

**Does Customer  
Service Still Exist?**

.....

**Waco's  
Greenwood Cemetery  
Desegregated**

.....

**Psalm of the Locusts:  
A Heavenly Benediction**



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1513 South Interstate 35  
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512/442-2304  
Fax: 512/443-3559  
www.tfda.com

### STAFF

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Ann Singer**  
ann@tfda.com

#### MEMBER AND REGIONAL SERVICES

**Joyce Dawson**  
joyce@tfda.com

#### FINANCE

**Karen Grice**  
karen@tfda.com

#### LOBBYIST

**Bill Haley**  
bhaley1@gmail.com

### PUBLISHER

**Sail House Publishing**  
3510 Crowncrest Dr.,  
Austin, TX 78759  
512-346-0892  
kscheberle@austin.rr.com

#### PUBLISHER

**Kim Scheberle**

#### EDITOR

**Alice Adams**

#### ART DIRECTOR/DESIGNER

**Kiki Pantaze**

#### ADVERTISING SALES

**Patty Huber**  
512-310-9795  
210-579-7054 - Fax  
phuber2@austin.rr.com

## COVER FEATURE



The Forgotten Mourners:  
How Children Deal with the  
Loss of a Loved One

10

## FEATURES

|                                                                                                                |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>EMERGING LEADERS: Meet Aaron King</b> .....                                                                 | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>The Stages of Grief Misinterpreted</b> .....                                                                | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Customer Service: Does It Still Exist?</b> .....                                                            | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Psalm of the Locusts: A Heavenly Benediction</b> .....                                                      | <b>22</b> |
| <b>National Museum of Funeral History Commemorates<br/>15th Anniversary of 9/11 with Special Exhibit</b> ..... | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Waco's Greenwood Cemetery Desegregated</b> .....                                                            | <b>26</b> |
| <b>REMEMBERING A LIFE:<br/>One Woman Cemetery in the Middle of the Road</b> .....                              | <b>38</b> |

## EDUCATION

|                                              |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>WORKPLACE/Dealing with Slackers</b> ..... | <b>28</b> |
| <b>WORKPLACE/The Texas Flag Bill</b> .....   | <b>30</b> |

## DEPARTMENTS

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| President's Message .....  | 4      |
| TFDA Leadership .....      | 6      |
| Director News .....        | 10, 32 |
| Community News .....       | 32     |
| Vendor News .....          | 34     |
| Endorsed Providers .....   | 35     |
| TFDA Services Inc. ....    | 36     |
| Index to Advertisers ..... | 37     |
| Calendar of Events .....   | 37     |

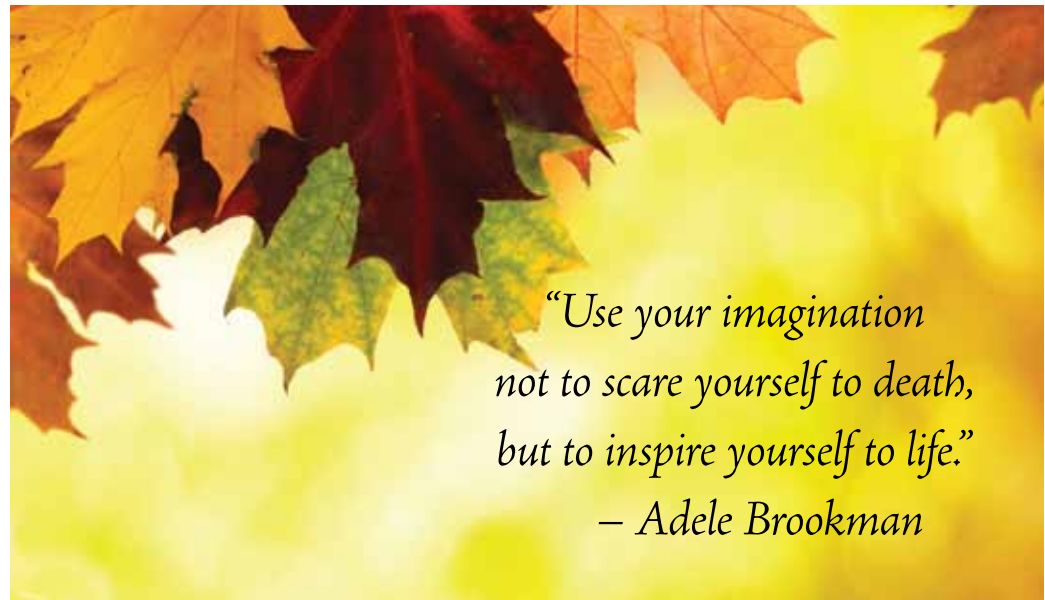




## Step into Service this Fall Season

I would like to say Happy Fall, Y'all, but with the temperature still hovering in the high 90s it just does not seem appropriate! If you are like me, you are ready to kick summer to the curb and begin enjoying some of those wonderfully cool evenings the fall season provides for us.

As you know, September was when the regional meetings began, and by the time you read this we will have had the East, Southeast, and South Texas regional meetings. Congratulations to President Jeremy Cameron and the East Texas Board, he said the meeting was very good and their speaker was David Leary from the Texas State Department of Health Services. He mainly wanted to meet with the directors and get to know them because of what all we can do to help him out. During the Ebola epidemic, he drove the blood back and forth to Austin. Personally, I think, that took some real courage! Thanks to all of the regions for their hospitality and for putting forth the effort to have fun and informative meetings. I look forward to attending the remaining regional meetings, as well as The Gathering this month. I really want to encourage each region to invite guests to be a part of their meetings. Building up our attendance and our membership is very important to the success of TFDA. I also want to remind the regions that their donations to PAC are very much needed. This is a legislative year and Senator Haley is working very hard to make sure our voices are being heard.



*“Use your imagination  
not to scare yourself to death,  
but to inspire yourself to life.”  
— Adele Brookman*

This month is the NFDA convention in Philadelphia and Charlie and I are really looking forward to attending. Not only will it be a great time to reconnect with past acquaintances, but I look forward to visiting a place rich with our country's history, especially during the changing of all the colors to fall. I hope all of you who are members of NFDA took time to vote in their election in August. We will experience a first at NFDA this year, no House of Delegates and just an Installation Ceremony. I will be sure to give an update in my article next month.

I want to invite all of you to attend our Wreaths Across America ceremony on the South steps of the State Capitol Building in Austin on Monday, December 12th at 11 a.m. Our special guest this year will be Taya Kyle, the widow of decorated Navy Seal Chris Kyle, and in addition to laying a wreath at

the State Capitol, we will have a procession to the State Cemetery where she will also lay a wreath at her husband's grave. I really want to have a good turnout for this event and we are going to need additional volunteers to help with this event this year since we have added an element to it. Please contact either myself or the ladies at the TFDA office if you would like to volunteer.

It is hard to believe that I already have three months as your president behind me, time certainly flies! I want to encourage all of you to reach out to me with any concerns that you are facing in your firm or in our industry, that is what the Texas Funeral Directors Association is here for! I will do my best to help in any way I can!

I want to extend a big congratulation to one of our past presidents of TFDA, Velma Sue DeLeon. She was honored by the Rio Grande Valley His-

panic Chamber of Commerce with the “Woman of Distinction” award. Congratulations to you, Velma Sue, on a well deserved award!

This being the month of Halloween causes me to reflect on this holiday growing up as a kid in the funeral business (I know some of you can relate)! I always had fun dressing up and I was fortunate to live in a small town where it was safe to Trick or Treat, BUT, the most fun I had was working in the First United Methodist Church Haunted House. For some reason, they always chose for me to lie in the casket and scare everyone as they came by. I probably did not appreciate it enough back then, but I now know how fortunate I was to grow up in small town America. So, in honor of this holiday I will leave you with the above quote.

Don't let those ghouls and goblins get you!

See you next month! ★



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c.robertson@amaonline.com



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Victoria, TX 77901  
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1306 West Main  
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(979) 836-4565  
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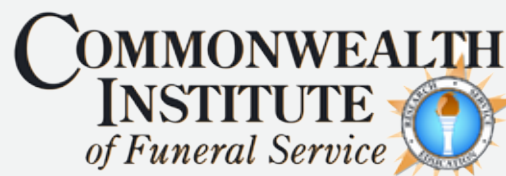
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

415 Barren Springs Dr.

Houston, TX 77090

(800)628-1580

(281)873-0262





## Aaron King



D. Aaron King, CFSP, is funeral director and superintendent at Oak Grove Memorial Gardens in Irving.

Born June 13, 1985 at Irving Community Hospital, Aaron graduated from Winfree Academy in Irving in 2004 and attended Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. He is 31 and was licensed in 2009.

He and Brandie have been married for 12 years, and are the proud parents of four children: Cade, 11, Addie, 8, Layne, 4, and Stevie, 2.

**Why did you choose funeral service?** I had the opportunity to work in a funeral home before I graduated from high school, so funeral service became a profession I wouldn't be able to walk away from. It became clear that it wasn't just a job, it had become a calling.

**Memorable mentor?** Austin Raney. He

inspired me so much with his love and compassion for his families. I have never seen one director loved by so many families in the community and make such an impact as he did. Not only his families, but among his peers as well. I have always told myself, if I can be half of what he was to the families that I have been chosen to serve, I just might make it.

**What would you add to what you learned in mortuary school?** Never be afraid to be yourself. Love on your families, treat them as your own, hold a hand, hug a neck, and always be available.

**Service you'll never forget?** I was standing next to the front pew of Calvary Church. As the family all walked by the casket for the last time, the son stopped until everyone had exited the sanctuary. Only he and I remained. He stood by the side of his father's casket, put his hand on his father's shoulder and said, "Dad; THANK YOU, thank you for all that you have done for me, and thank you for all that you have taught me, and I know that I will see you again. I love you, Dad." And he walked on. I have never felt such power in this profession as I did that day. I'd be lying if I said my eyes didn't water.

**Biggest surprise about funeral service?** Tomorrow will never go as you have planned it, and everyday people will continue to amaze you. Never let your guard down.

**Why you joined TFDA?** I joined TFDA because, as some of you may know, as a student in mortuary school, TFDA will give you a 1 year free membership. So I took advantage of that not only to secure my own pathway of

membership outside of my firm, but also to gain a personal identity and become another means of giving back to TFDA.

**What I get most from being a member of TFDA?** Fellowship, friendship, and support from the people who care the most in this profession and are here, as I am, to support the families we serve.

**Favorite sport, hobby or pastime?** I love almost anything outdoors: hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, landscaping, there is just so much to do.

**What do you see as the greatest reward of being a director?** When you give this profession everything that you have to give, and you take a family that has nothing more to give, and hold them close, and lead them down the path of respect and healing, that is what is worth hanging your hat on at the end of the day. Service Above Self.

**Greatest challenge facing directors today?** Uncaring directors who join this profession for a job and not a way of life.

**Community memberships, volunteerism, activities?** I am a member of Hope Fellowship Church in Irving, current master of George B. Dealey Masonic Lodge #1312 A.F. & A.M, member of the Irving Ambucs Chapter, committee member of Keep Grand Prairie Beautiful, board member of Dallas County Funeral Directors Association, serve on the Advisory Board for Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, and a member of the Texas Cemetery Association and the Texas Turfgrass Association. ★



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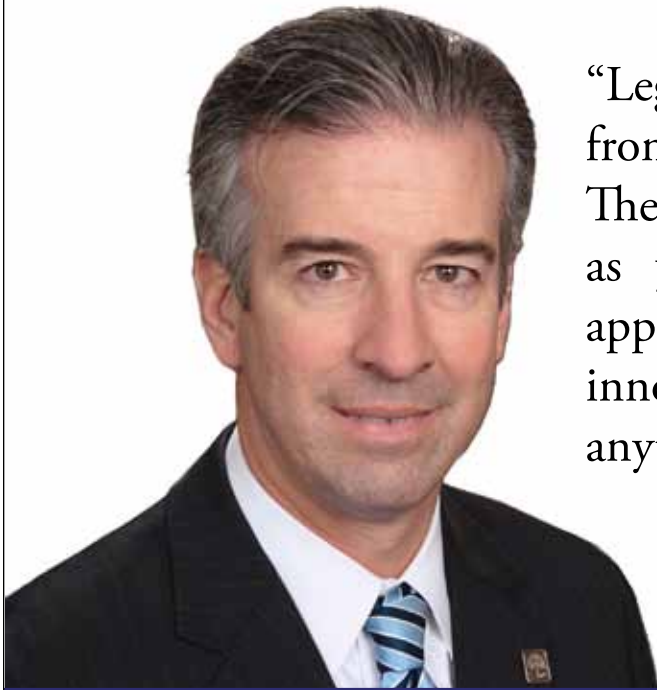
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### Know an Emerging Leader?

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](mailto:kscheberle@austin.rr.com).





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*For questions on how to join our family of professionals or to find other opportunities to advance in the funeral care industry, please visit our website.*



# CONTEST!

**ATTENTION: All Vendors/Suppliers**

Re: Membership Contest

The membership committee met at the leadership conference a few weeks ago. It was decided to have a Membership Contest between our vendors/suppliers to recruit new members. It was the committee's thinking that suppliers are already calling on funeral establishments and who better than the local sales representative to talk about the association.

The contest starts now and will end April 30, 2017. Our TFDA annual convention will be in Austin from June 4 through June 7, 2017. The winner will be announced at the convention. He or she will receive an award and will be recognized with signage throughout the convention.

See the membership application on the following page.

If you have any questions or need more information, please call Joyce at the TFDA office (512) 442-2304.

Thank you so much.

Let's make this a banner year for TFDA recruitment!



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# 2017 Membership Application

Texas Funeral Directors Association

1513 South Interstate 35, Austin, Texas 78741 (512) 442-2304 Fax (512) 443-3559

Please complete **ONLY ONE** membership section.  Make additional copies if necessary.  See reverse side to calculate dues and determine proper membership category.

Please be sure your information is correct and complete.

**Firm** or  **Commercial Embalmer** Membership

Name of Firm \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Funeral Director in Charge \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Owner/s \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle** Region to have membership applied to: Panhandle, West, South Central, South, North, East, Southeast

Firm Base Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (If you have multiple locations, you only pay the base once.) Commercial Embalmer Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Add \$10 for add'l regions)  
 add Volume \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please attach a separate application for each location. Individual Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Add \$10 for add'l regions)  
 Total 2017 Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Total # adult casketed sales X \$3.00 per sale) Individual (Employee) Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Add \$10 for add'l regions)  
 Estimated annual # of adult casketed sales \_\_\_\_\_ Associate Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (No Charge for additional regions)

To help us maintain accurate records, please supply your annual number of cremations here # \_\_\_\_\_. **Thank you!**

Enclosed is a separate Personal or Partnership check for TFDA-PAC donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Corporation contributions can be applied to the TFDA-PAC Admin account)

**Individual** or  **Associate** Membership

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a licensed funeral director or embalmer?  Yes  No

Funeral Director # \_\_\_\_\_ Embalmer # \_\_\_\_\_

Website Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Link funeral home website.

Dues include one region, if you want to join more than one please indicate which region/s and include \$10.00 for each additional region.

If you desire, your 2017 dues may be paid on one of the following credit cards:

American Express  Visa  
 MasterCard  Discover

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name as Appears on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# 2017 DUES STATEMENT

## MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

| Firm Dues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Case Volume</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Base</b>                        |
| 1 - 150                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Plus \$3.00 per adult casket sales |
| 151 - 300                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Plus \$3.00 per adult casket sales |
| 301 - 600                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Plus \$3.00 per adult casket sales |
| 601 - 2,000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Plus \$3.00 per adult casket sales |
| 2,001 & up                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Plus \$3.00 per adult casket sales |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | \$50,000 - Maximum fee             |
| <p>How to calculate dues:<br/>           If you have only one location, simply determine the base for your case volume, and multiply the adult casket sales by \$3.00. Please indicate the base and volume in the space provided on the front side of the application.</p> <p>If you have more than one location, make enough copies for each location. Determine the base by the cases served at your largest volume location. For that location only, the dues are the base plus the cases multiplied by \$3.00. On all the additional locations, simply multiply the cases served at that location by \$3.00. You may submit one payment for all locations, or you may send separate payments for each location.</p> |                                    |
| <b>Commercial Embalming Establishment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>\$575</b>                       |
| <b>Individual Membership</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>\$150</b>                       |
| <b>Individual (Employee) Membership</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>\$ 80</b>                       |
| <b>Associate Membership</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>\$195</b>                       |
| <p><b>Payment Plan Available:</b><br/>           Please call the TFDA office (512) 442-2304<br/>           for a payment plan that will accommodate your needs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |

**Firm Membership** – Applicant must be duly licensed and own or operate a funeral establishment. Where more than one member establishment is operated by the same ownership, dues shall be determined by **total adult casket sales**. If you need assistance in calculating dues, please call TFDA off 512/442-2304

**Commercial Embalmer Membership** – Applicant must be duly licensed and own or operate a commercial embalming establishment. Where more than one member establishment is operated by the same ownership, dues shall be determined independently.

**Individual Membership** – Any licensed funeral director and/or embalmer by a member firm who does not qualify for an establishment membership is eligible for membership in this category. Any licensed funeral director and/or embalmer not employed by a licensed funeral establishment also is eligible for membership in this category. You are **not** eligible to join as an individual if you are the FDIC, Owner or Manager of a funeral establishment. The funeral home has to join as an establishment member.

**Individual (Employee) Membership** – If you are employed by a member firm you are eligible for the discounted rate.

**Associate Membership** – Suppliers, cemetery owners, registered apprentices and surviving spouses or dependents who are not actively employed by an establishment member.

### DEDUCTIBILITY OF TFDA DUES

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUDGET REVENUE RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1993, THE TEXAS FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION IS HEREBY NOTIFYING OUR MEMBERSHIP THAT WE ESTIMATE THAT 16% OF 2017 TFDA DUES PAID BY A MEMBER WILL NOT BE DEDUCTIBLE AS ORDINARY BUSINESS EXPENSES FOR FEDERAL TAX PURPOSES. THIS ESTIMATE IS TO BE UTILIZED BY TFDA MEMBERS IN DETERMINING WHAT PORTION OF THEIR TFDA DUES ARE DEDUCTIBLE. PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THIS NOTICE TO YOUR ACCOUNTANT AND TAX PREPARER.

### SPECIAL NOTE

DUES ARE PAYABLE IN ADVANCE ON **JANUARY 1, 2017**. DUES BECOME LATE AFTER **FEBRUARY 1, 2017**. A **10% LATE PENALTY** WILL BE CHARGED AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2016. (AFTER THIS DATE PLEASE INCLUDE THE 10% LATE PENALTY ON DUES WITH THIS APPLICATION.)

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# The Forgotten Mourners

## *How Children Deal with the Loss of a Loved One*

By Terry Parrish



mon assumption that young children, particularly preschoolers, are not mature enough to fully comprehend the meaning and impact of loss, even though empirical evidence suggests the opposite. Children who do not receive sufficient support in the process of grieving and mourning are at risk of developing serious psychiatric disorders and behavioral challenges. Given the fact that 4% of children in Western countries experience the death of a parent, the need for a professional intervention program is apparent.

### **Mourning and Grief**

Mourning and grief are normal reactions of a person experiencing emotional distress following the loss of a beloved one. The normal grieving process includes periods of sorrow, numbness, guilt/anger, acceptance, and adaptation. In addition, the loss of a beloved one is frequently accompanied with physical symptoms, including weight loss, insomnia, and/or difficulty with concentration.

If a person undergoes a thorough grieving process normally, reconciliation is achieved. Rec-

The loss of a parent, friend, or even a pet has strong impact on emotional and physical well-being of a child. As surviving parents are focused on their feelings and dealing with their loss, mourning experienced by a child is frequently unnoticed. Moreover, it is a com-

mon assumption that young children, particularly preschoolers, are not mature enough to fully comprehend the meaning and impact of loss, even though empirical evidence suggests the opposite. Children who do not receive sufficient support in the process of grieving and mourning are at risk of developing serious psychiatric disorders and behavioral challenges. Given the fact that 4% of children in Western countries experience the death of a parent, the need for a professional intervention program is apparent.

conciliation is defined as the process of integrating new reality of moving forward in life without a physical presence of a person who died. According to Dr. Robyn Howarth, a pediatric neuropsychologist, there are seven stages of reconciliation:



- Acceptance of death
- Expression of pain
- Adjustment to life without a person who died
- Integration of aspects of the loved one
- Converting relationship with the lost people into memory
- Finding meaning in death of the loved one
- Commitment to new relationships

These stages of grieving and mourning are regarded as a normal reaction. However, these steps have limited application. Specifically, while the seven steps can be applied to assess the ability of a person to deal with the loss of a spouse, they do not seem applicable to evaluating grieving and mourning experienced by a child.

In discussion on mourning and grieving, it is necessary to differentiate among several terms. In particular, bereavement is the experience of loss; grief is a psychological reaction to loss (includes thoughts, behaviors, and feelings); acute grief is an emotion characterized with separation and traumatic distress; integrated grief is a permanent condition of feeling of loss; mourning is adjustment to life following the loss of the loved one and transformation of pain into a memory. On average, every death leaves four bereaved people. Relationships with others play an essential role in life of every person, giving joy, purpose, and overall satisfaction. Parents are exceptionally important individuals in lives of the majority of people and, thus, loss of a parent is highly stressful event.

The most common reaction of a person to the loss of a loved one is a sense of void and disorientation. As argued by Dr. Katherine Shear, professor of psychiatry, Center for Complicated Grief, "In the early bereavement period, the familiar world seems unfamiliar, and unanticipated small reminders cause sudden unexpected pain." A person who experiences loss of the loved one is entirely focused on thoughts about the one who died, and grief becomes the dominant emotion. A grieving person may also experience yearning and sadness, anxiety and worry, guilt and remorse, protest and bitterness. Even if a person continues to engage with others and performs daily tasks, emotional and behavioral changes are rarely absent. Given the complex nature of grieving and mourning processes, it is important to explore differences in reactions to death among children, adults, and adolescents.

### **Children: Mourning and Grieving**

Mourning is defined as the process of adaptation to the loss says Dr. William Worden. As both parents play critical roles in the normal development and growth of a child, the loss of one parent apparently has an immediate effect on the life of a child. Most professionals agree that children not only mourn but also understand the finality of death. When a surviving parent, educators, and therapists do not help a child go through all stages of grieving and mourning, a child is at risk of developing life-long complications, specifically in psychological and social development. Not only a surviving parent has to deal with the loss; a child is also adjusting. When a surviving parent is dysfunctional, the role of therapists and educators in helping a mourning child becomes of critical importance.

Children are never ready for the death of a parent, including those cases when a parent has been ill for a while. Even when a child observes the progress of illness and realizes that a mother or a father has little chance to survive, a child is not prepared to realize the irreversible nature of death. Many adults are reluctant to discuss death

with their children, partially due to their own fear and inability to explain it. Moreover, as early as at the age of 4-6 years, children perceive death as a reversible event. It is not an uncommon reaction of children to the death of a parent to blame themselves for being the cause of a death or illness. If not supported in mourning and grieving, a child may develop a strong fear that someone else may die. In other instances, a child may express anger toward a surviving parent, sibling, or peer.

According to Dr. Howarth, children adapt to loss of the loved one through the following stages: acceptance of the loss, overcoming negative emotions associated with the death of the loved one, adjustment to the environment, and establishment of the continuing bonds with the lost parent. The successful transition from two parents to one is the result of proper support offered by a surviving parent, school counselors, and human service professionals. A child may undergo mourning independently; however, the loss of a parent is more likely to have less negative effects when a child is supported during this difficult period of life.

Children frequently remain the "forgotten mourners," as termed by Dr. Sandra Black. It is widely assumed that children recover from the loss of the loved one quickly. This assumption is widespread not only among parents and educators, but also among human service professionals, even though it is not grounded in evidence. If children are not supported during their grieving and mourning, the psychological effects of the experience of the loss of a parent tend to reemerge for years. The process of grieving among children depends on age, culture, ethnic beliefs, etc.

The progress of grieving and mourning among children is dependent on age. In particular, Dr. Black highlighted that children aged 3 to 5 years do not have a clear understanding of death and may repeatedly ask a surviving parent when a deceased mother or father is coming back. They are at risk of becoming anxious or aggressive toward others. The reaction of a surviving parent to repeated questions of a child may intensify the feeling of anger and pain experienced by a parent. Black recommends surviving parents are in need of professional assistance in terms of how to interact with a child who experienced the loss of a parent. Thus, while both a surviving parent and a child experience loss of the loved one, their grieving and mourning processes are different and require different approaches.

Children aged 6-8 years already possess the cognitive ability to understand death. During this age period, the most common reaction to death of a parent is a feeling of blaming themselves and guilt. In addition, a grieving child may exhibit such behaviors as school refusal, suicidal thoughts, and regressive emotions. Nine to 11-year-old children's reaction to death of a parent is marked with more-informed understanding of the event. Specifically, a child may seek for detailed information about the death. Unlike younger children, a 10-year-old child may avoid expressing negative emotions such as sadness or anger, and yet accumulate such feelings inside, which eventually may manifest in serious mental health complications and behavioral patterns.

Children aged 12-14 years exhibit an entirely different set of emotions in response to the death of a parent. Black suggested that children in this age group tend to be indifferent about the loss and yet strongly feel the presence of the person who died. Children may continuously hold mental conversations with the deceased parent



or find comfort in clothing or other possessions of the lost loved one. Among behavioral outcomes, grieving children in this age are at high risk of developing clinical depression, drug use, and delinquent behavior.

The response of a child to death of a parent is age-specific and requires unique, individualized approach in helping a child successfully transit through all stages of mourning and grieving processes. In the conclusion of this article, which will run in a later *Texas Director*, we will look at the needs and responses of teenagers to the death of a parent and some of the models counselors use to help all children deal with their grief and mourning. ★



**Editor's Note:** For children coping with grief, The Wilbert Foundation provides crucial funds and resources for supporting them and their families as they deal with the trauma of grief, death, or preparation for surgery. When a family member dies, surviving children often struggle with the meaning of life and death. Without proper grief counseling, a child's wounded emotions can develop into lifelong problems. The Wilbert Foundation pledges grants to hospital Chaplaincy programs that are used for volunteers, counselors, ministers, and awareness initiatives that help guide children back to peace, hope, and comfort after their ordeals.

*Terry Parrish, born and raised in Dallas, Texas, proudly served in the*

*field of nursing for many years and decided to attend the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service in 1997 to pursue a second career. Following her graduation in 1998, she was offered the position of Director of Admissions, Registrar, Bursar and VA Official with the school.*

*Terry received her A.A.S. from the Dallas Institute in 1998, and then in 2010 she decided to return to school and completed her bachelor's degree in human services at Ottawa University in 2012. She continued her academic endeavors by attending Cappella University and earned her Master of Science degree in human behavior in 2014. She is currently working on a 2nd Master of Art Degree in American History from The University of Southern New Hampshire. One of her new responsibilities will be teaching as an Adjunct Instructor.*

*Ms. Parrish is a licensed funeral director and embalmer; she has worked for West-Hurt Funeral Home, Restland Funeral Home and Eastgate Funeral Home. Terry received her CFSP (Certified Funeral Service Practitioner) designation in 2005. Ms. Parrish is the faculty sponsor of Women in Black and also serves as a member of the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service Lions Club. She currently serves on several committees for the Texas Funeral Directors Association and is also a member of the Dallas County Funeral Directors Association, the North Texas Funeral Directors Association, and the National Funeral Directors Association. She is also a member of the Epsilon Chapter of Pi Sigma Eta Fraternity at Dallas Institute.*

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# ANOTHER VIEW: Ambiguous Loss

## THE STAGES OF GRIEF MISINTERPRETED

(PART TWO IN A FOUR-PART SERIES)

By Alice Adams



Dr. Pauline Boss, Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota, has written several books on ambiguous loss and the myth of closure in American culture. In this second part of the series, Dr. Boss discusses the stages of grief – or not.

In 1969, Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross introduced her five stages of grief – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – based on her patients’ reactions to impending death in her book, *On Death and Dying*. This explanation established our cultural vocabulary of grief...but, in fact, Kübler-Ross never intended for these stages of grief to be taken the way they have – which is believing every grieving person or someone who has experienced loss, we think that’s what they go through...and then they get to the end. We’ve used the five stages of grief to explain how we move on.

In fact, Kübler-Ross believed those five stages to be relevant to people who are dying, who are fading into death. She did not mean

that for those left behind to grieve their loss.

“Today, the new research in grief and loss does not recommend linear stages...going through stages one through five and then you’re done with grieving,” Dr. Boss explained. “Now we know this is not true and that human beings live with grief and, in fact, are able to live with grief. They don’t have to get over it. They don’t obsess with it five years down the road, but they occasionally remember and are sad, or go to the grave, or have some thoughts about the person who died. And this is normal – that living with grief is more oscillations of up and down. And those ups and downs get farther apart over time, but they never completely go away, the downs of feeling blue, of feeling sad.”

To thoroughly understand this way of looking at grief, we need to know the difference between depression and sadness because we can only cope with a problem if we know what it is.

“Depression is an illness that requires a

medical intervention,” Dr. Boss pointed out. “It’s the minority of people who have depression. And yet, with the ambiguous loss that comes with Alzheimer’s disease and 50-some other dementias, caregivers are said to be depressed. But the caregivers I’ve met are not depressed. They’re sad. They’re grieving.”

This should be normalized...and sadness is treated with human connection – by being there, of checking in periodically, of taking casseroles or invitations to lunch.

“For example, after 9/11, we were working with the families of the workers who cleaned the Trade Towers and ran the elevators and ran the air conditioning and the windows on the World Restaurant,” Dr. Boss remembered. “Many of them did not speak English, so we had to translate.”

“And my beginning was this – ‘What you’re experiencing is ambiguous loss because your loved ones are still missing. It is the most difficult, most stressful loss there is, but it is not your fault.’ That’s all I would say before the translators took over, and the people understood that and felt relieved. After a traumatic event, most people blame themselves, even if it’s a tornado, by the way. I’ve seen this.”

The researcher remembered one woman after 9/11 who had a newborn, and she was blaming herself because she didn’t wake her husband up early enough that morning. He had an alarm clock, and it didn’t go off. He was in the Trade Tower usually by 8:00 and out by 9:00. And on this day, he was late, and so he was in the Trade Tower when it went down.

“She blamed herself as she was crying. She was at her wit’s end. And we would meet, by the way, every month or so. About a year later, I complimented her on how lovely her little boy was. He was standing up at that time, leaning on her leg. And she said

to me, 'Do you remember that story I told you about my husband oversleeping? And that it was my fault?' I said, 'Yes, I remember.' And she said, 'Well, he always set the alarm clock. And I realized that, finally. And it wasn't my fault. He just wanted another hour to be with us.'

That's an example of the transformation people need to have with ambiguous loss, where she is no longer blaming herself and she now has a meaning that she can live with the rest of her life without too much stress.

"The only way to live with ambiguous loss is to hold two opposing ideas in your mind at the same time. And these are some examples. With the physically missing – like the passengers who went down with the Malaysia Airlines flights, people might say, 'He's gone, he's probably dead, and maybe not,' or 'He may be coming back, but maybe not.' Those kinds of thinking are common, and it is the only way that people can lower the stress of living with the ambiguity. And children learn it rapidly, and even adults learn it. It doesn't take too long. It is not part of our culture, however."

"In our culture, we like finite answers. You're either dead or you're alive. You're either here or you're gone. And let's say you have somebody with dementia, or a child with autism, and they're there, but they're not always there...and so once you put that frame on it, people are more at ease and recognize it may be the closest thing possible to the truth that they're going to get," Dr. Boss said, "so the only truth is that middle way of 'he may be coming back and maybe not.'"

"In our culture, we want people we love to get over pain when they're grieving, and we may actually feel like they're kind of choosing pain...and we don't like suffering."

"It's a more Eastern idea that suffering is part of life," the author said. "Our idea is that suffering is something you should get over... or cure it, or fix it, or find some solution for it. It is probably what has made our society great, and has made technology so wonderful, and cures for diseases."

"But here's the crux – there's a problem that has no solution. It could be an illness. It could be a lost person. It could be something like more everyday ambiguous losses such as adoption, divorce, immigration. Now and then, there are problems that don't have a perfect fix...and this idea of holding two opposing ideas in your mind at the same time is very useful for stress reduction."

So, what's the best way for people – like

funeral directors – to react?

"There was a woman whose brother went hiking in a wilderness area and never came back. They never found his body...and this happened a decade ago. So I asked her, how long has it been?" And it was 10 years, 14 years. I think that might be a question that, in kind of normal interactions, one might be embarrassed to ask, or feel like that would take them back to the painful time of not knowing...and I just said, "I am so sorry."

"There's really nothing else to say. And I think we could help each other in society to learn how to speak to people who have missing loved ones. I think it's perfectly good to

ask them, 'How long has it been?' Because they want to tell you how long it's been, and sometimes it's been decades."

"And, for example, with the Holocaust, and slavery – shall we go back – and Civil War, and with the Native Americans, and any genocide throughout the world – it can be a hundred years, and they still remember it. And so it's OK to say, 'How long has it been?' And then to say probably the only honest thing you can say, if you feel it, and that is, 'I'm sorry' Because we can't fix it." ★

*Next month – Ambiguous Loss Part III: The Generational Transmission of Trauma.*



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# From Where I Sit

## Customer Service: Does It Still Exist?

By Dawn Weatherford,  
*Office Manager, Grace Funeral Home*



Does customer service still exist? I ask myself this question quite a lot when I am out

shopping, on the phone with different businesses or just at a fast food drive thru. There

are days when I would swear no one had ever heard of the idea of customer service.

Walking into some big box stores, for example, is a real adventure. No one is around to even say hello, much less help you find anything. It is a real game of hide-and-seek, trying to find an associate or a check out with 32 lanes, only 4 open and a mile of people in each lane.

It certainly does not make for happy customers or even encourage repeat customers!

Okay, rant over. My point is this: customer service needs to be remembered by everyone in the public. With the advent of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., good and bad advertising gets out so fast.

On Facebook (on which I think I spend too much time) the town of Victoria has a section



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called The Good, Bad and Ugly of Victoria. Here members log on and either praise a business or employee or really tear them down. Sometimes it can be really vicious.

The sad part is it almost every entry is done at a time when that customer is really angry and just wants to “put it out there” for all to read. Naturally, it can be a real nightmare for that business, but it can also serve as a wake-up call for the owners and managers.

My advice, such as it is, is to take a look at what the public is saying. Train your staff to be more conscientious about providing good service...period. Whether you are a minimum wage salary earner or the manager, it is up to you to make sure your customers are happy to be there and even happier when they leave. It is what keeps the doors open and the reviews positive.

One of the first things I learned in business is the customer is always right. Well, when I got to Grace Funeral Home, there was another little bit added to that adage. “The customer is always right, even when they are wrong.”

Believe me, there are days when you really have to just smile, bite your tongue, agree with everything, and remember your feel-



ings don't count at this point. It is the family's needs that have to be met.

Now, on to something else. Since the last article, a few great things have happened. Number one (in my books) is I am a grandmother again. My son and his wife had their second baby on July 26. His name is Hudson Royal and I am just absolutely over the moon about him. His “big” sister Reiley is 18 months old and they both just own my heart!

The second great thing is Grace Funeral Home has expanded! We bought another funeral home and three more cemeteries. It was a long ordeal, a lot of paperwork, and a lot of discussions from beginning to end,

but totally well worth it!

We have a great group of people to become part of our Grace Family

I am so proud to be a part of this growing company. Charlie would ask me if I was ready for this big ride, and my answer was always a resounding “YES!” I am happy to have bought the ticket for this ride and even more so, to be able to serve the people of Victoria and all around us.

So, From Where I Sit, I see customer service here at Grace being preached and practiced daily. Since we have more locations, it is becoming ever more important to make sure we take care of our families -- by providing them with the best care and support both during and after the service. They are the ones who keep me and everyone else here employed, and for that I am grateful.

Hope you all have a wonderful month. When the cool weather finally gets here, get out and enjoy the beautiful fall days and evenings! ★

*Dawn Weatherford has been “the glue” at Grace Funeral Home during the TFDA presidencies of Charlie Hauboldt (2015-16) and Heather Hauboldt (2016-17).*

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# Psalm of the Locusts: A Heavenly Benediction

By Tommy Beggs



My family attended services at Madison, Florida's First Methodist Church, long before my birth. Raised as a Christian, my study of the Bible provided the immediate embrace of what I call the "burning bush stories" of my life.

To me, a story qualifies as a "burning bush" tale when there's simply no logical explanation of an individual place or happening. Oh, there have been some strange situations I have experienced in funeral service... the large funerals, triple drownings, auto accidents and the heart-wrenching funerals after the death of a child.

Another qualifier for a burning bush story: You don't call it a "burning bush" until later, after you've had time to think the happening through and it still stands out in your mind.

This particular story was very unusual in my experience. It also was the most awesome.

I was a young funeral director at the time and had been asked by the McLeod family to assist with a graveside service, along with their local pastor. The family, the person who died and the presiding minister (or priest) were Catholic.

The family had lived in Jacksonville, but the female decedent grew up in Greenville,

the town just to the west of Madison.

Now, before I proceed, it's important to know Greenville is a small community with less than 1,000 in population, usually much less.

Greenville's singular claim to fame is an African American musician by the name of Ray Charles Robinson who grew up there. When glaucoma robbed him of his sight when he was six, the small boy was shipped off to the St. Augustine School for the Deaf & Blind, where he learned music.

After graduating from St. Augustine School in 1947, he started getting gigs with small bands and touring. The young man also decided to drop his last name and became known as Ray Charles, hoping to avoid being confused with Sugar Ray Robinson, a successful boxer of that day.

Today, one of the main tourist attractions of Greenville, Florida, is the bronze likeness of favorite son Ray Charles, positioned in Hays Park, that depicts the singer/songwriter sitting on a bench and playing a keyboard he's balanced in his lap. His boyhood home also has been restored and is worth a visit.

Now, to get to the cemetery that day, I took the road from Greenville, south almost five miles. From there the road would

wind around until it came to the Andrews Farm. Up on top of a beautiful high hill in cow pasture, the Andrews Family Cemetery stood in silence, the resting place for 40 or 50 of the Andrews and McLeod clans.

After arriving at the hilltop burial ground, I stepped out of the hearse in time to take a deep breath of fresh, cool air...and because the family was already there, we hurried to set up for the graveside service.

Anywhere you stood in that hilltop cemetery gifted you with a 365-degree view of the vibrant valley below, accompanied by a sudden realization of calm and tranquility... enough to almost take your breath away.

In my opinion this place, approximately 18 miles from Madison, was one of the most idyllic settings in the county: the beautiful views, lush old oaks embellished with delicate swaths of Spanish moss and standing like sentinels surrounding the cemetery... and then there was the stillness...stillness that comes with being so far away from heavily-traveled thoroughfares...and on this particular day, there were just enough clouds to effortlessly mute the sun's blinding rays.

In making arrangements for the service, one of the family members asked if it would be possible to play three tunes on their battery-operated CD player. In those days – the 1970s – some people called those CD players "boomboxes," and they came in handy when music was needed outside the range of electrical outlets.

We didn't hesitate. "Of course. Bring any music you find meaningful." So while I was setting up seating, one of the decedent's daughters approached me with her CD player. I gave her a chair, where she could sit and play the music selected by the family: "Going Home" from Dvorak's "New World Symphony," "Ave Maria" and "Nearer My God To Thee."

After 40 to 50 mourners had arrived and found their seats, the family's priest began the first portion of the Latin mass, concluding with "Our Father's" and "Hail Mary's."

The last "Hail Mary" cued the sister with the beat box to play "Going Home," a beautiful symphonic piece and a perfect selection to harmonize with this pristine, pastoral setting.

Then came more of the Latin Funeral Mass, ending with readings from the Old and New Testaments.

The minute the next musical selection – the beautiful "Ave Maria" – began playing on the boombox, hundreds of locusts, up to now hidden from view among the leafy branches of the surrounding oak trees, began singing.

Quietly at first, the sound they produced was – and continues to be – almost impossible to describe. It obviously surprised members of the gathering, who began twisting in their seats to find where the insects were hiding. It also caught the priest and me unaware.

Somehow the locusts' familiar and intense buzzing transformed into a melodious accompaniment for the "Ave Maria," coming from the boombox, and continued until the last notes of the beautiful prayer had been played.

Then just as suddenly as it had begun, this psalm of the locusts suddenly ended,

creating an almost-deafening silence, broken only by the priest's eulogy, beseeching God to have mercy on the decedent and granting peace to all who had been left behind.

The woman in charge of the boombox pressed a button a third time and the final hymn played, but it was a cappella, and by that I mean not accompanied by the deep hum of the locusts.

After the final "Amen" and dismissal of the mourners, the priest approached me and commented, "We sure got a lot of help from Above, didn't we?"

I could only nod, still puzzled about what we all had experienced that afternoon.

All people at the graveside service could talk about were the locusts...not the beautiful setting or the perfect weather. They'd even come up to me at the grocery store, asking if I had come up with an explanation, which I had not, but I still remember, even after four decades have passed – and cannot imagine ever forgetting – the graveside service and the psalm of the locusts.

To this day, nobody has found an explanation...including this funeral director, who

can only assume God's hands directed this very special chorale.

**End Notes:** This unusual happening occurred about 1973 – almost 50 years ago. The cemetery on the hill at the Andrews farm contains 40 to 50 graves and remains well kept.

"From my Sunday school days, I remembered the verse, 'If God is with you, who can be against you.' In my heart, I always felt the psalm of the locusts was a gift from God... and because of this, I don't think we'll ever know the reason behind what happened that day. Remember, God moves in mysterious ways...and I don't think we're supposed to know everything.

"I have always had a strong faith, and this experience enhanced my beliefs." ★

*Tommy Beggs is a third-generation funeral director who has called Madison, Florida, home for almost all his life. Now retired, Tommy still owns the general store where his grandfather also provided coffins, funeral merchandise and clothing. This fabulous collection from the four generations of funeral directors is open by appointment only.*



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# National Museum of Funeral History Commemorates 15th Anniversary of 9/11 with Special Exhibit

**“United We Stand, United We Signed” runs through December 31, 2016**



The National Museum of Funeral History is currently showcasing United We Stand, United We Signed, a special 9/11 15th anniversary memorial exhibit, an extension of its 9/11 and Fallen Heroes Tribute permanent exhibit, to memorialize the men and women who lost their lives on 9/11 and pay tribute to the first responders who bravely served on that fateful September day, as well as the courageous men and women who have sacrificed their life on other occasions while “on the job” as firefighters and police officers.

Sept. 11, 2001 was a heartbreaking day in our nation’s history. Innocent men and women lost their lives. The first responders, particularly members of Fire Department New York and the New York Police Department, did not turn away. Rushing into the World Trade Center to aid civilians, many lost their lives, while others who “survived” likely still suffer the physical and emotional burdens that were given them that day.

“Commemoration of these sorts of tragic events is an important component of the healing process after the loss of life,” stated Genevieve Keeney, president of the Nation-

al Museum of Funeral History.

The special 9/11 15th anniversary exhibit, United We Stand, United We Signed, showcases hundreds of memorial books from Dignity Memorial funeral homes around the nation that were put out for people to express their condolences and grief following the 9/11 tragedy in 2001. The books, which also serve as the building blocks for a powerful visual within the exhibit – a replica of the tops of the World Trade Center Twin Towers, contain a plethora of signatures, as well as messages and drawings from children. This is the first time these books have even been seen by the public. Museum goers will also see ashes from the grounds at the Twin Towers and will have a chance to reflect on where they were on that fateful day in 2001, leaving their current thoughts and stories behind, all of which will be preserved and incorporated into a special future 20th anniversary exhibit in 2021.

“The thought of teaching young people about the horror of 9/11 can seem a daunting task,” said Keeney. “The National Museum of Funeral History provides a safe and

neutral environment to comfortably explore the sensitive topic of death and learn about various traditions and rituals practiced when someone dies.”

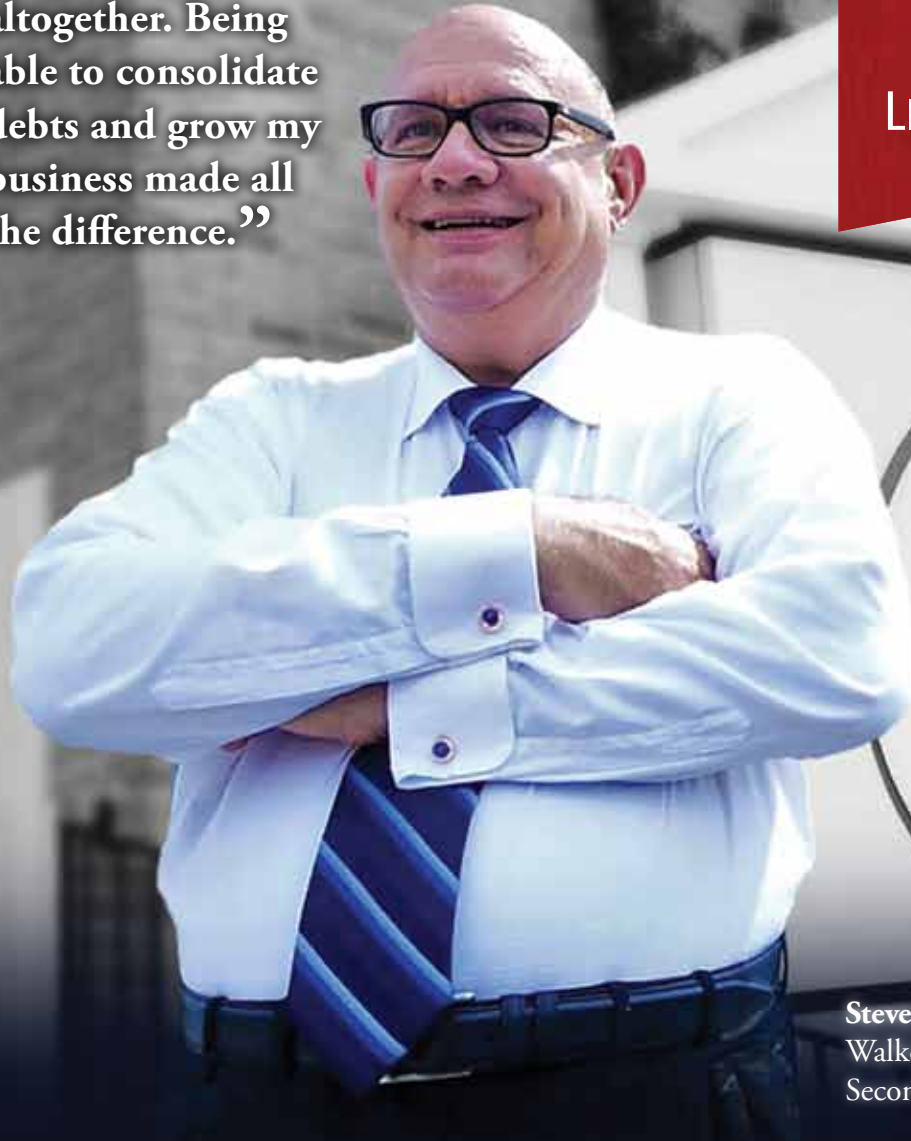
The Museum’s 9/11 and Fallen Heroes Tribute, a permanent exhibit on funerals of fallen first responders such as police and firefighters, often serves as a meaningful place to start a conversation regarding 9/11 or pay tribute to those who lost their lives on that tragic day or in other situations and circumstances.

Additionally, museum visitors will see a custom-designed police officer casket, showcasing how a funeral for a police officer or even a firefighter who perishes in the line of duty, can be customized to pay tribute to their life and legacy. Also on display are two urns donated by the City of New York containing the ashes and debris remnants from Ground Zero in Manhattan.

The subject and poignancy of death and the horrific events that transpired on that day are treated with respect.

Entrance into the United We Stand, United We Signed exhibit at the National Museum of Funeral History is included in the price of general admission to the museum. Tickets are available online at [www.nmfh.org](http://www.nmfh.org) or on-site at the National Museum of Funeral History, located at 415 Barren Springs Dr., Houston, Texas 77090. For more information, visit [www.nmfh.org](http://www.nmfh.org) or call 281-876-3063. ★

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# Waco's Greenwood Cemetery Desegregated



Earlier this summer, the city of Waco, Texas, issued an order to remove a fence in the city's public burial ground, Greenwood Cemetery. But it wasn't just a cosmetic

change: Using a forklift and power tools, City of Waco Parks & Recreation staff removed the chain-link fence separating the white section of the cemetery from the Afri-

can-American section.

Since the cemetery opened on the east side of Waco in 1875, the cemetery has been racially segregated. It was operated by two sets of caretakers, white and black, until the city took over the cemetery about 10 years ago.

"That should have been taken out 75 years ago," said Councilman Wilbert Austin, whose district includes East Waco. "There was a separation there, but now we need to open that whole cemetery up."

City parks and recreation director Rusty Black said development in the area, including the Baylor Research Innovation Collaborative research park across Business 77 from Greenwood Cemetery, has given the city impetus to clean up the cemetery. The city also plans to replace a state historical marker that was stolen recently from the cemetery and to create a new decorative entrance to the cemetery.

Waco is not the only Texas community to struggle with the ghost of Jim Crow: This spring, the Normanna, Texas, cemetery association was sued by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund for barring a white woman from burying the ashes of her Hispanic husband there.

Although the cemetery association later relented, the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating. No Hispanic people are buried at the Normanna Cemetery, although there is one sole tombstone with a Spanish surname, located just outside the cemetery's chain link fence.

Like the city councilors of Waco, many community groups and civic associations are currently engaged in the difficult, lengthy, and expensive tasks involved in unearthing black history. In the process, they are discovering that addressing the wrongs of the past is often more complicated than simply removing the physical reminders of Jim Crow that haunt our landscape. The traces of the past are sunk deep into the earth, but with the right tools, it's possible to make them visible.

This article is based, in part, on information published in the *Waco Tribune*. ★

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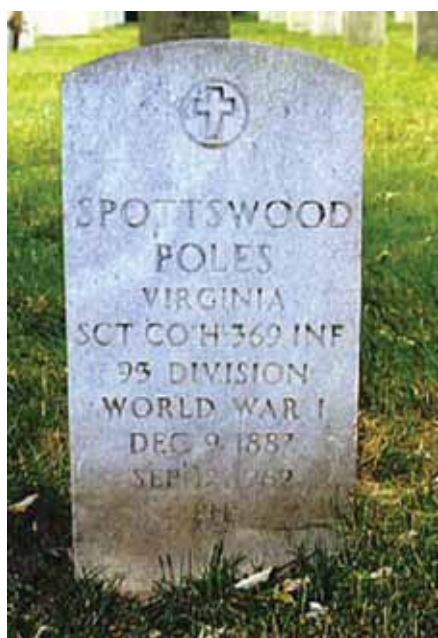


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# Sgt. Spottswood Poles: the First African American Soldier Buried in Formerly White Section at Arlington



Just a few weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* in May, 1951, President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which officially desegregated the military. Although it took years to desegregate battlefield units, the order went into immediate effect at Arlington National Cemetery.

One of the first black veterans to be buried in a formerly white section of Arlington was Spottswood Poles, a star of Negro League baseball who enlisted with the infamous Harlem Hellfighters, an all-black unit that fought in the trenches of France during World War I.

Born December 9, 1887 to French Poles, a laborer, and his wife Matilda. By age six, the youngster began playing baseball, using a broomstick for a bat. Advancing through a boys' league called the Hello Bill Club in 1897, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's Springda-



le Athletic Club in 1902 and the Harrisburg Colored Giants in 1906.

In 1909 Poles was 19 when he began his professional career as a center fielder for the eastern champions Philadelphia Giants. Poles soon became a leadoff batter, playing

two years with Sol White's Giants before following White to the New York Lincoln Giants in 1911 when that team was organized.

Poles earned five battlefield-star decorations as well as the Purple Heart, for his military service. He was interred at Arlington with full military honors in 1962.

As the racial composition of communities changed over time, many black cemeteries became neglected and forgotten, and the resting places of countless unsung heroes of America's black past quietly disappeared.

In 2014, U.S. Senator Bob Casey called on the Veterans' Administration to establish a public database listing where all black Civil War veterans were buried, because few such cemetery records exist. Since many black graves are unmarked, recording and cataloguing their locations requires ground-penetrating radar and high-precision GPS. Several months ago, over 800 unmarked graves were uncovered using this technology at a black cemetery in Atlanta, demonstrating the potential for similar discoveries in cemeteries and forgotten burial grounds across the country.

This article is based on information published in *Atlas Obscura*. Sept. 9, 2016. 🌟



## Dealing with Slackers

Got slackers at your firm? Yeah – you have. Slackers are those employees who get by, doing less when every other member of the team is working at double speed. Every funeral home has at least one – the man/woman who never volunteers, never is there when you need them, and spends most of their time looking for ways to do less work.

Some people spend a lot of energy looking extremely busy while really just squeaking by doing as little work as possible. Yep! That's a slacker for you...and whether you work with one or one works for you, you need strategies to handle this annoying type of co-worker.



So annoying, in fact, in a recent survey, the slacker was voted the most aggravating per-

son in the workplace, tied with the kiss-up.

How can you co-exist with this consistently lazy person?

Here's what works and what doesn't (besides slackers!) to ease your pain:

### What doesn't work:

"Misdiagnosing" a slacker. Someone who appears to be slacking may actually just be a low-performing team member. Maybe he/she doesn't understand how to do the work or simply isn't up to the task.

As another option: Is one isolated incident branding someone a slacker? That label's hard to shake, even if there was only one instance where a person didn't pull his or her own weight.

Cracking down on the PC. It's one of the biggest misconceptions of slackers – the Web has further enabled folks to goof off during the day. Turns out "cyberslacking" accounts for only about 25 percent of a slacker's wasted time. So making a move – like cracking down on everyone's Web use – probably won't jolt a lazy employee into productivity, and it could demoralize the rest of the team.

### What does work:

Breaking the slacker's work into chunks. It's easy to fly under the radar when there's a mile-long list of tasks to be accomplished. Too many things can be "in progress" for too long. Better to give a slacker one specific task at a time, with specific deadlines.

That way it's easier to monitor the headway being made. When one is done, it's time to move on to the next.

Call attention the right way. Chances are the slacker's supervisor knows this person isn't pulling his or her own weight – griping about it will only sound like tattling and could cast you in a negative light.

The best way to shine a spotlight on a slacker's sub-par performance? Keep your own performance high. As others see the work can get done, the slacker's lack of results will become more and more obvious.

Set up individual or team contests. This gives you hard data on who's trying to be part of the team.

If incentives (prizes and recognition) don't work, it may be time to re-tool your team and get rid of the slacker, even if he/she is the boss's son or daughter. ★



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## It's the Law: the Texas Flag Bill

Peace officers who die outside of active duty still earn right for state flag, honors



Lt. Doug Hudson and Sgt. George Silvio Honor guard presenting the Texas flag

Sgt. George Silvio and Lt. Doug Hudson of the Harris County Sheriff's Department are no strangers to funerals. Hudson, who has served 51 years in law enforcement and Silvio, 49 years service, are members of the Honor Guard and have attended more funerals than either likes to think about.

In 2000, the two veterans were attending a fallen officer's funeral in Huntsville when they began thinking about some recently-deceased comrades.

"These were men and women who went to work every day, often for years, and had

a heart attack while mowing the lawn or were honorably retired and were killed in a car wreck or died of natural causes," Silvio explained. "Because they weren't killed in action, their families didn't receive anything and there was no mention of their public service at their funeral."

The two men worked together, contacting the state representatives and senators to tell them about their plans, and even sought information about how to write a proposal for a new bill.

"We worked with Rep. Kevin Bailey and

Sen. John Whitmire, both of Harris County, Hudson said. "Sgt. Silvio and I then traveled to Austin to testify before the various sub-committees."

The new bill requested any Texas peace officer who died either while in active duty but not in the line of duty or honorably retired to receive a Texas flag that had flown over the Texas Capitol as well as a letter of condolence to the family from the governor.

The two men also requested the question, "Did the deceased serve as a Texas Peace Officer?" to be added to the bottom of the death certificate, next to the question, "Was the deceased a veteran?" However, this question was never added.

However, with the help of the two Harris County lawmakers, SB 1211 passed both houses unanimously and was signed into law September 1, 2001.

Hudson, who is commander in the oldest Color Guard in the state and president of the Police Officers in Austin, said families of officers who pass away after leaving public service, don't receive family assistance, no Color Guard, no flag. "Sgt. Silvio and I felt these retirees, these officers who died outside active duty should be recognized for their years of dedicated service."

Recalling their efforts in passing the bill. "We didn't go to our department but, instead, went to Sen. John Whitmire and Rep. Kevin Bailey, Harris County," Silvio said. "We talked to them about our idea. They liked it."

"We wrote up what our intent would be and met several times to get the wording corrected," Hudson said. "After our bill was presented to the House of Representatives, we testified in committee, paying our travel, food and lodging out of our own pockets."

In June 2001, the two determined officers traveled back to Austin to attend the official bill signing. Their reward? "Honors for all

men and women serving in law enforcement and a photograph of them and Gov. Rick Perry.”

They also went up to the state capitol’s flag pole, where each of them and their families were presented with a Texas flag that had flown over the capitol.

Once the bill had been signed into law, Silvio and Hudson made one more stop, this time to The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE). As the two officers discussed the original intent, they worked with TCOLE personnel to determine the how the new law would be carried out.

“To honor our fallen Peace Officers, the Texas Flag Program provides a Texas flag, flown over the capitol, to be presented to the surviving family,” Hudson said.

To submit a request for a Texas flag and memorial items for a fallen Texas peace officer, please contact Ken Mobley at 512-936-7705.

So Hudson and Silvio had crossed all the t’s and dotted all the i’s – except as the years have passed, the officers found most Texas funeral directors are not aware of the law. Further, the second question box, after the veteran question, was never added to the death certificate about if the deceased had ever been a Peace Officer.

“If the Peace Officer dies after retirement or if the death is not in the line of duty for active Peace Officers, the honors go unnoticed,” Hudson said. “So we’re trying to get out the word.”

So what can Texas directors do, 15 years since the law was passed, to make sure their Peace Officer families don’t miss out on honors for their loved one?

“If the Peace Officer dies in a medium-to-large city, TCOLE – when contacted by the funeral director – will provide the flag as well as an Honor Guard to present the flag,” Hudson said. “If the local community has no Honor Guard, the director can ask for the geographically closest honor guard to participate in the service.”

As an example, a retired police officer died at Patton Village, and Montgomery County sent over their officers to make the presentation.

“TCOLE, responsible for the licensing for law enforcement officers, will get the on-line form to order Texas Flag, and will sent a flag overnight, along with a letter from the governor,” said Silvio, “but be forewarned. Many Peace Officer families are unaware of these honors for their loved one, so it falls to the funeral director to ask if the deceased

has ever been a Peace Officer, and then making sure if they are not actively serving, they are at least honorably retired.”

Hudson said the flags are purchased by the Texas Police Officer Flag Fund, and donations are accepted by TCOLE for the fund.

Hudson and Silvio are still hopeful the question about service as a Peace Officer will be added to the death certificate.

As honor guard members, both officers are satisfied their law was passed unanimously, thanks to the help of Sen. John Whitmire and Rep. Talton. “As honor guard members, we’ve both traveled thousands of miles, as our chance to honor our fellow officers,” Hudson said. “It’s a job that must be done – and it’s not easy – but it’s a job that must be done.” ★

#### TO LEARN MORE:

<http://www.tcole.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Request%20for%20Texas%20Flag.pdf>

TEXAS OCCUPATION CODE 1701.161

Provision of a state flag delivered to next of kin of a deceased peace officer is laid out in Texas Occupation Code 1701.161.

(a) If the next of kin of a deceased peace officer requests a state flag, the commission shall:

(1) provide a state flag, at no cost to the next of kin, if the peace officer was:

(A) a current peace officer at the time of the officer’s death; or

(B) an honorably retired peace officer who voluntarily terminated employment with a law enforcement agency of this state or a political subdivision of this state; and

(2) notify the office of the governor of the death of the peace officer.

(b) The commission may apply for and accept gifts and grants from public and private entities on behalf of the Texas peace officer flag account.

(c) The commission shall deposit any gift or grant accepted by the commission under Subsection (b) to the credit of the Texas peace officer flag account. The Texas Peace Officer Flag Account is a special account in the general revenue fund. Money in the account may be appropriated only to the commission for the purpose of implementing this section. Interest earned on money in the Texas Peace Officer Flag account shall be credited to the account.

CONTACT: Ken Mobley at 512-936-7705.



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Director News

**Krestridge Funeral Home in Levelland Opens New Home**



Gene and Kate Allen and the staff of Krestridge Funeral Home hosted an open house for their new facility at 505 Austin Street in Levelland in mid-September. More than 100 community members at-

tended the event.

The open house followed nearly nine months of demolition and conversion of the former Lobo Lanes Bowling Alley into a spacious, state-of-the-art funeral home.

**KRESTRIDGE RIBBON CUTTING**—The staff at Krestridge Funeral Home cut the ribbon in front of their new business, with the Levelland Chamber of Commerce. After nine months of construction, the funeral home is officially open and has already held its first funeral. Among those who joined the festivities were, Dane Dewbre, Dee Craddock, Jake Penner, Barbra Dunn, Mary Siders, Kerry McCormack, Elgin Connor, Jerry Boudreaux, Mike Box, Karen Pence, Sheri Elkins, Carita Black, Mr. & Mrs. Jerry McKee, Gene Allen, Katie Allen, Reese Taylor, Allen Whitley, Chuck Robertson, Juneta Mitchell, Millie Rush, Chet Robbins, and Barbra Pinner.

Gene and Kate Allen, former Levelland residents and owners of funeral homes in Kerrville and Junction, purchased the property from Willie B. Jones late last year. “We gutted it to the bare walls, roof and slab; there was nothing left inside,” says Allen.

The Allens purchased the funeral home in Kerrville in December, 2001 and acquired the Junction funeral home in September, 2010.

They started a limousine company in March, 2008.

Allen spent 20 years in the local oilfield, working for National Oilwell Supply in Sundown before becoming a funeral director.

He was elected to the Levelland City Council for three terms but resigned after being elected to the third term to move to Dallas to study to become a funeral director.

He also served on Levelland’s Planning and Zoning Commission before being elected to the Council. He currently serves on the Kerrville City Council and is actively involved in leadership roles in the funeral home industry.

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## Branson Transport Opens in Fort Worth

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## Commonwealth to Host Continuing Education Symposium

The Alumni Board of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston will be offering a Continuing Education Symposium on October 27-28, 2016. It will include 16 hours (including all mandatory subject hours) of CE.

Classes will start at 8 a.m. each morning at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, 414 Barren Springs Drive, Houston, Texas 77090.

Free coffee/beverages pastries/snacks as well as lunch will be provided at the college each day. For more information, please call the college at 281-873-0262.

## Express Funeral Funding Acquires Jefferson Financial

Express Funeral Funding, the largest privately-held insurance assignment funding company in the United States, announces the acquisition of Jefferson Financial. Jefferson Financial is a national funding company with a significant presence in the South and West regions of the United States.

Express Funeral Funding is transitioning the Jefferson Financial processing center in Dallas, Texas to the Express Funeral Funding operations in Clarksville, Indiana.

Steve Calloway, President of Express Funeral Funding, stated "We are excited about the additional benefits we are able to provide to the Jefferson Financial customers. Some of the new services include online claim submission, real time claim status updates and reduced administration. They will quickly realize why so many other funeral homes and cemeteries have selected Express Funeral Funding as their preferred provider for funding of life insurance assignments."

Larry McCracken, the former National Sales Manager for Jefferson Financial will continue as a National Sales Manager

## Dallas Institute Launches New Lions Club Chapter



The Dallas Institute of Funeral Service began a new chapter of Lions Club International within the school this past year. This new chapter has succeeded at organizing several projects in the surrounding community.

The biggest project yet was a three-month food drive to help the Dallas Resource Center fill the shelves at one of their food banks. They challenged the three classes—freshmen, juniors and seniors—to compete against one another to see who could collect the most donations. The seniors came out with the victory.

The classes were able to collectively amass over 1,000 pounds of nonperishable food items. The Senior Lions were able to deliver and shelve the donations.



with Express Funeral Funding. Larry will be working closely with Jefferson Financial customers to ensure a smooth and easy transition to Express Funeral Funding.

For more information about Express Funeral Funding visit [www.expressfuneral-funding.com](http://www.expressfuneral-funding.com) or phone 800-231-8383.

## Don't Get Burned Fire Prevention Week – October 9-15, 2016

Every year, fires costs business owners billions of dollars – and that number doesn't even begin to measure the impact fires have on businesses and families of employees who are injured or killed by the blaze.

Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15, 2016, is a great opportunity to remember that preventing workplace fires is not a yearly, monthly, or even weekly activity—it is a daily activity. Investigations reveal that most fires can be prevented if businesses consistently pay attention to a few, very specific hazards.

To help you and your employees make it home safely each day, your Federated Insurance team is excited to share a new resource: a customizable, fire prevention checklist. (The latest full version of Adobe Reader is required to open and use the customizable checklist.)

Made available to all association members through our partnership with Federated, the checklist helps you identify and implement fire prevention practices that are needed most and can significantly impact your business. It also includes a few common fire hazards and also allows you the flexibility to add the unique risks and exposures your business faces.

For Federated Clients, create your own customizable checklist by logging on to Federated's Shield Network® at [www.federatedinsurance.com](http://www.federatedinsurance.com) or contacting our Risk Management Resource Center at 1.888.333.4949 or [riskmanagementmaterials@fedins.com](mailto:riskmanagementmaterials@fedins.com). At Federated Insurance, It's Our Business to Protect Yours®.



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### Business Insurance

Federated Insurance Cos. is the endorsed TFDA Services, Inc., property/casualty, liability and workers' compensation insurance provider. Federated is recognized as the national leader in partnering with trade association and buying groups and has been endorsed by 29 state funeral directors associations. The company has more than 100 years' experience providing insurance and risk management services to business owners. They currently have 29 representatives in Texas to serve you. Federated offers very competitive rates. For a comparison of your present coverage, please contact Michael Cox at (800) 633-6040.

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to [TFDA.com](http://TFDA.com) and click on "Continuing Education" and then on the Apex link. You will be taken to their website where you can sign up for CE hours. TFSC has approved all the continuing education modules. It is possible to get all 16 hours, including the required hours, through this program. You may study the modules and take the tests online, or order the modules through the website and have them mailed to you. The cost is reasonable and the process user-friendly.

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### Online Newsletters

MultiView produces and provides a weekly email newsletter, Funeral Trends, to the TFDA membership. The information in the newsletter is industry related covering a variety of news stories from across the country. They also sell advertising on the TFDA website. Members have the opportunity to purchase advertisements in the newsletter or on the website. For information on advertising rates, please contact Geoffrey Forneret at (469) 420-2629 or email [gforneret@multibriefs.com](mailto:gforneret@multibriefs.com).

### Phone "On Hold" Systems

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



# TFDA Services, Inc.

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## MEMBER SERVICES These services are provided to TFDA members only.

**AT&T Discounted Cell Phone Service** TFDA members are eligible for a 10 percent discount. This is for personal accounts under users' social security numbers. Business accounts are not eligible. They offer some great specials not available anywhere else. To access the link, you must go to the Members Only portion of the TFDA website and log-in. You may also take your membership card to any AT&T store to verify eligibility.

**TFDA Job Bank** assists funeral homes, commercial embalming establishments and crematories looking for personnel. Information is posted to the TFDA website for 90 days unless otherwise stated. Using the TFDA job bank significantly increases your applicants and shortens your search time. Licensed funeral directors and embalmers are encouraged to email their resumes to [joyce@tfda.com](mailto:joyce@tfda.com) so that potential employers can contact them. Contact the TFDA office at (512) 442-2304 for more information.

**Verizon Wireless Service** TFDA members (all existing and new customer Verizon accounts) will receive an 8 percent discount off their monthly bill along with discounts of up to 25 percent off all accessories. This discount applies to business accounts and personal accounts. All activation fees will be waived for new services provided, along with early termination fees up to \$350. All agreements will be for a duration of two years. Apple products will not receive discounts. To initiate your account, contact Will Godfrey (832) 349-5106, [will.godfrey@cellularsales.com](mailto:will.godfrey@cellularsales.com).

**El Dorado Motor Group** offers TFDA members and their employees the ability to purchase GM vehicles at fleet pricing. El Dorado Motors will sell all eligible vehicles at GM Supplier Pricing as detailed on the manufacturer's invoice. This is truly a "no hassles/no haggle" process. For each vehicle purchased, they will donate \$50 to the Colin Owens Memorial Scholarship Fund. Contact Tom Bresnahan in McKinney, Texas, at (972) 569-0101.

**Funeral Service Credit Union**, located in Springfield, Illinois, is a state-chartered credit union established in 1983 that provides financial services to funeral service professionals, their employees and immediate families. This credit union is endorsed by NFDA, many other national funeral service organizations and state funeral directors associations. They offer many services and very competitive rates. For more information, visit [www.fscunet.org](http://www.fscunet.org) or call toll-free (866) 701-3728 or (217) 546-5480.

**Music Licensing** TFDA members are eligible for the same low rate for music licensing as is available to NFDA members. NFDA allows members of the state associations to receive a discounted music license. The 2014 music license is \$235. This is a considerable discount over the price you would pay to become licensed directly with each agency (ASCAP, BMI and SESAC). For a copy of the 2014 NFDA music license renewal form, go to [www.tfda.com](http://www.tfda.com) and click on "Helpful Forms." Failure to obtain an annual license may result in substantial fines.

**Men's Wearhouse** Men's Wearhouse is the go-to menswear store for funeral directors of all ages. Superior suit selection is broad on styles and brand names. To get discounts go to [www.tfda.com](http://www.tfda.com), then Members Only.

## Index to Advertisers

ASD Inc. **32**  
 Austin Mortuary Service, LLC **8**  
 C & J Financial, LLC **13**  
 Capital Mortuary Services **31**  
 Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service **7**  
 Continental Computer **29**  
 Doric Texas **16**  
 Kirk Mortuary Service of Houston **21**  
 Lamcraft **27**  
 Legacy Funeral Group **9**  
 Live Oak Bank **25**  
 Matthews Int'l Casket Division **19**  
 Metropolitan Funeral Service **33**  
 Miller & Sons **10, 20**  
 Olinger Mortuary Service **23**  
 Shields Southeast Sales Inc. **BC**  
 Southwest Professional Vehicles, Inc. **17**  
 Tesco Transportation Equipment **28**  
 Texas Service Life **IFC**  
 Twin Wood Mortuary **5**  
 Victoria Mortuary Services **26**  
 Wilbert Funeral Services and Signet Supply **IBC**



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## 2016 TFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| 2017            |                           |              |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| <b>October</b>  |                           |              |
| 4 Tu            | The Gathering             | Wolfe City   |
| 13 Th           | North Texas Meeting       | Grapevine    |
| 18 Tu           | TFDA Services, Inc. Board | Austin       |
| 19 W            | TFDA Board Meeting        | Austin       |
| 23-26           | NFDA Convention           | Philadelphia |
| <b>December</b> |                           |              |
| 12              | Wreaths Across America    | Austin       |
| 13 Tu           | TFSC (Commission) Meeting | Austin       |
| <b>January</b>  |                           |              |
| 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       |
| <b>March</b>    |                           |              |
| 30 Th           | South Central Meeting     | TBD          |
| <b>April</b>    |                           |              |
| 18 Tu           | TFDA Services, Inc. Board | Austin       |
| 19 W            | TFDA Board Meeting        | Austin       |
| <b>June</b>     |                           |              |
| 4-7             | TFDA Convention           | Austin       |
| <b>October</b>  |                           |              |
| 24 Tu           | TFDA Services, Inc. Board | Austin       |
| 25 W            | TFDA Board Meeting        | Austin       |
| 29 - Nov 1      | NFDA Convention           | Boston, MA   |

**Would you like to advertise in Texas Director?**

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 phuber2@austin.rr.com  
 512.310.9795  
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# One Woman Cemetery in the Middle of the Road



The town of Hearne has earned the moniker of “The Crossroads of Texas” because it sits at the intersection of several highways and railroads. The little town used to be a hub of transport and commerce.

During World War II, Hearne was the site of the largest German Prisoner-of-War Camp, but today is a fairly sleepy pit stop on the way to somewhere else. Amid the suburban houses and grassy lawns though, there is an unusual sight: a body buried in the middle of the street.

The lone grave is marked by a sizable oak and two plaques set in an almond-

shaped median. The first marker reads: “COME YE BLESSED.”

The second: “TO THE MEMORY OF ‘OUR MOTHER’ HOLLIE TATNELL 1859 – 1911,” and below that, “MRS. GEORGIA E. GARTER Washington D.C. ANDREW L. HUNTER M. D. Marlin, Texas.”

According to the scant available history, Hollie Tatnell was born a slave in Texas. Upon her death in 1911, she was buried in Hearne’s colored cemetery, which had supposedly originated as a slave burying ground.

Mrs. Tatnell would have been one of the last people

interred at the cemetery before it was closed in 1912.

When real estate developers purchased the land in 1947, they edged out the families of color in the neighborhood, who were forced to exhume and rebury the remains of their ancestors in the cemetery.

The only family that refused to budge was Hollie Tatnell’s children, Georgia and Andrew.

The developers, eager to move forward, had to construct a median around Hollie Tatnell’s diagonal grave. As proof of their triumph, the Tatnell children placed the second marker on their



mother’s grave in addition to her original headstone.

In 2007 the median also received a sign from the Texas Historical Commission, denoting it as a Historic Texas Cemetery despite only containing the remains of one person. “This single grave,” it reads, “serves as a reminder of the area’s early African-American community and of the sanctity of burial grounds.” ★



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**Contact your Wilbert Funeral Services representative today!**

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[alee@wilbert.com](mailto:alee@wilbert.com)

Robert Babineaux  
Regional Marketing Manager  
(318) 423-0613  
[rbabineaux@wilbert.com](mailto:rbabineaux@wilbert.com)

Sly Jackson  
Regional Vice President  
(806) 762-0505  
[sjackson@wilbert.com](mailto:sjackson@wilbert.com)

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