP) to avoid sharps-related injuries.

Report all needlesticks, lacerations, and other exposure incidents to supervisors as soon as possible.

Employers should consider enhanced precautions in situations where workers are at increased risk of exposure to Zika virus or other hazards. CDC recommends health-care workers use standard precautions during patient care regardless of suspected or confirmed Zika infection status. While there is no evidence of Zika transmission through aerosol exposure, minimizing the aerosolization of blood or body fluids as much as possible during patient care or laboratory tasks may help prevent workers from being exposed to other pathogens.

Additional protections, including engineering controls to ensure containment of pathogens or enhanced PPE to prevent or reduce exposure, may be necessary during any aerosol-generating procedures or other such task.

Additional Resources

- ♦ **Zika in Texas.** www.texaszika.org
- ♦ **Zika Virus.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html
- ♦ **Zika Travel Information.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information

Zika Virus Infection in Humans



Current science-based evidence suggests that approximately one out of five infected people develops symptoms of Zika virus, usually beginning 2-7 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms are usually mild and can last 2-7 days. The most common symptoms of Zika virus infection are fever, rash, joint pain and red or pink eyes. Other symptoms include myalgia (muscle pain) and headache. These symptoms are similar to those of dengue fever or chikungunya. Neurological and autoimmune complications are infrequent but have been described in outbreaks in Polynesia and, more recently, Brazil.

During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be detected in the blood and is capable of being spread from an infected person to a mosquito that feeds on that person. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. In some instances, having direct contact with infectious blood or other body fluids (such as semen through sexual transmission) of an infected person may result in transmission of the virus.

Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus and has been linked to a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly in babies of mothers who had Zika virus while pregnant. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as absent or poorly developed brain structures, defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth. CDC recommends special precautions for women who are or may become pregnant. ❌

- ♦ **Zika Virus Fact Sheet.** World Health Organization (WHO). www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/
- ♦ **Zika virus infection and Zika fever:** Frequently asked questions. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9183&Itemid=41711&lang=en
- ♦ **Surveillance and Control of Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus in the Unit-**

ed States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/resources/vector-control.html

- ♦ **Bloodborne Pathogens and Needlestick Prevention Safety and Health Topics.** Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/ ❌

ANOTHER VIEW: Ambiguous Loss

AN INTRODUCTION
(PART ONE IN A FOUR-PART SERIES)

By Alice Adams



For as long as I can remember, funeral directors and embalmers have gone the extra mile in restoring the appearance of a traumatized decedent so that families could have closure. As a veteran funeral director remembered, “One decedent had been terribly injured in a mining cave-in. The funeral director was able to show the family only the victim’s hand, but that was enough for them to identify their loved one.”

An embalmer, after seeing an earlier photograph of a cancer victim who had lost her nose to the invasive disease, offered to restore the nose for the viewing...an idea the family didn’t know was possible but quickly embraced and appreciated.

For years, funeral directors have focused their efforts on providing a suitable memory picture – and to offer closure for the family and friends of the deceased.

But like every other aspect of funeral service over the passage of time, the theory behind the idea of closure has been challenged and may be changing. One of the proponents of the myth of closure is Pauline Boss, an expert on loss and its ambiguity.

In her 1999 book, *Ambiguous Loss*, Dr. Boss, University of Minnesota Emeritus Professor, coined a phrase “ambiguous loss”

that has become a field in psychology and family therapy. She also believes there is no closure after a loss.

Dr. Boss was one of the first to identify the reality that the so-called “normal” family of the American post-WWII era often had an absent father at its heart – alive, but not present in meaningful ways, there but not there.

Boss, herself, grew up in a first generation Swiss-American immigrant family in Wisconsin. “Homesickness was an essential part of my family’s culture,” the professor explained. “I think it may be true for all immigrant families, but it certainly was for mine – that missing of the country and culture we left behind.

“I know homesickness was part of my family’s culture because I could see the sadness periodically, like when my father would get a letter from Switzerland, or worse yet, a letter with a black rim around it, which meant announcement of death in the family. So, I was always aware that there was another family somewhere, and that there was some homesickness, except where was home?”

“I figured that home was in Wisconsin where we lived, but yet I knew he had this other family across the Atlantic that he pined for. And my maternal grandmother was the

same. And, of course, she refused to learn English. She said she lost her mountains, she lost her mother, she lost her friends, and she wasn’t going to lose her language.”

Dr. Boss sees this homesickness as not unusual for immigrant families today, especially the older family members.

So, we may talk about the Chinese family in our neighborhood and puzzle over the fact that the mother cooked two dinners every night – one for her westernized sons consisting of so-called American dishes, and another one, when her physician-husband came home, where she served traditional Chinese meals...but we don’t acknowledge the grief or that homesickness or that sadness, that loss that must always be there, even when people have made a choice to come to live in another country.

“I think that’s part of our American culture,” Dr. Boss continued. “No, we don’t want to hear that. We also don’t just deny death in our culture, I think we deny ambiguous loss that comes with things like immigration. And homesickness comes along with that and we really want people to get over it.”

But people aren’t built that way. In fact, the more you want people to get over it, the longer it will take...and why not remember your former country, your former culture while you’re learning to fit into the new one? In other words, having two cultures is what it ends up being – living with one foot in the old culture and one foot in the new, which is the most honest way to do it.

Dr. Boss identifies type-one ambiguous loss as a physical presence and psychological absence, which would also be like dementia, autism or a kind of mental illness where people incrementally disappear. But there’s also type two ambiguous loss – like death, where there’s a physical absence and psychological presence, though the person disappears – like one of the tragedies, such

as 9/11 or a recent tsunami, where the Red Cross called Dr. Boss in to counsel survivors.

"I'm not a first responder," she said. "I'm not even brave. And I'm not good in the field. But when I was studying this psychological absence, and I gave my first paper on that as a graduate student, the military was in the audience. And they said, if you would reverse this and study physical absence, we would have data for you on the families of the missing in action soldiers in Vietnam...and the trauma of people not being able to say goodbye, not being able to bury their dead."

"We come from a culture in this country where we like to solve problems," the professor said. "We're not comfortable with unanswered questions." [The father and his three kids who disappeared sailing off the coast of Florida or the Malaysia Airlines flights that disappeared.] "These are losses that are minus facts. Somebody's gone. You don't know where they are, you don't know if they're alive or dead, you don't know if they're coming back. And so, that kind of mystery, I think, gives us a feeling of helplessness that we're very uncomfortable with as a society. It's not always called ambiguous loss, but there are many unanswered questions. Generally, we'll say, 'Thank God it's not me.'"

So how is the grief involved in ambiguous loss distinct from traditional grief?

"With ambiguous loss, there's really no possibility of closure. Not even, in fact, resolution, whichever word you prefer to use. And therefore, it ends up looking like what the psychiatrists now call 'complicated grief' – a diagnosis that requires some type of psychiatric intervention [counseling, drugs, etc.]

"My sense is that ambiguous loss is a complicated loss, which causes, therefore, complicated grief, but it is not a pathological psyche. It's a pathological situation. And as clients frequently say back to me, 'Oh, you mean the situation is crazy, not me,' that's exactly what I mean."

"Ambiguous loss is an illogical, chaotic, unbelievably painful situation that these people go through who have missing loved ones, either physically or psychologically. And if they have symptoms of grief that carry on, let's say, even for five or 10 years, such as a caregiver of an Alzheimer's patient or the parent of a missing child, there is nothing wrong with them. That is typical. It is to be expected, they would grieve along the way for the various things that they are missing. For example, if a child is kidnapped, they may have an extra grief when

this child's friends are graduating, going to college, getting married. So this grief is long-term. It is chronic grief."

In the case of Alzheimer's or a long battle with cancer or aging and senility in an older adult, it's an incremental death and requires a monumental struggle for the rest of the family to grasp this reality – the person they love – who is there and yet, not there.

How important in our culture is it for us to bury our dead?

Dr. Boss believes it's important for people to know where the body is, practice the rituals that are most meaningful to us. That gives the family some needed control

when they lose a loved one. But this need also parallels with attachment...they want somewhere to come back to, a touch point... which is why whenever there is a mass tragedy like 9/11 or Jonestown, the Holocaust – and there are memorials all over the world – they are all serving the greater purpose of being a base the families can come back to, a very human need...and people who don't know where their loved ones are really need memorials. They play a very great function in our psychological well-being. ✪

(Next month – Part II: *Ambiguous Loss: The Stages of Grief Misinterpreted?*)

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The Widow and the Red Chair

By Tommy Beggs
Retired Funeral Director



The outskirts of Madison, a small town in northern Florida, are embroidered – like a fine lace doily – with nondescript shanty towns and railroad tracks, small shade tobacco farms and sprawling acreage, passed down through the generations from a time before Florida was ever a state.

It was here, right next to the railroad tracks, Old Man Lashley lived a hermit's life with his much younger wife, Mary. The weather-worn, gray walls of their shed-like cottage had been carelessly patched over the years. Little grew around the bedraggled structure, with the exception of a few stately live oaks, dating back to the time Ponce de Leon docked his galleons on Florida's shores.

The old man had been around since dirt, always keeping to himself, never bothering with his neighbors... not so much as an acknowledging wave when he walked the eight miles into Madison, his wife walking five paces in front of him as he punched the dirt shoulder intently with his walking stick.

Whenever I saw the Lashleys walking along the side of the road on their way to buy groceries in Madison, although I was tempted to stop, I knew better than to offer them a ride. "It's his darned pride," Miz

Cook explained to the Baptist ladies' quilting group. "He'd rather walk eight miles than to accept help from anybody."

Mary was a homely girl, missing more than a few teeth, her hair hanging in oily hanks down her back. She wore plain dresses, mostly patched, with shoulders hunched, her slender frame almost depending on the support of her arms she kept folded in front of her waist. Nobody knew where she came from. She had just appeared one day, walking to town, five paces in front of the old man.

Some said he had forbidden her to speak to anyone, other than to say "hello." The neighbors reported hearing her screaming whenever he beat her or when he chased her around their dusty yard.

Why did he chase her?

"The way she tells it, he takes out after her any time she makes him mad."

And when he catches her?

"I can run faster than him," she told a neighbor, "but sometimes when he does catch me, then he beats the tar outta me."

That was the story making the rounds up at the Baptist church, not far from the Lashleys' shanty. Mary Lashley was often the topic at the weekly quilter's group. "She

waves to the Amtrak engineers whenever the train passes and the engineers toot their horns," said Miz Cook, who played piano on Sunday mornings. "Neighbors say the girl sometimes runs alongside, waving to the passengers and lookin' like a crazy woman."

"That old man Lashley – he's terribly jealous – comes storming out, yelling and slamming their old door practically off its hinges and takes off running after her."

"Course he never catches her 'cause she can get far enough ahead of him, she can skitter up one of them oak trees faster than a scared cat. Then, while she's sittin' pretty up in one of those big ole trees, the old man keeps running around the yard and yellin' – because he doesn't know she's up there – 'til he finally gets too tired to run anymore."

Mary Lashley was a few decades younger than her husband. Many speculated the old man might have adopted her from a relative, sorta took her in...or they may, indeed, have married, but she never wore a ring.

At one time she may have been a pretty girl, but that would have been years ago.

Now, her hands were rough, calloused, like she had worked the earth from a very young age. Her face was as leathery as a cotton picker's from toiling in the searing sun. Her body was bony, shapelessly thin... so much so, neighbors wondered if the old man starved her as punishment...and her feet were always dirty because she rarely wore shoes. When she did, she wore her husband's hand-me-down work boots, although he rarely worked.

After harvest one year, rumor had it the old man was bad sick...and before many more months had passed, T.J. Beggs Funeral Home got a call that the old man had died.

As our removal vehicle navigated the rutted road out to shanty town, I could only imagine the state Mary Lashley was in. After all, the old man – in spite of his beatings and strange eccentricities – had been her companion for more than a decade. Their sparsely-furnished cabin, drafty in the winters and intolerably hot in the summers, was the only home she'd known.

“Sad,” I thought. “I wonder if she can survive without him?”

Surrounded by a wire fence, about 20 yards from the shanty, we drove the removal vehicle off the road and stopped a respectful distance from that gateless fence. In small towns like Lee, Florida, (pop. 398), word travels fast. Neighbors had congregated, so we solicited several volunteers to help us get our gurney over the fence.

As we neared the cabin, we dodged chickens and a lurking cat on the sagging front porch, and as we soon would learn, there were chickens in the house, too. Someone had shoved a boulder under the middle of the porch in an effort to keep the whole structure from falling down.

Poor Mary was standing just outside the weathered door, her hair matted around her head, her plain dress hanging from her shoulders. Smiling pleasantly, she invited us in. “He’s in there,” she said, pointing to one of the hovel’s two rooms. Inside, the cabin was lit only by a glassless window, one in each room. Furnishings were sparse...two kegs served as seating in the outer room. No table, no light. Nothing.

Wheeling our gurney ahead, the neighborly volunteers accompanied us to the room where we found the old man’s dead body lying on a mattress... if you dare call a pile of pine-filled feedsacks cobbled together on the floor a mattress.

“He didn’t say much, never has,” his wife began as we pulled the gurney inside the front room. “I knew he was sick because he wouldn’t eat nothing, even stopped pooping, but he’s stunk up this house real good now.”

Stepping carefully to avoid missing floorboards, we wheeled our gurney into position and with the help of several of their neighbors, we transferred Old Man Lashley’s frail body onto the cot.

While we were making the removal, a thoughtful neighbor brought wire cutters and sliced an opening so we could easily leave the yard, gurney in tow.

“I’m so sorry for your loss, Miz Mary,” I said after her husband’s body had been loaded into the funeral home’s vehicle and I had gone back into the cabin.

“Sorry?” she looked at me quizzically. “Don’t be sorry for me. Why, I feel like a bird out of her cage. I’m glad he’s gone.”

It was something I’d never heard from a widow, but who was I to judge?

Her words reflected the relief of her husband’s passing. Finally, she was free – free of

his unreasonable expectations, his psychotic eccentricities, his cruel and abusive treatment of her.

As I was saying my goodbyes and thanking the volunteers for their assistance, I looked back to the woefully shabby shack and saw Mary, standing on the porch, taller, straighter than I remembered from the times I had seen them walking to Madison.

Later, back at the funeral home, as I thought about the day’s events, it occurred to me that, in all my years of making removals and including those I helped my father with while I was in high school, the Lashleys had one of the most primitive homes I ever had witnessed, far more pitiful than the poorest family our Methodist Youth visited when we had collected food for or gathered donated clothing over Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays.

The entire removal had taken less than 15 or 20 minutes, but it was long enough for me to verify all the rumors I had heard... about how the old man treated Mary, about the poverty they lived in, their truly hard-scrabble life.

In a few days, when Miz Mary’s half-brother brought her to the funeral home to make arrangements, she was still cheerful... talkative, animated – a totally new person than anyone remembered while the old man was alive.

She chose the least expensive casket, said the church choir could sing and the deacons would be the pallbearers. That was it. Nothing else. No flowers, no folders, no tears of grief.

The funeral was held after lunch on a Tuesday at the Baptist church in nearby Corinth with graveside rites in the church’s cemetery. Prior to the afternoon service, her neighbors had taken Miz Mary in, collected some more presentable clothing for her and had fed her.

I had picked up the widow and two of her neighbors on my way to the church. Mary rode in the front seat next to me, her friends in back. As we drove, she told us what crazy things he did, how she often outsmarted him and we laughed all the way to the church.

For years, many of us who knew about this odd couple had assumed Mary was slow. However, on the drive over to the church, I changed my opinion. Mary Lashley, though not well educated, had been under a terrible pressure to obey her husband and abide his peculiar ways for years.

I remember there was a nice crowd at the

small church.

In our part of northern Florida, funeral traditions dictated that, at the end of the service, the casket was opened and mourners were invited to pass by the casket, viewing the decedent for one last time. The surviving family and spouse would be the last to view the body before leaving for the cemetery.

“Miz Mary,” I inquired as those in attendance filed past the casket, “would you like to see your husband one last time?”

She looked at me incredulously. “No, I don’t want to see him,” she said, her tone defiant. “Just close that casket and put him in the ground, Mr. Beggs.”

I also remember the latch key to the cabin had been locked inside when we left for the church, so I was elected to climb through one of the windows, retrieving the key and unlocking the door.

I couldn’t forget what I had seen – or rather, what it was I hadn’t seen – at the Lashley’s shanty, so a few days after the service, I went to the furniture store and purchased an unpainted, ladder-back chair. Then, using spray paint, I lacquered it a bright, cheery red and took it out to Miz Mary.

It might as well have been a pricey antique. She was, at once, speechless and absolutely thrilled, giving me a big hug for the exciting surprise.

I heard her half-brother set her up in a trailer house in the front yard of his home about five miles away, so at the end of the month, Mary Lashley moved out of the shanty by the railroad track. The only possession she loaded into back of the rusty, old pickup was one bright, red chair.

Maybe that chair symbolized a new beginning in her heretofore miserable life. Or perhaps it was a sign of hope for better days to come.

We buried Mary Lashley several years later. The Baptist church was filled. The choir sang and deacons carried the casket to the adjacent cemetery where she was laid to rest next to the old man.

As I left the graveyard, I smiled, remembering a woman who transformed – almost before our eyes – from downtrodden to exuberant, from sullen to vibrant. I also remembered her excitement when I delivered that simple, red ladder-back chair after her husband died... and I was thankful for my God-given opportunities to serve as a support and a guide for our neighbors as they “... walk through the valley of the shadow.”

After all, that’s what funeral directors do. ★

Influence of Rising Cremation Rates on the U.S. Funeral Service Industry

Research, Statistics and Projections
from NFDA's 2016 Cremation and Burial Report



Approximately 27% of funeral homes in the United States now operate their own crematories; another 8% plan to open their own within the next five years. This means that the majority of funeral homes still remain in competition with stand-alone crematories in the 45 states that allow funeral homes to own crematories, particularly in view of the growing trend for consumers to select direct cremation. The primary reason for selecting direct cremation (no formal viewing, visitation or ceremony with the body present) is the perceived cost-effectiveness of this choice. There is a trend to follow direct cremations with some type of memorialization event with family and friends but frequently without the services of a funeral home.

The steadily rising popularity of cremation is attributed to a number of factors, including consumer cost considerations, environmental concerns, fewer religious

prohibitions of the practice and changing consumer preferences, such as the desire for simpler, less ritualized funeral practices. Cremation has become socially acceptable as more Americans are thinking and talking about death in new ways, and its popularity is expected to intensify.

A surge in the number of Americans who no longer identify with any religion has contributed to the decline of the historically traditional funeral in America – and the rise in cremation as the disposition of choice. Those who are nonreligious are the most likely to consider cremation for family and friends (FAMIC, 2015). In just five years, from 2007 – 2014, the percentage of unaffiliated adults increased from 16% to almost 23% of the U.S. public (Pew, 2015). Since 2012, the percent of U.S. consumers (40 and older) who feel it is very important to have religion as part of a funeral has decreased from 49.5%

in 2012 to 42.1% in 2016.

As cremation numbers increase, the forecast for funeral home revenue gains is moderate since cremation services in general produce lower revenue. Typically, cremations cost less than one-third of funerals with burials. In the last five years, however, statistics show that the average cost of a cremation has increased (IBISWorld Inc., 81221, April 2016; 81222, March 2016). Many of the same product and service options are available, regardless of whether one chooses cremation or burial. The cost difference between cremation and burial lessens when like products and services are compared.

To meet the business challenges created by the ongoing rise in cremation rates and the continued decrease in preferences for a traditional funeral, funeral homes, crematories (when allowed by state law) and cemeteries will likely offer more specialized products

and services associated with cremations, such as more product and service options, cremation packages and customized urns. It is predicted that funeral homes will continue expanding their array of extra services offered to families and increasingly focus on niche markets to differentiate themselves and draw attention to their value-added services, such as serving groups with diverse cultural and religious preferences.

Key External Influences on the Funeral Service Industry

Key external drivers that influence funeral service are the number of deaths, number of adults aged 65 and older, number of cremations and U.S. per capita disposable income, all of which are projected to increase from 2016 – 2021 and in subsequent years (IBISWorld Inc. 81221 April 2016; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

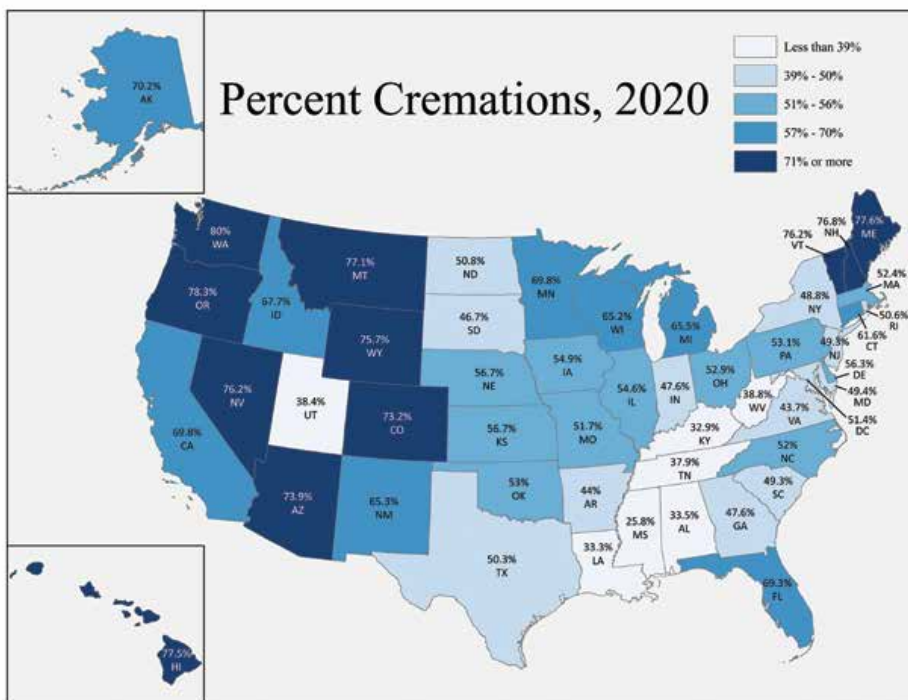
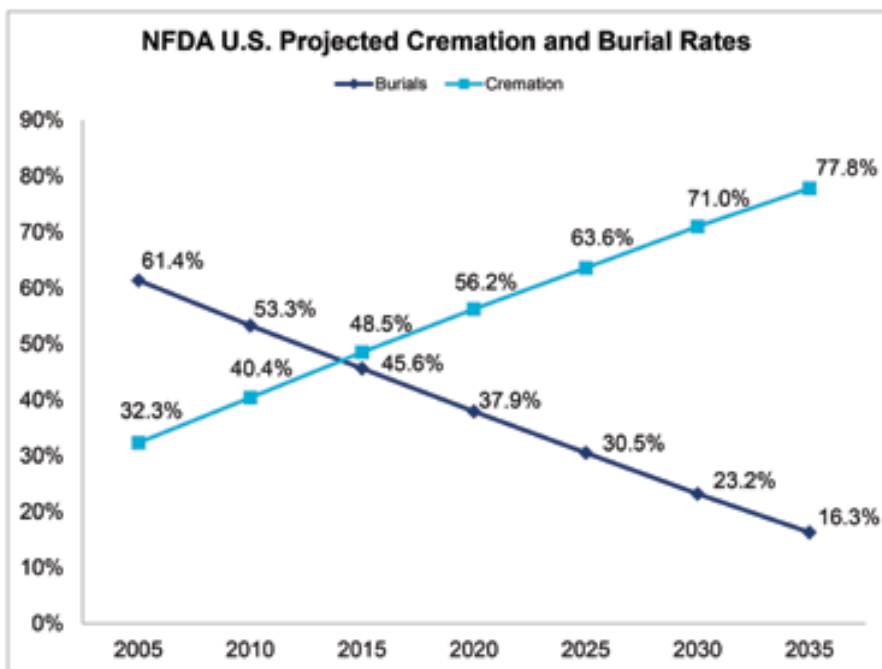
Based on analysis of the key external influences on the funeral service industry, business conditions are projected to slightly improve for the industry over the five-year period from 2016 – 2021, with revenue anticipated to expand at an average annual rate of 1.7% for funeral homes, crematories and cemeteries. In 2016, direct cremation services are estimated to make up approximately 5.6 percent of total industry revenue (IBISWorld Inc., 81221, March 2016; 81222, April 2016).

Per capita disposable income in the United States is predicted to increase at an average annual rate of 1.9% over the next five years as economic conditions continue to improve; this means that consumer price concerns about funeral costs may somewhat diminish (IBISWorld Inc. 81222, March 2016).

The number of adults aged 65 and older increased from 13% of the U.S. population at the time of the 2010 census to 14.9% in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau). By 2030, when all baby boomers (born 1946-1964) have joined the ranks of the older population, it is projected that 20.3% of the U.S. population will be 65 and over (U.S. Census Bureau, P25- 1140, May 2014). Long-term outlooks show that America's 65-and-over population is projected to nearly double over the next three decades, ballooning from 48 million to 88 million by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, CB16-54, March 2016).

U.S. Cremation and Burial Rates

The U.S. national cremation rate is projected to exceed the burial rate for the first



time in 2015 (2015 final data are not yet available as of this printing). By 2035 – in fewer than 20 years – the current cremation rate is projected to grow to 78.3% of deaths.

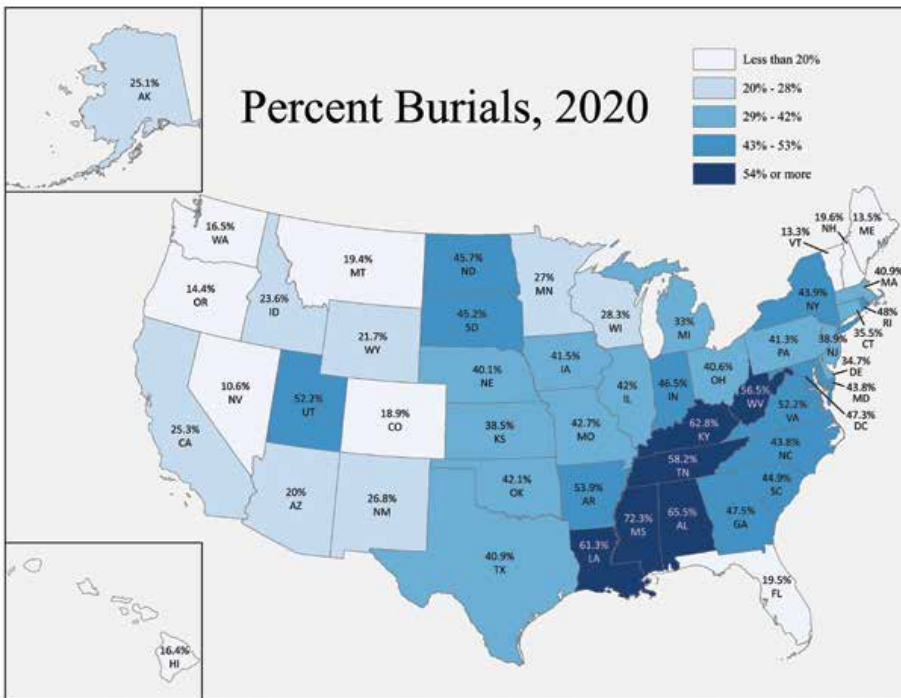
The number of cremations is expected to rise from 1.33 million in 2016 to 1.88 million by 2025 and 2.76 million by 2035. The number in 2010 was just one million.

Over the next nine years (by 2025), cremation rates will likely exceed the 50% mark in 43 states, up from only 16 states exceeding the mark in 2010. By 2035, Mississippi

will likely remain the only state with a burial rate that exceeds its cremation rate.

Even with the expected increase in U.S. deaths from 2.6 million in 2016 to 3.5 million deaths in 2035 – a 34% increase – the increasing consumer preference for cremation will result in the number of burials declining from 1.2 million in 2016 to 907,100 in 2025 and only 559,050 in 2035. In 2010, the number of burials was 1.3 million.

Direct cremations accounted for approximately 37% of all cremations in 2014. Cre-



mations with memorial services accounted for 36% and casketed adult funerals with a viewing and cremation accounted for 27% of all cremations (latest available data).

U.S. Crematory Ownership

Crematories are owned by 26.7% of the funeral homes in the 45 states that allow them to do so. Of the 65% of funeral homes in these states that use third-party crematory facilities, 8% plan to build their own crematories within the next five years. Nearly 70% of funeral homes operating crematories now offer a viewing area so families can witness the beginning of the cremation process, the same number as in 2015.

Thirty-eight percent of cremated remains are returned to families, 35.8% are buried at a cemetery, 2.1% are scattered at a cemetery, 20.2% are scattered at non-cemetery locations and 7.4% are placed in a columbarium.

Population density, the percentage of adults 65 and over and regional preferences for cremation instead of burial influence the location of crematories. The highest concentrations of crematories (and cemeteries) in the United States are in Mid-Atlantic, Southeast and Great Lakes regions (IBIS-World, 81222, March 2016).

Pet Cremation Services

Only 11% of funeral homes in the United States now offer pet cremation services; another 13% plan to offer these services within the next few years. Most funeral homes (70%) have no plans to offer pet cremation in the future. ★

NFDA Projected Deaths by Method of Disposition, 2005 – 2030, Percent of Total

Burials

	2005	2010	2015	2017	2020	2030
Texas	69.5%	59.3%	50.4%	46.6%	40.9%	22.1%
United States	61.4%	53.3%	45.4%	42.3%	38.0%	23.2%

Cremations

	2005	2010	2015	2017	2020	2030
Texas	22.2%	32%	41.3%	44.9%	50.3%	69.1%
United States	32.3%	40.4%	48.5%	51.6%	56.0%	71.1%

2014 General Price List Burial and Cremation-related Charges

Selected Funeral Goods and Services

Selected Funeral Goods and Services	2014 Median Charges
Adult casketed funeral with viewing and ceremony followed by burial (vault not included)	\$7,205
Immediate burial (container provided by family)	\$2,505
Immediate burial (container provided by funeral home)	\$2,995
Adult casketed funeral with viewing and ceremony followed by cremation	\$6,160
Direct cremation (container provided by family)	\$2,200
Direct cremation (container provided by funeral home)	\$2,300
Metal burial casket	\$2,350
Cremation casket	\$1,000
Alternative cremation container	\$125
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Reconstruction in Austin: The Unknown Soldiers

By Nicholas Roland



There are seven Unknown Soldier gravesites set precariously close the cemetery's outer fence. Here are four of the gravestones.

Seven marble head stones lie along a chain link fence in the Old Grounds of Austin's historic Oakwood Cemetery. Their inscriptions read simply "U.S. Soldier." These graves are Austin's own unknown soldiers, men whose identities were lost over time and whose existence is mostly forgotten in the bustling twenty-first century Texas capital. They are also some of the last tangible remnants of the United States Army's occupation of Austin during the Reconstruction years, a period that is often overshadowed by the deadly four year struggle between North and South that preceded it.

The recent sesquicentennial of the American Civil War occasioned an outpouring of scholarly commentary, public programming, and commemoration. No such effort will be made to recall the drama of Reconstruction, an effort that began while the Confederacy

still clung to life and ended in the aftermath of the 1876 presidential election. Historians today see the Civil War and Reconstruction not as discrete events, but as a critical period in a wider nineteenth-century struggle over issues of race, citizenship, individual rights, and the relationship between the state and federal governments and individual Americans.

Scholars debate exactly how much Reconstruction accomplished and whether more radical policies were either desirable or possible, but the long-term impact of Reconstruction legislation, especially the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution, is undeniable. On the ground level, the United States Army played a key role in supporting the operations of the Freedmen's Bureau and in protecting white unionists and the formerly enslaved from the wrath of defeated Confederates.

The seven men who lie in Oakwood Cemetery today took part in the struggle of Reconstruction in Texas, a struggle that in many ways was simply a continuation of the American Civil War.

Emancipation and Reconstruction arrived in Texas on June 19, 1865 in the form of the Union Army. Within weeks, Union forces entered the state from several directions and proceeded to station troops in the most heavily populated areas. Austin was occupied on July 26, making it the last Confederate state capitol to fall to Union forces. Volunteer units, who made up the vast majority of the Union Army during the war, were the first to garrison Austin. The Second Wisconsin, First Iowa, and Seventh Indiana Cavalry regiments, under the command of General George A. Custer, camped on the northern outskirts of town in the fall of 1865. As early as November 1865 the volunteer forces were being mustered out of the service and in 1866 they were replaced by Regular Army units. Although troops began to be sent to Texas' western frontier in the fall of 1866, others remained in Austin and other portions of the eastern half of the



The Neill Cochran House located just west of the University of Texas at Austin's campus.

The Old Oakwood Cemetery gates.



state to maintain order and combat rampant violence aimed at suppressing the interracial political coalition represented by the fledgling Texas Republican party. The United States Army maintained at least a small garrison in Austin until 1875.

A recently published work on Oakwood Cemetery says that the men who are buried there today were victims of a cholera outbreak that took place among Custer's troops, who were encamped along Shoal Creek. If they were members of Custer's cavalry, they were veterans of the Civil War as well as participants in the Reconstruction occupation of Texas. Although newspaper reports from the time do not mention a cholera outbreak, the unit histories of the regiments stationed in Austin reveal that nearly 86 percent of the casualties they sustained during their service were from disease. Along with other casualties, the men are believed to have been buried on the grounds of the historic Neill-Cochran house, which was used as a hospital by the Army from the fall of 1865 until March 1867. In the 1890s most of the bodies along Shoal Creek were supposedly exhumed and reinterred elsewhere, but the seven men were forgotten until a flood exposed their graves some time prior to 1911, at which point they were transferred to Oakwood Cemetery.

As Drew Gilpin Faust illustrates in *This Republic of Suffering*, the federal government faced a monumental task in attempting to locate and identify the Union dead in the years following the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1871, 303,536 Union dead were relocated to national cemeteries, at a cost of over \$4 million. Only 54 percent of

the bodies were identified. One of the major obstacles confronting efforts to identify and move the Union dead to national cemeteries was the intransigence of former Confederates, who did not hesitate to remove headboards and otherwise desecrate Union graves. In contrast, African Americans in the South proved to be the best allies of federal investigators who labored to document and care for Union graves. In fact, David W. Blight argues that the first Memorial Day commemoration took place in Charleston, South Carolina in 1865, when formerly enslaved Charlestonians held a memorial service for Union prisoners of war who had died while in captivity at a local race track. The culture of commemoration established by Americans during the Reconstruction years continues in the modern Memorial Day holiday.

Were Austin's unknown soldiers forgotten due to malice toward occupying US troops? On the one hand, Travis County had voted against secession in the 1861 referendum and

many prominent unionists resided in Austin. Custer's troops camped on land owned by Elisha M. Pease, a pre-war governor and moderate unionist who would serve again as governor under the military government established by the Reconstruction Acts in 1867. The owners of the Neill-Cochran home, S.M. Swenson and John Milton Swisher, were both unionists as well, although Swisher worked for the state of Texas during the war. According to the records of the Texas State Cemetery, part of the cemetery was set aside during Reconstruction for burials of Army personnel, a move that hardly seems to indicate hostility toward the occupying soldiers. Sixty-two Reconstruction-era soldiers were eventually transferred from Austin to the San Antonio National Cemetery in the late nineteenth century. The men buried in Oakwood may have simply been the victims of negligence or error.

On the other hand, although relations between Austinites and the occupying federal soldiers appear to have been generally peace-

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ful, Amelia Barr recorded that the town was “practically in mourning” in the aftermath of Confederate defeat. Libby Custer, who accompanied her husband to Austin, recalled that “it was hard for the citizens who had remained at home to realize that the war

Obelisk dedicated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1909 to General Tom Green, an officer in the Republic of Texas army and a Confederate general who was killed in action in 1864. Courtesy of the author.

was over, and some were unwilling to believe there had ever been an emancipation proclamation. In the northern part of the State they were still buying and selling slaves.” Most white Texans steadfastly opposed the Reconstruction program of advancing racial equality, often violently. In later years “Lost Cause” propaganda and the Dunning school of Reconstruction history would paint the Reconstruction period as a time of corruption, misrule, and tyranny. Ironically, a town that was known for its large unionist population during the secession crisis became dotted with Confederate memorials during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The physical space of Oakwood Cemetery illustrates the workings of Texas historical memory over time. Approximately twenty yards directly north of the unknown soldiers

is a large obelisk dedicated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1909 to General Tom Green, an officer in the Republic of Texas army and a Confederate general who was killed in action in 1864. Monuments to other individuals are scattered throughout the cemetery, some with Texas Historical Commission markers that tell their stories. In their midst, these seven marble headstones lie adjacent to Navasota Street, unknown and largely forgotten, with nothing to explain their significance to visitors. Although controversies over Confederate statuary and school names draw the most media attention in twenty-first century Austin, the long shadow of the Civil War and Reconstruction lingers in the city’s oldest cemetery, at once hidden and in plain sight. ★

This story originally appeared on www.NotEvenPast.org and is reprinted with permission. Not Even Past was founded in 2010 and developed by the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin in order to bring great history writing to the public. The History faculty and graduate students at UT Austin are committed to making our research available and accessible to everyone interested in History.

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You Can't Make this Stuff Up!



A movable viewing: An elderly woman from Alaska apparently felt that late was better than never when she took her recently deceased husband on a little road trip.

The Juneau Empire reported the recently deceased, a 78-year-old man from Prince of Wales Island, died of natural causes on Saturday, July 23. He was laid in a basic aluminum casket used for transporting bodies, and loaded into the back of a pickup truck for transport to the local mortuary.

His elderly widow had other plans however, and instead of the mortuary she took her late husband on a little road trip. At around 3:15 a.m. on Wednesday, police in Ketchikan received an anonymous call from the area near the Potlatch Bar. When officers arrived on the scene, they found the transport casket in the back of the pickup with the recently departed still within and packed in ice.

"The body was supposed to be destined for the mortuary, but for some reason she

decided to not go directly to the mortuary and had been driving around with him for a couple of days," said KPD Chief Alan Bengaard. "My understanding of this is kind of—leading up to the events of the last couple days—there's been a rolling wake or viewing. It was pointed out to me that, evidently, she had stopped at a couple of canneries and got ice and filled the bed of the truck with ice to keep the body chilled."

The woman did not break any laws and was not charged. A local mortuary took custody of the body after police responded, and is awaiting the family's arrangements for transport.

"Hopefully it won't go back on the road again," said Bengaard.

BTW, You're not invited: — A German man has taken his grudges to the grave, telling relatives in a posthumous newspaper notice that some of them aren't welcome at his funeral, the AP reports. News agency

dpa reported that Hubert Martini published his own obituary in the *Trierischer Volksfreund*, a newspaper in western Germany. The deceased described himself as "open, honest, and unforgiving" and said his five siblings and their families are forbidden from attending his memorial service. It is unclear what made Martini want to have the last word, but the 64-year-old notes that in life "I have hurt some people—and that's good."

Proud to be an Okie. The name Jim Thorpe still shows up on short lists of "greatest athletes ever." Among other things, the Native American played pro football and baseball and won two golds (for the pentathlon and the decathlon) at the 1912 Olympics.

Less well-known is the bitter dispute that continues 63 years after his death about where Thorpe should be buried. Kurt Streeter of ESPN reported the controversy, which centers on Thorpe's surviving sons, Richard, 83, and Bill, 87. Their dad is currently buried in a tomb in a town called Jim Thorpe, Pa., and the brothers want to live long enough to see him returned to his native Oklahoma for a proper Native American burial.

According to tribal tradition, his spirit remains unable to rest until that happens.

As the story goes, the controversy began when Thorpe's third wife, Patsy, stormed into the tribal funeral taking place in Oklahoma in 1953 and had police remove her husband's coffin. She had shown a "disdain" for Native American tradition, writes Streeter. When the state balked at paying for a public memorial, she looked around for another option and finagled a deal in Pennsylvania, where Thorpe had once played football.

Two towns agreed to merge, take the name Jim Thorpe, and receive the remains as a tourist draw. Thorpe is still there to this day; a federal court ruled against the brothers' wish to have him removed, and the Supreme Court opted not to hear the case last year.

The fight isn't over though: The brothers have hired a prominent DC lobbyist to press their case with town officials. "We are not giving up," said Bill. ★

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Missouri Director's Priceless Collection Heading for Texas Museum

By Alice Adams



Houston's National Museum of Funeral History just added to its growing collection of antique funeral artifacts and rounded out its collection of articles from funeral service of yesteryear.

The donor, Lee Ward of Independence, Missouri, had collected antiques and funeral memorabilia for more than 20 years.

"Whenever I purchased a funeral home, the basement held treasures that had been stored for many years. That's how I began collecting," he explained, "and eventually word got around, so I began getting calls from all over the country, offering to donate their antiques and equipment to my collection, knowing they would not be destroyed."

As journalist Mike Genet reported in the *Independence Register*:

"It's safe to say no other person possesses a collection of antique funeral and embalming equipment, embalming tools from the Civil War and later, funeral photographs,

manuals and various coffins."

Ward said he knew he wanted to pursue a career in funeral service by age nine. "In this part of the country, undertakers were highly regarded and respected pillars of the community," he said. "Some were considered heroes in the areas they served, so I aspired to do and be the same thing."

Ward worked as an embalmer and funeral director for 40 years and prefers to be called "an undertaker." Trained at the California College of Mortuary Science in Los Angeles, where he graduated in 1967, he has been licensed for more than 50 years...and although he retired in 2001, he still helps out at Speaks Chapel in Independence, Missouri.

"I've been a history buff since I was a kid," the affable undertaker confessed. He has authored several books about one of his favorite subjects, the Civil War when embalming first happened in the United States.

At one point, Ward dreamed of opening

a stand-alone museum, but in the interim, dedicated parts of his home to display his growing collection and began offering guided tours to the public by appointment.

A popular part of his collection is an embalming surgeon's kit from the Civil War, including all the tools, pumps, jars and equipment an embalmer would need anywhere... in a home or in the embalmer's tent near a battlefield.

"These instruments are important because they marked the beginning of the country's adoption of embalming in funeral service," Ward pointed out. "This was a milestone for our profession."

Coffins, Kits and More!, Ward's 2007 book, marks this point in the evolution of embalming by saying, "It was unheard of, except in medical schools. It was also very dangerous for the embalmer because of the chemicals they used.

"The Civil War threw a whole new loop into it because the parents of soldiers killed in that war wanted their boys brought home, so they had to figure out how to do that."

Representatives from the Houston museum arrived at his home recently – on his birthday, specifically – to catalogue and remove the collection, which took Ward some 15 years to amass. "But there were so many pieces, they will have to make a second trip later this fall," he explained.

"Yes, it was an emotional day for me," admitted Ward, who is a grief counselor for St. Mark's Catholic Church in Independence, "but I know the Houston museum is the place it should be. I didn't want to sell it; I wanted to donate it. And it will stay all together."

Genevieve Keeney, the museum's president and chief operating officer, said Ward first reached out several years ago to ask about the museum carrying his book *Coffins, Kits, And More!* about the early history of embalming. It has sold well in the gift shop, she said.

Last year, Ward contacted her again about



potentially donating the collection, and they finalized an arrangement a few months ago. Keeney, who was in Independence with museum manager Lucy Gonzalez and Keeney's father, Larry Hoefler, said she's thrilled to receive Ward's collection.

"He has so many unique pieces we don't have, and he has so many pieces that we'll integrate into our existing collection," Keeney said. "He'll have a scavenger hunt when he comes to the museum, finding his stuff."

After Ward graduated from mortuary school in Los Angeles, he moved back to Missouri and owned funeral homes in Chilhowee and Urich before selling them in 1991 and moving to Independence, where he began working at Speaks.

Among the highlights of Ward's collection: the embalming machine used at George C. Carson Funeral Home for President Harry Truman. It was retired out of respect after that job, and Ward found it stored away and covered when Speaks bought the Carson facility. The former Reppert-Brown Funeral Home in Buckner, now Speaks-Buckner Chapel and reportedly the oldest continuously operated funeral home west of the Mississippi River (since 1868), provided many of the oldest artifacts. The collection includes the 1895 embalming license for that funeral home's founder, Chase Henthorn.

In addition to embalming equipment and caskets, Ward also had wicker carrying baskets used in the 19th century to transport bodies to the embalmer, direction and orders for funerals of Truman, President Franklin Roosevelt and Jesse James and death masks of Robert E. Lee and Napoleon Bonaparte.

A custom-made replica Civil War-era glass-top, pine coffin will remain with the collection's donor, selected by Ward for himself when he dies. "I plan to have my urn sitting on top of it," he explained. "It's one of my favorite pieces."

The undertaker said he had gotten calls from the History TV Channel's American

Pickers, who wanted to base one of their shows on his collection, but Ward didn't want the collection disassembled, piece by piece, so he turned down their offer.

In his research, the amateur historian said he has found approximately 50,000 books written about the Civil War, but he didn't find one about embalming during the war, and that's when his collection started. Obviously, his collection are products of his two big loves – history and funeral service.

His wife has been supportive and understanding of that, helping welcome the small tour groups that arrived from all parts of the country over the years to view the collection (free but by appointment).

"I enjoyed it (leading tours of the collec-

tion) thoroughly," he said. "I enjoyed meeting people; I had them coming from all over."

Funeral director Lee Ward's funeral collection will now be displayed at the National Museum of Funeral History in Houston.

"I know I'm going to have some seller's remorse, although I'm not actually selling it." But to save his children from having to deal with his collectables – and in an effort to keep his collection intact – he's donating the collection to the National Museum of Funeral History in Houston. "I took comfort that day, knowing that everything was going to a good home for others to enjoy." ★

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Texas, Oklahoma Educators Collaborate on Cremation Book

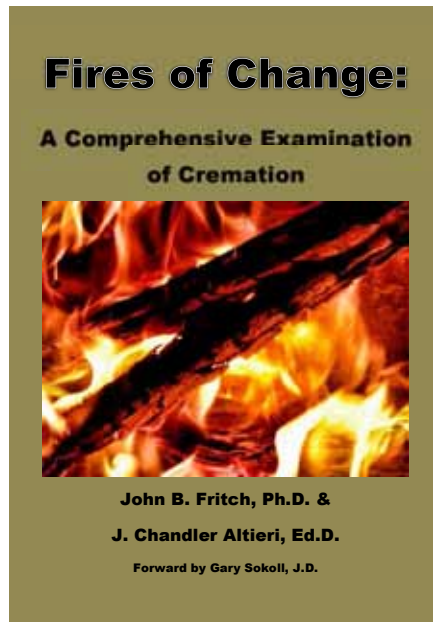
By Alice Adams

Jason Altieri, EdD, president of Commonwealth Institute in Houston, and John Fritch, EdD, chair of the mortuary science program at the University of Central Oklahoma, first met as undergraduate students at UCO. As educators, they have maintained their friendship. While at UCO, they also shared a mentor, long-time faculty member Gary Sokoll.

As Altieri remembered, “We were working on special project in New Jersey several years ago, one evening – after a long day – John and I were visiting in the hotel lobby when the conversation turned to funeral service education. It became obvious that cremation really stood out.”

“As we talked further, it became obvious neither of us could think of one comprehensive cremation text out there we were comfortable with,” Altieri remembered.

“By the end of conversation, we had a rough outline, literally on the back of a napkin, of what we needed to do,” Fritch added, “so when we returned home, we started working on the new book immediately. The



result was *Fires of Change: A Comprehensive Examination of Cremation*.”

“In the past, the books on cremation consisted primarily of a lot of technical information, a lot of history, but no one had written

about the impact of cremation on funeral service this past two decades,” Altieri pointed out, “so it was clear we needed a comprehensive look at cremation at all levels.”

The educators’ common goal was simple to describe, more difficult to achieve. “We wanted, we needed, to put something together that was well-researched,” Fritch explained, “and it had to be well-documented.”

The two authors were well aware of the challenges they faced. “We had to walk that line between a well-researched book and a salable final product that would be accessible to a wide audience,” Fritch said. “We wanted a book to be appropriate for students, funeral service professionals and the general public.

After writing, re-writing and proof-reading the manuscript, the two found a publisher, the Funeral Service Education Resource Center. The book, *Fires of Change*, has been welcomed by students and professionals, alike. (Available at fserc.com.)

“Interestingly enough, we’re getting more feedback, particularly from consumers, and their comments have been overwhelmingly positive,” Altieri said. “It makes both of us feel good to know we have produced the quality product we both had envisioned that night in the hotel...and, as the cremation market is changing so rapidly, we’re already planning a revised edition.”

So what’s the biggest mistake funeral directors make when it comes to cremation?

Altieri spoke first: “It still goes back to believing cremation is selected due to cost,” he said.

“So many families still need to be educated about cremation and the meaningful ways cremation can be included in the funeral process,” Fritch added. “Funeral service is strong in its traditions. However, the many variables of the process emerge when there are so many unique details and aspects the family brings through that door.”

The two are also planning their next project; a book on funeral directing...probably not on the back of a napkin. ★

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Reasons to Consider EPLI Coverage

By Mike Petty



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Understanding Employment Practices Liability Insurance

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Mike Petty is with Houston Insurance Co. in Katy, Texas.



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Regulations Broaden Who's Covered Under ADA

By Michelle Diamant



The U.S. Department of Justice is issuing new regulations significantly expanding who's covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In a final rule published in August in the Federal Register, the agency is clarifying that those with everything from cancer to diabetes, epilepsy, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities and other conditions should be protected under the ADA.

The regulations cement changes that Congress made when it passed the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Justice Department said.

"In response to earlier Supreme Court decisions that significantly narrowed the application of the definition of 'disability' under the ADA, Congress enacted the ADA Amendments Act to restore the understanding that the definition of 'disability' shall be broadly construed and applied

without extensive analysis," the rule states.

Technically, the ADA Amendments Act is already in effect, but publishing the updated regulations will eliminate confusion about what the law calls for and how it should be applied, the Justice Department said.

"This final rule clarifies Congress' original mandate that eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities requires an expansive definition of what disability means and who the law covers," said Vanita Gupta, head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department's regulation sets forth clear new rules, new examples and detailed guidance to ensure that courts, covered entities and people with disabilities better understand the ADA Amendments Act."

The new regulations will officially take effect on October 11th. ★

This article appeared in the Aug. 15th issue of the Disability Scoop.

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Funeral Directors Life was recently certified as a great workplace by the independent analysts at Great Place to Work®. Funeral Directors Life earned this credential based on extensive ratings provided by its employees in anonymous surveys administered by the workplace culture experts at Great Place to Work®. A summary of these ratings can be found at <http://reviews.greatplacetowork.com/funeral-directors-life>.

"It is an honor to be certified as a great workplace by the reviewers at Great Place to Work®," said Kris Seale, President and CEO at Funeral Directors Life. "In fact, one of our primary objectives as a company is to be known as a great place to work! At Funeral

Directors Life, we try to create an environment where employees feel honored, valued, and appreciated both personally and professionally. But all the programs in the world can't take the place of hiring great people. I am very fortunate to work with some of the best people I know, and they are truly what make this company great."

New Aftercare Packet for Pet Loss Now Available

Companion Press announces the publication of a new aftercare packet entitled "After Your Pet Dies: Helping Yourself Heal," by renowned grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

Designed for veterinary offices, pet cemeteries, therapists, and other death and loss professionals to provide to their grieving clients, the 12-page booklet affirms pet lovers' grief and helps them understand and express their normal and necessary feelings. The booklet also contains a list of pet-loss bereavement organizations and support groups as well as a selected reading list.

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado. The author of *When Your Pet Dies: A Guide to Mourning, Remem-*

bering, and *Healing* and many other books for grief caregivers and mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well.

"After Your Pet Dies" can be purchased in small quantities or in bulk for organizational use. To order a sample copy and to learn more about Dr. Wolfelt's books on grief and loss, visit www.centerforloss.com.

Selected Independent Funeral Homes Educational Trust Welcomes New Board Members



Paul St. Pierre

Lisa Groff

AJ Asta

Selected Independent Funeral Homes Educational Trust announced the selection of two new members of its Board of Trustees to fill positions that were vacated. Also announced is one interim Trustee to replace a position vacated early. The new Trustees will officially assume their roles on September 14, 2016, at the Educational Trust

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Annual Gala at the Grand Floridian Resort and Spa in Orlando. The event takes place during the 98th Annual Meeting of Selected Independent Funeral Homes.

Paul C. St. Pierre is a sixth generation Funeral Director, and President of Wilson St. Pierre Funeral Service & Crematory in Indianapolis, IN and Brown-Butz-Diedring Funeral Service & Crematory in Anderson, IN.

Elizabeth "Lisa" Groff is the President and Licensed Supervisor of The Groffs Funeral Home and is the fourth generation of funeral directors serving the Lancaster, PA community.

Al Asta has joined as an interim one-year Board Trustee to replace Michael "Tripp" Carter, who had to vacate his position. Asta is COO of Johnson Consulting Group and General Manager of Whitney & Murphy Funeral Home in Phoenix, AZ, and has worked with hundreds of funeral homes throughout the US and Canada and has already stepped into his role.

The entire 2016 Board of Trustees includes Cade C. Williamson, Thomas R. Morris, Lawrence Shildmeier Sr., Greg Cannon, Bob Hoaglund, Al Asta and Robert J. Paterkiewicz, Administrative Trustee.

Service Corporation International Announces \$40 Million Investment in Texas

Service Corporation International, North America's largest provider of funeral and cemetery services, and its brand Dignity Memorial®, announced a \$40.9 million investment in new, upgraded and expanded facilities in cities across Texas including Dallas/Ft. Worth, El Paso, Houston, the Rio Grande Valley and Austin. These initiatives are part of the company's ongoing commitment to the communities served by SCI and reinforce its core values of innovation and service excellence.

SCI Texas investment projects include:

- Dallas/Ft. Worth – Two new projects are scheduled for the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. A new development is planned for Laurel Land Memorial Park in Dallas featuring a new 21,000-square-foot funeral home. Additionally, Dignity Memorial is expanding its footprint in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area with the new 8,000-square-foot Keller Funeral Home, to be completed by the end of 2016.

- El Paso – The city of El Paso's largest cemetery, Evergreen East, is in the development phase of a new funeral home, scheduled to be completed by late 2016.

Memorial Funeral Home Donates \$10,000 to the Laurie P. Andrews PAWS Center

Memorial Funeral Home of San Juan and Edinburg presented The Laurie P. Andrews PAWS Center with a contribution of \$10,000 towards their capital campaign and are proud sponsors of the Fire Hydrant Statue where rescue stories will be featured.



Located at 2451 N. U.S. Expressway 281 in Edinburg, PAWS is a one of a kind animal welfare facility with state of the art kennels, public dog parks, an in-house spay and neuter clinic, and an education smart room.

The 10,700-square-foot building will be located near the entrance of the cemetery and will make it the first SCI/Dignity Memorial property to feature both a cemetery and funeral home in El Paso. Current plans for Evergreen Cemetery, located on Alameda Avenue, include a renovation of the existing office property.

- Houston – Pat H. Foley, Forest Park Lawndale, American Heritage, Chapel of Eternal Peace, Forest Park Westheimer and Pasadena Funeral Home have recently or will undergo renovations to their facilities. In addition, parking facilities at Katy Funeral Home have been expanded.

- Rio Grande Valley – Extensive development planned for the Rio Grande Valley includes the construction of three new funeral homes and expansion of one existing location. The development of a

10,700-square-foot funeral home for Palm Valley Memorial Gardens in McAllen is currently underway and will include two chapels, a grand lobby, three arrangement rooms and business offices. Construction of a new funeral home and paved roads at Highland Memorial Park in Weslaco has just been completed while construction of a new funeral home and offices at Roselawn Memorial Park in Harlingen will be completed in 2016. Funeraria Del Angel's Valley Memorial Gardens in Mission will be expanded to include a new 3,000-square-foot chapel and offices while Restlawn Memorial Park near Weslaco and Mont Meta Memorial Park near Cameron will feature newly paved roads.

- Austin – A facility renovation is scheduled for Cook-Walden Capital Parks Funeral Home in Austin.



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Adams

As a new day dawned on his beloved Austin and just hours before his 82nd birthday, Ron Adams crossed the finish line of this life on July 20, 2016...and immediately began his next race and adventure. Ron is the loving husband to Alice Adams, longtime writer and editor for this publication.

A life-long athlete, Ron was born July 21, 1934, to O. D. and Myrtle Gober Adams in San Angelo, Texas, the oldest of four children. He spent his younger years in Early, Texas, before his family moved to Brownwood.

A good student, Ron also excelled in sports from an early age, regularly earning accolades as a stand-out tackle and playing both offense and defense for the "Mighty Fightin' Brownwood Lions' football team. His success on the gridiron led to a scholarship to play for the San Angelo College

Rams, where Ron had the honor of playing for the legendary Coach Max Bumgardner, along with Grant Teaff, Ben Kelly and Spike Dykes, among others. During his years at SAC, Ron played in the Junior College National Championship Bowl and earned honors as a Junior College All-American.

He completed his teaching degree and a bachelor of science in mathematics at Howard Payne College in Brownwood before beginning his career as a football and track coach. He spent 35 years as an educator and coach with assignments at LeFores, Panchandle, Canyon, Temple, Beeville, Bishop and Spring. He retired in 1991 as an administrator for the Spring ISD, culminating what he saw as his lifelong calling to serve as a role model, mentor and friend to young people around the state.

Ron was a marathoner, ultra-marathoner

and competed in the National Senior Games in Syracuse, Tucson, Houston and Baton Rouge, LA, where he garnered national standings in age-group triathlon, cycling, discus and shot put, and traveled the country, training triathlon officials to expand triathlon opportunities in every state.

In 1991, he met and married journalist Alice Ann Berthelsen of Houston, the woman who became his best friend, confidante, partner in adventure and the love of his life.

The couple moved to Austin in 1998, where they enjoyed UT football, local politics, music, theatre and film, international travel and spending time with their beloved grandchildren.

Ron was an enthusiastic member of Austin's infamous Yeller Dawg Democrats weekly discussion group and actively supported a number of political candidates. Had he lived to election day 2016, he would have enthusiastically cast his vote for Hillary.

He was a member of the NAACP, NOW, Texas High School Coaches Association, Texas Teachers organizations and Triathlon USA. He and Alice were members of Texas Exes, the Texas Historical Society, TFN, PFLAG, NARAL and the Travis County Democratic Party.

Using the 'can do' attitude, discipline and the 'never quit' ethic he learned in sports, Ron battled Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia for 17 years. However, in spite of the indignities of older age, this true gentleman's spirit and goodness never flagged and his enthusiasm for life never waned.

Ron is survived by his loving wife and partner of 24 years, sons Kevin, Jeff and Erik and daughter Kristin. He also is survived by his grandchildren Emma, Walter, Jackson and Mary Berthelsen of Dripping Springs



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and Erik and Erika of Dallas. Also his brothers Shelby (Pat) Adams of Ft. Worth, Fred (Debbie) Adams of New Braunfels, his sister Sharon (Gray) Derbonne of Keatchie, Louisiana and his beloved Aunt Inez Lack of Brownwood as well as numerous cousins, nephews and a niece and many loving and like-minded friends.

His family wishes to thank Dr. Carsten Kampe, Ron's unbelievably talented oncologist and friend for 17 years at Texas Oncology South. We also are eternally grateful to Rick and the incredible team of nurses and patient care techs of St. David's South Austin Medical Center's 3 Central who surrounded Ron and Alice with compassionate caring, tremendous expertise and love, the St. David's staff – especially Versy and Vickie of Housekeeping – who made it possible for Alice to accompany Ron every step of the way on his final journey, the Hospice Austin team and Joel of Our Home Care for providing gentleness and caring for this amazing man.

A celebration of Ron's life and a tribute to his legacy will be held at a later date. His funeral will be under the direction of Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home in Austin.

Coker

John Wesley Coker was born on January 13, 1934 in Angelina County, Texas, the only surviving son of John Moore Coker and Corean Mary Squyres, and he passed away peacefully at his home in New Braunfels, on August 16, 2016, at the age of 82.

John was a man of high integrity and character, a leader and true business professional. While his illustrious sales and marketing career included over eight years as the President, CEO, and Trust Officer of a bank in Woodville, Texas, the majority of John's work was in the service to the funeral industry in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and New Mexico. John's service included 20 years with Texas Coffin Co., two and one-half years as the Executive Director of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, eight years as Executive Vice President of Affiliated Funeral Supply, two years as the Director of Corporate Development for Funeral Directors Life Insurance Company, fourteen years as an independent sales agent for the Deaton-Kennedy Company and his last three years as an independent agent for Messenger Stationery Products.

John also served for many years as a Board Member and President of the Golf Associa-

tion of Morticians and Salesmen.

Overall John's career defined the true meaning of customer service, business ethics, professionalism and plain hard work. In addition to his career, John was also a 32nd Degree Mason-Shriner and member of the Royal Order of The Jesters, Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

John Coker's highly successful business career did not and will never overshadow the lifetime of love, dedication, selflessness, and sacrifice he gave to his family, his friends, and his God. John deeply loved his wife Judy without fail for 63 years. He rarely missed an event or function his children participated in. He served in every church he attended and instilled faith in Christ in his kids. He gave to the poor and was kind to strangers. John Coker loved his grandkids with unbridled passion and he was a fun-loving, loyal and supportive friend to many.

John's grandkids describe "Gramps" best: "the ultimate jokester, full of surprises, unwavering in support and encouragement, godly, selfless and caring, unconditionally loving, infectious warm, the kindest man I've ever known, truly adored, and an inspiration to all."

John is survived by his wife Judy, his son

Steve and wife Joni, his daughter Debbie and husband Kenny, and his four grandchildren, John Wylie, Kyle, Katherine, and William. There will never be another like big, John Coker. He will be dearly missed, but he will be seen again in heaven, where he has received his inheritance and reward, no doubt with the words from his Savior, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

A visitation was held at OakCrest Funeral Home in Waco, TX on August 18, with funeral services on August 19. Interment followed at Waco Memorial Park. The family requests any memorial gifts be directed to either Tejas Cowboy Church – P.O. Box 193 Bulverde, TX 78163 or St. Paul's Episcopal School – 517 Columbus Ave. Waco, TX 76701. OakCrest Funeral Home provided the funeral direction.

Jamison

Curtis Raye Jamison, 86, completed her work on earth, August 18, 2016. She was born August 25, 1929 to the late Curtis Johnson and Effie Frances White.

She graduated from Asberry High School in Yoakum in 1946. She married M.C. Jamison May 20, 1948 and moved to San Antonio where she worked at Kelly and Lackland

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AFB, then with the Civil Service. She became the mother of five children, Karen, Michael, Lorna, Pamela and Maurice and in her spare time, went to college to obtain her Nursing Home Administration Certification.

In 1990 she returned to school to become a funeral director. She was a talented and studious person; having served on the Yoakum Heritage Museum Board, Yoakum, Housing Authority, City Council, Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, Governor's Regional Review Committee, DeWitt County Juvenile Probation Advisory Board, past-President of Yoakum Asberry Alumni Association, Campus Improvement Committee at the Intermediate School Level, DeWitt County Youth Advisory Board and guest writer for the Yoakum Herald Times Newspaper, writing "A View From My Side of the Porch". In 2005 she was honored with the Paul F. Gustwick Award from the Yoakum Chamber of Commerce for her outstanding service to make Yoakum a better place for generations and is a Honorary Rotarian receiving the Paul Harris Award in 2013.

Mrs. J allowed God to use her hands, her

time and her vision to help provide a safe place for young children to go after school, to continue to learn, to grow and to provide them with a greater opportunity to become outstanding citizens by example. She served as the director of the Jamison Youth Center for 18 years. She helped mold our youth with great aspirations and educational opportunities. She also became a foster mother to many children including, Gregory Price and Al Hamilton.

She served the Lord all the days of her life. It was clear through her exceptional morals and loving character that she was deeply committed to her church and Her God. She was a faithful member of St. James AME Church in Yoakum and Bethel AME Church in Shiner. She served as Steward, Treasurer of the Church and the Pianist. She was a Nursing Home Administrator for 21 years and owner/operator of Jamison Funeral Home until closing in 2014, when she went to work at Thiele-Cooper Funeral Home.

Survivors are her daughters, Lorna Jamison, Pamela Chapman and beloved daughter-in-law, Camellia Jamison; son, Maurice Jamison;

10 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren; Aunts Erma White, Willie Mae Brown and Gerthyl Dickerson and her faithful companion her puppy "PIP".

Preceded in death by her parents; husband, M.C. Jamison; daughter, Dr. Karen Jamison; son Michael Jamison.

Visitation was held August 24, 2016 at Thiele Cooper Funeral Home.

Funeral services were held August 25, 2016 at the Yoakum Community Center with Rev. Andrea Brooks and Rev. Lawrence Hall officiating. Burial followed at Yoakum Restland Cemetery.

Pallbearers included her grandsons David Armstrong, Quincy Chapman, Justin Williams, Jaquainte Flowers, Donovan Chapman and Nicholas Clearlake.

Honorary pallbearers were Craig Harrison, Danny Morales, Finley James Jr., David Houston, Terrace Hall, Jerry Dilworth, Kecia Jones and all the past and present students of the Youth Center.

Memorials may be given to Jamison Youth Center or Bethel AME Church.

Arrangements were entrusted to Thiele Cooper Funeral Home and Victoria Mortuary.

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2016		
September		
13 Tu	East Texas Meeting	Tyler
13 Tu	TFSC (Commission) Meeting	Austin
15 Th	Southeast Texas Meeting	Humble
21, 22	South Texas Meeting	S. Padre Island
October		
4 Tu	The Gathering	Wolfe City
13 Th	North Texas Meeting	TBD
18 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
19 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
23-26	NFDA Convention	Philadelphia
December		
12	Wreaths Across America	Austin
13 Tu	TFSC (Commission) Meeting	Austin
2017		
January		
17 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
18 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
18 W	Membership Committee Mtg.	Austin
18 W	Membership Phone-A-Thon	Austin
19 Th	Membership Phone-A-Thon	Austin
March		
30 Th	South Central Meeting	TBD
April		
18 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
19 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
June		
4-7	TFDA Convention	Austin
October		
24 Tu	TFDA Services, Inc. Board	Austin
25 W	TFDA Board Meeting	Austin
29 - Nov 1	NFDA Convention	Boston, MA

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Patricia Huber

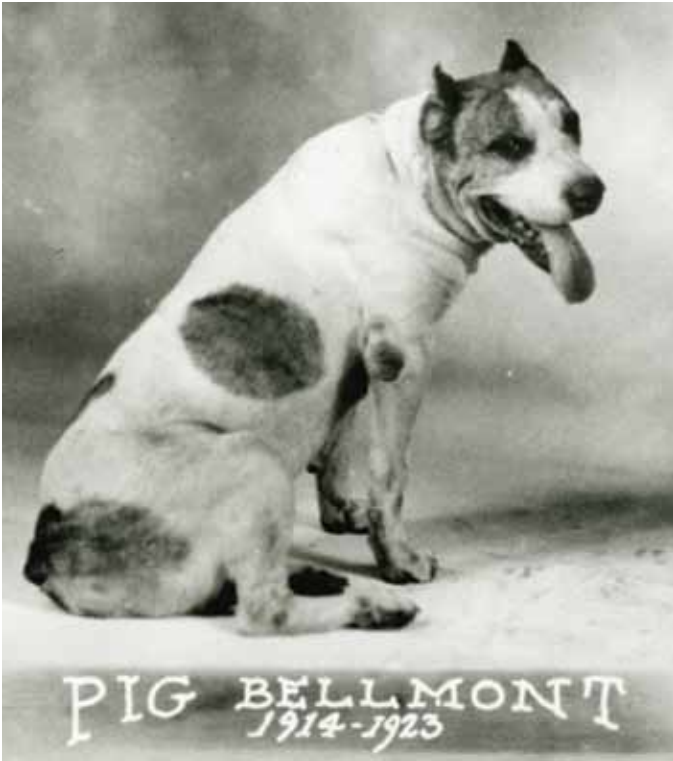
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The Death and Funeral for UT's First Mascot: Pig Belmont



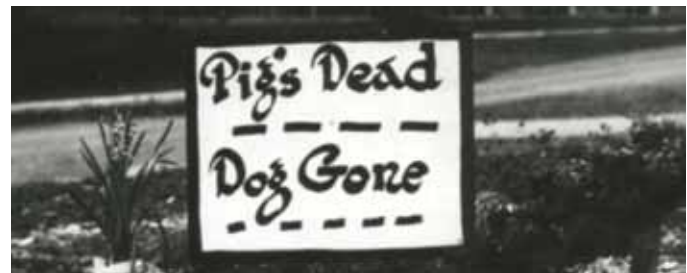
Before a Texas Longhorn was selected as The University of Texas' mascot, Texas students named Pig Belmont as their rival to Texas A&M's Collie, Reveille. Pig was the longtime pet of L. Theo Belmont (1881-1967), athletic director, professor of physical training and men's basketball head coach at UT.

According to *Alcalde* magazine, Pig was born in Houston, Feb. 10, 1914. He'd follow his human to work daily and was named for Gus "Pig" Dittmar, who played center for the 'Horns. On New Year's Day,

1923, the mascot was hit by a Model T at the corner of 24th and Guadalupe streets, always a treacherous intersection.

"He was only injured," UT historian Jim Nicar remembered, "but no one realized how seriously until his body was found two days later. Pig's death was a tragic event on campus, and the students decided to pay a final, fitting tribute to their beloved canine friend."

On Friday, Jan. 5, the pup's body lay in state in front of the University Co-Op. Then,



at 5 p.m., a funeral procession – led by the Varsity Band – marched south to 21st Street, then east to the old Law Building, where the Graduate School of Business is located.

Serving as pallbearers were the members of a newly-

formed organization called the Texas Cowboys.

This article is based on a July 2, 2016 article published in the *Austin American-Statesman* by Michael Barnes. The historic photographs are courtesy AustinFound.blog. ★

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