

2015 AWARD RECIPIENTS
LISTEN UP! LET'S MAKE IT PERSONAL
SAN ANTONIO SALES MEETING
LEGACY WINS TOP OWNERSHIP
GROUP AWARD
UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF
THE FUNERAL PROCESSION

Legacy

Serving One Family at a Time

LEDGER

FALL 2015

LEGACY
FUNERAL
GROUP



Michael Soper
Legacy President
and CEO

In the last issue of the Ledger, I asked all of our professional staff—well, really, I challenged everybody—to not do any more cookie-cutter funerals. I asked everybody to make a concerted effort to “Make it Personal.” I just have to say, you are doing it! Each and every week we get great emails from the field about the wonderful services that we are arranging. So, hats off to our professional staff for going above and beyond and really making it personal for each family. You are not only creating more value for the families you serve, you are also making the healing process a lot easier on these families.

In addition to all the beautiful celebrations of life over the last few months, the Legacy family has also been

busy cooking and feeding thousands of community members for our 9/11 Patriot Day events. As a company, we served over 6,800 plate lunches and dinners to first responders in approximately 50 communities! These are people who put their lives on the line for us daily and often don't get the recognition they deserve. This was an awesome experience to be a part of...and I am already looking forward to our community-wide holiday events that are just around the corner.

In this edition of the Ledger, Doug Ray, Regional Manager, shares just a few ways that he and his team are “listening up” and tuning in to conversations with family members. By listening closely, they are offering creative ideas for celebrating the life of a loved one...and the results have been phenomenal.

This issue also covers some of our recent events as a company. Over the last several months, we have had the opportunity to have regional meetings around the country, and let me tell you, the company culture of *servicing one family at a*

time has never been better. We look forward to continue this heritage of service for many generations to come. Next, we recognize several awards our professional staff has received, including Employee of the Year awards, the Chairman's Award, and the Excellence in Customer Service award by Johnson Consulting! What a tremendous honor, and congratulations to all our award winners.

Last but not least, we have included an article by Alan Wolfelt on the importance of the procession. I know sometimes it is tempting for families to take shortcuts and miss out on this significant part of a funeral service. This article will share some of the reasons a procession is so important and meaningful.

Until next time, great job everybody, keep up the good work, and keep the pictures coming!

Employee of the Year Awards

Scott Haynes, Funeral Home Manager at Resthaven Gardens of Memory & Funeral Home
Pam Woodward, Family Service Counselor at Sunset Memorial Gardens & Funeral Home
Bryan Hicks, Manager at Elmwood Funeral Home and Memorial Park
Chris Knight, Superintendent at Highland Memorial Gardens and Orlando Memorial Gardens
Nancy Mather, Regional Bookkeeper for New Mexico and West Texas
Melinda Noecker, Regional Bookkeeper and Office Manager for Las Vegas and Davis Funeral Home & Memorial Park

An award established to recognize employees who consistently perform well beyond what their job duties require. Nominees are consistently courteous and helpful to others and strive to improve themselves, their firm, and their communities.



Sales: Chairman's Award

Carla McCreery, Family Service Counselor at Resthaven Gardens of Memory & Funeral Home

L to R: Bill Wimberly, Carla McCreery, Terry Tillman, Scott Haynes

The Chairman's Award is designed to recognize the Family Service Counselor that has excelled in maintaining the highest level of prearrangement sales for combined results in both cemetery and funeral home locations.

Listen Up! Let's Make it Personal

By Doug Ray, Regional Manager

In 1965, Bob Dylan was singing, "The Times They Are a-Changin'," and Baby Boomers were making their mark on the world and demanding change. Now, fifty years later, Baby Boomers are still making waves. FUNERALS ARE A-CHANGIN!!!

More and more people want the life of their loved one to be celebrated. Some families spent their best moments in life fishing and spending time together on the lake. Why not deliver the casket to the cemetery in a boat? Others brought joy to their family by the music they composed on a piano or guitar. Why not play a recording of that music during the ceremony? When an artist dies, shouldn't we offer the family an opportunity to paint the casket, and maybe even use the artist's paints?

All of these suggestions and more have been part of funeral celebrations within Legacy in the last year. The family didn't come up with the ideas on their own; it was the funeral director who suggested the idea.

Part of the change that Baby Boomers are demanding of us is to bring a creative mindset to the arrangement table.

How do you know what to listen for? Here are a few signs to look for when meeting with families:

- When the family tells a story about the deceased... listen up and think about how you could incorporate an aspect of that story into the ceremony.
- When a family shows a high state of emotion, either through laughter or tears...make note of it because it points to a meaningful moment in their lives together.
- When a family member shares about their loved one's interests, hobbies, collections, dreams, passions, volunteer work or community involvement...that's when you hone in with ideas for making this a positive and memorable experience for the family.

Yes, funerals are changing and cremation rates are rising. And yes, we can still



serve and minister families by helping them through the worst times of their lives. We simply have to approach our ministry in a different manner. These are the most exciting times with the most changes that have come along in decades in the funeral industry. It would be a major disservice to the families you serve, and yourself, if you let the opportunity to create and produce a memorable experience slip by. I ask that you honor the deceased, the families you serve, and yourself by "making it personal"!

Sunset Memorial Gardens & Funeral Home Recognized for Excellence in Customer Service



Sunset Memorial Gardens & Funeral Home in Odessa, Texas recently received a Certificate of Excellence in Customer Service Award from Johnson Consulting Group, a funeral home and cemetery consulting group.

The award was presented in recognition for achieving the highest levels of customer satisfaction from families served in 2014, having maintained a rating of 97% customer service satisfaction throughout the year.

Congratulations to all the funeral home and administrative staff at Sunset who made this special recognition possible!

Johnson Consulting Group also recognized the following funeral homes in our Legacy family with the Excellence in Customer Service Award:

Harper-Talasek Funeral Home of Belton
Emken-Linton Funeral Home
Ardoin's Funeral Home of Eunice
Baker Funeral Home
James F. Webb Funeral Home

Left to Right: Bill Vallie, Mel Wideman, Dudley Chandler, Elizabeth Lara, John Ewing, Nancy Olvera, Tony Lujan, Michael Soper, Faustino Baeza, Mark Dovel, Shawna Smith, Joseph Miller, Armondo Salcido, Lorenzo Rodriquez, Susie Carrasco, Pam Woodward.



San Antonio "Gun Slinger" Sales Meeting



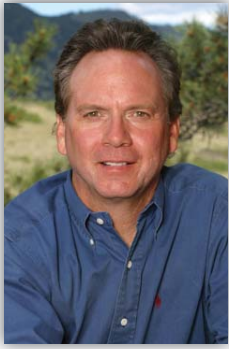
West Texas/New Mexico Managers Meeting

Legacy Funeral Group Wins Award for Top Ownership Group



Legacy Funeral Group won first place as Top Ownership Group at Funeral Directors Life Insurance Company's awards ceremony in Aruba this April.

FDLIC President and CEO, Kris Seale, presented the award to Steve Bassett, Brian Nichols, and Bill Vallie, who accepted on behalf of the Legacy family.



By Alan D. Wolfelt, Director, Center for Loss & Life Transition

Understanding the Value of the Funeral Procession

My attention was recently drawn to a blog post entitled “Funeral Processions Should Be Outlawed,” which originally appeared on ChicagoNow.com.

The challenge to funeral service is clearly stated in the author’s opening line: “I’ve never understood the reasons behind the funeral procession.” So, here we have a clear statement of the problem. Often, it is this very lack of understanding of the value of various elements of meaningful funeral experiences (visitation, music, readings, eulogy, symbols, processions, reception) that causes some people to eliminate them.

Unfortunately, not understanding the WHY, or the value, of the elements, many grieving families forego them. Too often today they are stripping the funeral bare of ceremonial elements in favor of direct disposition. What they do not realize is that the more they chip away at the full ceremony, the more they run the risk of missing the “sweet spot” of a meaningful funeral experience. As T.S. Eliot observed, “You can have an experience and miss the meaning.”

In this blog post focusing on the specific element of the procession, the author claims, “They’re a traffic hazard...a massive inconvenience...and completely useless.” Of course, as the author of a number of books that advocate for the value of funerals, I beg to disagree.

The procession (or cortège) literally means “to pay honor.” Often, the last thing we can do for someone we love is accompany him or her to the grave. While it provides the practical function of accompanying the dead person’s body (or cremated remains) to a final resting place, the procession serves a number of other needs as well.

The procession is intended to activate community support. Drivers are encouraged to pull over and show respect for this final rite of passage, which signifies the transition between life and death. The procession puts the entire community on notice that one of their own has died. As drivers stop or pull over, they are invited to take pause and not only show respect for the bereaved family and friends, but to consider the preciousness of life and ponder their own mortality (one of the unstated reasons many people do not like processions). If we believe that taking a brief moment for community acknowledgement of a member’s death is a “massive inconvenience,” we have lost sight of all that is truly important.

In addition, driving in a procession often results in a sense of meaning and purpose for participants. Their grief moves in unison and solidarity. Often their feelings inside are weighty and somber, and the weighty and somber movements of the procession expresses

their internal reality. Mourning is internal grief expressed externally, and it is essential to healing. The procession is a form of mourning.

I would take this opportunity to remind everyone involved in funeral service about their responsibility as gatekeepers of ceremony surrounding death. You have an obligation to educate the families you serve and the general public about the value of funerals and the individual elements they consist of (in this case, the procession).

Yes, processions do slow down traffic and force us to pause when we may be in a hurry. They are supposed to. In a fast-paced, convenience-oriented culture that is forgetting the value of meaningful funeral experiences, I invite you to join me in teaching your fellow human beings the reasons we have had processions for generations.

Dr. Wolfelt is a respected author and educator on the topic of creating meaningful funeral experiences. Recipient of the Association of Death Education and Counseling’s Death Educator Award, Dr. Wolfelt is Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition. For additional information, visit www.centerforloss.com.



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