

HIGHLAND FUNERAL HOME GRAND  
OPENING  
MAKING IT PERSONAL...ONE FAMILY  
AT A TIME  
4TH ANNUAL CRAWFISH BOIL  
JOHNSON CONSULTING AWARDS  
ENSURING RESPECT FOR THE DEAD

# Legacy

Serving One Family at a Time

# LEDGER

SUMMER 2018

LEGACY  
FUNERAL  
GROUP



## Giving Back



Michael Soper  
Legacy President  
and CEO



The Legacy  
management  
team built a  
home for a family  
in Costa Rica!

Our Legacy management team recently traveled to Costa Rica for our quarterly meeting. We carved out a couple days from our meeting to build a home, ground up with "Homes For Hope, Youth with a Mission." I have been blessed to participate in three other builds, but this one was special, working side by side with my management team. It made me proud to see these ten businessmen come together like brothers to glorify God and give back. I can assure you there was not a dry eye in the group as we handed the keys over to Mr. Lopez to his family's new home.

This team building exercise illustrates the culture of our Legacy Family. I am honored to see many of our locations around the country giving back to their communities that we serve. My father used to tell me, "give back what you take out." Keep up the good work Legacy!

This issue of Legacy Ledger includes an article written by John Burgess directing a family to do more than just a direct cremation and how his actions started the family down a healthy path of healing. It also features seven of our funeral homes recognized for Excellence in Customer Service. Finally, our

friend Dr. Alan Wolfelt does a beautiful job of explaining the importance of helping families see the value of permanent memorization. Have a safe and happy summer!



## Highland Funeral Home Grand Opening

The grand opening of Highland Funeral Home in Apopka, Florida was celebrated on March 21, 2018. The City of Apopka's Commissioner, Doug Bankston, alongside Lieutenant Sierra from Seminole County were in attendance and openly welcomed the business to the community. Michael Soper, Steve Bassett, Rick Prindiville, along with other Legacy staff welcomed hundreds of community friends. Highland Funeral Home offers a welcoming foyer, a private viewing area and a spacious chapel that accommodates up to 150 people. This brand-new, state-of-the-art funeral home offers a full range of services including preplanning services, personalized family arrangements, burial and cremation services. Since the grand opening, this facility has kept up with the other highly reputable competitors in the area. Legacy Funeral Group is very proud of this accomplishment and will continue to strive for excellence in the Orlando market.



Legacy is proud to announce the grand opening of Highland Funeral Home on the grounds of Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery in Apopka, Florida.

## Making It Personal... One Family at a Time



John Burgess,  
Funeral Director  
with Harper-  
Talasek Funeral  
Home, Belton, TX

Recently, I was contacted by a family to simply assist in renting a couple of limousines for a service in Austin. After a discussion with the family, it was clear that the family needed a bit more help. There was a bit of contention between two groups in the family. First, there was the stepfather (married to the to the deceased) and his family. Second, there was the daughter of the deceased and her family. The stepfather used a direct cremator to handle the cremation without consulting the daughter of the deceased.

Since they did not use a funeral home, there were additional hurdles, including transportation, coordination of services, and communication between parties. I was reminded of when I attended the Celebrant Training in March 2017; it provided great guidance on how to extend ourselves to become part of the family and provide a more meaningful service.

In this case, the family was very used to being served to the highest standard. I was available to cater to them 24/7, helping the daughter with many small details and other insights. I contacted the priest to coordinate service details. Both daughter and stepfather were pleased that we were there to coordinate logistics.

After the service, we went to a large tree-lined, historical cemetery for the graveside committal with a line of limos. The committal went smoothly after I took care a couple of issues that the cemetery had not handled properly. The stepfather was beginning to finally realize that

we were there to assist in conducting the service and celebrate the life of his late wife. Lock, stock and barrel was when I offered him a ride in the limo to the reception. The best part was being able to present both the daughter and the stepfather with a Memory Portrait. Mentioning that the daughter and I believed he would appreciate the gesture went the distance. The goal here was to help a family celebrate their loved one and to hopefully leave them in a better place than we found them.

In the movie *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, Dustin Hoffman's character is fondly remembered by stating, "Life is an occasion. Rise to it." This certainly applies when providing a meaningful and personal funeral. There are so many simple and wonderful ways that we can achieve this with each family we serve. From ideas like the rider-less horse, to simply standing by the side of a family and being there to meet their every need, we rise to the occasion. What a wonderful foundation Legacy provides with programs like the Celebrant Training, We Make It Personal Training, and other great opportunities we utilize when serving our communities to the best of our ability.

## Legacy Funeral Group's 4th Annual Crawfish Boil



4th Annual Crawfish Boil prepared for our Houston staff by our Louisiana managers.

On April 20, 2018, the home office in Houston hosted its 4th Annual Crawfish Boil. This event is always highly anticipated as our Cajun family cook up their best mud bugs in Texas. Over 100 people attended this event, making it our largest boil to date.



# Legacy Funeral Group Recognized for 2017 Johnson Consulting Awards for Excellence in Customer Service

A number of our Legacy family members were recently recognized by Johnson Consulting Group with the Excellence in Customer Service Award, achieving the highest levels of customer satisfaction in 2017.

Johnson Consulting Group is a leading nationwide consulting firm that provides management expertise for the funeral and cemetery

industry, as well as performance tracking tools to measure a family's level of satisfaction with their funeral home provider.

Awards were presented to select funeral homes who achieved the highest overall performance scores from families served in 2017.

Award winners in 2017 included: Chapel of Hope Funerals and Cremations in Hobbs, NM; Ardoin's Funeral Home in Eunice, LA; LaFond-Ardoin Funeral Home in Opelousas, LA; Minton Chatwell Funeral Directors, Borger, TX; Ascension Funeral Home in Gonzales, LA; Turcotte Piper Mortuary in Kingsville, TX, and Collison Carey Hand Funeral Home in Winter Garden, FL.

Congratulations to all of our Legacy funeral homes who were recognized for excellent service in 2017!



**Chapel of Hope Funerals and Cremations:** *Elio Barrios, Sherry Joe Norman, Danielle Hammack and Bobby Arther*



**Minton Chatwell Funeral Directors:** *Jerry Chatwell, Geneva Gifford, Lea Minton, Jake Minton, Brenda Fraley, Mark Phelps, Marcy Hopkins*



**Ardoin's Funeral Home in Eunice:** *Kim Fontenot, Alexis Miller, Sandra Fontenot, Chrissie Menard, Shirley Dietz, Leana Belfour, Elaine Deville*



**Turcotte Piper Mortuary:** *Joe Quintanilla, Lupita Lopez, Ashley Guerra, Norman Gonzalez Jr., Bettye Chambliss, Roy Cantu, Gabby Trevino, Noe Gonzalez Jr., Irma Little*



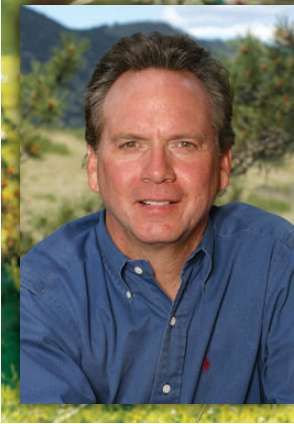
**Ascension Funeral Home:**  
*Pete Cole*



**Collison Carey Hand Funeral Home:** *Michael Daly, Vicky White, Robert Bittle*



**Lafond-Ardoin Funeral Homes:** *Dana Wimberly, E. Ray Dupré II, Amelia Desonier*



By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

# Ensuring Respect for the Dead



## The critical importance of helping families understand the value of permanent memorialization.

I recently overheard an adult son say, "Dad is dead. We don't need a casket for his body. We are just going to cremate him and be done with this. We will just scatter him to the winds."

His comment reminded me of a story told by spiritual teacher Ram Dass. An old man is too weak to work in the garden or help with household chores, so he just sits on the porch, gazing out across the fields, while his son tills the soil and pulls up weeds. One day, the son looks up at the old man and thinks, "What good is he now that he is so old? All he does is eat up the food! I have a wife and children to think about. It's time for him to be done with life!"

So the son makes a large wooden box, places it on a wheelbarrow, rolls it up onto the porch and says to the old man, "Father, get in." The father lies down in the box and the son puts the lid on the box, then wheels it toward the cliff.

At the edge of the cliff, the son hears a knock from inside the box. "Yes, Father?" the son asks. The father replies, "Why don't you just throw me off the cliff and save the box? Your children are going to need it one day."

As cremation becomes more and more prevalent in today's world, "the box" is becoming less and less important. Many families no longer value caskets. In choosing cremation, they also typically believe they are opting for quick and efficient. As you know, today's mantra tends to be "faster, cheaper, easier."

But readers of this column also know that when it comes to funerals, faster, cheaper and easier are generally much less effective at helping grieving families embark on a healthy path to healing.

In fact, slower and more complex is almost always better at helping families dose themselves with the "whys" of the funeral ritual. The more elements-rich and personalized a funeral is, the more it helps mourners transition from life before the death to life after the death. Educating families about why each funeral element is used and how it helps them meet their mourning needs is now an essential role for funeral directors and funeral homes that still want to be in business a decade from now.

Another element today's families need your help in understanding and embracing is the need for permanent memorialization. In forsaking "the box" and choosing to take home or scatter cremated remains, many families simply do not fully anticipate the long-term repercussions of their choice. Traditionally, the casket housed the body of the person who died and, upon burial or entombment, became the tangible, seeable, knowable final resting place. Cemeteries have long been the place where you go to visit and pay

respects to your loved one, and casketing was a sequential step in that process. Then along came cremated remains burial and cremation niches, which served the same purpose.

Now, however, more and more families are choosing to take the cremated remains home with them in a decorative urn or container or sometimes a simple cardboard box. One 2014 survey showed that 54% of California and Washington residents had cremated remains in their homes, and I'm sure that number has only increased. Many family homes now house the cremated remains of more than one person.

I must say that the family's impulse to keep their cremated loved one close can be borne of love, making it an honorable and even mourning-fostering choice. In the early weeks and months after the death, having the urn on the fireplace mantel can indeed be an effective way for the primary mourners to continue to acknowledge the reality of the death, remember the person who died, initiate discussions with others and encounter the pain of the loss.

But in the longer term, as you know all too well, mantled remains often become problematic. What if they're accidentally spilled? Will anyone want to safeguard and display them 10, 20 or 50 years from now? What happens when more people in the family die? How many cremation urns can one mantle hold? A funeral director friend recently shared with me a story about a county landfill worker who discovered a box of cremated remains amid the trash and opted to bring them to the funeral home rather than treat them as garbage.

Scattered remains, of course, engender a different set of challenges for families. In the short-term, scattering cremated remains in a location important to the family or the person who died can feel like a good fit. After all, the person who died is being honored in a personal way, and the scattering is often surrounded by ceremony and attended by at least several people who were closest to the person who died and to each other.

But in the long run, scattering often creates a vacuum for the family. Where can one go to pay respects to the person who died? The particulars of the location are often lost to time, and even when the location is known, it is often remote or difficult to visit. And what happens when the cremated remains have been scattered in multiple locations? This practice can naturally create especially confusing or even upsetting thoughts and feelings down the line.

I realize I'm preaching to the choir here in bemoaning the many problems that ensue when permanent memorialization isn't undertaken. But I also believe education can counter this unfortunate trend. With each family that chooses cremation, I urge you to spend some time explicitly teaching them about the benefits of permanent memorialization.

First, it provides a suitable place to mourn, which helps people heal.

Second, it gives all mourners access to a public location where they can go to pay respects and connect with the person who died. Families sometimes do not consider that others who live outside the family home may want to be able to visit the final resting place.

Third, the cemetery, mausoleum or cremation garden will be around for generations to come. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren and on down the line will find meaning in having a fixed, marked place that anchors their personal histories. And fourth, the permanent resting place is a practical choice. Families can rest easy knowing that the cremated remains are being taken care of in perpetuity. The idea of having to pass along urns to the next generation or amassing more and more urns on a shelf (or in a closet!) is usually enough to help families realize that keeping the remains at home is not a viable long-term solution.

Families often simply need education about the permanent memorialization options available to them. They know they want cremation, but they don't have any idea about what choices they have in dealing with the cremated remains.

I recommend creating a handout on memorialization options and locations in your community. You know that columbarium niches, ground burial and scattering gardens are available nearby, but consumers often do not. Many who were considering taking the remains home or scattering them will be relieved to know there are established locations and processes in their community.

And don't forget that for those families that take the cremated remains home with them, there is an ongoing need to advertise and offer permanent memorialization. Displaying that urn in their home may in fact help them with their grief in the first couple of years, but beyond that, they may well find themselves ready to choose a permanent resting place.

It was renowned British statesman Sir William Gladstone who said, "Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals." In educating families about permanent memorialization and helping them make choices that are good for them, you will be making a long-term difference in your community.

Ours may be a throw-away, quick-fix society, but in facilitating memorialization, you will be counteracting this harmful trend. Generations from now, families will still be visiting their ancestors in your community's cemeteries and cremation gardens. The dead will be cared for respectfully and with an understanding of the sanctity and continuity of life.

And that box in the story at the beginning of this column? It's not really about the box itself. It's about respect for the dying and the dead. Permanent memorialization is one of the most important ways in which we as a culture can ensure that respect, regardless of means of disposition.

Thank you for championing memorialization in your community. In doing so, you are not only looking out for the families in your care, you are also fostering the long-term well-being of your community and acting with the highest of ideals.

*Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., is a respected author, educator, and consultant to funeral service. Among his many books are Funeral Home Customer Service A to Z, A Tale of Two Funerals and Creating Meaningful Funeral Experiences: A Guide for Caregivers. For more information or to receive a descriptive brochure, call the Center for Loss at 970.226.6050, visit [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com), or e-mail Dr. Wolfelt directly at [drwolfelt@centerforloss.com](mailto:drwolfelt@centerforloss.com).*



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