

# Canadian

FUNERAL NEWS



DECEMBER 2023



## *Service* **BEFORE SELF**

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Jeff Weafer

ON THE COVER:

- 6 Service Before Self  
FSAC president Jeff Weafer leads by example  
*by Lisa Johnston*

FEATURES:

- 10 Testing Values?  
The answer may lie in the cards  
*by Michael Brooke*
- 12 Oopsie!  
*by Jeffrey Chancellor, CFSP*
- 16 To Be, or Not to Be?  
*by Dr. Bill Webster*
- 34 Complicated Grief: An Introduction  
*by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD*

REGULARS:

- 36 Upcoming Events
- 37 Buyer's Guide

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Publisher | Patrick Ottmann  
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www.otcommunications.com

CANADIAN FUNERAL NEWS is a magazine dedicated to the advancement of funeral service in Canada. The magazine of Canadian funeral directors is published 12 times per year by OT Communications Inc.

Changes of address should be sent in 30 days ahead of the next issue for delivery to new address. Subscriptions: \$100 per year.  
Listings without subscription: \$95 per year. Subscription & listing: \$195/year. Add \$95 for each branch listing. Please add 5% GST.  
Please allow 8 to 12 weeks for subscription delivery. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa.  
Publications Mail Registration No. 09931. ISSN 0382-5876.  
Second-class postage prepaid at Calgary, Alberta.  
Canadian publications mail sales product agreement No. 40012479  
POSTMASTER: Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:  
Circulation Dept. Suite 1025, 101 - 6th Ave. SW, Calgary, AB, T2P 3P4

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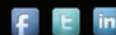
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Pat Ottmann

## BLESSINGS

by Pat Ottmann

**"To point with pride, view with alarm and occasionally recommend."**

Our dear friend Todd Van Beck would always tell stories of Heafey & Heafey Mortuary and Mr. Heafey's little black book. I have shared this before, but Todd always sent shivers as he'd wind his way through the story as only he could do. The book was rumoured to hold everything from gambling debts to the names of girlfriends, or some other nefarious list that was steep in mystery, drama and suspense.

As it turned out, the little black book held the names of people experiencing their first Christmas without a loved one. Everyone on that list would receive a Christmas Eve invitation to Mr. Heafey's home so they wouldn't be completely alone over the holiday season.

I know many of our funeral homes across the country have special services around Christmas to help people process the loss. The engagements recognize the acute pain often felt during this time of the year and bring the community together in shared healing.

This is when our profession can add value to what we do while asking for nothing in return. The funeral home is the hub of the community, the expert in dealing with loss. If we don't step up to the plate to help, then who will? I have talked to some people who tell me even families outside the Christian faith will attend the holiday gathering for community support. It is a time for the funeral home to be the centre of the community and lead the journey of healing.

An email, a tweet or a post on Facebook just doesn't get this one done, folks. If I need to explain why, I fear for the profession as we know it. Put in the effort, do the right thing and help your families.


Stepping off my soapbox, I always find myself reflecting at this time of year. As I look back at 2023, it was a year filled with many challenges, but even more blessings. Serving as a supplier to this great profession has always been appreciated by myself and our team. To be a part of something – through our work and efforts, our sharing of ideas (good and bad) – to give our front-line professionals something to consider. Hopefully, through this consideration of the ideas put forth, our funeral professionals will improve their offerings to the families being served.

It is truly gratifying to know that on our own small level, we may have helped someone going through loss. We take this responsibility seriously but also with a sense of pride in serving the profession. We, like so many of you, get to share our story of the value of the funeral whenever questioned about what we do. *Canadian Funeral News* is unknown to most people outside the profession, and I think it sparks similar questions to those when you mention you're a funeral director.



Thank you for reading and supporting the magazine, but thank you even more for continuing to search for new ideas and ways to serve your communities. To our suppliers, thank you for continuing to use us to share your message. Without you, we don't exist.

On behalf of my brother and business partner Tim, Lisa, Nancy and Jessi, I wish you all a Merry Christmas. We hope you will continue to count your blessings for living in the country that we do, while being able to serve our communities.

Until next year... 



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# SERVICE BEFORE SELF

FSAC PRESIDENT JEFF WEAFER LEADS BY EXAMPLE

by Lisa Johnston

Throughout the course of a day, Jeff Weafer wears many hats. The father of six serves as manager of Regina Funeral Home, deputy mayor of Dog River (from Corner Gas fame) and is currently president of the Funeral Service Association of Canada (FSAC). No matter the task at hand, the purpose remains the same: it's all about service to others.

"The bottom line for me is to make a difference," states Weafer. "I was put on this planet to help people. It's as simple as that."

Weafer has always focused on creating meaningful relationships, first as a manager for The Keg for seven years before turning his focus to funeral service. His earliest recollection with death was being told to stay home from his grandfather's funeral when he was 10 – even though the need to be in attendance resonated for years. The second encompassed serving as a pallbearer in his mid-20s. Both experiences ultimately brought him to the door of Regina Funeral Home.

"I had taken a month off work to figure out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life," says Weafer, who grew up in several small Saskatchewan towns as his father transferred various posts during his RCMP career. "Helping people and making a difference were high-value items for me, so I did some research on the funeral profession, developed an exit strategy from The Keg and sought to find an internship in funeral service."

Wanting to put down roots in a smaller community, Weafer knocked on doors from Brooks, Alberta to Portage le Prairie, Manitoba. Unfortunately, no one was hiring.

"On the advice of a family friend, I showed up at Arbor Memorial's Regina Funeral Home and made an offer to work for free for three months," says Weafer, a business graduate from the University of Regina. "I told them they could let me go after two weeks if I didn't work out and we'd both go our different ways. But if I stayed, they owed me an apprenticeship."

FSAC president Jeff Weafer.







In Loving Memory of  
*Sharon Anne Martinez*  
October 27, 1962 - August 13, 2023



*Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
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now and at the hour of our death.  
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Jeff Weafer joins his FSAC colleagues for a strategic planning session in Winnipeg.

Weafer started that afternoon at \$6/hour and celebrated 28 years with the company this past September.

A licensed funeral director and embalmer since 1999, Weafer has become a role model in the profession, mentoring many interns over the years, including his own daughter, Lauren. Education has always been important and was a primary focus during his involvement with the Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan (FCSCS) where he chaired the education and professional development committee for 15 years before being elected chairperson in 2020.

His passion is evident in everything he does, whether serving families or volunteering with many organizations from the Saskatchewan Roughriders to Kiwanis to Ducks Unlimited.

“Many opportunities have been presented over the years, but I have been happy to remain with Arbor Memorial at Regina Funeral Home,” says Weafer. “It’s rare to have a company that has supported and fulfilled your professional needs for 28 years in today’s employment market. I am very blessed to have had people like David Scanlan, Jerry Roberts and Glen Talbot say they believed in me, providing me with the tools I needed to succeed. It is because of their support that I have had the opportunity to be involved in FSAC.”

Weafer’s involvement with the national association began in 2012, when FSAC’s annual conference was held in Regina.

Weafer’s passion is evident in everything he does, whether serving families or volunteering with many organizations from the Saskatchewan Roughriders to Kiwanis to Ducks Unlimited.



Jeff Weafer attends the NFDA convention in Las Vegas on behalf of FSAC.

Upon learning the event was coming to his own backyard, Weafer reached out to volunteer and ended up moderating a town hall session in front of 220 delegates.

“It was my first experience with FSAC and it was an incredible opportunity to stand in the middle of a room full of seasoned funeral service veterans alongside up-and-coming students,” recalls Weafer. “The energy was amazing and it was easy to recognize the potential for good.” Weafer’s message to the group that day was clear: a rising tide floats all boats. Only by working together can the funeral service profession become stronger.

It is a belief he still promotes today. “We really need to expand our footprint and come together as one to help everyone succeed,” says Weafer, who moderated several more FSAC sessions before officially joining the board in 2016. “FSAC is not just for funeral service practitioners; it’s also for



Jeff Weafer, right, participates in a podcast interview at the 2023 NFDA convention.

“I was put on this earth to make a difference in someone’s darkest day; to offer small human courtesies; and treat families the way I would like to be treated,” says Weafer.

crematoriums, cemeteries and grief professionals. We are really listening and working hand in hand with NFDA and provincial associations to have a larger presence.”

Weafer adds, “The ongoing mission of FSAC is to promote the ritual of memorialization while demonstrating leadership, providing education and raising public awareness. We don’t need to be all things to all people, but we really need our provincial associations to be as strong as they can be with FSAC providing overriding support for the work that can only be done nationally.”

According to Weafer, that includes helping with the staffing challenges plaguing death-care businesses across the

country. “FSAC is exploring many possibilities, including the potential to create a Red Seal program which would provide federal funding for both businesses and students. We are also looking at international avenues for recruitment, as there are many people working in other countries who would love to come to Canada.”

Throughout Weafer’s term as president, the focus will be on rebranding and retooling FSAC to realign with Canada’s death-care consumers.

“I’m not a traditionalist thinker,” says Weafer on his skill set to lead FSAC into the future. “Even back to my hospitality days, I would take off my manager’s hat and stand in line with the people waiting to get in. I would listen and learn. The same can apply to our establishments: when you walk into a funeral home, what does it feel like? What does it smell like? What is the temperature in the room? How are we greeted? We have to be cognitive of all those little things. I try to think like both a consumer and an entrepreneur to help identify the rapidly changing needs of today’s death-care families.”

Weafer believes part of the solution lies in the profession telling its own story. “A funeral is not about us; it is about the family and the deceased. As a result, we have become part of the woodwork, stoically going about our duties, serving families in need and being pillars in our communities. We haven’t done enough to share our incredible stories of healing. We haven’t shone the spotlight on the legends who have served. If we don’t tell our own stories, consumers are going to pick up a different storyline from somewhere else; one that could be full of misnomers. This is when you see disengaged consumers who say, ‘I don’t want anything you have to offer.’ We have to change that. We have to do a better job of telling our story.”

When not telling that story, Weafer enjoys spending time outdoors, hunting, fishing or walking the land. He is a hands-on father – something he claims as his biggest accomplishment – to Morgan, 28, Madeline, 26, Lauren, 23, Nigel, 16, Josiah, 15, and Elias, 13. When the phone rings – whether it’s one of his six kids or a funeral family – Weafer is always ready to answer the call.

“I was put on this earth to make a difference in someone’s darkest day; to offer small human courtesies; and treat families the way I would like to be treated,” says Weafer, who has had the privilege of serving the penniless to former prime minister Stephen Harper. “I learned a long time ago that if you put families first, all the business elements will take care of themselves.”

For Weafer, it all goes back to service over self. “For me, it’s not about the position; it’s not about pinning something to my chest. It is about serving my professional community and ultimately the families who come through our doors.”



Michael Brooke

# TESTING VALUES?

## THE ANSWER MAY LIE IN THE CARDS

by Michael Brooke

I was never a big fan of psychometric tests. I recall taking a vocational test in high school that had me pegged as a teacher or a priest. Then, almost 30 years ago, I took a test to land a sales job at a large photocopier company. Looking back on that particular job (and my less-than-stellar career at the company), I should have stuck with teaching!

A number of funeral homes test before they hire employees. Throughout the next three issues of *Canadian Funeral News*, I will dive into what's out there, what's working and what ideas could benefit your funeral home.

First up is an examination of the importance of assessing values.

Psychologists place their faith in the profound influence of values. Research indicates that ethics and values can fundamentally transform our inner world. Values influence how we perceive and respond to our environment and fellow employees. For those people who hold honesty as a core value, their actions will genuinely reflect their virtue. This reduces the likelihood that they will behave dishonestly or use unfair tactics to achieve their goals.

Whether personal or professional, values foster space for acquiring knowledge, wisdom and a deeper understanding of oneself. Following are several reasons why it's essential to assess values.

### **Cultural Fit**

Aligning values is critical for creating a cohesive and harmonious workplace culture.

### **Employee Engagement**

Employees who align with the organization's values are generally more engaged. They are more likely to be motivated, committed and passionate about their roles, which can lead to higher productivity and job satisfaction.

### **Ethical Conduct**

Values influence ethical behaviour. When employees share the organization's values, there is a higher likelihood of acting ethically and responsibly, which is crucial for maintaining the company's reputation and trustworthiness.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Employees who embody the company's values are likelier to deliver a consistent, high-quality customer experience. This can lead to improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts are inevitable in any organization. Assessing values can help identify individuals more likely to resolve disputes constructively, promoting a healthier work environment.

To gain more insight into how values tests have impacted hiring, I reached out to David Garvie. We initially met while researching an article I wrote on disruption within the funeral service profession. Garvie spent over four decades as a funeral director in Toronto. Although he's now retired and living on Vancouver Island, he's still involved with teaching and mentoring.

A former employee I will call "Alice," who worked with Garvie, mentioned that she had participated in a values assessment before getting hired as an intern. To this day, Alice remembers taking the test and still thinks about its impact years later.

"I'm not surprised that Alice remembered the John Maxwell exercise," Garvie tells me. "I put all new employees through it (whether hired or not) to help them and me learn more about them."

Garvie shared some insights about this values test and how he discovered it. "Several years ago, I attended a John Maxwell nationwide meeting. Our meeting pod was in Oshawa, with about 600 of us meeting for a full-day session with John, his team and numerous guest speakers.

“It was a fabulous learning experience and, at times, very moving to hear the life stories of individuals who shared where they had come from and where they were today,” Garvie recalls. “When we first arrived, we all received a workbook to take notes and a deck of cards wrapped in plastic. We were instructed not to open them until John told us to do so.”

Part way through the morning, Maxwell told his audience to open the deck of cards and take them out of the box. “These were not like an ordinary deck of cards, but rather something called ‘value cards,’” says Garvie. These cards depicted various values that attendees had acquired throughout their lifetimes.

“We were instructed to individually look at each card and then divide the deck into two piles. One side was to be the cards/values we felt were meaningful and important in our lives. The other pile would consist of values we felt were unimportant to our lives.”

The group was instructed to return the non-value cards to the box, re-examine those values they felt were important, and select the eight most important cards. “Then we were to find a partner and share our eight most important values with them, telling them why we felt they were important in our lives.” Participants were instructed to reduce the eight values to four and then reduce the four to two again.

“Those remaining two values were considered the two most important values in our lives and would impact the many decisions we would make daily.”

As Garvie explains, “It did not mean that the other values that we had selected previously would not also impact our decisions, but the two most significant values would be most impactful in our daily lives.”

Garvie recalls always being amazed at this little exercise’s impact on interviewees. “They always walked away having learned something about themselves and why they sometimes acted or made decisions the way they did.” Garvie says he learned more about these candidates and what made them tick as the whole process was filled with discussions about many of the values they had selected and discarded and why they had chosen those specific values to keep or discard.

The test was both fascinating and meaningful for everyone

who participated. “To this day, many of the people that I meet that were either selected as potential future interns or employees always remembered and mentioned the value card exercise that I put them through,” he says.

Garvie tells me that he would always take the time to discuss with candidates where they thought these values came from, how they learned them, from whom and during what circumstances they acquired them. “It was interesting that many young women who came from broken homes, raised by their mother or grandmother, often selected ‘trust’ as one of their primary values.”


When assessing the value of these tests, Garvie recommends their use wholeheartedly. “These little cards were very impactful and insightful as they brought about some meaningful discussions and a learning process about the individual applying for a position with us.” But equally important, potential employees learned much about their likely new GM and how he looked upon them and life.

There is one caveat that Garvie is quick to point out. “Someone purchasing these value cards online who had not experienced the process as we did at the John Maxwell event would probably not gain the same understanding as participants during that day.”

Garvie cautions that someone might misinterpret or misuse these cards if they aren’t careful. “How they are presented and used to encourage thoughtful and insightful conversation is most important. You must always ask each person being interviewed if they wish to participate in the exercise and assure them there are no right or wrong answers.”

Garvie admits that he would tell candidates to avoid picking values that they thought would impress him. “This was to be a personal learning experience for them as much as it was for me.”

The Maxwell Value Cards are readily available on the Maxwell Leadership website. There are, however, many other value assessment tools that are free and easily completed. I tried out [personalvalu.es](http://personalvalu.es) and found that it was a very accurate assessment.

When assessing your team and their core values, I encourage you to take the time to investigate. There is genuinely a tremendous benefit for all. 

Michael Brooke is both a writer and former publisher. He now turns people’s memories into magazines. Contact Michael at [mbrooke@timeformystory.com](mailto:mbrooke@timeformystory.com).



Jeffrey Chancellor, CFSP



## OOPSIE!

by Jeffrey Chancellor, CFSP

What was your biggest ever oopsie at work? Any volunteers? Anyone? No? OK, I'll go first. In my early years as a funeral director, I once forgot to confirm a grave opening. When I arrived at the cemetery to preview everything, there was no grave. "This is going to be bad" were the words in my head as I felt a particular type of horror. Let me share the story.

It was the second time I had met with the family. First it was for dad and now we were looking after mom. Arrangements went smoothly and quickly. They were getting pretty good at this, being their second experience in as many weeks.

After we finished our business, the daughter said she would go to the cemetery sales office to pay for dad's bill and to arrange mom's interment details. Once she left, I did what we always do: got to work on her mom's care and service details.

In our area, the funeral culture was pretty standard. Usually, the funeral and burial were held three days after the death. If you were Catholic, your rosary service and public viewing would be at 7 p.m. and your mass celebrated at 10 a.m. If you were Protestant, your visitation would start at 7 p.m. and your celebration of life would begin at 2 p.m. Both services likely contained *The Old Rugged Cross*, *How Great Thou Art*, the same lunch menu and the same hearse to the same cemetery.

Our rosary service and viewing went smoothly and the morning of the service, I went by the cemetery to preview the grave at 8 a.m. To my horror, there was no grave. The mound looked exactly the same as we left it two weeks ago, albeit the flowers were now brown and wilted. My heart started beating faster. What to do?!? Should I call the family? Should I try to get the grave opened and set up with less than two hours until the service? Should I call my boss?

I sped over to the cemetery sales office to discover that the daughter had got distracted and missed her planned visit. The

receptionist was more than happy to inform me that her team didn't make the mistake. She went on to say that it was in fact the family's fault and that they still had not paid for dad's grave from two weeks ago. I told her it was actually 100 per cent my fault. I hadn't followed up with the sales office or the daughter, full stop. I asked her if we could do anything to get the grave open ASAP.

She reiterated that the company policy required 24-hours' notice to open a grave. I looked at my watch. It was 8:20 a.m. I asked her what the policy was when the company policy fails? I explained that this family had experienced two deaths in as many weeks and that if we broke policy, we had enough time. She relented and called the foreman.

Fortunately, our firm had cultivated and nurtured wonderful relationships with the cemetery workers. The foreman gladly dropped what he was doing and radioed his team to meet at the graveside. He promised to have the grave ready by 11 a.m.

I headed to the church at 8:45 and told the priest about my blunder. He assured me it wouldn't be a problem. He would add a little extra Scripture and make a restroom announcement before we proceeded to the cemetery. Phew! Was it really going to be that easy?

My next call was to the boss. First, to share my blunder and solutions. Second, to ask how to express "our" gratitude to the fine people at the cemetery and the church who pulled together in the service of this family. He thought pizza and beer for the cemetery workers and me volunteering to serve at the church's fall supper.

When it was all over and the family was pleased with our service, my boss asked me, "What did you learn from this experience?" I said, "There is no 'I' in team. If I had discussed all the service details with my co-workers before the event, we could have saved money on food and I'd be enjoying the church meal instead of serving it."



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It has been said that a smart person learns from their mistakes and a wise person learns from the mistakes of others. What have we, as a profession, learned from these all too frequent mistakes?

He agreed the cost was reasonable for a valuable learning and brand building experience. He received compliments about the integrity and honesty of his staff, and, as for me, it never happened again.

Not all oopsies are that easy to fix. During my travels as a supplier and an educator, I have met more than a few folks who have made irreversible oopsies. Like cremating the wrong body, for instance. These oversights have ended careers and brands, and all have cost big bucks in addition to giving our profession a black eye. Are they a good learning experience and a good brand building exercise? Yes, but not for the poor souls who made the blunders.

It has been said that a smart person learns from their mistakes and a wise person learns from the mistakes of others. What have we, as a profession, learned from these all too frequent mistakes?

I have personally met 12 people who have cremated, buried or shipped out the wrong body. But wait Jeff, in your career of over three decades, there have been millions of families well and properly served by “your clients.” Surely, 12 is a relatively low number, right? Perhaps this is true, but my question is: what were the commonalities or similarities I observed with the folks I’m referring to?

Let’s forget about chain of custody SOPs, company policies and procedures for a moment and look at something less obvious, but more impactful: culture. Let’s compare our profession’s culture with that of commercial aviation. Have you ever heard a captain say, “Cabin crew arm your doors and cross-check” during a flight? The flight attendants almost ceremonially arm their door and then walk across the aisle and cross-check – giving a thumbs-up – before proceeding with their next duty.

It is a very public display. There isn’t any room for omissions or errors. It is highly visible. Compare that with our culture in transfers, storage, embalming, arrangements and cremation. I see transfer contractors deliver remains after hours and there is no cross-check process. I see embalmers embalm without photographs and they don’t keep case reports. I see embalmers who will not accept criticism of their features or makeup.

How many readers ever heard this before: “That is my case, hands off”? Or “I don’t want him doing makeup on my case”? I sure have. I’ve observed it firsthand in many firms and in many countries.

Let me ask you this: how many crematorium operators are working alone, offsite with no access to a cross-check? How many firms employ a transfer into a care log and a twice daily checkup log on the cases in the refrigerator? How many keep very accurate embalming and cremation reports? It is this type of culture that breeds oopsies.


In death care, there are few industry standards, let alone many national regulations. Add to that complexity, there are a lot of small businesses. It reminds me of the old days of aviation. Any guy who learned to fly in the war could buy an old airplane and if he worked hard, he could build an airline.

Those days are long gone in aviation because of standards, regulation, inspection and enforcement. The industry best practices are thoughtful and comprehensive and filled with cross-checks, minimum continuing education standards, drug and alcohol testing, record keeping and the list goes on because people’s lives depend on it.

These standards have no doubt created a barrier to entry into the aviation space. Let’s look at death care a little more closely. Is it the same as aviation? Are the barriers to entry growing?

In some markets, the legal requirements regarding cremation go as far as having to wait a certain number of hours before performing a cremation to recoding the day, time and weight of the body and container when you start and the day, time and weight of the urn when you finish.

Are you looking for some advice on oopsie proofing your death-care business? Give us a call. We will be happy to assist and you will be happy you did.

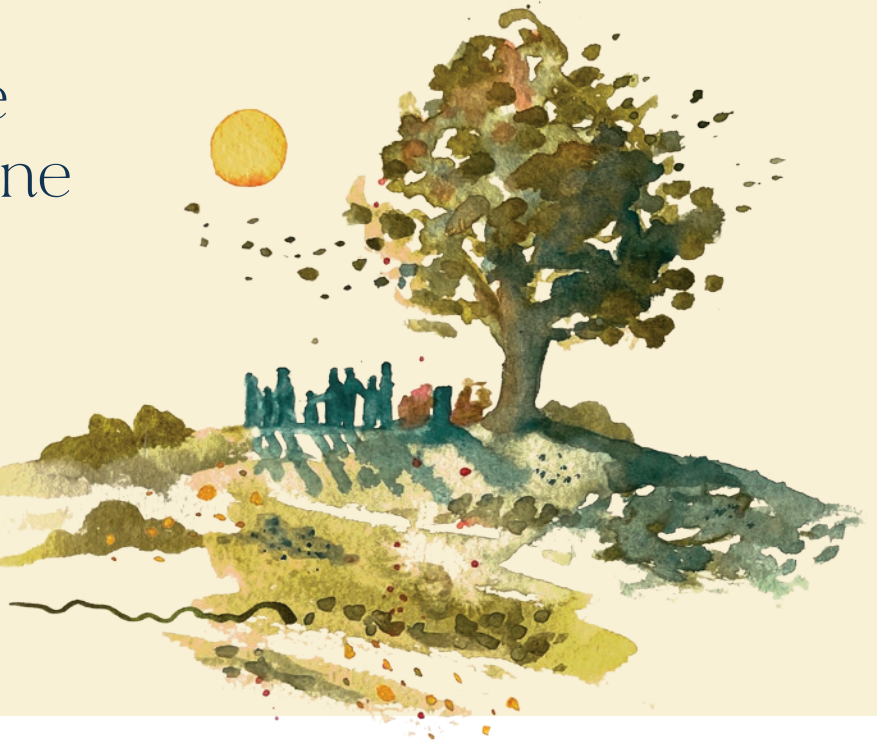
Like death care, there are literally millions of flights in between oopsies. We are doing a pretty good job in both professions but there is definitely room for improvement. 

Jeff Chancellor serves as director of education, training and research for Eckels and welcomes your opinions.



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# Grief

the unwelcome journey

Dr. Bill Webster has written a new 40-page booklet designed for people in the early days of grief after bereavement. "Grief: The Unwelcome Journey" is an ideal resource to include in a stationery package or as a personalized token of your support to your families.

After a mere three months, the booklet is already in second edition in the U.K., and has been described as "... a masterpiece, covering all aspects of grieving in a most practical and helpful manner." (J. West, West & Coe, London)

Dr. Bill will introduce this product to the Canadian market in the fall of 2023, at less than the cost of a sympathy card.

To receive a complimentary copy for your consideration, please email Dr. Bill Webster ([info@griefjourney.com](mailto:info@griefjourney.com)) with your name and funeral home details.

Visit [www.griefjourney.com](http://www.griefjourney.com) for more grief support resources.



Dr. Bill Webster

# TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

by Dr. Bill Webster

I'm getting to that time in life when I'm realizing "too soon old, too late smart." But, for me, the question for this new year has become "to be, or not to be?"

Shakespeare's famous soliloquy is about life and death for Hamlet. But the real question for most of us is not just about death or how many difficulties or struggles we have in life; the actual issue is what we should do about them. Do we, in Hamlet's words, "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" or "take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing, end them"?

This is the choice that confronts us as we all look for reasons and resources to live our lives. It's about deciding to give up or to go on. It's whether to make the best of life in whatever the situation we find ourselves, or whether to submissively surrender to an inevitable fate.

It's tempting to think that the question is "what do I have to do to make life successful or even worth living?" But that's not the real issue. What do I have to be (or not to be) to make life work? That is indeed the question!

## BE CREATIVE

Whether in the workplace or at home, one of the secrets of breathing life into business, personal relationships or indeed any situation is creativity.

Many businesses these days are "suffering slings and arrows" by hanging on to the idea that "this is the way we've always done it" known as the "same old, same old" syndrome.

If you haven't noticed, technology has changed our world.

Whether it's shopping on Amazon, or buying a ticket for a concert or a sports event, the only way to do it is on my computer or phone. For a generation not used to technology, it means constantly having to ask our grandchildren how to do it or having them do it for us.

Whether we like it or not, technology is revolutionizing the funeral profession. Soon, funerals will be arranged and funeral plans marketed with the use of AI and avatars. Even grief support will be distributed by email and other Internet solutions. Imagine how you could enhance your reputation in the community by simply having a series of five- to six-minute grief support videos sent to your families on their own computers, in their own homes, accessible at any time of the day or night.

This technology is already here, because I'm currently involved in helping produce such an innovative program of support.

What could you do to "be creative" in this new year? What can you do to help you stand out from the crowd? To be, or not to be?

## BE A COMMUNICATOR

Good communication always involves two elements. The message, or the substance of what we want to say, and the method, referring to the ways in which the content of that message is conveyed. The greatest thing in connecting with people is not just what you say, it is the impression you leave with them afterwards. Unfortunately, this is not an innate skill, but a learned behaviour.

There is a huge difference between sympathy and empathy. Mere sympathy doesn't help you build deep connections

The real heroes are the people who seem to face all kinds of adversity, but never lose the spirit of determination linked closely to an attitude of gratitude.

with other people because it is only surface-level understanding. Sometimes sympathy is just our relief at not having the same problems.

Empathy, on the other hand, lets you walk in someone else's shoes. It is our ability to understand how someone feels, allowing you to see and feel the situation from the other's perspective. If you were ill, had experienced bereavement or needed help, what response would you want, need and long for in a situation like that?

A nursing friend of mine made the following insightful statement:

"It was a gigantic day for me when I decided not to question or resent the bell that summoned me to the sickroom, but to simply answer it. It was one small way I could live in compassionate service to another human being. This realization came about when I put myself in my patient's shoes – or in their sickbed, to be more specific! What if I could not get up without help? What if I needed some water, food or just some companionship? But I was the one who was there for them."

Communicate your desire to provide that level of experience every time you answer the call. "To be, or not to be?"

## BE CONTENT


After any loss, grieving people find themselves asking, "to be, or not to be?" Every day we all have to find answers to the questions death raises and the challenges of survival.

A good life is not just about positive outcomes, but is determined by the way we allow ourselves to be affected by whatever life brings. The assessment of "good" or "bad" should not depend on circumstances. The real heroes are the people who seem to face all kinds of adversity, but never lose the spirit of determination linked closely to an attitude of gratitude.

In light of my own life losses, I have had to come to the place where I say, "It is what it is," and then find ways to make the most of what I have left and to be content with that.

And when we do, we discover that death is not the ultimate defeat. A life that is un-lived is truly the greatest disaster.

It's never too late to get smart. So, take a look at your life today, your relationships, your involvements and your plans for a new year, and ask yourself, "To be ... or not to be?"

Only you can decide what your answer to that question will be. 

Dr. Bill Webster is the director of the Centre for the Grief Journey, and can be reached at [www.GriefJourney.com](http://www.GriefJourney.com), and on Twitter @drbillwebster.

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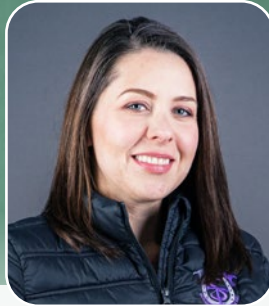
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# HOLIDAY GREETINGS

## FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY



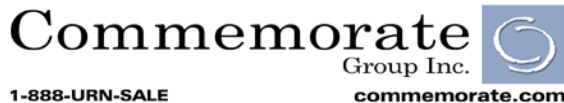
*“Warm wishes for a wonderful Christmas season. May you celebrate this time with high spirits and lots of smiles!”*

*~ Nancy Bielecki, Account Executive, Canadian Funeral News*



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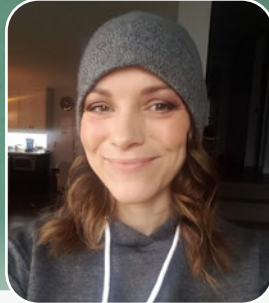
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# HOLIDAY GREETINGS

## FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY



*"If you ever needed a reason to feel merry, let this Christmas be just that."*

~ Jessi Evetts, Art Director, Canadian Funeral News

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# HOLIDAY GREETINGS

## FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY



*"Wishing you a season full of love, peace and happiness. May the new year be blessed with good health and prosperity."*

~ Lisa Johnston, Editor, Canadian Funeral News



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all the magic of the holiday season."**



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# *Season's Greetings*

*Wishing you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a healthy and peaceful New Year from all of us at Dignity Memorial.*

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# IN MEMORIAM

Valérie Garneau




It is with regret that we announce the quiet death of Valérie Garneau on November 5, 2023, at her residence, at the age of 49. Valérie leaves behind an entire business community and many colleagues in the funeral profession where she was a source of inspiration. She was an exemplary philanthropist involved in her community and served as director of finance for the Garneau Group.

Working alongside her sister Marie Eve, Valérie represented the fourth generation of the Garneau family and helped the family business to experience significant growth. She was also the first woman to head the board of directors of the Corporation des thanatologues de Québec (CTQ) and was the Funeral Service Association of Canada (FSAC) rep to FIAT-IFTA.

Valérie supported several causes and organizations in her community. For five years, she suffered from multiple system atrophy, which unfortunately was her biggest and last challenge. True to herself, she used this ordeal to create the Valérie

Garneau Philanthropic Fund – United for the AMS to raise awareness of this terrible disease. The foundation works to support AMS through projects, awareness initiatives, research and community projects. Her contributions to her local community resulted in her being awarded the title of honorary citizen of Lévis in 2021.

Valérie leaves behind several loved ones, including her husband Joël Philibert; parents Rollande Roy and Jean Garneau; her children, of whom she was so proud, Gabriel (Camille Dion), Raphaël and Laurence (Mathieu Champigny); and her sister Marie Eve (Owen St. John). She was surrounded by precious friends who accompanied her until the end.

Visitation occurred at Complexe Claude Marcoux followed by a religious ceremony on November 15, 2023 at Saint-Romuald Church. Expressions of sympathy can be sent in the form of a donation to the Valérie Garneau Philanthropic Fund – United for the AMS. 



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# IN MEMORIAM

William (Bill) Dermody  
(November 23, 1952 - October 18, 2023)



It is with sadness that we announce the sudden and unexpected passing of William (Bill) Dermody. Bill and his family own and operate P.X. Dermody Funeral Homes in Hamilton, ON, and Bill was a board member and past chair of GFD. He was also a highly respected practitioner of business law and estates.

Bill was the beloved husband of Judy (nee McIntyre) and the loving father of Erin (Rich Svirga) and Clare (Jay Duncan). He will be terribly missed by his grandchildren William, Vivian and Rich Junior. He was the dear brother of Paul (Doris), Maureen and John; loved uncle of Andrea (Patrick Gordon), Paul and Alex; great uncle of Audrey; and brother-in-law to Richard, John and Brian McIntyre. He is also survived by his aunts and uncle, Vyvyan and Russell Reilly, and Joan Lavery as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins. Bill was predeceased by his parents Mary Margaret (nee Langford) and William P. (Bill) Dermody.

Bill's kindness was his greatest trait and was evident in both businesses he operated. His death leaves a huge hole in his community, his profession and his family. A lawyer for 42 years, Bill was also incredibly passionate about boating (one of his favourite hobbies was completing The Great Loop) and everything funeral related.

Visitation was held at his beloved P.X. Dermody Funeral Home (7 East Ave. S.) location on Sunday, October 22 and Monday, October 23. A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on October 24. Interment followed at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

In Bill's honour, donations can be made to the De Mazenod Door Outreach program or St. Patrick's Church. 



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# HIGHLIGHTS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA'S FUNERAL SERVICES GRADUATION

The British Columbia Funeral Association (BCFA), in conjunction with the Canadian College of Funeral Service (CCFS) and SkilledTradesBC, held their funeral services graduation and awards ceremony on September 16, 2023, at the Delta Hotels Burnaby Conference Centre.

Following welcoming remarks by BCFA board members Jason

Meidl and Brigitte MacNamara, the graduates were introduced. Represented by valedictorian Jennifer Bryce, the class of 2023 featured 30 graduates. In addition to dinner and the presentation of awards and diplomas, greetings were also offered by Roger Girouard, CCFS president and program director, Pam Moss, executive director of the Funeral Service Association of Canada, and Athena Theodorakakis, BCFA president. 

## CLASS OF 2023

**Lucas Branstetter**, McPherson Funeral Service Inc. • **Jennifer Bryce**, First Memorial Funeral Services Victoria

**Cassandra Capone**, Providence Funeral Homes Inc. • **Benjamin Cheung**, Richmond Funeral Home

**Shannon Cunnington**, Valley View Funeral Home • **Joseph Dolan**, Affordable Cremation & Burial • **Jessica Dovey**, Yates Memorial Services Ltd.

**Madeline Dudley**, Forest Lawn Funeral Home • **Annika Eckstein**, Providence Funeral Homes Inc. • **Brianna Fontaine**, Valley View Funeral Home

**Jennica Hanson**, Reynars Funeral Home • **Patrick Hau**, Hamilton Harron Funeral Home • **Rebecca Jayne Helpel**, Forest Lawn Funeral Home

**Bethany Hitchcock**, First Memorial Funeral Services Kelowna • **Mariah Kutchma**, First Memorial Saanich

**Tonya Makuch**, Elements Cremation, Pre-planning & Burial • **Odessa McKechnie**, Sands Funeral Chapel Victoria

**Sarene Nordwall**, Forest Lawn Funeral Home • **Chanelle Novakowski-Tupper**, Ocean View Funeral Home

**Jennifer Obradovic**, Springfield Funeral Home • **Kristina Olson**, Alternatives Funeral & Cremation Services

**Shayne Sampson**, Henderson's Fraser Valley Funeral Home • **Alexandra Scheck**, Springfield Funeral Home

**Jennifer Scramstad**, Burquitlam Funeral Home • **Anna Simpson**, Schoening's Funeral Home

**Brielle Soltys**, First Memorial Funeral Services Boal Chapel • **Perrin Strijckers**, First Memorial Saanich

**Jennifer Whatley**, Ocean View Funeral Home • **Anna Witek**, Burquitlam Funeral Home • **Joseph Wood**, Omega Mortuary Service

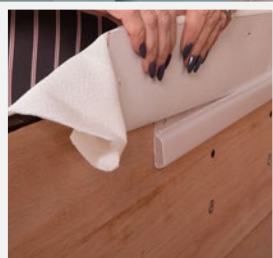
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## PRESENTATION OF AWARDS



**BRITISH COLUMBIA FUNERAL ASSOCIATION &  
CANADIAN COLLEGE OF FUNERAL SERVICE  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*(highest overall academic achievement in embalmer  
and funeral director studies)*

**Presented to Rebecca Jayne Heipel  
by Athena Theodorakakis and Roger Girouard**



**DODGE COMPANY (CANADA)  
EMBALMER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

*(highest academic performance in  
embalmer studies)*

**Presented to Alexandra "Ali" Scheck  
by Rick Bilcowski on behalf of Dodge Company  
(Canada)**



**ARBOR MEMORIAL SERVICES INC.  
JURISPRUDENCE AWARD**

*(highest academic performance in funeral law studies)*

**Presented to Rebecca Jayne Heipel  
by Brigitte MacNamara**



**SERVICE CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL (CANADA) ULC  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

*(highest academic performance in funeral director studies)*

**Presented to Rebecca Jayne Heipel  
by Mark Revie**



**ETERNITY'S TOUCH  
STEVE BILODEAU MEMORIAL BURSARY**

*(exemplifying community spirit in the classroom)*  
**Presented to Jennifer Bryce by Brennan Jackson**

## Funeral Service Foundation Scholarship Award Winners

The Funeral Service Foundation began in 1945 as an organization dedicated to improving the funeral profession and death-care services through the effective stewardship of charitable donations from leaders, funeral professionals, businesses and organizations in the funeral service community. The Funeral Service Foundation has served as the philanthropic voice of the funeral profession and has been identified as the charitable arm of the National Funeral Directors Association since 1997. This year, several BCFA graduates were recipients of generous scholarships.

### FOUNDATION 45 SCHOLARSHIP:

**Rebecca Jayne Heipel**

**Tonya Makuch**

**Shannon Cunnington**

**Patrick Hau**

**Jennifer Obradovic**

**Anna Witek**

### JOSEPH E. HAGAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:

**Alexandra Scheck**

### DENNIS SCHOEPP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:

**Odessa McKechnie**

### JOHN CARMON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:

**Kristina Olson**

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Graduates, left to right: Randy Klassen (Peter Carscadden Funeral Service), Keith Carey (Dalmeny Funeral Home), Tammy Thompson (Tubman Cremation & Funeral Services) and Benjamin Banbury (Tubman Cremation & Funeral Services). Missing from the photo: Grayson Gallagher and Amara Geick (Paragon Funeral & Cremation Services).

## CANADIAN COLLEGE OF FUNERAL SERVICE HONOURS SASKATCHEWAN GRADUATES

On September 23, 2023, six Canadian College of Funeral Service (CCFS) students gathered at Memories Dining in Regina to celebrate their graduation with family, friends, and college staff. After a message from Roger Girouard, president and program director of CCFS, and Kim Eberts, assistant registrar and compliance officer with the Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan (FCSCS), the diplomas were presented. Class valedictorian Randy Klassen also said a few words prior to the presentation of awards.


The Arbor Memorial Jurisprudence Award was presented to Benjamin Banbury; the Dodge Chemical Embalming Technologies Award went to Amara Geick; Randy Klassen received the Imperial Group Funeral Service Achievement Award; and Tammy Thompson was awarded the Eternity's Touch Steve Bilodeau Memorial Bursary. 



# MANITOBA GRADUATES CELEBRATED

The Inn at the Forks was the place to be on Friday, October 6, 2023, for the Canadian College of Funeral Service (CCFS) Manitoba graduation. Nine graduates were honoured this year for their perseverance and dedication in attaining their licences as they continue service to death-care families.

This year's graduates included Danielle Besnard (Thomson In

the Park Funeral Home), Madelyn Braun (Chapel Lawn Funeral Home), Amanda Desrochers (Desjardins Funeral Home), Taylor Emery (Chapel Lawn Funeral Home), Abram Giesbrecht (Wiebe Funeral Home), Samantha Henrickson (Chapel Lawn Funeral Home), Kendra Hodges (Chapel Lawn Funeral Home), Paige Kohlenberg (Klassen Funeral Home) and Rebecca Pash (Braendle-Bruce Funeral Service). 



Back row, left to right: Madelyn Braun, Samantha Henrickson, Abram Giesbrecht, Danielle Besnard and Rebecca Pash. Front row, left to right: Amanda Desrochers, Taylor Emery, Kendra Hodges and Paige Kohlenberg.

## PRESENTATION OF AWARDS



**CANADIAN COLLEGE OF FUNERAL SERVICE  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
*(highest overall academic performance)*  
Presented to Madelyn Braun by Roger Girouard



**MANITOBA FUNERAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION AWARD**  
*(high academic standards, skills and traits of  
the most well-rounded funeral director)*  
Presented to Paige Kohlenberg by Donna Olson



**ARBOR MEMORIAL SERVICES INC.  
ARBOR JURISPRUDENCE AWARD**  
*(highest overall performance in law)*  
Presented to Madelyn Braun by Naomi Lutz  
and Jeff Weafer



**IMPERIAL GROUP INC.  
FUNERAL SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
*(graduate who best exemplifies integrity, honesty and teamwork  
amongst their peers, educators and the funeral profession)*  
Presented to Abe Giesbrecht by Brennan Jackson



**DODGE CHEMICAL CO.  
EMBALMING TECHNOLOGIES AWARD**  
*(highest overall academic performance in  
embalming technology)*  
Presented to Madelyn Braun by Jody Lewis



**FRIENDS FUNERAL SERVICE AWARD**  
*(graduate who represents the most growth and development,  
positive attitude, teamwork and compassion in funeral service)*  
Presented to Abe Giesbrecht by Jotham Koslowsky  
and Danielle Froese

## COLIN HASKETT NAMED CHAIR OF BAO'S FUNERAL AND TRANSFER SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) has announced Colin Haskett as chair of the funeral and transfer services advisory committee. The announcement was made during BAO's online annual general meeting on September 27, 2023.

Haskett is proud to be the fifth generation of his family to provide bereavement services in rural southwestern Ontario. A licensed funeral director for more than 20 years, he currently serves as president of Haskett Funeral Homes and is an officer at Southwest Crematoriums. Prior to joining the family business, he was fortunate to work for three urban (privately and corporately owned) funeral companies.

"As part of the process in Ontario, I was on the BAO's advisory committee beforehand and the previous chair of that committee, Scott Miller, was completing the end of his term," says Haskett. "It became evident we were going to need someone to step up and do their best to fill his shoes and I felt that it would be well suited to my skills and abilities."

During the past two decades, Haskett has actively endeavoured to better understand and expand his role as a funeral director in the communities he serves. To that end, he has completed training as a crematorium operator, become a certified funeral celebrant and has learned the skill of monument engraving.




Colin Haskett

"For me, my focus is always on common sense," adds Haskett. "It's incredibly important to have someone at the BAO who is able to provide some insight into what is actually taking place in the profession and find some common-sense solutions to everyday problems.... All in all, some open dialogue between the profession, the sector and the regulators."

Haskett has sharpened his board acumen with various leadership roles on governance and operations boards and committees in the bereavement sector and beyond.

He has also taken a keen interest in leading public presentations and is regularly asked to speak on a variety of topics.

"There are going to be some changes coming to funeral service across the entire country," notes Haskett. "Those changes will include how funeral directors are educated. We need to find a new way to create new funeral directors. We need to be able to extend some licences to people who are already working in the profession. To make education more accessible. Then lastly, as a sector, we are going to have to figure out how to continue to compensate funeral directors. This is plaguing all businesses in all sectors. We are no different from anyone else and it's going to require some out-of-the-box thinking on how to move forward."

Haskett's one-year board term will continue until June 21, 2024. 

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## GFD UNVEILS REFRESHED BRAND IDENTITY TO REFLECT ORGANIZATION'S EVOLVING VISION

GFD, a leading financial services company specializing in the bereavement sector, recently announced the unveiling of their newly refreshed brand identity. The updated brand identity expresses the company's evolution and commitment to serving the bereavement sector, while staying true to their core values.

Over the past six months, GFD has been working closely with branding experts, Aardvark, to better understand their brand identity and more effectively communicate it and reflect the direction of the organization and their ongoing modernization. The refreshed brand identity was born out of an extensive research and consultation process with members, employees and key stakeholders across the bereavement sector.

"We're excited to unveil our renewed brand identity, which truly reflects our values, commitment to the sector and our

*continued on page 64*



Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

# COMPLICATED GRIEF: AN INTRODUCTION

by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

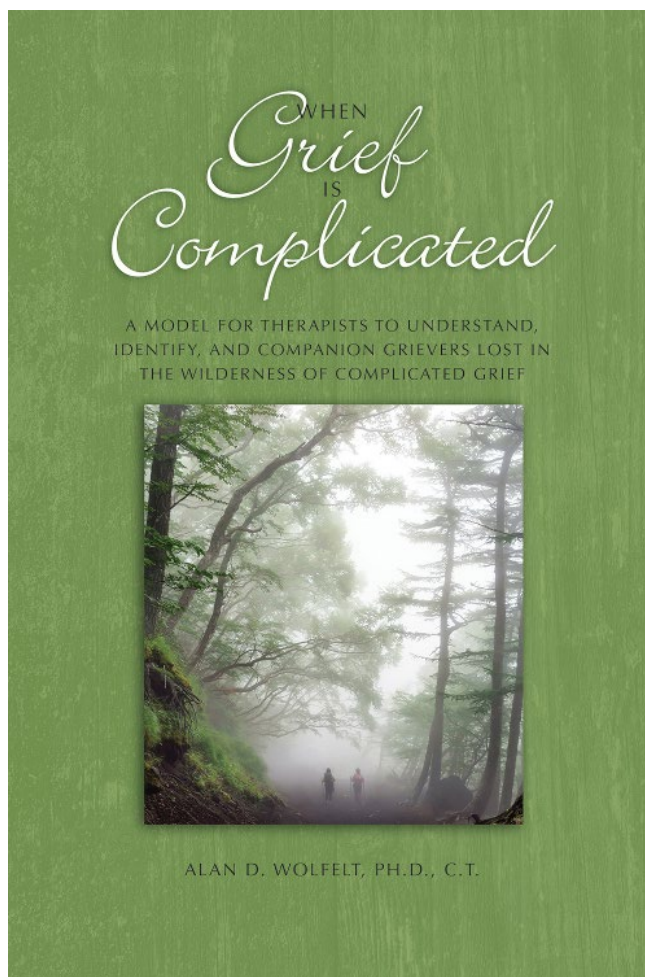
Grieving families come to you from all walks of life and in all manner of circumstances surrounding death. If you have been in funeral service for a while, you have likely companioned people in profound shock and traumatic grief over the most challenging types of loss, ranging from infant death and violent accidents to drug overdose, homicide and suicide.

As you know, death is always hard, but in particularly challenging circumstances, it can seem unbearable. And yet it is your job to help families through the early days that follow these tragic losses. Their challenge becomes, in part, your challenge. We psychologists call what these families are experiencing “complicated grief.” Effectively helping complicated grievers requires special understanding and compassionate care. In this article and three others that follow, I will share some background on complicated grief as well as ideas for helping complicated grievers during and after the funeral process.

## **Complicated grief: a definition**

First, it’s essential to understand that complicated grief is not a problem or disorder but simply a normal, necessary response in what is almost always an abnormally challenging loss situation. It’s a matter of degree, feature prominence and sometimes duration.

Of course, all grief is complicated. Just as love is always complex and multifaceted, so too is grief. Whenever someone we love dies, we naturally have lots of different and ever-changing thoughts and feelings about the death. Grief is often profoundly challenging and chaotic. In fact, it’s common for grievers to feel like they’re going crazy because their inner experience of loss is so different from their usual thoughts and feelings. The experience we will be calling “complicated grief” in this article series is simply regular old complicated grief that has gotten extra complicated somehow.



This article is excerpted from *When Grief is Complicated: A Model for Therapists to Understand, Identify, and Companion Grievers Lost in the Wilderness of Complicated Grief*. To order, visit [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com).

That “somehow” is often the challenging causes of death I mentioned in this article’s opening paragraph, but there are also other risk factors for a complicated grief response, which I will be reviewing in the second article in this series.

### **The wilderness of complicated grief**

When we think of grief as an arduous journey through a vast, inhospitable, mountainous forest, we capture some of the essence of the normal, necessary experience. Traversing grief is challenging. We don’t always know where we’re going. It’s easy to lose the trail. We sometimes feel the warmth of the sun and glimpse great beauty, but we often encounter obstacles and dangers we weren’t expecting. We’re not always as well-equipped as we thought or wish we were, and we definitely cannot control the forces swirling around us. Understandably, we get tired. Along the way, it gets dark, stormy and slippery, and though we’d often like to be able to fast-forward ourselves to the end of the trail, the only way out is through.

If every significant grief journey is such a challenging trek through the wilderness, what is complicated grief? It’s an even more challenging odyssey. Here in Colorado we’re privileged to be home to numerous 14,000-foot Rocky Mountain peaks, or 14ers, as they’re called. Because of the terrain and topography, some of our 14ers are particularly difficult to summit. They remind me of complicated grief – rugged, relentless and vast.

Hikers often get lost or stranded on Colorado’s mountain trails and peaks, and when this happens, we as a community take it quite seriously. After all, these travellers are often in mortal danger. Predators such as mountain lions lurk in the shadows, and the cold, wind, altitude and vertiginous drops make unassisted survival unlikely. The backcountry is unforgiving.

Fortunately for the lost hikers, Colorado has teams of volunteers and professionals at the ready to locate and retrieve them. These search-and-rescuers are well-trained and well-equipped for the often-perilous expeditions. More often than not, the endangered hikers live to tell the tale. They are forever changed by their wilderness experience, but they are able to continue on with their lives with gratitude and new perspective.

Companioning families through complicated grief is not unlike search and rescue. We trained volunteers and professionals are called upon to assist when we are alerted that a griever is struggling in the wilderness. It is our job to join

them – to meet them where they are – and to accompany them back to safety. While it is not the grief companion’s role to carry, lead or find the way out, it is our responsibility to bear witness, provide shelter, offer sustenance, carry tools, safeguard vital signs and imbue hope. We are not rescuers in the savior or saviour sense; rather, we are rescuers in the “thank goodness you were there to help me” sense.


In short, some people get lost or trapped in the jeopardous wilderness of their naturally complicated grief. We find them and help walk them back to safety. I believe this ministry is nothing less than search and rescue of the human soul, and I am honoured to lead you in this discussion.

### **Why you play an essential role in helping complicated grievers**

It is believed that as many as 10 to 15 per cent of the population may experience complicated grief. When you consider that complicated grief is more of a continuum than a yes-no, and you give thought to all the people affected by the risk factors we’ll be reviewing in the next article, it’s easy to imagine that the true incidence could be much, much higher.

All grievers need the support of people who care about them, but complicated grievers usually need some professional support and guidance to help them get back on track. If they don’t receive the help they need, they often become stuck in their misery, emptiness or harmful behaviour. They remain lost in the wilderness. They die while they are alive.

Not only are people lost in the wilderness of complicated grief unable to self-actualize, they often stultify or negatively affect others around them. Their partners and children can be hurt by their ongoing complicated grief. Their colleagues and neighbours can suffer. And the potential they brought with them into this world is never realized. In essence, their quandary sends out ripples into the world, as each person’s life they touch affects the next person and so on and so on and so on.

And so, complicated grievers need you. Not only do they need you to effectively and compassionately companion them in the early days of their loss experience, they also need your aftercare in the months that follow as well as your support in connecting them to ongoing community resources. The good news is that with education and good companioning skills, you can indeed help. 

Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt is a noted author, educator and grief counsellor. He serves as director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado, and presents numerous workshops each year across North America. Perhaps best known for his companioning model of caring for people in grief, he is the author of *Companioning the Bereaved*, *Companioning the Grieving Child*, and *When Grief is Complicated*, from which this article is excerpted. For more information or to order Dr. Wolfelt’s books, visit [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com) or call 970.226.6050.

# UPCOMING EVENTS 2023/2024

## ALBERTA FUNERAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (AFSA)

### AGM & Conference

Deerfoot Inn & Casino  
April 25-27, 2024  
Calgary, AB

## BRITISH COLUMBIA FUNERAL ASSOCIATION (BCFA)

### Annual Conference & AGM

April 30 – May 2, 2024  
Westin Wall Centre, Vancouver Airport  
Vancouver, BC

## CREMATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA (CANA)

### Cremation Symposium

February 14-16, 2024  
The Linq Hotel + Experience  
Las Vegas, NV

### Cremation Innovation Convention

September 11-13, 2024  
Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park  
Chicago, IL

## FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES COUNCIL OF SASKATCHEWAN (FCSCS)

### Spring Symposium

May 23 & 24, 2024  
Saskatoon Inn & Conference Centre  
Saskatoon, SK

## FUNERAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (FSAC)

### Annual Conference & Trade Show

June 11-13, 2024  
Winnipeg, MB

## HUMBER COLLEGE

### CE Offering: No One Left Behind

December 7, 2023  
Online Event

### CE Offering: Exploring Alkaline Hydrolysis

Available Until December 31, 2023  
Recorded Seminar

## INTERNATIONAL CEMETERY, CREMATION & FUNERAL ASSOCIATION (ICCFA)

### Dead Talks

January 16-18, 2024  
Park MGM  
Las Vegas, NV

### Convention & Expo

April 10-13, 2024  
JW Marriott Tampa Water Street  
Tampa, FL

### ICCFA University

July 19-24, 2024  
Emory University  
Atlanta, GA

## NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (NFDA)

### Consumer Trends Conference

February 22 & 23, 2024  
Virtual Event

### Meet the Mentors

March 19-22, 2024  
Washington, DC

### Professional Women's Conference

April 28-30, 2024  
The DeSoto  
Savannah, GA

### Embalming & Restorative Arts Seminar

May 2 & 3, 2024  
Pittsburgh Institute of  
Mortuary Science  
Pittsburgh, PA

### Leadership Conference

July 29 – August 1, 2024  
Ponte Verda Inn & Club  
Ponte Verda Beach, FL

### Convention & Expo

October 20-23, 2024  
New Orleans, LA

## ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CEMETERY AND FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS (OACFP)

### Cremation Symposium

April 17 & 18, 2024

### Educational Conference and Trade Show

October 8-10, 2024  
Caesars Windsor Hotel & Casino  
Windsor, ON

## ONTARIO FUNERAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (OFSA)

### AGM & Education Conference

September 16 & 17, 2024  
West Trillium House  
Blue Mountain, ON

## SELECTED INDEPENDENT FUNERAL HOMES

### NextGen Seminar

January 28 – February 1, 2024  
Atlantis Paradise Island  
The Bahamas

### Annual Meeting

September 25-28, 2024  
Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa  
Lake Buena Vista, FL


*continued from page 33*

vision for the future,” says Heather Kiteley, CEO of GFD. “Our renewed brand identity is an extension of our efforts to modernize our business and adapt to changing market conditions. We believe that this identity will help us build a stronger connection with our members, partners and employees, and enable us to more clearly communicate the direction we’re headed.”

The refreshed brand identity includes a modernized logo, new colour palette, typography and updated photography. The logo and colour palette have a bolder and more distinct design, while still retaining the essence of the brand. Central to the brand identity is the photography, which features GFD members captured in authentic moments at their workplaces and celebrates the significant contributions they make to their communities and beyond.

“We wanted to create a revitalized brand identity that was both modern and timeless, and that more accurately reflects the spirit of our organization and the members we serve,” says Bill Denning, past chair of the board at GFD. “We’re excited to showcase the evolution of our brand. We believe the renewed identity will help us better communicate our message and create a stronger brand image for GFD in the marketplace. Our goal is to faithfully represent all of our members across the country and encourage new members to join us in moving the sector forward.”

GFD’s refreshed brand identity will be rolled out across all of their marketing and communications, including the company’s website, social channels and marketing materials.

Established in 1961, GFD is a leading financial services company specializing in the bereavement sector. Its mission is to provide bereavement professionals across Canada with solutions to support, promote and secure future business. Whether investing and administering funds, providing exceptional service or helping the public understand and preplan their last wishes, GFD is dedicated to the growth and vitality of its members. 

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## **BCFA WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The board of the British Columbia Funeral Association (BCFA) is excited to announce the hiring of Bradd Tuck to serve as executive director, effective August 14, 2023.

Tuck is the former general manager of Yates Memorial Services, a full-service family-owned funeral home, cemetery and crematorium with locations in Parksville and Port Alberni. He began his education with an honour’s degree from the University of Victoria, and then worked as a park manager in Wells Gray and Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Parks before joining the funeral profession in 2016. He completed his




Bradd Tuck

apprenticeship in 2018, receiving top honours in law, funeral service studies and overall academic performance.

Tuck’s role quickly evolved to general manager, where he managed a team of 20 staff. He is passionate about leading with empathy, professional development and support wherever he works.

Centring his life around three core values of family, community and lifelong learning, Tuck lives in Parksville with his wife Carlea, two young boys and the family dog. He loves to explore the local beaches, trails and waterways with his family. When not at work, he can usually be found exploring tide pools with his boys or riding his bike on one of the many Vancouver Island trail networks.

Tuck has held a variety of community roles including vice chair for Leadership Vancouver Island; director and young professionals chair for the Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce; board member of the Young Professionals of Oceanside; committee member of SOS Project Rebuild; and is an organizing member and facility host of 100 Oceanside Men Who Care. He has volunteered with Cops for Cancer Tour de Rock and Oceanside Minor Baseball. In 2019, Tuck worked with BCFA and Consumer Protection BC as part of their Regulatory Change Project. He became a director of the board at the 2023 annual conference where he joined the government and legal committee. He has since submitted his resignation as a board member.

As executive director, Tuck looks forward to gaining a deeper understanding of the board and the direction of the association. His interests lie in being a strong voice for the funeral profession, helping to position the profession to the ever-evolving needs of the changing clientele, listening and advocating for members, and focusing on labour retention and recruitment, amongst other already existing initiatives. He is incredibly grateful to be surrounded by a team of outstanding professionals. Tuck hopes his passion for learning, curiosity, collaboration and leadership can help BCFA meet its mission of providing the public with the highest standards of ethics and service in the funeral profession. 

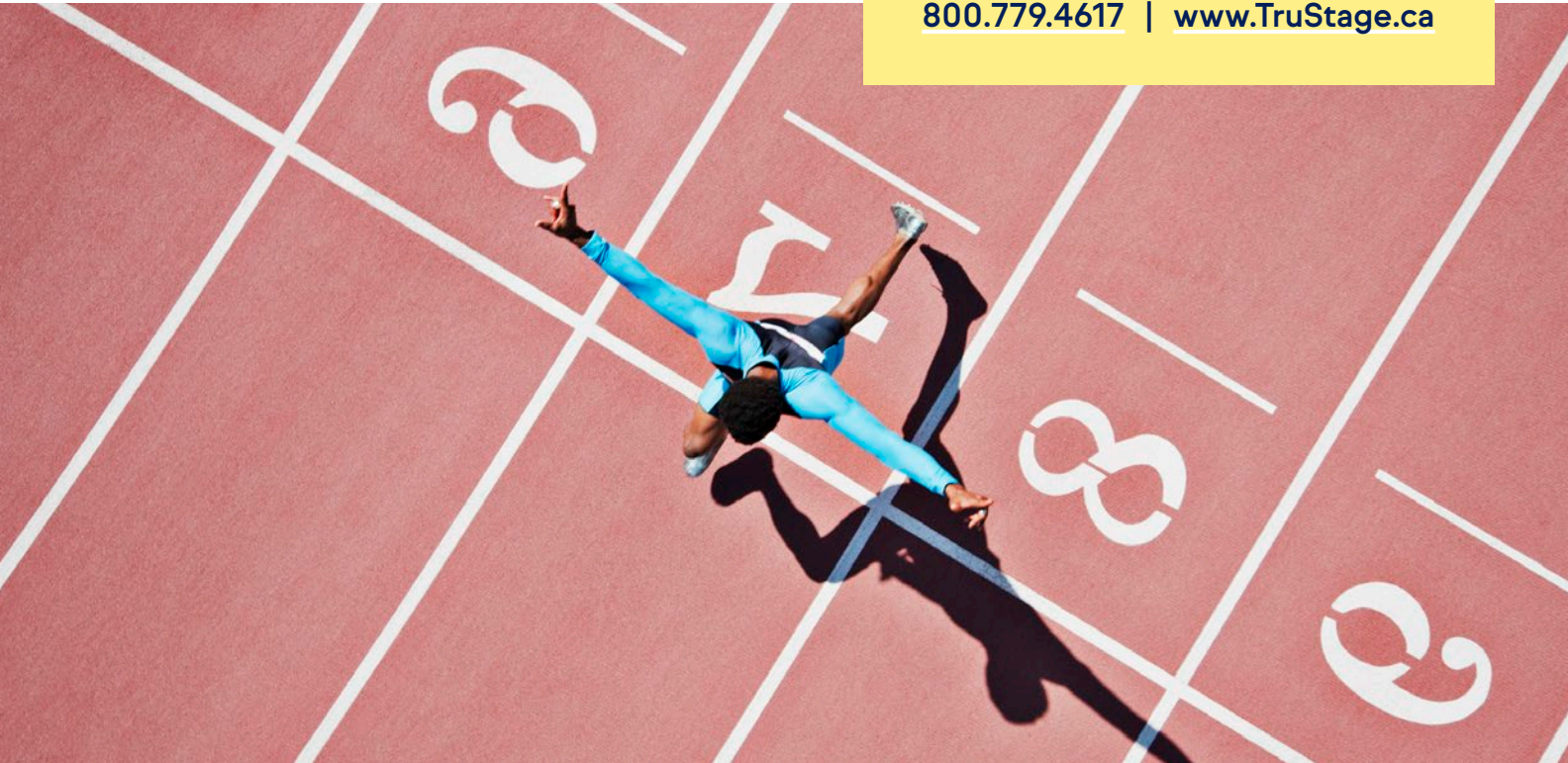


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