

THE CREMATIONIST OF NORTH AMERICA

VOL. 57, NO. 2

CANA's Annual Statistics Report

Exploring Attrition Among New Funeral Service
Professionals

Journey to Serve

CANA's 103rd Convention Preview

Member Spotlight: Cremation By Grandview

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VOL. 57, NO. 2



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Since 1913, CANA has been collecting death and cremation data. Using figures primarily obtained through state and provincial governments in the United States and Canada, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths and forecasts future cremation percentages.

24 Myth, Truth, and Uncertainties: A Preliminary Study Exploring Attrition Among New Funeral Service Professionals

In April 2019, the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) charged a Research Task Force with exploring the attrition of new funeral service professionals. By John B. Fritch, Ph.D., & Gary Steward Jr., Ph.D., for the ABFSE Research Task Force.

27 Journey to Serve

The Journey to Serve initiative features free tools and resources designed to recruit military veterans into positions throughout the funeral service profession.

28 CANA's 103rd Annual Convention Preview

CANA prepares for the excitement and novelty of its first Virtual Cremation Innovation Convention & Trade Show. Discover what's in store for our next big event.

30 Member Spotlight: Dr. C. Lynn Gibson and Cremation By Grandview

Grandview strives to meet the changing preferences of its community, while at the same time providing a quality of care that meets the universal needs of the bereaved

CANA

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Founded in 1913, the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) is an international organization of over 3,300 members, composed of funeral homes, cemeteries, crematories, industry suppliers, and consultants. CANA members believe that cremation is preparation for memorialization.

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President's Message



There's certainly something to be said for long-standing, time-honored traditions. They reassure us with their steady, repetitive rhythms and anchor the important landmarks in our lives.

So it is with the traditions surrounding the activities and governance of the Cremation Association of North America, including the one-year term of a CANA President. The office is traditionally book-ended at its start and at its finish by the association's Annual Cremation Innovation Convention. As part of this popular event, the President is sworn in to office at the close of one summer and passes the gavel along to a successor at the next, surrounded by supportive colleagues who are passionate about death care and the work we all do. Of course, the overwhelmingly disruptive events of 2020 led to an adjustment in the usual orderly progression of these ceremonies.

However, CANA is not an organization of people who are likely to sit idly by and wait for developments to unfold. Immediately after it was clear that the convention could not take place in its typical format, association leadership and staff eagerly sought to construct a viable meeting that could be conducted during the shutdown. The annual convention was quickly and creatively redesigned to convene in a safe online environment that would also provide opportunities for presenters, attendees, and suppliers to interact in a variety of meaningful ways. Working with software that was still being developed even as the convention was about to open, CANA managed to bring industry professionals together for much-needed networking and social contact.

In the year that followed, CANA continued to sponsor interactive conference calls and online discussions and webinars to fill the urgent need for relevant information and peer support on a broad range of topics. The association made sure that experts and experienced practitioners were available to brainstorm with participants, answer questions, and provide practical solutions to successfully navigate all the changes brought about by the pandemic.

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CANA announced this month that it will once again be convening a face-to-face annual meeting in person. Although my presidency began with an unprecedented virtual convention in 2020, I am delighted that it will come to a close during the (almost) traditional in-person meeting we're planning for August 2021 in Seattle. Cheers to a return to one of CANA's most cherished, venerable, and meaningful traditions! Hope that you'll consider joining us there.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Scott Smith'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

W. Scott Smith

Scott Smith comes from a long line of funeral professionals. As a third-generation funeral director/embalmer, he has been licensed in the state of Texas since 1993. He is very passionate about the death care profession and involved in every aspect of the funeral industry. Appointed by Governor Perry in 2014, Scott continues to serve on the Texas Funeral Service commission. A past president of the Texas Funeral Director Association, the Dallas County Funeral Director Association, and the North Texas Funeral Director Association, he currently serves as vice chair of the Texas Disaster Response Team and responded to the West, Texas plant explosion and the Oklahoma City bombing. Scott had the distinct honor to be chosen by the state of Texas to handle the cremation of the first Ebola death in the United States. CEO/President of All Texas Cremation, Scott is very involved in the evolving and changing environment of our business.

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CANA Annual Statistics Report

Featuring final 2019 data, newly released 2020 data, and projections to 2025

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2020—A Year of Unprecedented Cremation Numbers and Continued Predictable Growth Rate

Over the past 50 years, cremation rates have grown predictably and followed a growth curve, and 2020 was no different. The 2020 cremation rate of 56.1% reflected an increase of 1.5% over the 2019 rate of 54.6%. This is well within the predicted rate. But the cremation numbers tell a different story. Between 2015 and 2019, deaths have increased on average 35,000 year over year. In 2020, the U.S. death numbers increased by nearly 500,000. Of those deaths, 321,000 resulted in cremation.

Cremation is driven by customer choice. Death care business models, protective legislation, pricing, etc., have had no visible impact on cremation rate growth or decline. Not even a pandemic could disrupt the cremation growth pattern, at least not immediately. More families than ever before have selected cremation, so this could impact the adoption of cremation for future deaths. But more likely, we can anticipate lower death and cremation numbers over the coming years because the additional 2020 deaths were premature (see *Cremation Rates Stay Predictable Throughout the Pandemic*, p. 15).

As CANA has noted in prior years, only new consumer preferences, such as body donation and green burial, are likely to impact cremation growth regionally or nationally.

Methodology

Since 1913, CANA has been collecting death and cremation data from a variety of sources. Over the past twenty years, CANA has published figures primarily obtained through state and provincial governments in the United States and Canada. Based on disposition data derived from death certificates, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths and forecasts future cremation percentages.

Please note that many states and provinces, as a matter of policy, do not release provisional data. The data reported for 2020 is provisional, subject to change, and collected from what was available at the time of publication. When the state or province would not provide data, staff retrieved death counts from national sources to support the statistical projections during this unpredictable year.

Projections

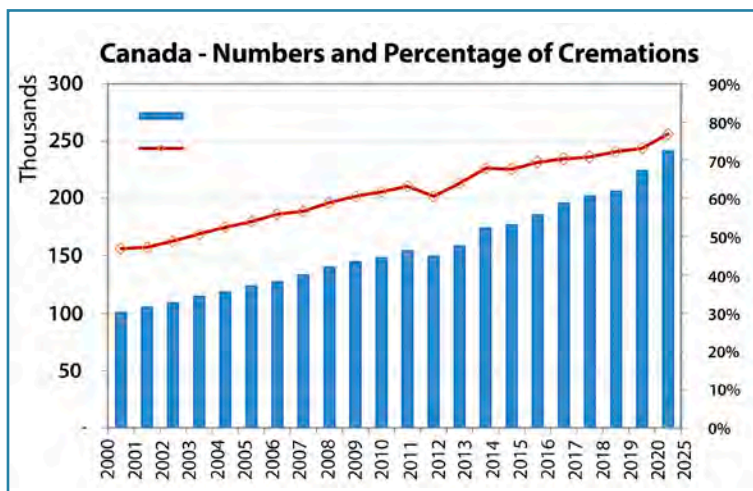
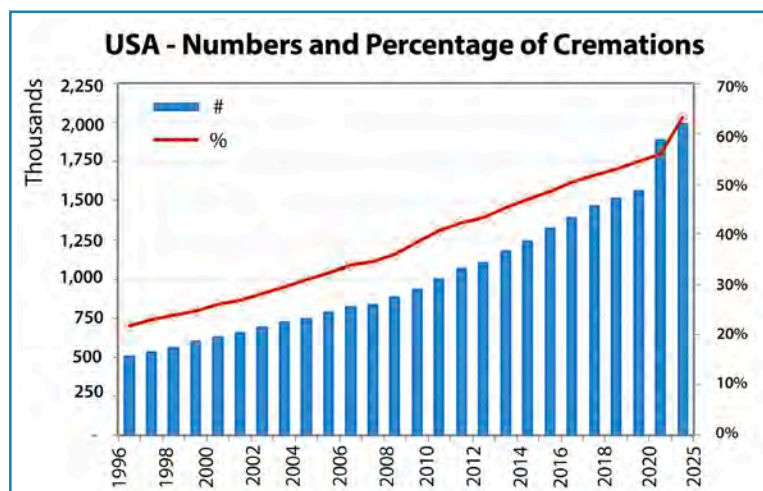
A regression analysis was implemented to aid the interpretation of the data. CANA's consultant develops and runs five models to describe future percentages and reported the average of those five models.

This regression analysis was applied over a twenty-year period in states and provinces where such a data set was available. From these figures, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths, which includes all the states and provinces. CANA has also been able to use these figures to forecast future cremation percentages. Distant projections do not account for the excess deaths of 2020 or the potential of the novel coronavirus or other widespread disaster to occur.

Two Canadian provinces have stopped releasing disposition data from provisional agencies—Ontario and Quebec. As described in footnotes, data is collected from provincial associations and CANA members to validate statistical projections.

For detailed information about our methodology, contact info@cremationassociation.org

United States and Canadian Cremation Trends



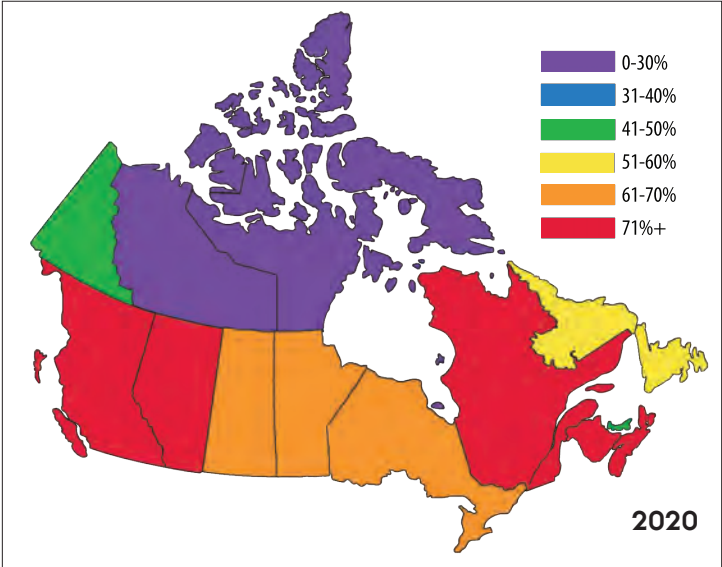
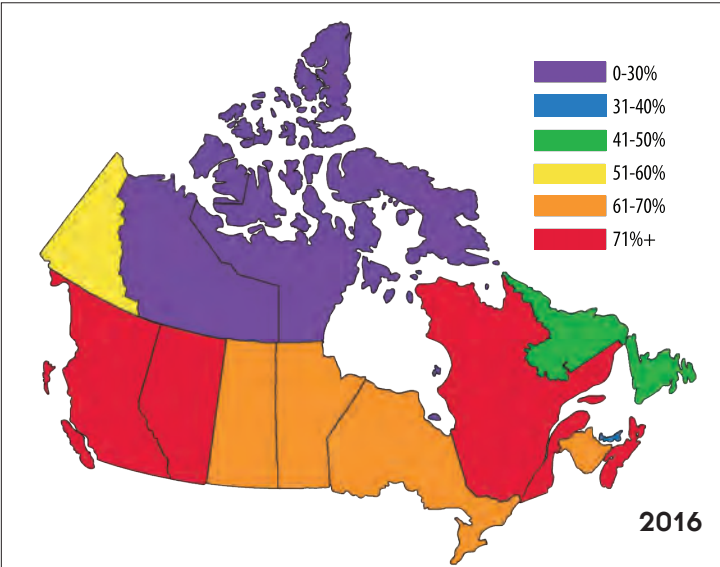
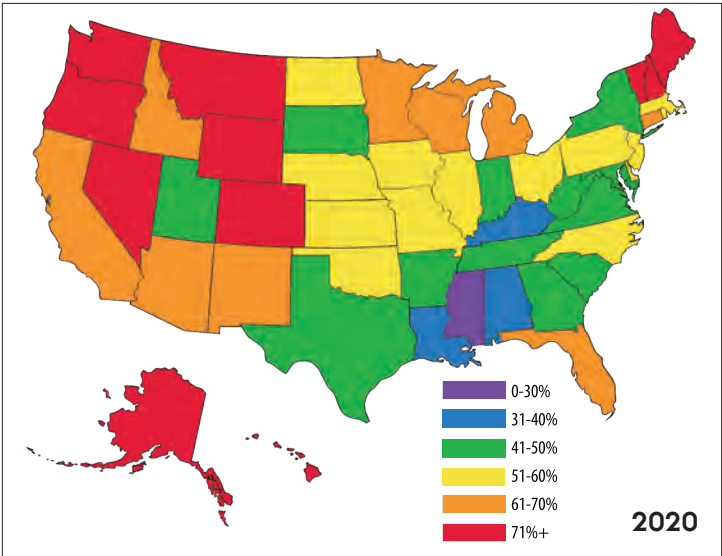
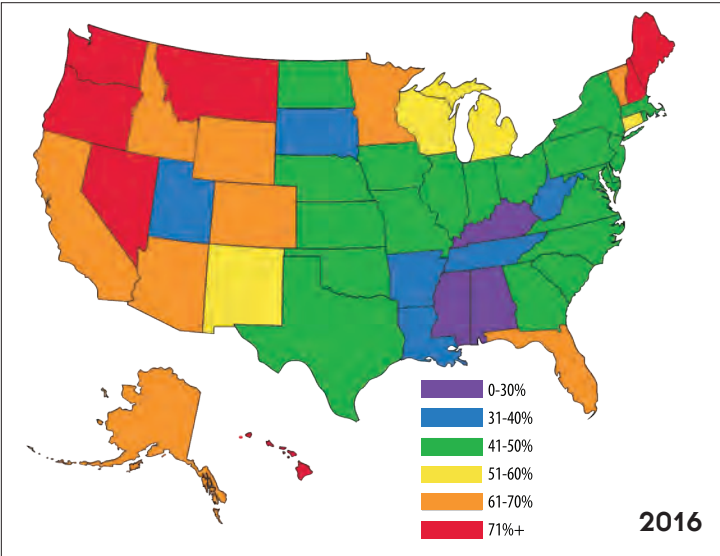
Annual Growth Rate

The annual growth rate is the difference between the yearly percentages of deaths cremated and averaged over a five-year period. The tables below show the rates for the United States and Canada from 2005 through 2020. Further, these tables illustrate that the cremation rate is increasing exponentially, with the current average growth at 1.50% annually in the U.S. and 1.10% in Canada.

| Annual Growth Rate – Five Year Average USA | |
|--|------------|
| Year | % Cremated |
| 2005 | 32.4% |
| 2010 | 40.8% |
| 2015 | 48.6% |
| 2020 | 56.1% |
| % Change 2005 - 2010 | 8.4% |
| % Change 2010 - 2015 | 7.8% |
| % Change 2015 - 2020 | 7.5% |
| Annual Growth Rate per year over 2014-2019 | 1.50% |

| Annual Growth Rate – Five Year Average Canada | |
|---|------------|
| Year | % Cremated |
| 2005 | 53.8% |
| 2010 | 61.6% |
| 2015 | 67.6% |
| 2020 | 73.1% |
| % Change 2005 - 2010 | 7.8% |
| % Change 2010 - 2015 | 6.0% |
| % Change 2015 - 2020 | 5.5% |
| Annual Growth Rate per year over 2014-2019 | 1.10% |

Percentages of Cremations in the States/Provinces for 2016 and 2020



continued on page 8

Top 10 States for Cremations – 2019

The table below shows the 10 states with the highest **number** of cremations in 2019. *Note that the rank order is defined from highest as 1 to lowest as 51. The number in parentheses shows the rank order by percentage of that state.*

| Top 10 ranked by number of cremations | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| State | Cremations | % Cremations (Rank) |
| California | 173,967 | 64.2% (16) |
| Florida | 142,154 | 67.8% (13) |
| Texas | 98,499 | 47.7% (36) |
| New York | 74,892 | 47.5% (38) |
| Pennsylvania | 71,100 | 53.1% (25) |
| Ohio | 63,663 | 51.5% (26) |
| Michigan | 61,392 | 62.8% (18) |
| Illinois | 55,130 | 50.6% (30) |
| North Carolina | 47,907 | 49.5% (33) |
| Washington | 45,889 | 78.7% (3) |

The table below shows the 10 states with the highest **percentage** of cremations in 2019. *Note that the rank order is defined from highest as 1 to lowest as 51. The number in parentheses shows the rank order by the total number of cremations in that state.*

| Top 10 ranked by percent of cremations | | |
|--|--------------|--------------------|
| State | % Cremations | Cremations (Rank) |
| Nevada | 80.7% | 21,350 (25) |
| Oregon | 78.9% | 29,525 (19) |
| Washington | 78.7% | 45,889 (10) |
| Maine | 78.2% | 11,776 (34) |
| New Hampshire | 76.9% | 9,543 (36) |
| Montana | 76.5% | 7,984 (42) |
| Hawaii | 73.9% | 8,674 (41) |
| Vermont | 72.9% | 4,343 (46) |
| Colorado | 72.7% | 29,154 (21) |
| Wyoming | 72.0% | 3,386 (49) |

Bottom Five States for Cremations – 2019

The table below shows the bottom five states (in rank order) with the lowest **number** of cremations in 2019. *Note that the rank order is defined from lowest as 1 to highest as 51. The number in parentheses shows the rank order by the percentage of that state.*

| Bottom five ranked by number of cremations | | |
|--|--------------|---------------------|
| State | Cremations | % Cremations (Rank) |
| Dist. Of Columbia | 3,072 | 50.8% (28) |
| Alaska | 3,110 | 68.5% (11) |
| Wyoming | 3,386 | 72.0% (10) |
| North Dakota | 3,727 | 50.8% (29) |
| South Dakota | 3,817 | 45.5% (42) |

The table below shows the bottom five states (in rank order) and the percentage of deaths resulting in cremations with the lowest **percentages** of cremations in 2019. *Note that the rank order is defined from lowest as 1 to highest as 51. The number in parentheses shows the rank order by the total number of cremations in that state.*

| Bottom five ranked by percent of cremations | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| State | % Cremations | Cremations/Rank |
| Mississippi | 27.9% | 8,937 (40) |
| Alabama | 32.6% | 17,341 (28) |
| Kentucky | 35.1% | 17,096 (30) |
| Louisiana | 37.1% | 17,114 (29) |
| Utah | 40.2% | 7,806 (43) |

Top 10 States for Growth in Cremations

The table below shows the top 10 states with the highest growth in the number of cremations from 2015 to 2019.

| Top 10 highest growth by number of cremations | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| State | Increase in # of Cremations | Increase in % of Cremations | Rank by % growth |
| Texas | 21,764 | 7.1% | 21 |
| Florida | 18,505 | 4.1% | 45 |
| New York | 14,951 | 5.6% | 33 |
| California | 12,469 | 2.1% | 48 |
| Ohio | 11,176 | 7.1% | 22 |
| Pennsylvania | 10,920 | 7.6% | 16 |
| North Carolina | 9,976 | 7.4% | 19 |
| Georgia | 8,703 | 7.8% | 13 |
| Michigan | 8,519 | 6.5% | 26 |
| Tennessee | 7,230 | 9.3% | 2 |

The table below shows the top 10 states with the highest growth in the percentage of cremations from 2015 to 2019.

| Top 10 highest growth by percentage of cremations | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| State | Increase in % of Cremations | Increase in # of Cremations | Rank by # growth |
| Oklahoma | 10.8% | 4,418 | 22 |
| Tennessee | 9.3% | 7,230 | 10 |
| Minnesota | 8.9% | 5,646 | 15 |
| North Dakota | 8.9% | 847 | 43 |
| Kansas | 8.6% | 2,675 | 31 |
| Missouri | 8.5% | 6,666 | 11 |
| Iowa | 8.4% | 3,221 | 27 |
| South Dakota | 8.4% | 886 | 42 |
| Delaware | 7.9% | 1,079 | 40 |
| Nebraska | 7.9% | 1,474 | 37 |

continued on page 10

Bold indicates predicted numbers; final data not yet available.

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Confirmed Deaths, Cremations, and Percent of Deaths Cremated, United States, 2019

| State | 2019 Cremations | 2019 Deaths | % of Deaths Cremated | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | | | 2015 | 2019 |
| Alabama | 17,341 | 53,209 | 25.7% | 32.6% |
| Alaska | 3,110 | 4,539 | 65.3% | 68.5% |
| Arizona | 43,111 | 63,701 | 66.6% | 67.7% |
| Arkansas | 13,855 | 32,332 | 36.4% | 42.9% |
| California | 173,967 | 270,958 | 62.1% | 64.2% |
| Colorado | 29,154 | 40,100 | 64.9% | 72.7% |
| Connecticut | 18,991 | 31,941 | 53.1% | 59.5% |
| Delaware | 5,133 | 9,302 | 47.2% | 55.2% |
| Dist. of Columbia | 3,072 | 6,043 | 43.1% | 50.8% |
| Florida | 142,154 | 209,731 | 63.6% | 67.8% |
| Georgia | 40,432 | 85,641 | 39.4% | 47.2% |
| Hawaii | 8,674 | 11,739 | 72.2% | 73.9% |
| Idaho | 9,411 | 14,338 | 60.4% | 65.6% |
| Illinois | 55,130 | 108,937 | 45.8% | 50.6% |
| Indiana | 31,250 | 66,519 | 39.4% | 47.0% |
| Iowa | 16,683 | 30,669 | 46.0% | 54.4% |
| Kansas | 15,307 | 27,312 | 47.5% | 56.0% |
| Kentucky | 17,096 | 48,669 | 27.3% | 35.1% |
| Louisiana | 17,114 | 46,142 | 29.7% | 37.1% |
| Maine | 11,776 | 15,068 | 72.4% | 78.2% |
| Maryland | 24,042 | 50,490 | 42.1% | 47.6% |
| Massachusetts | 29,489 | 59,619 | 44.9% | 49.5% |
| Michigan | 61,392 | 97,812 | 56.2% | 62.8% |
| Minnesota | 30,808 | 45,396 | 58.9% | 67.9% |
| Mississippi | 8,937 | 32,050 | 20.9% | 27.9% |
| Missouri | 32,993 | 64,777 | 42.5% | 50.9% |
| Montana | 7,984 | 10,435 | 71.4% | 76.5% |
| Nebraska | 9,246 | 17,200 | 45.8% | 53.8% |
| Nevada | 21,350 | 26,450 | 78.9% | 80.7% |
| New Hampshire | 9,543 | 12,409 | 71.2% | 76.9% |
| New Jersey | 36,067 | 74,313 | 42.6% | 48.5% |
| New Mexico | 11,613 | 18,202 | 58.3% | 63.8% |
| New York | 74,892 | 157,738 | 41.9% | 47.5% |
| North Carolina | 47,907 | 96,686 | 42.1% | 49.5% |
| North Dakota | 3,727 | 7,339 | 41.9% | 50.8% |
| Ohio | 63,663 | 123,641 | 44.4% | 51.5% |
| Oklahoma | 20,013 | 39,705 | 39.6% | 50.4% |
| Oregon | 29,525 | 37,437 | 74.6% | 78.9% |
| Pennsylvania | 71,100 | 133,932 | 45.5% | 53.1% |
| Rhode Island | 5,369 | 10,619 | 44.9% | 50.6% |
| South Carolina | 23,505 | 50,003 | 39.5% | 47.0% |
| South Dakota | 3,817 | 8,390 | 37.1% | 45.5% |
| Tennessee | 29,146 | 71,935 | 31.2% | 40.5% |
| Texas | 98,499 | 206,441 | 40.6% | 47.7% |
| Utah | 7,806 | 19,432 | 35.2% | 40.2% |

| State | 2019 Cremations | 2019 Deaths | % of Deaths Cremated | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | | | 2015 | 2019 |
| Vermont | 4,343 | 5,956 | 68.4% | 72.9% |
| Virginia | 31,363 | 69,452 | 40.9% | 45.2% |
| Washington | 45,889 | 58,297 | 76.4% | 78.7% |
| West Virginia | 9,379 | 22,914 | 33.2% | 40.9% |
| Wisconsin | 33,610 | 54,189 | 55.1% | 62.0% |
| Wyoming | 3,386 | 4,700 | 67.9% | 72.0% |
| United States Total | 1,563,164 | 2,864,849 | 48.6% | 54.6% |

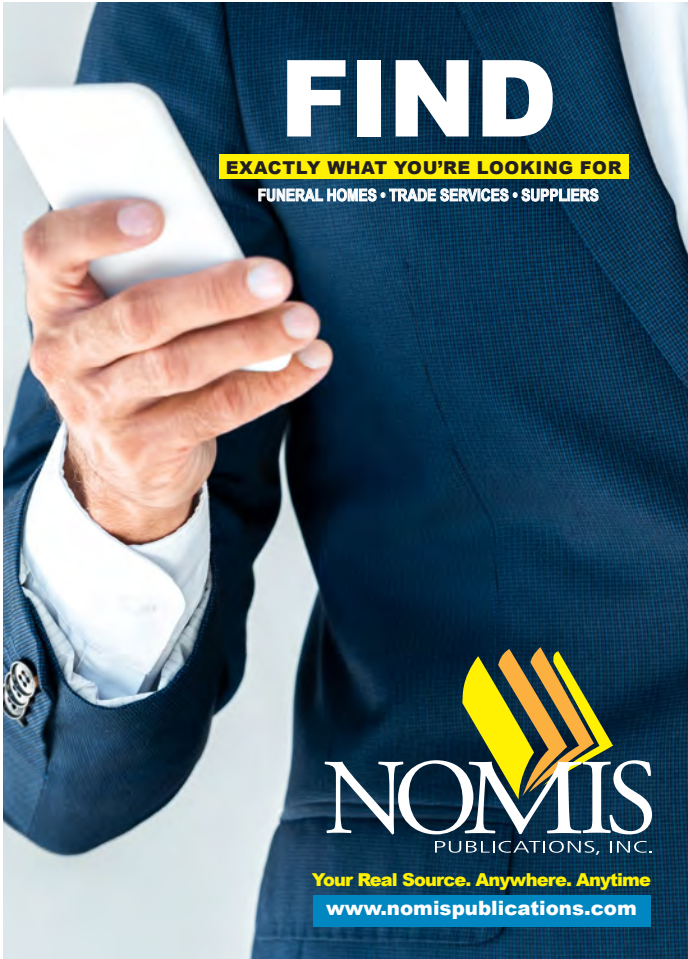
Provisional Deaths, Cremations, and Percent of Deaths Cremated, United States, 2020

| State | 2020 Cremations | 2020 Deaths | % of Deaths Cremated | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | | 2016 | 2020 |
| Alabama | 22,586 | 63,183 | 27.7% | 35.7% |
| Alaska | 3,511 | 4,905 | 66.3% | 71.6% |
| Arizona | 51,578 | 75,133 | 67.1% | 68.6% |
| Arkansas | 16,999 | 37,740 | 37.3% | 45.0% |
| California | 207,025 | 318,220 | 62.8% | 65.1% |
| Colorado | 35,125 | 47,570 | 70.2% | 73.8% |
| Connecticut | 22,890 | 37,513 | 54.4% | 61.0% |
| Delaware | 6,148 | 10,834 | 49.9% | 56.7% |
| Dist. Of Columbia | 3,942 | 7,439 | 46.3% | 53.0% |
| Florida | 167,371 | 243,098 | 64.9% | 68.8% |
| Georgia | 50,523 | 102,604 | 41.7% | 49.2% |
| Hawaii | 9,035 | 12,047 | 72.5% | 75.0% |
| Idaho | 10,980 | 16,460 | 62.0% | 66.7% |
| Illinois | 68,966 | 128,660 | 47.7% | 53.6% |
| Indiana | 38,339 | 78,194 | 41.5% | 49.0% |
| Iowa | 20,111 | 35,538 | 48.1% | 56.6% |
| Kansas | 18,046 | 31,081 | 49.9% | 58.1% |
| Kentucky | 20,691 | 55,437 | 29.5% | 37.3% |
| Louisiana | 21,928 | 56,239 | 31.6% | 39.0% |
| Maine | 12,467 | 15,618 | 74.4% | 79.8% |
| Maryland | 29,419 | 59,608 | 44.0% | 49.4% |
| Massachusetts | 37,176 | 72,577 | 45.6% | 51.2% |
| Michigan | 74,240 | 115,246 | 57.9% | 64.4% |
| Minnesota | 36,478 | 52,180 | 61.4% | 69.9% |
| Mississippi | 11,367 | 39,105 | 22.5% | 29.1% |
| Missouri | 40,389 | 76,003 | 44.4% | 53.1% |
| Montana | 9,156 | 11,983 | 73.6% | 76.4% |
| Nebraska | 11,114 | 19,698 | 48.0% | 56.4% |
| Nevada | 25,572 | 31,441 | 79.4% | 81.3% |
| New Hampshire | 10,470 | 13,511 | 71.6% | 77.5% |
| New Jersey | 49,178 | 95,443 | 44.2% | 51.5% |
| New Mexico | 14,609 | 22,644 | 59.8% | 64.5% |
| New York | 92,574 | 189,358 | 43.6% | 48.9% |

Bold indicates predicted numbers; final data not yet available. 2020 numbers are predicted, except for NV, WY, PR, AB, BC, NU, YT

| State | 2020 Cremations | 2020 Deaths | % of Deaths Cremated | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | | 2016 | 2020 |
| North Carolina | 55,322 | 107,389 | 44.6% | 51.5% |
| North Dakota | 4,635 | 8,839 | 42.5% | 52.4% |
| Ohio | 76,467 | 143,785 | 46.2% | 53.2% |
| Oklahoma | 23,799 | 46,135 | 46.8% | 51.6% |
| Oregon | 31,966 | 40,132 | 76.2% | 79.7% |
| Pennsylvania | 85,419 | 156,344 | 48.0% | 54.6% |
| Rhode Island | 6,337 | 12,137 | 46.5% | 52.2% |
| South Carolina | 29,153 | 60,140 | 42.0% | 48.5% |
| South Dakota | 4,682 | 9,856 | 40.1% | 47.5% |
| Tennessee | 37,350 | 88,231 | 33.1% | 42.3% |
| Texas | 121,859 | 245,997 | 42.4% | 49.5% |
| Utah | 9,201 | 22,216 | 36.5% | 41.4% |
| Vermont | 4,448 | 5,981 | 69.7% | 74.4% |
| Virginia | 37,514 | 79,390 | 42.7% | 47.3% |
| Washington | 49,974 | 62,432 | 76.9% | 80.0% |
| West Virginia | 11,391 | 25,425 | 35.3% | 44.8% |
| Wisconsin | 40,507 | 62,432 | 57.4% | 64.9% |
| Wyoming | 4,137 | 5,526 | 70.3% | 74.9% |
| United States Total | 1,884,164 | 3,358,697 | 50.4% | 56.1% |

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U.S. Deaths and Cremations by Region – 2019

| Region | State | 2019 Cremations | 2019 Deaths | 2019 % Cremations |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| East North Central | Illinois | 55,130 | 108,937 | 50.6% |
| | Indiana | 31,250 | 66,519 | 47.0% |
| | Michigan | 61,392 | 97,812 | 62.8% |
| | Ohio | 63,663 | 123,641 | 51.5% |
| | Wisconsin | 33,610 | 54,189 | 62.0% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 245,045 | 451,098 | 54.3% |
| East South Central | Alabama | 17,341 | 53,209 | 32.6% |
| | Kentucky | 17,096 | 48,669 | 35.1% |
| | Mississippi | 8,937 | 32,050 | 27.9% |
| | Tennessee | 29,146 | 71,935 | 40.5% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 72,520 | 205,863 | 35.2% |
| Middle Atlantic | New Jersey | 36,067 | 74,313 | 48.5% |
| | New York | 74,892 | 157,738 | 47.5% |
| | Pennsylvania | 71,100 | 133,932 | 53.1% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 182,059 | 365,983 | 49.7% |
| Mountain | Arizona | 43,111 | 63,701 | 67.7% |
| | Colorado | 29,154 | 40,100 | 72.7% |
| | Idaho | 9,411 | 14,338 | 65.6% |
| | Montana | 7,984 | 10,435 | 76.5% |
| | Nevada | 21,350 | 26,450 | 80.7% |
| | New Mexico | 11,613 | 18,202 | 63.8% |
| | Utah | 7,806 | 19,432 | 40.2% |
| | Wyoming | 3,386 | 4,700 | 72.0% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 133,815 | 197,358 | 67.8% |
| New England | Connecticut | 18,991 | 31,941 | 59.5% |
| | Maine | 11,776 | 15,068 | 78.2% |
| | Massachusetts | 29,489 | 59,619 | 49.5% |
| | New Hampshire | 9,543 | 12,409 | 76.9% |
| | Rhode Island | 5,369 | 10,619 | 50.6% |
| | Vermont | 4,343 | 5,956 | 72.9% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 79,511 | 135,612 | 58.6% |

| Region | State | 2019 Cremations | 2019 Deaths | 2019 % Cremations |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Pacific | Alaska | 3,110 | 4,539 | 68.5% |
| | California | 173,967 | 270,958 | 64.2% |
| | Hawaii | 8,674 | 11,739 | 73.9% |
| | Oregon | 29,525 | 37,437 | 78.9% |
| | Washington | 45,889 | 58,297 | 78.7% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 261,165 | 382,970 | 68.2% |
| South Atlantic | Delaware | 5,133 | 9,302 | 55.2% |
| | Dist. of Columbia | 3,072 | 6,043 | 50.8% |
| | Florida | 142,154 | 209,731 | 67.8% |
| | Georgia | 40,432 | 85,641 | 47.2% |
| | Maryland | 24,042 | 50,490 | 47.6% |
| | North Carolina | 47,907 | 96,686 | 49.5% |
| | South Carolina | 23,505 | 50,003 | 47.0% |
| | Virginia | 31,363 | 69,452 | 45.2% |
| | West Virginia | 9,379 | 22,914 | 40.9% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 326,987 | 600,262 | 54.5% |
| West North Central | Iowa | 16,683 | 30,669 | 54.4% |
| | Kansas | 15,307 | 27,312 | 56.0% |
| | Minnesota | 30,808 | 45,396 | 67.9% |
| | Missouri | 32,993 | 64,777 | 50.9% |
| | Nebraska | 9,246 | 17,200 | 53.8% |
| | North Dakota | 3,727 | 7,339 | 50.8% |
| | South Dakota | 3,817 | 8,390 | 45.5% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 112,581 | 201,083 | 56.0% |
| West South Central | Arkansas | 13,855 | 32,332 | 42.9% |
| | Louisiana | 17,114 | 46,142 | 37.1% |
| | Oklahoma | 20,013 | 39,705 | 50.4% |
| | Texas | 98,499 | 206,441 | 47.7% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 149,481 | 324,620 | 46.0% |
| USA Total | | 1,563,164 | 2,864,849 | 54.6% |

Bold indicates predicted numbers; final data not yet available. 2020 numbers are predicted, except for NV, WY, PR, AB, BC, NU, YT

Statistics from Puerto Rico

The table below shows the number and percent of cremations from 2006-2020, with projections to 2025.

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2025 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| # | 4,049 | 4,492 | 4,712 | 5,026 | 5,631 | 6,343 | 6,557 | 6,747 | 7,812 | 7,842 | 9,064 | 10,538 | 9,925 | 10,729 | 12,851 | 15,206 |
| % | 14.1% | 15.3% | 16.2% | 17.3% | 19.2% | 21.1% | 21.9% | 23.0% | 25.8% | 27.6% | 30.6% | 33.9% | 33.9% | 36.2% | 41.6% | 50.1% |

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U.S. Deaths and Cremations by Region – 2020

| Region | State | 2020 Cremations | 2020 Deaths | 2020 % Cremations |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| East North Central | Illinois | 68,966 | 128,660 | 53.6% |
| | Indiana | 38,339 | 78,194 | 49.0% |
| | Michigan | 74,240 | 115,246 | 64.4% |
| | Ohio | 76,467 | 143,785 | 53.2% |
| | Wisconsin | 40,507 | 62,432 | 64.9% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 298,519 | 528,317 | 56.5% |
| East South Central | Alabama | 22,586 | 63,183 | 35.7% |
| | Kentucky | 20,691 | 55,437 | 37.3% |
| | Mississippi | 11,367 | 39,105 | 29.1% |
| | Tennessee | 37,350 | 88,231 | 42.3% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 91,994 | 245,956 | 37.4% |
| Middle Atlantic | New Jersey | 49,178 | 95,443 | 51.5% |
| | New York | 92,574 | 189,358 | 48.9% |
| | Pennsylvania | 85,419 | 156,344 | 54.6% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 227,171 | 441,145 | 51.5% |
| Mountain | Arizona | 51,578 | 75,133 | 68.6% |
| | Colorado | 35,125 | 47,570 | 73.8% |
| | Idaho | 10,980 | 16,460 | 66.7% |
| | Montana | 9,156 | 11,983 | 76.4% |
| | Nevada | 25,572 | 31,441 | 81.3% |
| | New Mexico | 14,609 | 22,644 | 64.5% |
| | Utah | 9,201 | 22,216 | 41.4% |
| | Wyoming | 4,137 | 5,526 | 74.9% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 160,358 | 232,973 | 68.8% |
| New England | Connecticut | 22,890 | 37,513 | 61.0% |
| | Maine | 12,467 | 15,618 | 79.8% |
| | Massachusetts | 37,176 | 72,577 | 51.2% |
| | New Hampshire | 10,470 | 13,511 | 77.5% |
| | Rhode Island | 6,337 | 12,137 | 52.2% |
| | Vermont | 4,448 | 5,981 | 74.4% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 93,788 | 157,337 | 59.6% |

| Region | State | 2020 Cremations | 2020 Deaths | 2020 % Cremations |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Pacific | Alaska | 3,511 | 4,905 | 71.6% |
| | California | 207,025 | 318,220 | 65.1% |
| | Hawaii | 9,035 | 12,047 | 75.0% |
| | Oregon | 31,966 | 40,132 | 79.7% |
| | Washington | 49,974 | 62,432 | 80.0% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 301,511 | 437,736 | 68.9% |
| South Atlantic | Delaware | 6,148 | 10,834 | 56.7% |
| | Dist. of Columbia | 3,942 | 7,439 | 53.0% |
| | Florida | 167,371 | 243,098 | 68.8% |
| | Georgia | 50,523 | 102,604 | 49.2% |
| | Maryland | 29,419 | 59,608 | 49.4% |
| | North Carolina | 55,322 | 107,389 | 51.5% |
| | South Carolina | 29,153 | 60,140 | 48.5% |
| | Virginia | 37,514 | 79,390 | 47.3% |
| | West Virginia | 11,391 | 25,425 | 44.8% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 390,783 | 695,927 | 56.2% |
| West North Central | Iowa | 20,111 | 35,538 | 56.6% |
| | Kansas | 18,046 | 31,081 | 58.1% |
| | Minnesota | 36,478 | 52,180 | 69.9% |
| | Missouri | 40,389 | 76,003 | 53.1% |
| | Nebraska | 11,114 | 19,698 | 56.4% |
| | North Dakota | 4,635 | 8,839 | 52.4% |
| | South Dakota | 4,682 | 9,856 | 47.5% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 135,455 | 233,195 | 58.1% |
| West South Central | Arkansas | 16,999 | 37,740 | 45.0% |
| | Louisiana | 21,928 | 56,239 | 39.0% |
| | Oklahoma | 23,799 | 46,135 | 51.6% |
| | Texas | 121,859 | 245,997 | 49.5% |
| | Sub-Total Region | 184,585 | 386,111 | 47.8% |
| USA Total | | 1,884,164 | 3,358,697 | 56.1% |

Bold indicates predicted numbers; final data not yet available. 2020 numbers are predicted, except for NV, WY, PR, AB, BC, NU, YT

continued on page 16

Cremation Rates Stay Predictable Throughout the Pandemic

by Thomas J. Anderson

If you followed the news throughout the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, you noticed that in most areas of our country death care professionals were busy. There were news reports of backlogs at funeral homes and crematories in different areas of the country at different times, depending on where “Covid-19 hotspots” were at that moment.

And those of us who work in funeral service sure thought that we served a lot of cremation families. We did. According to preliminary data on deaths in the United States, over 1,884,000 million United States deaths had a final disposition of cremation in 2020. That's 321,000 more cremations in the United States than in 2019 . . . a 20% increase. That translates to an increase in cremation dispositions of almost 1,000 per day.

No wonder it seemed like those of us who have crematories thought there were a lot of cremations. But America also had a lot of deaths in 2020—over 3.3 million deaths, or about 500,000 more than in 2019. That's a preliminary figure of a 17.2% increase in deaths for the year. With so many deaths, we were bound to have more cremations.

A more interesting question for me was, “Did the pandemic exacerbate or increase the percentage of families who chose cremation as the form of disposition for their loved ones?” After reviewing the preliminary data in CANA's Annual Report, I don't believe that it did. For the most part, the rate of cremation disposition to overall deaths in the United States continued on its forty-year slow and steady march toward higher percentages. It appears to me that the Covid-19 pandemic did not play any major role in increasing this percentage regardless of how we looked at it anecdotally.

For instance, preliminary data shows that out of over 3.3 million deaths in the United States in 2020, 1.884 million of those deaths resulted in cremation. That's a rate of 56.1%—approximately 1.5% higher than the 54.6% rate of 2019. However, that is a rate of increase that is actually smaller than the rate of increase between the years 2018 and 2019, when the increase in the national cremation rate was 1.6% (from 53.0% in 2018 to 54.6% in 2019).

I do contend, and the data does show, that an ever-increasing portion of the United States prefers cremation over burial—and that number keeps marching up.

It appears the state of Nevada will crack the 80% penetration number of cremation percentages—becoming the first state to do so—and it may be that 2020 is the year. Secondly, 2020 may be the last year with any state under a 30% cremation rate. Provisional data shows Mississippi, the lowest percentage cremation rate state in the country, at 29.1%, and I would suggest that it will top 30% after 2020.

So, while there may be individual markets that are exceptions to the rule, I conclude that the Covid-19 pandemic, at least to date, has had little to do with families' choices pertaining to final disposition of the remains. While it may be too early to understand what the entire death care experience was for those families and how it will affect future decisions, early indications are that the choice of cremation continues to be on a trend of predictable small annual (1-2%) but sure increases across the entire country.

If you are a funeral home or crematory operator you should take a good look at the data. Many of us thought that the anecdotal information we were getting from the Covid-19 pandemic would lead to a fast ramp-up of cremation dispositions. Looking at CANA's report, it appears that did not happen, and you should take that into consideration when working on your future budgets. Intuition is great, and sometimes necessary to rely on—however, if I was still operating my business, I would be continuing to count on the predictable annual cremation increases rather than looking at a big increase at this moment.



Thomas J. (Tom) Anderson is the CEO and Editor of “Funeral Director Daily.” Tom was the owner/operator of the Anderson Funeral Home in Alexandria, Minnesota, for over 35 years, succeeding his father as owner in the fourth-generation firm. Tom graduated from the University of Minnesota's Mortuary Science program in 1980. In 2013, Tom sold the majority of the firm and continues to this day as a minority partner. He has worked in all aspects of funeral service, including owning a crematory and insurance agency as well as being a licensed insurance agent himself. In 2015 the Minnesota Legislature appointed Tom to the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents. Tom serves as Chairman of the Finance and Operations Committee, where he is responsible for a \$4 billion budget.

CANA is continuing Milestone Research by projecting when each state will reach specific cremation rates—50%, 80% and 90%.

Look for this research in the next issue of The Cremationist.

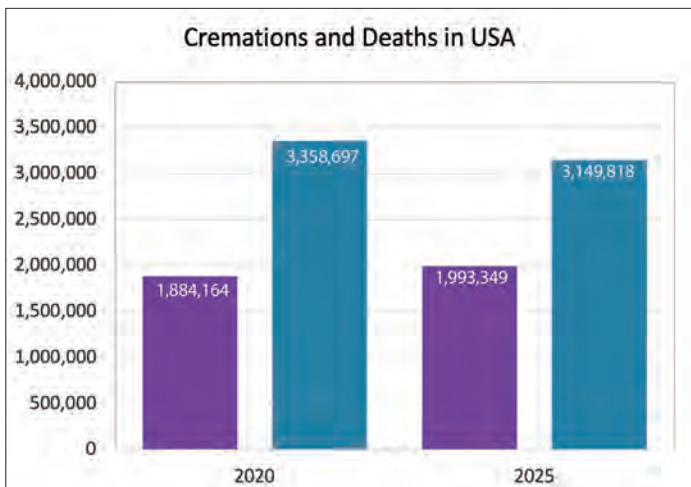
Projected U.S. Cremation Rates – 2025 & 2030

| State | 2019 % Cremations | 2020 % Cremations | 2025 % Cremations | 2030 % Cremations |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Alabama | 32.6% | 35.7% | 46.1% | 55.2% |
| Alaska | 68.5% | 71.6% | 73.0% | 76.2% |
| Arizona | 67.7% | 68.6% | 70.6% | 72.2% |
| Arkansas | 42.9% | 45.0% | 53.9% | 61.6% |
| California | 64.2% | 65.1% | 68.9% | 72.0% |
| Colorado | 72.7% | 73.8% | 77.6% | 80.7% |
| Connecticut | 59.5% | 61.0% | 69.0% | 76.1% |
| Delaware | 55.2% | 56.7% | 65.1% | 72.6% |
| Dist. of Columbia | 50.8% | 53.0% | 55.6% | 61.2% |
| Florida | 67.8% | 68.8% | 73.3% | 77.2% |
| Georgia | 47.2% | 49.2% | 58.1% | 65.7% |
| Hawaii | 73.9% | 75.0% | 77.1% | 79.1% |
| Idaho | 65.6% | 66.7% | 70.5% | 74.0% |
| Illinois | 50.6% | 53.6% | 61.0% | 66.9% |
| Indiana | 47.0% | 49.0% | 57.3% | 63.8% |
| Iowa | 54.4% | 56.6% | 69.6% | 79.8% |
| Kansas | 56.0% | 58.1% | 67.2% | 74.8% |
| Kentucky | 35.1% | 37.3% | 47.2% | 56.3% |
| Louisiana | 37.1% | 39.0% | 48.8% | 58.0% |
| Maine | 78.2% | 79.8% | 85.2% | 89.2% |
| Maryland | 47.6% | 49.4% | 56.1% | 62.3% |
| Massachusetts | 49.5% | 51.2% | 56.6% | 60.8% |
| Michigan | 62.8% | 64.4% | 72.0% | 78.2% |
| Minnesota | 67.9% | 69.9% | 79.4% | 86.8% |
| Mississippi | 27.9% | 29.1% | 37.9% | 46.1% |
| Missouri | 50.9% | 53.1% | 63.2% | 72.0% |
| Montana | 76.5% | 76.4% | 81.8% | 85.3% |
| Nebraska | 53.8% | 56.4% | 66.0% | 74.4% |
| Nevada | 80.7% | 81.3% | 85.0% | 87.6% |
| New Hampshire | 76.9% | 77.5% | 83.4% | 87.9% |
| New Jersey | 48.5% | 51.5% | 56.8% | 62.8% |
| New Mexico | 63.8% | 64.5% | 69.1% | 73.2% |
| New York | 47.5% | 48.9% | 54.9% | 60.0% |
| North Carolina | 49.5% | 51.5% | 60.0% | 67.1% |
| North Dakota | 50.8% | 52.4% | 63.5% | 72.5% |
| Ohio | 51.5% | 53.2% | 61.2% | 68.1% |
| Oklahoma | 50.4% | 51.6% | 62.5% | 71.0% |
| Oregon | 78.9% | 79.7% | 83.6% | 86.9% |
| Pennsylvania | 53.1% | 54.6% | 63.1% | 70.4% |
| Rhode Island | 50.6% | 52.2% | 57.9% | 62.2% |
| South Carolina | 47.0% | 48.5% | 56.4% | 62.3% |
| South Dakota | 45.5% | 47.5% | 57.9% | 67.7% |
| Tennessee | 40.5% | 42.3% | 53.0% | 62.1% |
| Texas | 47.7% | 49.5% | 57.3% | 63.8% |
| Utah | 40.2% | 41.4% | 48.3% | 55.3% |
| Vermont | 72.9% | 74.4% | 79.2% | 83.0% |
| Virginia | 45.2% | 47.3% | 54.0% | 59.4% |
| Washington | 78.7% | 80.0% | 83.5% | 86.4% |

| State | 2019 % Cremations | 2020 % Cremations | 2025 % Cremations | 2030 % Cremations |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| West Virginia | 40.9% | 44.8% | 53.7% | 63.2% |
| Wisconsin | 62.0% | 64.9% | 73.6% | 80.8% |
| Wyoming | 72.0% | 74.9% | 82.2% | 86.8% |
| US Total | 54.6% | 56.1% | 65.2% | 72.8% |

CANA's Projections Versus Actual Deaths to Cremations Comparisons in the United States

| Year | % of U.S. Cremations to Deaths | | | # of U.S. Cremations (in thousands) | | |
|------|--------------------------------|--------|------------|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | Projected | Actual | Difference | Projected | Actual | Difference |
| 1989 | 16.2% | 16.4% | +0.2% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1990 | 16.9% | 17.0% | +0.1% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1991 | 17.47% | 18.50% | +1.03% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1992 | 18.89% | 19.11% | +0.22% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1993 | 20.16% | 19.78% | -0.38% | 438.5 | 448.5 | +10.0 |
| 1994 | 20.79% | 20.60% | -0.19% | 469.2 | 471.0 | +1.8 |
| 1995 | 21.49% | 21.14% | -0.35% | 496.8 | 488.3 | -8.5 |
| 1996 | 21.78% | 21.77% | -0.01% | 514.1 | 502.1 | -12.0 |
| 1997 | 22.04% | 23.13% | +1.09% | 520.9 | 533.8 | +12.9 |
| 1998 | 23.75% | 23.99% | 0.24% | 553.4 | 558.2 | +4.8 |
| 1999 | 25.39% | 24.81% | -0.58% | 595.6 | 599.7 | +4.1 |
| 2000 | 25.56% | 26.17% | 0.61% | 605.1 | 628.8 | +23.7 |
| 2001 | 27.25% | 27.01% | -0.24% | 651.2 | 652.8 | +1.6 |
| 2002 | 27.78% | 28.15% | 0.37% | 677.7 | 688.3 | +10.6 |
| 2003 | 28.63% | 29.53% | 0.90% | 693.7 | 723.7 | +30.0 |
| 2004 | 29.61% | 31.25% | +1.64% | 708.7 | 745.9 | +37.2 |
| 2005 | 31.99% | 32.13% | 0.14% | 778.0 | 790.5 | +12.5 |
| 2006 | 33.53% | 33.87% | 0.34% | 800.2 | 821.6 | +21.4 |
| 2007 | 34.89% | 34.60% | -0.29% | 842.5 | 838.6 | -3.9 |
| 2008 | 36.02% | 36.22% | 0.20% | 884.3 | 895.4 | +11.1 |
| 2009 | 37.02% | 38.15% | +1.13% | 901.4 | 931.7 | +30.3 |
| 2010 | 40.62% | 40.60% | -0.02% | 998.5 | 998.8 | +0.3 |
| 2011 | 42.10% | 42.00% | -0.1% | 1036.4 | 1055.9 | +19.5 |
| 2012 | 42.00% | 43.30% | +1.3% | 1073.9 | 1097.5 | +23.6 |
| 2013 | 45.3% | 45.2% | -0.1% | 1142.5 | 1171.4 | +28.9 |
| 2014 | 46.7% | 47.0% | +0.3% | 1214.1 | 1231.2 | +17.1 |
| 2015 | 48.6% | 48.7% | +0.1% | 1285.7 | 1302.9 | +17.2 |
| 2016 | 50.1% | 50.3% | +0.2% | 1336.3 | 1384.7 | +48.4 |
| 2017 | 51.6% | 51.7% | +0.1% | 1400.6 | 1450.3 | +49.7 |
| 2018 | 53.1% | 53.1% | 0.0% | 1478.4 | 1514.6 | +36.2 |
| 2019 | 54.6 | 54.6 | 0.0% | 1550.2 | 1563.2 | +13.0 |
| 2020 | 56.1% | N/A | N/A | 1884.2 | N/A | N/A |



The graph above shows a comparison of the current year (2020) deaths and cremations to the 2025 projections. The 2020 provisional data were collected from the individual state agencies or estimated based on 2018-2019 state data and 2020 provisional death count from the CDC. The 2025 rates were calculated based on an average of the past five years' growth rates compounded annually.

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About Singhal LLC • Management Consultants

Arvind Singhal develops and applies statistical analytical techniques and courses. He has developed and uses a simplified Six Sigma Process.



Arvind earned his Bachelor of Engineering from IIT, Roorkee, Master of Science in Engineering from Western Michigan University, and an MBA from Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.

Cremation Association of North America (CANA) has retained Arvind for his data analysis and projections. As part of the agreement, CANA members are entitled to a no-obligation, free initial consultation over the phone. Please email Arvind Singhal at ConsultSinghal@yahoo.com for details.



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Percentage of Deaths in Canada Resulting in Cremation—Projected to 2025

The total percentage of cremations resulting from deaths reflects the number of cremations and/or the rate of cremations that were provided for each province.

| Province | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2025 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alberta | 65.5% | 66.2% | 67.2% | 68.5% | 69.4% | 70.8% | 71.4% | 72.5% | 73.8% | 74.7% | 74.7% | 78.8% |
| British Columbia | 81.4% | 82.3% | 82.6% | 83.4% | 83.6% | 84.3% | 84.9% | 84.7% | 85.3% | 85.9% | 85.7% | 87.1% |
| Manitoba | 59.6% | 60.7% | 59.5% | 61.4% | 63.7% | 63.3% | 64.8% | 66.0% | 65.2% | 67.4% | 67.9% | 71.2% |
| New Brunswick | 46.1% | 49.3% | 51.8% | 54.2% | 56.8% | 59.4% | 62.7% | 64.8% | 66.5% | 69.5% | 71.6% | 81.4% |
| Newfoundland/Labrador | 21.3% | 22.8% | 24.2% | 25.9% | 32.6% | 37.7% | 41.1% | 43.8% | 45.9% | 46.8% | 56.0% | 63.5% |
| Northwest Territories | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Nova Scotia | 62.4% | 63.6% | 67.5% | 70.4% | 71.4% | 73.9% | 76.6% | 77.8% | 78.1% | 80.7% | 83.2% | 89.5% |
| Nunavut | 1.7% | 8.0% | 3.7% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 0.7% | 0.0% | 3.3% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| Ontario | 57.2% | 58.7% | 48.2% | 54.6% | 60.7% | 61.1% | 62.5% | 63.3% | 61.9% | 63.7% | 64.3% | 66.4% |
| Prince Edward Island | 22.0% | 25.2% | 29.0% | 30.3% | 35.2% | 35.6% | 39.2% | 42.8% | 41.9% | 47.4% | 49.8% | 62.2% |
| Quebec | 63.7% | 65.8% | 68.7% | 70.6% | 75.8% | 72.0% | 75.3% | 76.1% | 79.2% | 80.6% | 81.5% | 87.2% |
| Saskatchewan | 54.6% | 55.7% | 57.4% | 59.2% | 60.8% | 62.1% | 63.1% | 66.5% | 67.3% | 67.1% | 68.6% | 74.4% |
| Yukon Territory | 62.8% | 63.5% | 77.4% | 79.4% | 63.2% | 50.0% | 51.6% | 51.9% | 52.1% | 50.9% | 47.7% | 58.3% |
| Canada Total | 61.6% | 63.1% | 60.5% | 63.9% | 67.9% | 67.6% | 69.4% | 70.3% | 70.8% | 72.2% | 73.1% | 76.8% |

The provincial agencies responsible for collecting disposition data in Quebec and Ontario have refused CANA requests to release data for more than five years. Numbers in this chart reflect predicted numbers validated by or supplied by provincial associations.

Total Cremations by Province

The table below shows the cremation totals provided by each province.

| Province | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2025 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Alberta | 13,647 | 14,143 | 14,902 | 15,722 | 16,276 | 17,021 | 17,570 | 18,547 | 19,225 | 19,614 | 21,880 | 23,699 |
| British Columbia | 25,361 | 26,161 | 26,736 | 27,556 | 28,108 | 29,540 | 30,925 | 32,417 | 32,580 | 32,919 | 35,189 | 37,230 |
| Manitoba | 5,973 | 6,254 | 6,015 | 6,222 | 6,833 | 6,784 | 6,985 | 7,317 | 7,223 | 7,566 | 8,133 | 8,454 |
| New Brunswick | 2,924 | 3,136 | 3,280 | 3,584 | 3,856 | 4,303 | 4,479 | 4,881 | 5,100 | 5,335 | 5,916 | 6,946 |
| Newfoundland/Labrador | 951 | 1,032 | 1,121 | 1,262 | 1,624 | 1,969 | 2,055 | 2,252 | 2,402 | 2,464 | 3,016 | 3,651 |
| Northwest Territories | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nova Scotia | 5,231 | 5,476 | 5,727 | 6,292 | 6,257 | 6,960 | 6,914 | 7,460 | 7,627 | 7,972 | 8,225 | 9,534 |
| Nunavut | 2 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Ontario | 50,801 | 53,099 | 43,650 | 48,663 | 56,554 | 57,776 | 62,185 | 65,372 | 66,264 | 68,291 | 73,307 | 77,738 |
| Prince Edward Island | 242 | 312 | 350 | 377 | 448 | 443 | 436 | 554 | 565 | 641 | 696 | 857 |
| Quebec | 37,488 | 39,189 | 41,788 | 42,919 | 47,907 | 46,188 | 47,863 | 50,276 | 54,512 | 54,647 | 60,721 | 65,729 |
| Saskatchewan | 5,012 | 5,170 | 5,345 | 5,567 | 5,718 | 5,852 | 5,963 | 6,318 | 6,518 | 6,401 | 6,873 | 7,328 |
| Yukon Territory | 118 | 113 | 154 | 162 | 127 | 103 | 111 | 124 | 124 | 138 | 125 | 169 |
| Canada Total | 147,750 | 154,097 | 149,073 | 158,327 | 173,708 | 176,945 | 185,488 | 195,518 | 202,145 | 205,988 | 224,081 | 241,338 |

Bold indicates predicted numbers; final data not yet available.

Total Deaths and Cremations, Canada

Projections based on regression analysis.

| Canadian Totals | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2025 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Deaths | 239,694 | 244,025 | 246,452 | 247,638 | 255,984 | 261,596 | 267,158 | 277,967 | 285,474 | 285,173 | 306,468 | 314,043 |
| Cremations | 147,750 | 154,097 | 149,073 | 158,327 | 173,708 | 176,945 | 185,488 | 195,518 | 202,145 | 205,988 | 224,081 | 241,338 |

continued on page 20



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2021 Crematory Counts • United States

In an effort to continually improve CANA research, staff paid particular attention this year to updating and improving the methodology to determine crematory counts. For each state, three sources of data at the state and federal level were consulted. When two out of three sources agreed, that number was used. In the rare cases when multiple sources were unavailable, CANA members were consulted. Other unique situations are indicated in the footnotes.

| State | # | State | # |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|--------------|
| Alabama | 62 | Montana ² | 37 |
| Alaska* | 12 | Nebraska | 26 |
| Arizona | 55 | Nevada | 25 |
| Arkansas | 41 | New Hampshire | 21 |
| California | 227 | New Jersey* | 27 |
| Colorado | 79 | New Mexico | 31 |
| Connecticut | 21 | New York | 50 |
| Delaware | 19 | North Carolina | 149 |
| District of Columbia ¹ | N/A | North Dakota | 12 |
| Florida | 206 | Ohio | 158 |
| Georgia | 135 | Oklahoma | 55 |
| Hawaii* | 17 | Oregon | 67 |
| Idaho | 38 | Pennsylvania ² | 191 |
| Illinois | 137 | Rhode Island | 14 |
| Indiana | 119 | South Carolina | 81 |
| Iowa | 68 | South Dakota | 13 |
| Kansas | 43 | Tennessee ² | 40 |
| Kentucky* | 27 | Texas | 187 |
| Louisiana | 36 | Utah | 20 |
| Maine | 14 | Vermont | 12 |
| Maryland | 40 | Virginia | 116 |
| Massachusetts ² | 19 | Washington | 60 |
| Michigan | 78 | West Virginia | 32 |
| Minnesota | 83 | Wisconsin | 148 |
| Mississippi | 48 | Wyoming | 18 |
| Missouri ² | 37 | TOTAL | 3,251 |

no symbol = Source: State agency; *Source: State agency validated by CANA member; ¹Uses crematories in Maryland; ²USEPA database of air permits issued and businesses in operation.

2021 Crematory Counts • Canada

| Province | # | Province | # |
|-----------------------|-----|-----------------------|----------------|
| Alberta | 55 | Prince Edward Island | 3 |
| British Columbia | 51 | Saskatchewan | 31 |
| Manitoba | 18 | Quebec | 86* |
| New Brunswick | 18 | Northwest Territories | 0 ¹ |
| Newfoundland/Labrador | 8* | Nunavut | 0 |
| Nova Scotia | 19 | Yukon | 1 |
| Ontario | 77* | TOTAL | 367 |

no symbol = Source: Provincial agency; *Source: 2018 data; ¹Uses crematories in Alberta

Total Cremations Carried Out in the United Kingdom

Source: <http://www.cremation.org.uk/progress-of-cremation-united-kingdom>.

| Year | Operating Crematoria | New Crematoria | Deaths in British Islands** | Cremations | Percentage |
|------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1960 | 148 | 17 | 588,032 | 204,019 | 34.70 |
| 1970 | 206 | 2 | 638,834 | 353,957 | 55.41 |
| 1980 | 220 | 1 | 644,684 | 420,717 | 65.26 |
| 1990 | 225 | 0 | 629,629 | 438,066 | 69.58 |
| 1991 | 225 | 0 | 634,339 | 441,108 | 69.54 |
| 1992 | 226 | 1 | 622,410 | 437,000 | 70.21 |
| 1993 | 227 | 1 | 646,477 | 453,045 | 70.08 |
| 1994 | 228 | 1 | 616,719 | 434,223 | 70.41 |
| 1995 | 229 | 3* | 649,635 | 445,574 | 68.59 |
| 1996 | 230 | 1 | 640,081 | 445,934 | 69.67 |
| 1997 | 234 | 4 | 633,635 | 446,305 | 70.44 |
| 1998 | 238 | 4 | 633,062 | 439,145 | 69.37 |
| 1999 | 240 ⁽¹⁾ | 3 | 635,785 | 444,169 | 69.86 |
| 2000 | 242 | 2 | 611,960 | 437,609 | 71.51 |
| 2001 | 242 | 0 | 605,835 | 428,383 | 70.71 |
| 2002 | 242 | 1 | 609,943 | 437,124 | 71.67 |
| 2003 | 242 | 1 | 615,177 | 442,538 | 71.94 |
| 2004 | 242 | 1 | 588,753 | 424,835 | 72.16 |
| 2005 | 242 | 3 | 586,829 | 424,684 | 72.37 |
| 2006 | 250 | 2 | 576,211 | 416,881 | 72.35 |
| 2007 | 253 | 3 | 578,716 | 417,920 | 72.22 |
| 2008 | 253 | 0 | 583,754 | 422,853 | 72.44 |
| 2009 | 256 | 4 | 563,741 | 413,870 | 73.41 |
| 2010 | 260 | 5* | 565,776 | 413,780 | 73.13 |
| 2011 | 265 | 5 | 556,434 | 413,845 | 74.37 |
| 2012 | 266 | 1 | 572,962 | 425,784 | 74.31 |
| 2013 | 270 | 5* | 580,086 | 436,280 | 75.20 |
| 2014 | 273 | 3 | 573,904 | 429,254 | 74.80 |
| 2015 | 278 [#] | 5 [#] | 606,216 | 462,916 | 76.36 |
| 2016 | 281 | 4 | 597,206 | 459,693 | 76.97 |
| 2017 | 292 | 9 | 607,172 | 468,702 | 77.19 |
| 2018 | 300 [#] | 8 [#] | 616,014 | 481,308 [#] | 78.13 [#] |
| 2019 | 307 | 8* | 604,723 ⁺ | 472,302 | 78.10 ⁺ |

* Includes replacement of existing crematorium.

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⁽¹⁾ Includes Arncliffe Vale which closed in 1998.

[#] Adjusted figure

⁺ Provisional figures as of April 24, 2020



International Cremation Statistics

Information below based on data published by the Cremation Society of Great Britain • www.cremation.org.uk/statistics

| Country | Crematories | 2018 | | | 2019 | | |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | | Deaths | Cremations | % of deaths | Deaths | Cremations | % of deaths |
| Andorra | 1 | 250 | 165 | 66.00 | — | — | — |
| Argentina | 110 | 336,823 | 151,571* | 45.00* | — | — | — |
| Austria | 13 | 83,975 | — | — | 81,485 | — | — |
| Belgium | 19 | 110,645 | 67,252 | 60.78 | 108,745 | 67,768 | 62.32 |
| Canada | 367 | 285,474 | 202,145 | 70.8 | 285,173 | 205,988 | 72.2 |
| Czech Republic | 27 | 112,920 | 92,061 | 81.52 | 112,400 | 88,939 | 79.12 |
| Denmark | 20 | 55,232 | 46,340 | 83.90 | — | — | — |
| Finland | 20 | 54,295 | 29,038 | 53.48 | 53,559 | 30,733 | 57.38 |
| France | 185 | 610,000 | 232,577 | 38.13 | 612,000 | 238,762 | 39.01 |
| Germany | 159 | 960,000 | 643,200 | 67.00 | 936,591 | 646,248 | 69.00 |
| Ghana | 8 | 76,050 | 5,075 | 6.67 | 80,792 | 5,176 | 6.41 |
| Greece | 1 | — | — | — | 113,419 | 447 | 0.39 |
| Haiti | 3 | — | 176 | — | — | 167 | — |
| Hong Kong | 6 | 47,479 | 43,803 | 92.26 | 48,706 | 45,543 | 93.51 |
| Hungary | 17 | 133,675 | 85,818 | 64.20 | 129,600 | 86,702 | 66.90 |
| Iceland | 1 | 2,352 | 802 | 34.10 | 2,378 | 836 | 35.16 |
| Ireland | 7 | 31,116 | 6,583 | 21.16 | 31,134 | 7,063 | 22.69 |
| Italy | 79 | 633,133 | 183,146 | 28.93 | 634,432 | 194,669 | 30.68 |
| Japan | 1,405 | 1,405,209 | 1,404,737 | 99.97 | — | — | 99.97 |
| Lithuania | 1 | 3,804 | 39,835 | 9.55 | 38,378 | 4,902 | 12.77 |
| Luxembourg | 1 | 4,318 | 2,602 | 60.26 | 4,283 | 2,810 | 65.61 |
| Mongolia | 2 | 17,864 | 1,364 | 7.64 | 18,403 | 1,463 | 7.95 |
| Netherlands | 99 | 153,249 | 100,089 | 65.31 | 151,815 | 101,642 | 66.95 |
| New Zealand | — | 33,532 | — | 75.00 | 34,260* | — | 75.00* |
| Norway | 26 | 40,840 | 17,429 | 42.68 | 40,684 | 17,937 | 44.09 |
| Peru | 8 | 1,474 | 997 | 67.64 | 1,192 | 871 | 73.07 |
| Portugal | 20 | 7,976 | 3,872 | 48.55 | 6,447 | 3,706 | 57.48 |
| Romania | 4 | — | — | — | 263,463 | 1,314 | 0.50 |
| Russia | 27 | 1,828,910 | 220,000 | 12.03* | 1,798,307 | 273,563 | 15.21* |
| Serbia | 2 | 16,554 | 3,451 | 20.85 | 16,554 | 3,451 | 20.85 |
| Singapore | 4 | 20,874 | 16,808 | 80.52 | 21,385 | 17,245 | 80.64 |
| Slovenia | 2 | — | — | — | 20,485 | 17,188 | 83.91 |
| South Korea | 60 | 298,820 | 259,347 | 86.79 | 295,100 | 259,712 | 88.01 |
| Spain | 132 | 427,721 | 175,618 | 41.06 | 417,625* | 186,006 | 44.54* |
| Sweden | 58 | 92,185 | 75,669 | 82.10 | 88,601 | 73,497 | 82.95 |
| Switzerland | 29 | 66,654 | 54,842 | 82.28 | 67,307 | 57,746 | 85.79 |
| Thailand | 2,077 | 473,541 | 378,833 | 80.00 | 506,211 | 404,969 | 80.00 |
| United Kingdom | 307 | 616,014 | 481,308 | 78.13 | 604,723* | 472,302 | 78.10* |
| USA | 3,251 | 2,854,027 | 1,514,607 | 53.10 | 2,864,849 | 1,563,164 | 54.6 |

* provisional data

The following is a list of countries in which cremation facilities exist according to the Cremation Society of Great Britain.

| Country | # of crematories |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Aruba | 1 |
| Australia | 101 |
| Bahamas | 1 |
| Brazil | 43 |
| Bulgaria | 1 |
| China | 1,745 |
| Colombia | 18 |
| Costa Rica | 2 |
| Cuba | 9 |
| El Salvador | 1 |
| Estonia | 2 |
| Grenada | 1 |
| Guatemala | 1 |
| India | N/A |
| Indonesia | 7 |
| Jamaica | 2 |
| Latvia | 1 |
| Malaysia | 7 |
| Mauritius | 126 |
| Mexico | 70 |
| Namibia | 1 |
| Panama | 5 |
| Philippines | 2 |
| Poland | 52 |
| Puerto Rico | 3 |
| Slovak Republic | 3 |
| South Africa | 33 |
| Spain | 132 |
| Sri Lanka | 45 |
| Suriname | 2 |
| Taiwan | 38 |
| Trinidad & Tobago | 4 |
| Ukraine | 3 |
| United Arab Emirates | 1 |
| Vietnam | 2 |
| Zimbabwe | 2 |

Historical Cremation Data—United States and Canada

| YEAR | UNITED STATES | | | CANADA | | |
|---------|---------------|------------|-------|---------|------------|-------|
| | Deaths | Cremations | % | Deaths | Cremations | % |
| 1876-84 | | 28 | | | | |
| 1885-89 | | 724 | | | | |
| 1890-94 | | 2,897 | | | | |
| 1895-99 | | 7,189 | | | | |
| 1900 | | 2,363 | | | | |
| 1901 | | 2,713 | | | | |
| 1902 | | 3,200 | | | 3 | |
| 1903 | | 3,532 | | | 6 | |
| 1904 | | 4,093 | | | 16 | |
| 1905 | | 4,328 | | | 19 | |
| 1906 | | 4,537 | | | 19 | |
| 1907 | | 5,436 | | | 27 | |
| 1908 | | 6,152 | | | 52 | |
| 1909 | | 5,690 | | | 88 | |
| 1910 | | 6,466 | | | 97 | |
| 1911 | | 7,524 | | | 74 | |
| 1912 | | 9,109 | | | 71 | |
| 1913 | | 10,183 | | | 64 | |
| 1914-18 | | 65,571 | | | N/A | |
| 1919-21 | | 40,568 | | | N/A | |
| 1922 | | 15,563 | | 106,100 | 141 | 0.13% |
| 1923 | | 16,516 | | 108,900 | 152 | 0.14% |
| 1924-28 | | 101,467 | | 538,700 | N/A | |
| 1929-33 | | 142,346 | | 553,100 | 3,044 | 0.55% |
| 1934-38 | 7,100,000 | 182,054 | 2.56% | 554,800 | 4,160 | 0.75% |
| 1939-43 | 7,048,000 | 226,227 | 3.21% | 586,000 | 6,319 | 1.08% |
| 1944-48 | 7,098,000 | 264,002 | 3.72% | 601,000 | 8,375 | 1.39% |
| 1949-53 | 7,393,000 | 299,202 | 4.05% | 628,800 | 12,225 | 1.94% |
| 1954 | 1,481,000 | N/A | N/A | 124,900 | N/A | N/A |
| 1955 | 1,529,000 | N/A | N/A | 128,500 | N/A | N/A |
| 1956 | 1,564,000 | N/A | N/A | 132,000 | N/A | N/A |
| 1957 | 1,633,000 | N/A | N/A | 136,600 | N/A | N/A |
| 1958 | 1,648,000 | 58,760 | 3.57% | 135,200 | 3,724 | 2.75% |
| 1959 | 1,657,000 | 59,376 | 3.58% | 139,900 | 4,096 | 2.93% |
| 1960 | 1,712,000 | 60,987 | 3.56% | 139,700 | 4,537 | 3.25% |
| 1961 | 1,702,000 | 61,595 | 3.62% | 141,000 | 4,891 | 3.47% |
| 1962 | 1,757,000 | 63,435 | 3.61% | 143,700 | 5,138 | 3.58% |
| 1963 | 1,814,000 | 67,330 | 3.71% | 147,400 | 5,792 | 3.93% |
| 1964 | 1,798,000 | 67,658 | 3.76% | 145,900 | 6,382 | 4.37% |
| 1965 | 1,828,000 | 70,796 | 3.87% | 148,900 | 6,906 | 4.64% |
| 1966 | 1,863,000 | 73,339 | 3.94% | 149,900 | 7,388 | 4.93% |
| 1967 | 1,851,000 | 77,375 | 4.18% | 150,300 | 7,991 | 5.32% |
| 1968 | 1,930,000 | 83,977 | 4.35% | 153,200 | 8,081 | 5.27% |
| 1969 | 1,922,000 | 85,683 | 4.46% | 154,500 | 8,408 | 5.44% |
| 1970 | 1,921,000 | 88,096 | 4.59% | 156,000 | 9,188 | 5.89% |
| 1971 | 1,928,000 | 92,251 | 4.78% | 157,300 | 9,406 | 5.98% |
| 1972 | 1,964,000 | 97,067 | 4.94% | 162,400 | 11,717 | 7.21% |

| | UNITED STATES | | | CANADA | | |
|------|---------------|------------|--------|---------|------------|--------|
| YEAR | Deaths | Cremations | % | Deaths | Cremations | % |
| 1973 | 1,973,000 | 112,298 | 5.69% | 164,000 | 15,880 | 9.68% |
| 1974 | 1,934,400 | 119,480 | 6.18% | 166,800 | 17,415 | 10.44% |
| 1975 | 1,892,900 | 123,918 | 6.55% | 167,400 | 20,694 | 12.36% |
| 1976 | 1,910,900 | 140,052 | 7.33% | 171,000 | 22,615 | 13.23% |
| 1977 | 1,902,100 | 145,733 | 7.66% | 167,500 | 24,713 | 14.75% |
| 1978 | 1,924,100 | 163,260 | 8.49% | 171,000 | 28,456 | 16.64% |
| 1979 | 1,905,000 | 179,393 | 9.42% | 170,600 | 30,274 | 17.75% |
| 1980 | 1,989,841 | 193,343 | 9.72% | 172,000 | 32,423 | 18.85% |
| 1981 | 1,977,981 | 217,770 | 11.01% | 173,000 | 34,884 | 20.16% |
| 1982 | 1,974,797 | 232,789 | 11.79% | 183,700 | 37,222 | 20.26% |
| 1983 | 2,019,201 | 249,182 | 12.34% | 184,000 | 41,887 | 22.76% |
| 1984 | 2,039,369 | 266,441 | 13.06% | 185,500 | 44,630 | 24.06% |
| 1985 | 2,086,440 | 289,091 | 13.86% | 190,500 | 49,216 | 25.84% |
| 1986 | 2,105,361 | 300,587 | 14.28% | 195,000 | 54,482 | 27.94% |
| 1987 | 2,123,323 | 323,371 | 15.23% | 197,000 | 53,867 | 27.34% |
| 1988 | 2,167,999 | 332,183 | 15.32% | 186,600 | 57,568 | 30.85% |
| 1989 | 2,150,466 | 352,370 | 16.39% | 195,500 | 60,087 | 30.74% |
| 1990 | 2,148,463 | 367,975 | 17.13% | 193,000 | 62,797 | 32.54% |
| 1991 | 2,169,518 | 400,465 | 18.46% | 195,000 | 66,087 | 33.89% |
| 1992 | 2,175,613 | 415,966 | 19.12% | 185,211 | 64,557 | 34.86% |
| 1993 | 2,268,553 | 448,532 | 19.77% | 193,557 | 70,017 | 36.17% |
| 1994 | 2,278,994 | 470,915 | 20.66% | 195,331 | 75,489 | 38.65% |
| 1995 | 2,312,132 | 488,224 | 21.11% | 210,545 | 79,206 | 37.62% |
| 1996 | 2,306,470 | 502,120 | 21.8% | 207,772 | 81,960 | 39.45% |
| 1997 | 2,308,077 | 533,773 | 23.1% | 209,395 | 85,196 | 40.69% |
| 1998 | 2,327,411 | 558,238 | 24.0% | 213,004 | 90,200 | 42.35% |
| 1999 | 2,417,619 | 599,691 | 24.8% | 219,836 | 101,454 | 46.15% |
| 2000 | 2,401,110 | 628,361 | 26.2% | 215,025 | 100,678 | 46.8% |
| 2001 | 2,412,954 | 652,773 | 27.1% | 223,729 | 105,570 | 47.2% |
| 2002 | 2,441,267 | 689,101 | 28.2% | 223,711 | 109,166 | 48.8% |
| 2003 | 2,444,539 | 724,444 | 29.6% | 226,267 | 114,562 | 50.6% |
| 2004 | 2,395,215 | 746,141 | 31.2% | 226,465 | 118,560 | 52.4% |
| 2005 | 2,441,404 | 790,483 | 32.4% | 230,252 | 123,990 | 53.8% |
| 2006 | 2,425,366 | 820,181 | 33.8% | 228,551 | 127,517 | 55.8% |
| 2007 | 2,420,487 | 832,816 | 34.4% | 235,513 | 133,358 | 56.6% |
| 2008 | 2,463,995 | 885,040 | 35.9% | 238,462 | 140,398 | 58.9% |
| 2009 | 2,436,004 | 933,422 | 38.3% | 238,436 | 144,230 | 60.5% |
| 2010 | 2,460,866 | 1,003,677 | 40.8% | 239,694 | 147,750 | 61.6% |
| 2011 | 2,511,959 | 1,060,517 | 42.2% | 244,025 | 154,097 | 63.1% |
| 2012 | 2,544,436 | 1,100,714 | 43.3% | 246,452 | 149,073 | 60.5% |
| 2013 | 2,599,567 | 1,174,218 | 45.2% | 247,638 | 158,327 | 63.9% |
| 2014 | 2,629,765 | 1,233,312 | 46.9% | 255,984 | 173,708 | 67.9% |
| 2015 | 2,719,174 | 1,320,820 | 48.6% | 261,596 | 176,945 | 67.6% |
| 2016 | 2,751,625 | 1,320,820 | 50.4% | 267,158 | 178,620 | 69.4% |
| 2017 | 2,827,389 | 1,462,137 | 51.7% | 277,967 | 195,518 | 70.3% |
| 2018 | 2,855,454 | 1,514,363 | 53.0% | 285,474 | 202,145 | 70.8% |
| 2019 | 2,864,849 | 1,563,164 | 54.6% | 285,173 | 205,988 | 72.2% |
| 2020 | 3,358,697 | 1,884,164 | 56.1% | 306,468 | 224,081 | 73.1% |

Please note: numbers from the years 1876 to 1913 in the report above have been updated based on research by CANA Historian Jason Ryan Engler. The E.P. Samson Pittsburgh data (1914) and the known number of cremations from the J.S. Cobb Massachusetts report (1901) have been merged to include previously missing statistics from the Baltimore Crematory.



Myth, Truth, and Uncertainties: A Preliminary Study Exploring Attrition Among New Funeral Service Professionals

by John B. Fritch, Ph.D., & Gary Steward Jr., Ph.D., for the ABFSE Research Task Force

In April 2019, the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) charged a Research Task Force with exploring the attrition of new funeral service professionals. The task force was prompted by the claims of some in the industry that 50% of new funeral service professionals leave the field within five years.

This claim surfaced as early as 2011 when Glenn Gould reported in the *Winter Chronicle* that a majority of survey respondents believed that 60% of mortuary science students will leave the profession within five years.

In addition, Daniel M. Isard stated in the June 2019 issue of *The Director*, “We don’t know the exact number of new graduates who survive more than five years, but most parties with which I have spoken believe the survival rate to be 50% at the end of five years.” In the same edition of *The Director*, Charles T. Bowman also posits the notion of a high attrition rate for newly employed professionals, but was quick to point out that the exact percentage is unknown. He suggests that the 50% attrition rate is the prevailing view among practitioners, but provides no empirical support.

Prompted by this concern, the task force was convened and began collecting data from ABFSE-accredited programs during the summer and fall of 2019. As data was received and analyzed, the information was reported to the full task force, and once the report was fully analyzed, the results were presented by Fritch and Steward during a Town Hall meeting of the American Board of Funeral Service Education in December 2020.

Design of the Project

The research team was immediately challenged with two related questions. First, how should we define attrition for this project? Second, what are the parameters or boundaries of a funeral service professional? There was vigorous discussion on both questions with ample examples that called into question prevailing beliefs among the task force members. For example, if a new graduate becomes a licensed funeral director and worked in a home for three years and later sold industry related goods to funeral homes full-time, should this person be counted as leaving the profession? Or, is a person who practices as a funeral director and later becomes a teacher or director (full time) of an ABFSE-accredited program still considered to be in the profession? These and many more examples illuminated the importance of defining attrition among new professionals.

What surfaced during the discussion were two opposing positions, both tenable but both with limitations. The narrow view holds that a new graduate who practices as a licensed funeral director or embalmer and leaves those respective career tracks should be counted in the attrition rate. The broader view espouses that one who pursues other opportunities in a funeral-

related industry should not be counted in the attrition rate, as long as it is considered industry related. While both perspectives have merit as well as limitations, the research team sided with the more narrow view and defined attrition for this project as follows: *A graduate of an accredited funeral service/mortuary science program that was licensed as a funeral director and/or embalmer and is no longer practicing as such in either a full-time or part-time capacity.*

An early draft of the survey was piloted by a handful of program directors from ABFSE-accredited schools. The survey was edited to account for the feedback from the pilot group. After several iterations, a final draft of the survey was sent electronically to 59 directors of ABFSE-accredited programs. The survey requested information about the graduates from the classes of 2010 through 2014. Information requested included: 1) number of graduates, 2) percentage of females/males, 3) number of graduates who became licensed funeral directors/embalmers, 4) number of graduates who remained in the profession as of fall 2019. In each major field there was an additional category labeled as “unknown.” In addition to the numerical responses, we added an important open-ended question. We asked each director to rank the top three reasons they believe recent graduates leave the career.

What We Found

After sending the survey to the directors of all 59 ABFSE programs, we were informed that one program had closed their doors, leaving a total of 58 programs to garner responses. We immediately received correspondence from four program directors who informed us that they did not track such data and were unable to participate. Of the remaining 54 programs, the task force received 27 responses (50% response rate). However, 10 of these submitted incomplete data. The task force decided to remove the incomplete responses from the evaluation. Seventeen programs provided complete data (31% of the ABSFE accredited programs).

The following information summarizes the findings from the completed survey:

- The 17 programs represent public and private institutions.
- The programs hail from 16 different states across the United States.
- There were a total of 2,292 graduates; of these graduates, it was unknown if 575 (25%) were still in the funeral service profession.
- Of the 1,717 remaining graduates, 481 students were no longer practicing as funeral directors/embalmers (28% attrition rate).
- Of the 1,717 remaining graduates, 945 are female (55%) and 772 are male (45%).
- Of the 481 graduates who were no longer in the profession, 308 were female (33%) and 173 were male (attrition rate is 33% and 22%, respectively).

The Underlying Causes of Attrition

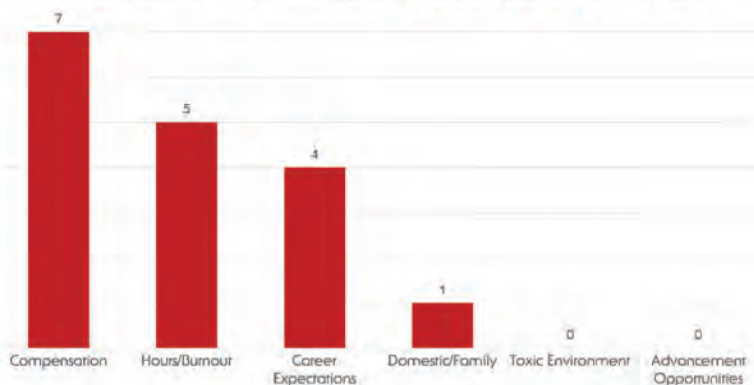
The survey included an open-ended question for program directors to list the top three reasons they believe new professionals leave the funeral industry. The question requested that each participant rank the causes based on frequency. Two

of the task force members reviewed the responses independently and afterwards collaborated to develop categories that captured the variegated responses. Six categories were developed: 1) Compensation, 2) Hours and burnout, 3) Domestic and/or family issues, 4) Toxic environment, 5) Expectations of the career, 6) No opportunity for advancement.

After defining each category, the researchers independently assigned each survey response to a corresponding category. Of the 51 items, two researchers only differed in categorizing three of the responses. In those cases, the researchers discussed the differences and agreed to assign the responses to a single category of best fit.

The chart below reveals the number of directors who indicated “the most frequent cause.” Compensation was considered the top cause of attrition by seven program directors (41%), followed by “hours and burnout” (29%), while four considered “career expectations” as the most frequent reason for attrition.

Chart 1 - Underlying Causes of Attrition



Another means of considering the relative strength of each cause is to depict the numerical value. As stated, program directors were asked to list the causes of departure from the profession in descending order, with “one” as the most frequent reason of attrition, followed by a “two” for the second most frequent reason for attrition, and finally a “three” representing the third most frequent reason for departure. In assigning a score to each of the six categories developed by the researchers, any “blank” category was assigned a “four” to ensure comparisons. This resulted in a numerical score in which the lower the number the more frequently that category was cited as the cause of departure from the profession. The rankings for each category are depicted in Chart 2.

Consistent with Chart 1, compensation was the lowest numerical value indicating the most frequent cause of departure from the profession (see Chart 2). There was a 13-point difference between each of the top three reasons: compensation (28), hours and burnout (41), and career expectations (54). On the other hand, there was only a four-point difference that spanned the final three categories, domestic/family (59), toxic environment (62), and opportunity for advancement (63). We argue that the clustering of the bottom three categories indicate the relative interchangeability of each cause. In other words, the difference between the fourth-ranked category and sixth-ranked category is

continued on page 26

a mere four points. These categories could have been rearranged by a different response from just one institution.

In addition, one might argue that “career expectations” (third rank) lies closer to the bottom three perceived causes than to the top-ranked cause of “compensation” or the second-ranked “hours and burnout.” What seems plausible to the researchers is the clustering of the top two reasons for attrition, while career expectations, domestic/family, toxic environment, and opportunity for advancement are separated by much less.

On a final note, “career expectations” was the third most cited reason by directors for attrition of new graduates. This was a surprise to the researchers, as four of the 17 participants listed this as their top reason. This suggests that the new graduate’s expectations of the career are misaligned with the reality of the profession. This is an area that funeral service educators can control in terms of presentation, curriculum, practicums or internships, etc.

Program Directors ranked reasons for attrition in order of priority, therefore lower point values represent a reason ranked number one most frequently.

Chart 2 Causes of Attrition Ranked

1. Compensation (28 points)
2. Hours and burnout (41 points)
3. Domestic and/or family issues (54 points)
4. Toxic environment (59 points)
5. Expectations of the career (62 points)
6. No opportunity for advancement (63 points)

Concluding Thoughts


To quote Bowman (2019), “We don’t know the exact number of new graduates who survive more than five years,” but we believe we have initiated a line of inquiry that ultimately will help us understand more clearly what the rate of attrition is in the funeral service profession as well as provide insight into possible reasons why people decide to leave the profession.

There are three important findings of this research that have implications for ABFSE-accredited programs and the future of the funeral service profession. First, many ABFSE-accredited programs do not track their graduates. While the reasons vary, it is extremely difficult to fully understand the phenomenon of attrition in the profession apart from a robust tracking system. We note two critical points in the tracking process: the number of students who are licensed and enter the profession after graduation, followed by the number of professionals who leave the industry after a defined period of time. We recognize that this requires resources by ABFSE programs as well as a standardized methodology for counting and reporting graduates in the field.

A second important finding of this research is an industry-wide conversation about compensation and hours/burnout, the top two reasons cited by directors for attrition among new professionals. While we suspect that the attrition rate among new professionals is lower than the prevailing belief of 50%, we argue that the results of the research should sound cause for alarm. As stated in the *Funeral Director Daily* on December 18, 2017, “Nothing will drive young people away from our industry faster than not compensating them on a comparable basis with

other industries... when you combine schedules that they don’t want with low salaries it will cause nothing but a shortage.” This also comports with Gould’s (2011) reasons for attrition, including low pay, long irregular hours, working conditions, insufficient benefits that are employer paid, no opportunity for advancement, and interns released from the funeral home after gaining their licenses. Although his study is ten years old, many of the same issues that he identified remain salient today. The industry must address these recurring problems in order to rectify attrition among new professionals. Funeral associations and related professional organizations can underscore and engage members in these important conversations and best practices. We suspect that increased compensation and better hours/schedules will actually lead to efficiencies and help to retain talented and dedicated new professionals.

A final takeaway from this study relates to the “expectations of the career.” As noted, nearly 25% of the participating institutions indicated that this was the top reason for the attrition rate among new professionals. This point may serve as a lesson to ABFSE-accredited programs. While there are many factors in the profession that lie outside of the influence of accredited programs, curriculum is one area that can be leveraged by directors. Tempering student expectations to align more closely to the current realities warrants consideration. Of course, we suspect that this occurs in many programs.

This project should be viewed as a starting point or preliminary research at best. A deeper understanding of the realities of the profession, attrition among new professionals, and program orientation is a promising beginning, but this conversation needs to continue to secure the authentic reality regarding attrition in the funeral service profession. 




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Gary Steward, Jr., holds a B.A. in Sociology from Central State University and a M.A. in Criminal Justice Management and Administration from the University of Central Oklahoma. He earned his doctoral degree (sociology) in 1999 from Oklahoma State University. Dr. Steward is the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO). His research interests

include death and dying, new religious movements, and collective behavior/social movements.



The Journey to Serve initiative features free tools and resources designed to recruit military veterans into positions throughout the funeral service profession.



Journey to Serve: Recruiting Military Veterans into the Funeral Service Profession

Recruiting capable, focused professionals into available funeral service and deathcare positions became easier today thanks to a landmark partnership between the Funeral Service Foundation and the ICCFA Educational Foundation. The organizations teamed up to launch the Journey to Serve initiative, designed to connect military veterans with careers throughout the funeral service profession.

Journey to Serve's purpose is twofold. The sweeping initiative—which was funded equally by both organizations and endorsed by NFDA and ICCFA—positions the funeral service profession as an ideal career path for military veterans to deploy the skills, traits, and talents acquired and earned during their tour of duty. At the same time, the initiative equips deathcare and funeral service professionals with free tools and resources specifically designed to engage with military veterans on a local, regional, national, and international scale.

“Military veterans embody the same strength of character that so often defines funeral service and deathcare professionals; connecting veterans with our mission-driven work was a natural fit,” said Foundation Chair Anthony Guerra and ICCFA Educational Foundation President Jim Price in a joint statement. “Finding and retaining skilled, reliable, and compassionate staff benefits the entire funeral service profession, and we knew that our organizations working together would create the synergy necessary to help get the job done.”

Free Tools and Resources

Curated with all funeral service and deathcare professionals in mind, the toolkit offers a variety of resources available for download, including customizable print and digital ads and customizable radio and podcast spots in :30 and :60 lengths. There is also a moving video explaining the natural fit between veterans and funeral service and testimonials from veterans already working in the funeral service profession. You'll find a social media post template, customizable flyers and postcards. The toolkit provides slide decks for use when speaking to veterans' groups, key messaging documents, FAQs, and a hyperlocal Facebook marketing campaign option, which can be

used to recruit veterans in your area for specific positions with the help of an experienced social media team.


Academic Scholarships

The Funeral Service Foundation and the ICCFA Educational Foundation will also award two \$5,000 academic scholarships to military veterans to help offset the costs associated with pursuing a career in funeral service and deathcare. The annual scholarships are equally funded by both organizations. A third scholarship, the Hunter M. Harbeson Memorial Scholarship, will provide \$2,500 in academic support to a qualified veteran. All scholarship applications open in September 2021.

Virtual Kick-Off

Hundreds of funeral service professionals came together in April for a live virtual kick-off event hosted by Bob Arrington, founder and president of Arrington Funeral Directors in Jackson, Tennessee, and Jay Dodds, President/COO of Park Lawn Corporation, headquartered in Toronto. Lisa Rosser, CEO of The Value of a Veteran, delivered a keynote entitled “Regard, Recruit, Retain: 5 Reasons That Hiring Veterans Makes Good Business Sense—And How to Find Great Hires.” Jim Price and Funeral Service Foundation Executive Director Lee Wiensch shared the comprehensive resources, which are now available at JourneyToServe.com. Those interested may view the webinar on demand.

Canadian Roll-Out

The foundations are working with the Funeral Service Association of Canada (FSAC) to roll out Canadian-specific materials this summer. More information about the exciting joint initiative is forthcoming. 

To support the initiative, CANA will offer active service members and veterans a discount on Crematory Operations Certification Programs. Whether or not they are members of CANA, Canadian and US military members and veterans will receive a special rate of just \$195. Visit the CANA website for details: goCANA.org/COCP



Conventions are known for fun, intimacy, lots of food and drink, and networking centered around cremation. While the association has held these crucial conversations virtually since the pandemic began, nothing compares to the opportunity to connect face-to-face. During the challenges of 2020, CANA held a successful virtual convention attracting record-breaking numbers of attendees to what was the first of many events. This year, the association and its leadership see a path to connecting in-person safely.

Inspired by the enthusiasm of its members, CANA has decided to host the 103rd Annual Cremation Innovation Convention in-person this August at the Westin Seattle. To balance the need for safety with the need to connect, the 103rd Convention will be smaller and emphasize quality over quantity.

Within physical distancing requirements, the CANA Convention will feel like the familiar place that death care professionals gather to learn, network, and catch up with innovative solutions from exhibitors. “Recently, I was honored to serve on a panel at the national Casket and Funeral Supply Association of America in Indianapolis,” said CANA Executive Director Barbara Kemmis. “We met in person, ate a meal together, even shook hands, hugged while masked, and took a selfie. There were some negotiations about vaccine status and comfort level wearing masks, but overall it was remarkably familiar and comfortable. CANA is listening and learning about what death care professionals need as we plan the 103rd CANA Annual Innovation Convention in August in Seattle.”

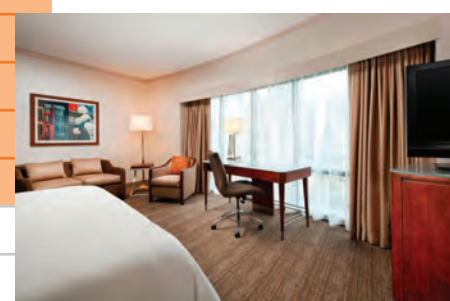
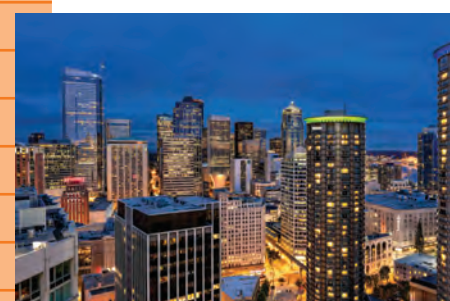
CANA is building a convention for those who want to come, but the association knows it’s not right for everyone. A decision to travel involves more than judging whether time away from family or business is feasible—there are other risks and benefits to calculate while considering the shifting restrictions to protect everyone’s safety. But, like every funeral, cremation, and cemetery business throughout this pandemic, CANA will find a way forward that meets the needs of registrants and complies with safety guidelines. As we plan this convention, health and safety guidelines will continue to evolve and we’ll adapt our planning to meet these changes. We appreciate your patience and support as we prepare to gather in-person again.

Seattle offers opportunities to explore the outdoors with three national parks within a day trip, the famous open-air Pike Place Market, beautiful vistas from the Space Needle, and other walkable city sights.

Learn more and register: goCANA.org/CANA21



| WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11 | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 8:00am – 4:30pm | Exhibitor set up (12:30-4:30pm) | In Person COCP (8am-4pm) | |
| 5:00pm – 7:00pm | | Meet 'n Greet: Reconnecting with Partners (bars open, hors d'oeuvres served) | |
| THURSDAY, AUGUST 12 | | | |
| 7:00am – 7:45am | Visit with exhibitors | Breakfast | |
| 7:50am – 8:00am | | Convention Open | |
| 8:00am – 8:30am | | Opening Session | |
| 8:30am – 9:00am | | Supplier Showcase (exhibitor introductions from the stage) | |
| 9:00am – 9:30am | | Membership Meeting In Memoriam | |
| 9:30am – 10:00am | | Visit with exhibitors | |
| 10:00am – 11:00am | | Session | |
| 11:00am – 12:00pm | | Session | |
| 12:00pm – 1:00pm | | Lunch | |
| 1:00pm – 2:00pm | | Session | |
| 2:00pm – 3:00pm | Exhibitor Appointments | | |
| 3:00pm – 3:30pm | Visit with exhibitors | | Bars open, hors d'oeuvres served |
| 3:30pm – 4:30pm | | Session | |
| 4:30pm – 5:00pm | Visit with exhibitors | Prizes awarded @ 4:50pm | |
| 5:00pm | Exhibitor tear down | | |
| FRIDAY, AUGUST 13 | | | |
| 7:00am – 8:00am | | Breakfast | |
| 8:00am – 9:30am | | Panel Session | |
| 9:30am – 10:00am | | Coffee Break | |
| 10:00am – 11:00am | | Session | |
| 11:00am – 12:00pm | | Session | |
| 12:30pm – 3:30pm | Possible Facility Tour | | |



| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | EXHIBITOR ZONE | | EATING/LEARNING ZONE |
|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|

A NOTE ABOUT ZONES: All participants will be required to wear a mask unless seated at a table and actively eating or drinking. In order to comply with this and other state, local and hotel safety regulations, convention activities will take place in designated zones. (We recognize that guidelines surrounding masks are changing. As state, local and hotel guidelines change we will update our guidelines. Check the Health & Safety section of the convention website for the most up-to-date information.) The exhibit zone is where you'll be able to reconnect with your supplier partners by visiting their exhibit tables and attending scheduled exhibitor appointments. Presentations and meals will occur in the eating and learning zone, and this is where you can sit at a table and remove your mask to eat or drink.

Mark your calendars for CANA's 103rd Cremation Innovation Convention and keep your eye out for details about what CANA is doing to be both fun and safe. Registration is open for attendees and suppliers with limited registrations available. Visit goCANA.org/CANA21 to learn more.



CREMATION



Member Spotlight:

Dr. C. Lynn Gibson • Cremation By Grandview

Above: Threshold entrance to the Grandview Legacy Trail.

Q: Please provide a little detail about your company.

Cremation By Grandview is a sister company of Smith Life & Legacy, an organization that began as a simple funeral home in 1962 with a focus on traditional burial, but now provides multiple professional resources and services including a community cemetery, two funeral homes, crematory, pet services, florist, and event center facilities. We currently employ over forty professionals and have four Managing Partners: Lynn Gibson, Lisa Gibson, Jason Chambers, and Justin Chambers.

Cremation By Grandview is located on the campus of Grandview Cemetery in Maryville, Tennessee, where Becky Gabehart, Certified Crematory Operator, is the licensed Funeral Director in Charge (FDIC). Cremation By Grandview was started in 2012 to respond to our community's growing interest in cremation services without the added cost of traditional funeral ceremonies.

Q: What is your area of expertise?

The focus of Cremation By Grandview is to provide simple, respectful, and affordable cremation services to our community. By "simple," we emphasize that arrangements can be made in person, over the phone, or online through our website. By "respectful," our intent is to provide our client-families not only compassionate cremation services, but also meaningful options for a final place of remembrance in our beautiful cemetery – an important connection point many funeral homes miss with cremation families. By "affordable," we promote our expertise of eliminating costly (and unneeded) overhead and pass the savings directly on to client-families.

My professional focus in recent years has been adopting and implementing a Nurturing Care paradigm across all of our deathcare divisions, including Cremation By Grandview. We

retooled our emphasis in recent years to promote a more flexible framework for service offerings to client-families, meeting them where they are in their deathcare needs. By applying universal principles of bereavement caregiving, our Nurturing Care approach emphasizes a funeral director's comforting presence and professional guidance that solidifies support and healing.

Q: How has the business grown and changed since its founding?

Our Managing Partners and their children now represent four generations since we first began in 1962. Our fathers and grandfathers were all hired by Mr. Leonard Smith, our founder, when he first opened our business to support local families in Blount County, Tennessee, with modern funeral facilities. Over the generations, we have grown our business model to include many additional areas of support, including a florist, pet companion burial services, venues for outdoor celebrations of life, an on-site state-of-the-art crematory, and even a grief support dog named Tuck (who has his own Instagram profile @tuckcomfortdog).

Q: What trends have you noticed that have aided the rise in cremation?

There are several key trends that have contributed to the rise of cremation in North America. Along with my colleague and friend Dr. Jason Troyer, we presented a seminar at the 2019 CANA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, entitled "Cemeteries are Dying: A Bold Response." In this educational seminar, we suggested that there are several emerging patterns evident in how we approach death today in the United States. Today's emerging ethos represents the broad changes in the way people think. To be sure, a growing number of people are 1) less formally religious; 2) not tied to traditional rituals; 3) geographically distant from where they were born; 4) more

economically committed to short-term priorities; and 5) open to new ideas and alternative ceremonies.

Q: What features have you added to meet the needs of the families you serve?

Our cemetery recently designed the Grandview Legacy Trail & Pavilion specifically to address the emerging trends in deathcare. Our hope is to meet the changing preferences of our community while at the same time, providing a quality of care that meets the universal needs of the bereaved. The big idea we want to communicate to our community is that cemeteries are not only sacred places where the deceased are remembered, but also where people can regularly engage in healing and meaningful experiences. Here are a few examples.

- As people are becoming less formally religious, we designed our Legacy Trail to include nonreligious yet meaningful features—such as our Reflection Booth, where a Christian, a Buddhist, or an agnostic can take a quiet moment for themselves and reflect on life—even write a letter to their loved one to express their grief, should they choose.
- Because of the growing geographic mobility of families, we are creating opportunities for meaningful connections at our cemetery through virtual experiences, too. Since people no longer live in the same town where their relatives are buried, we have recognized the need to foster meaningful connections by bringing the cemetery to them virtually, such as providing online visibility of grave memorials and driving directions to the exact GPS location of a gravesite. In the future, we want to add the ability to share one's history and story online through pictures and videos and even provide remote flower orders and delivery straight to a loved one's grave. Through our Cremation By Grandview funeral home, families can arrange and even prearrange online, including completing all of their required forms, identification, and payment.
- Given the economic constraints many families face, we want our cemetery's new Legacy Trail to provide affordable options for disposition, such as our Cremation Ossuary and Legacy Wall and our semi-private niche options. Other appealing features of our Legacy Trail include in-ground niches that provide room for five (5) full-size urns, making efficient and cost-effective use of space for families not wanting traditional burial.
- What is important is that there are many creative options affordable for families today, and plenty of excellent designers out there to assist cemeterians who desire an upgrade or new initiative idea for their cemetery. For example, Gerardo Garcia and his amazing team from Columbian By Design worked with us at Grandview every step of the way, from initial concept design to turn-key completion, helping us bring our Legacy Trail development to full fruition. When launching a new creative project, professional collaboration is a must.
- We intentionally placed our Legacy Trail next to our Grandview Pavilion—a modern, yet comfortable event facility design with picturesque views of the foothills



Above: (top) the Grandview Ossuary; (bottom) the Grandview Pavilion.

of the Great Smoky Mountains. This outdoor facility is perfect for all types of celebrations of life, including traditional committals as well as private cremation memorials and community events, such as death cafes, yoga, and concerts featuring local artists.

- Our Grandview Legacy Trail & Pavilion was also designed to create meaningful connections with our community by offering ongoing grief support. Partnering with the Center for Hope & Wellbeing, we are thrilled to offer our community the Healing Path®—a first of its kind. The Healing Path® is a self-guided and interactive series of stations situated along the Legacy Trail that is designed to help people who still need more support through their grief journey. After people enter our beautiful threshold entrance to the Legacy Trail, they can pick up a copy of our Healing Path® Field Guide to make use of the numerous grief resources and activities we have provided that will help them explore their thoughts and feelings and find the support and healing they may need while walking along the trail's pathway.

Q: What are some of the issues facing your company for the future?

One of the areas that has been growing in our community is the demand not only for low-cost cremation services, but also for no-ceremony offerings. Sometimes it is a family from out of state who needs us to care for their loved one and return the cremated remains to them. In other cases, families have decided to forgo traditional ceremonies and use of licensed funeral directors and plan on hosting a memorial service on their own. While we hope that families will continue honoring their loved ones and secure comforting support from their family and friends even without

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Above (l to r): Becky Gabehart, Dr. Gibson, and Raphen LaJuett.

our professional assistance, we do worry that families are not giving themselves adequate space to mourn and lament their loss.

Cremation By Grandview provides opportunities for families who choose a cremation without ceremonies to utilize our cemetery for a final place of rest. Even without formal funeral services, families still benefit from having a place to go to remember and reframe their lives without their loved ones. Though we have been told repeatedly by grief researchers that human beings are surprisingly resilient when it comes to death and grief, we also understand that there remains a qualitative value of having a place to go and return again and again to not only honor the deceased's life, but also to honor how our own stories have been forever changed. Cemeteries are indeed still vital to a healthy community. Providing a "cremation without ceremonies" through Cremation By Grandview also means educating families about the importance of a permanent place where they can find comfort and search for meaning.

Q: How has CANA helped you and your business grow and be more competitive?

We have been active members of CANA for many years, largely because CANA helps us understand and develop good options for the families who call upon us for assistance when choosing cremation. CANA continues to be a leader in helping us think through the impact of cremation on deathcare. I believe that by participating in CANA's many opportunities for networking and learning, the funeral and deathcare professions are evolving to better address real community needs, literally across the globe.

Q: What do you think is the major issue facing the cremation industry today?


I am one part concerned and one part encouraged about the future in deathcare. As cremation rates continue to steadily rise, so is the growing awareness that cemeteries are not necessary. The reason for this, I truly believe, is that we are now in an unprecedented era of deritualization – the growing trend in the United States of a public openness to revise, replace, minimize the significance of, and even eliminate or avoid long-held traditional funerary rituals to assist in the adaptation of loss. I have written extensively about deritualization in my research with Stellenbosch University. In short, deritualization is a

significant interdisciplinary concern for all types of deathcare practitioners.

There has never been a time in human history where we have not disposed of our dead without pausing for some form of ritualization to help us find meaning, comfort, and healing. We actually do not know the collective effect on our society (and on us as individuals) if we gradually continue the course of choosing cremation (or burial) without any memorialization or rituals of support. Cremation is, of course, not the problem. Instead, my concern is providing quality support and care for families who experience a loss. This is why we at Cremation By Grandview work hard to educate families that cremation is not a final mode of disposition, but a means to prepare a deceased loved one's body for final disposition. In short, cemeteries still matter.

Though it is doubtful we will ever return to the traditional rituals of old in how we care for our dead and each other, we can, however, create new ritual forms of support, hope, and healing. The good news is that now may be the best time ever to be involved in deathcare—it has never been more challenging or more fulfilling to assist one another in finding meaning and hope in the realm of human loss. The future for funeral service and end-of-life caregivers is indeed wonderfully promising.

The great irony we've discovered is that the key to our shared future lies buried, like some ancient treasure, in what is being too often ignored, if not forgotten altogether . . . the intrinsic value of cemeteries. As funeral professionals searching everywhere for any insights that may help us in our important work with bereaved families, we have found that true timeless wisdom abounds in perhaps one of the most surprising places of all—the old cemetery.

These dedicated spaces and sacred grounds are available in all our communities and are ripe with possibilities for new ritual forms that can be packed with new meaning. The response to pervasive deritualization is creative reritualization, embedded right in our community cemeteries from long ago. It seems that the key to our future has been with us all along. And thankfully, with the help of CANA and its international reach, deathcare practitioners continue getting better at making the connection between cremation and meaningful memorialization. 



Dr. C. Lynn Gibson is a Managing Partner of Smith Life & Legacy, located in Maryville, Tennessee. Lynn is a Licensed Funeral Director, a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner, and a Certified Crematory Operator. He holds two doctorates in social research and pastoral care. As a writer and speaker, Lynn contributes to several international organizations, including the Cremation Association of North America, the National

Funeral Directors Association, and the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association. Lynn currently serves as a Research Associate for Stellenbosch University in South Africa. He is also the Co-Founder of the Center for Hope and Wellbeing.

Foundation Partners Group Teams Up with American Forests to Plant 50,000 Trees in Honor of National Funeral Director and Mortician Recognition Day



Foundation Partners Group, one of the industry's most innovative providers of end-of-life experiences and products, announced a new partnership with American Forests, the oldest national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States, to plant more than 50,000 trees in honor of the tireless efforts of its team of funeral service professionals who have helped families through the pain and loss of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The March 11 announcement marked National Funeral Director and Mortician Recognition Day, a day set aside by Congress in 2008 to "pay tribute to these funeral directors and morticians who, day in and day out, assist our Nation's families in their times of sadness and grief and help families mourn a death and celebrate a life."


The Foundation Partners' donation to American Forests will cover the cost of planting one tree for each family served by funeral directors and morticians at the company's nearly 160 funeral homes, cemeteries, and cremation centers in 20 states in 2020.

"Today is a day to show gratitude to our funeral directors, morticians and cemeterians, and to recognize the sacrifices they have made to serve families in new and creative ways during these unprecedented times," said Kent Robertson, Foundation Partners Group president. "So, today we plant trees to honor our team members and the families they served, and to represent new life where there was loss."

American Forests was founded in 1875 to create healthy and resilient forests, from cities to wilderness, that deliver essential benefits for climate, people, water and wildlife. It advances that mission through forestry innovation, place-based partnerships to plant and restore forests, and movement building.

Hunt for WWE Treasure Leads to CANA's Historian

WWE's Most Wanted Treasures is an American reality television series that premiered on A&E on April 18, 2021. The series involves World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) personalities traveling across the country searching for collectibles related to professional wrestling. In season 1, episode 2, The Undertaker (Mark Calaway) reunites with Kane (Glenn Jacobs, Mayor of Knox County, TN) to recount exclusive stories and search for their lost memorabilia, including the urn that was used against the Undertaker to launch Kane's career. They negotiate with CANA Historian Jason Engler and Genevieve Keeney, President of the National Museum of Funeral History, to trade items for the "Betrayal Urn" that was presented to Jason by the Undertaker's manager, Paul Bearer.

You can watch the complete episode here: <https://play.aetv.com/shows/wwes-most-wanted-treasures/season-1/episode-2>. 



Above, L to R: A. J. Francis with the "Betrayal Urn," Mark Calaway, Genevieve Keeney, and Jason Engler

ASD's Web Form WatchDog™ Feature Now Protecting Over 1,000 Funeral Home Websites



**Web Form
WatchDog™**

ASD – Answering Service for Directors recently recorded a new milestone. The company's award-winning Web Form WatchDog™ feature has now been added to more than 1,000

funeral home websites. ASD has also recently added advanced message screening technologies to this feature to filter out spam messages and ensure funeral professionals are only notified when an urgent need is communicated via their website.

Most funeral home websites have a "Contact Us" form instructing visitors to leave their information and reason for contacting. Funeral professionals would frequently overlook these messages because they were often sent to a single, generic email address that was not monitored 24/7. In 2018, ASD introduced the company's Web Form WatchDog™ feature to help funeral professionals become more responsive to submitted web forms.

With this feature, time-sensitive inquiries submitted through the firm's "Contact Us" form automatically generate an alert within ASD's notification system. This safety net ensures funeral home web queries are answered in a timely manner and are always sent to the designated on-call funeral director. ASD received the 2018 NFDA Members' Choice Award in recognition of the numerous benefits Web Form WatchDog™ offers to funeral homes. Since that time, this tool been activated on over 1,000 funeral home websites.

"We aim to be more than an answering service for our clients. Our goal here at ASD is to be a technology leader, assisting funeral professionals in managing all aspects of their funeral home's communication," says ASD Family-Member Owner and head of our Technology Team, Marty Czachor, Jr. "Right now, funeral directors are being pulled in so many different directions and may be overlooking some forms of communication. Our Web Form WatchDog™ gives funeral homes a second line of defense and gives directors added peace of mind, allowing them to provide an enhanced level of customer service to their website visitors without having to sacrifice personal convenience or efficiency."

For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

Wilbert Offers Companion Urn for Same-Sex Couples



A companion urn with an etching showing same-sex couples walking down a country path is now available from Wilbert

Funeral Services, Inc. to meet the desire of the LGBTQ community for an urn that is truly designed for them. Wilbert, in conjunction with urn supplier Mabrey Products, is offering the Together Again companion urn, a solid walnut urn featuring an intricate three-dimensional carving of two men or two women walking arm-in-arm in a beautiful pastoral setting. This expands the Companion Urn beyond the heterosexual couple that is also offered as a choice.

Wilbert recognized an unfulfilled market when they received a heartfelt plea for help from a couple of thirty-five years who were at a loss at finding a suitable urn representing their life together as a gay couple.

"We realized the need to expand our offering to all couples after an earnest conversation with these gentlemen who explained that not only were they unable to find an appropriate urn, but felt turned away by others they reached out to," said Mike Devaney, Merchandising Manager at Wilbert. "They told us that they were grateful to Wilbert for breaking through barriers and making life and love equal, no matter who you are."

The Wilbert Companion Urn can be found on Wilbert.com or ordered directly from WilbertDirect.com, an ecommerce website exclusively for funeral providers. You can also contact your local Wilbert representative for more information on this unique urn.

Carl Wackerle retires from NGL as Regional Vice President Sales



National Guardian Life Insurance Company (NGL) is pleased to announce the retirement of Carl Wackerle, NGL Regional Vice President Sales on April 13, 2021. Wackerle's experience in the industry spans two decades. He is a well-known and influential executive who has participated in many industry events and has been a popular speaker at national conventions and meetings.

"I have worked with Carl for many years, first as competitors and then as colleagues. The one thing I know without a doubt about Carl is that he is very passionate about what we do—helping families prepare to face one of the most difficult times of their lives. He will be missed by all of us at NGL and by our partners who he's worked closely for years," said John Baker, NGL Vice President Strategic Partner Development.

"It has been a privilege to work for NGL during the past 20 years and be a part of the phenomenal growth of our Preneed line of business over that time. When this journey started, we were basically a two or three state regional player and over time NGL grew to be one of the largest providers of Preneed products in the marketplace. I am proud to have played at least some part in that story during my tenure," said Wackerle.

Wackerle joined NGL as the company entered the Preneed space and has been an integral part of the growth of NGL's Preneed product line of business. He is an expert in AssetGuard, NGL's

product that helps clients transfer and/or protect their assets while setting aside funds to cover final expenses. His expertise helped NGL become a market leader in this rapidly growing product area.

"I had the pleasure of working with Carl for several years in the marketing department. His knowledge of the industry and support in the creation of training and marketing materials were such an important piece to our success. He will forever be "the voice" in my mind, with the professional and entertaining way he recorded all our training presentations. It was a pleasure working with Carl and I wish him a great time in his retirement," said Jessica Grann, NGL Vice President Chief Culture and Communications Officer.

"Carl's professionalism and dedication to the industry and to the families who rely on the valuable services provided is an inspiration to all who have had the pleasure of working alongside him," said Jennifer Kaset, NGL Regional Vice President Sales.

Crowne Vault Introduces New Memorial Accent Collection



At a time when many families are still struggling to share life events in a safe and personal way, the death care industry is creating new solutions to meet that need. It's in this spirit that Crowne Vault—home of the modern burial urn vault—has created a special assortment of custom urn vault

accessories: the Memorial Accent Collection.

This exciting new collection features custom engraved nameplates and handmade rose garland. The nameplates are created from a specialty acrylic material with an adhesive backing. The flexible material is ideal for display on the vault sides as well as curving around the vault dome lid. Available in metallic Gold, Rose Gold & Silver as well as Celestial Blue and Black, customers can choose from 4 fonts for their engraved personalization. The rose garland is crafted with silk flowers and bead spacers, and is sized to crown the Regent and Marquis urn vault lids.

The new Memorial Accent Collection is the perfect way to ease first-time cremation families into the traditions and personalization available for End of Life celebrations.

For more information about ordering the Memorial Accent Collection, please call Crowne Vault at 866-763-0485 or visit www.crownevault.com.

Halcyon Death Care Management Solutions and Matthews Aurora Funeral Solutions Announce New System Integration

Halcyon Death Care Management Solutions and Matthews Aurora Funeral Solutions are pleased to announce an integration between Halcyon's management system and Matthews Aurora's Solution Center Catalog. This integration will allow funeral directors to access the Matthews Aurora Solution Center showroom directly

within the Halcyon arrangement screens. The products chosen via the Matthews Aurora Solution Center are automatically populated on the client's contract in Halcyon. Funeral arrangers will have the option to send their order to Matthews Aurora with a single click of a button when the contract information is saved.

This integration provides a streamlined process to view, select, customize, and order Matthews Aurora products without ever leaving the arrangement. It also keeps the latest product and pricing information in Halcyon synchronized with the master pricing and product information in the Matthews Aurora Solution Center. No more worrying that a

product with an out-of-date price or cost has been entered on a contract. This combined offering creates efficiencies by eliminating the need for double entry, logging in to multiple websites, and the requirement to call in, fax, or log in to another website to place your orders.

Greg Rollings, the President and CEO of Rollings Funeral Service, remarked, "Several of our funeral homes have been using the integration for the past few months. It makes the selection and ordering process seamless and has surpassed my expectations."

Sara Gard, President of Halcyon, said, "We are very excited to be bringing this new tool to our customers to help them run their operation more efficiently and seamlessly at no additional cost to them. It's another example of how our awesome in-house developers continually work to improve our products. The Matthews Aurora team was a great partner in this joint effort."

Marty Strohofer, Vice President of Marketing and Product Development at Matthews Aurora, added, "We continue to focus on delivering the finest digital merchandising tools that help our funeral home clients educate families about our products and simplify families' selection experience. This integration with Halcyon is a great advantage to our joint customers."

For more information, visit www.halcyondcms.com. 

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Cape Cod Community College's Funeral Service Program Receives Accreditation from American Board of Funeral Service Education



Powerful Futures Start Here

Nearly three years after taking on the Funeral Service program from Mount Ida College after their sudden closing, Cape Cod Community College (4Cs) has received accreditation

from the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE). This makes Cape Cod Community College the only public institution with an accredited Funeral Service Program in New England accredited by ABFSE, the premiere agency in the field.

On April 6, 2018, the leadership in the Funeral Service program at Mount Ida received the news that their college would be shuttering their doors, leaving the historic program with an uncertain future. Just four days later, Cape Cod Community College President John Cox and Dean Patrick Preston traveled to Mount Ida and started the process of building an academic "teach out" plan to make the existing students whole and bring the program to 4Cs.

Over the course of just a few months, Cape Cod Community College built out a one-of-a-kind Funeral Service laboratory and learning space on the campus of nearby Bridgewater State University (BSU), allowing students to live on campus so they could finish their degree in the teach-out program accredited by ABFSE. In January 2019, the displaced Mount Ida students were pinned as graduates of Cape Cod Community College. In Fall 2019, the first full cohort of new students started at 4Cs, taking their classes at BSU.

"It really is staggering to think how fast we went from meeting with the students displaced from Mount Ida, to becoming the only accredited ABFSE Funeral Service program in a public college in New England," said President John Cox, "We knew at the outset how important and historic this program is, and how critical it is to the communities we serve. Our Funeral Service practitioners play an immensely important role in our lives providing dignified death care experiences, and they need and deserve a world-class education. We are immensely proud of our Funeral Service students and graduates, our academic leadership in the program, and our program advisors from the Funeral Service and support professions who have helped us get here today."

The Funeral Service program at 4Cs has a storied history in New England. Originally starting with industry pioneer A. Johnson Dodge in 1907 in West Roxbury, MA, the program made its original home in Boston's Kenmore Square before moving to Mount Ida College in 1989. Historic materials and equipment from the Dodge family are still on display today at 4Cs Funeral Service lab space.

"It is worth noting that going from teach out to full accreditation in less than three years is not a common occurrence," said Arlene Rodriguez, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs for Cape Cod Community College. "This historic moment is thanks

in large part to the academic leadership in Funeral Service Program Coordinator Dan Shea and Professor Jeff Megna. Dan and Jeff came to us from Mount Ida and their expertise, knowledge, and hard work have been critical to our success. We are grateful for bringing our program to prominence in New England. Our students are fortunate to have them."

The first full cohort of 4Cs Funeral Service students will be celebrating their graduation during next month's Virtual Commencement ceremony on May 27, 2021. Registration is open now for the next cohort starting September 2021 on the Bridgewater State University campus. For more information about the Funeral Service program email Dan Shea at dshea@capecod.edu.

Selected Educational Trust Announces New Sponsor for Scholarship Program



The Selected Educational Trust is pleased to announce that Ring Ring Marketing has graciously offered to sponsor the entire Second-Career Scholarship Program for 2021!

"We are so deeply grateful to Ring Ring Marketing for their generous support of this program," said Bea Pedersen, Executive Director of the Selected Educational Trust. "The Trust has been privileged to have awarded 45 second-career scholarships totaling \$63,500 to Mortuary Science students who have chosen to enter this time-honored profession as a second career! Without the support of our generous donors and sponsors such as Ring Ring Marketing, these scholarships would not be possible."

The Second-Career Scholarship Program is designed exclusively for individuals who aspire to work as a funeral director as a second career. Scholarships are awarded in June and December of each year. The application deadline for the spring cycle is May 31. For eligibility requirements and to apply for a scholarship, go to <https://www.selectedtrust.org/second-career-scholarship>.

Selected Educational Trust's mission is to provide the best educational opportunities for the advancement and support of all who work within the independent funeral service profession. To fulfill this mission, the Trust provides programs that offer scholarships to mortuary science students and funeral service professionals, education programs that bridge the gap between school and on-the-job training through its Institute for Exceptional Funeral Service, and networking and employment opportunities through its Workforce Development Centers.

Ring Ring Marketing provides comprehensive online marketing solutions for funeral homes. RRM clients benefit from our mastery in both technology and marketing.

Virtual Workshop on Becoming the Go-to Funeral Home for Veterans

Having trouble working with veterans and their families because you don't know how to "speak military"? Veterans Funeral Care

and the Order of the Golden Rule are partnering together to help funeral homes across the nation understand how to reach this important group and their specialized needs.

In a two-part virtual workshop June 8 and 9, noted veterans funeral expert Jim Rudolph of Veterans Funeral Care will explain how understanding ranking, military culture, and other demographics will equip you and your staff to serve veterans better than your competitors. From a military ranks cheat sheet to examples of community outreach programs that will help you connect with the veterans in your area, Rudolph will provide an entire toolkit to every attendee.

"Some funeral directors think all it takes is to put up an American flag every morning, and the job is done," Rudolph said. "That flag is the starting point; we are going to go way, way beyond that during these presentations."

You'll also learn how to train your staff to read and decode DD 214 paperwork and communicate to families all the benefits for which veterans are eligible. By the end of this training, you'll walk away with highly effective tools to honor and connect with veterans.

The workshops are scheduled for 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. EDT each day. Can't make it at that time? Both sessions will be recorded and made available on-demand afterward.

Reasonably priced at \$175 each or \$299 for both, this is a can't-miss opportunity. Discounted rates are available to OGR members. Attendance at both workshops may allow your funeral home to join the Veterans Funeral Care Provider Network, an exclusive opportunity for more marketing tools, training, and community programming.

To register or learn more, visit OGR.org/VFC, or call Nancy Weil at (800) 637-8030, ext. 304.

Scholarship Program for Connecticut High School Seniors Pursuing a Funeral Director Career

All Connecticut high school seniors pursuing careers as funeral directors now can apply for scholarship funds from the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA). The statewide professional organization will award three (3) graduating high school seniors with \$500 in scholarship funds to be used toward their education and professional training. Applications must be submitted by June 15, 2021.

"Members of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association know the importance of helping families and individuals during what can be the most difficult of times, and we encourage and support young women and men interested in providing this important care and service," explains David W. MacDonald, CFSP, CPC, CCO, a licensed funeral director and President of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association. "Our objective is to ensure that there will continue to be qualified professionally educated and trained individuals to serve families and individuals in the future."


All funeral directors/embalmers in the State of Connecticut are licensed. The licensure requirements include a degree in mortuary science or funeral service from an accredited college

or university, successful completion of the National Conference Board Examination, and a one-year apprenticeship under the direct supervision of a licensed funeral director/embalmer. The Connecticut Funeral Directors Association works closely with the Funeral Service Program at East Hartford's Goodwin University. CFDA members offer professional guidance and career opportunities for the school's students and faculty.

To be eligible for the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association's scholarship award for high school seniors pursuing careers in funeral service, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a high school senior who will graduate in June 2021;
- Be a legal resident of the State of Connecticut;
- Be pursuing a career as a funeral director; and
- Have maintained at least a B grade point average in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

All candidates must submit the application form and a current high school transcript and an essay responding to the question: Why are You Pursuing a Career as a Funeral Director? The application form must be neat and legible, and filled out completely.

The deadline for applications for the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association's "Family Support Services Scholarship" program is TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2021. To download an application and get contest rules, go to www.ctfda.org. 



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Take Time Out With Your Peers

Join the inaugural meeting for Funeral Professionals Peer Support in the US. This meeting is open to anyone who serves their communities during some of their worst moments, providing care to the grieving. That includes staff from the front office to the back room, chapel to gravesite, suited to coveralls—and everyone in-between. All are invited to share personal experiences and connect with people who understand what you experience everyday.

Open to everyone across North America—no registration is required to attend. Simply mark your calendar and follow the Zoom link to access the meeting.

CANA is proud to host what is hopefully the first of many of these meetings, but our staff will not be attending so you'll have space to talk to your peers and share. You do not need to be a CANA Member to participate. Because this is a time to simply connect with others, no CE is available.


Peer support is provided by peers, for peers. Founded on key principles such as respect and shared responsibility, it's a group of individuals with similar experiences who encourage and assist each other. Everyone is expected to treat others with care and understanding. Everyone will be given space to share their story, but no one will be "called on," because respectful listening can also be beneficial.

Anonymity is respected: attendees are asked to share just their first name or initial when they log in. Participants will keep the information shared in the group confidential and the event will not be recorded. Cameras and microphones are not required to be on during the meeting.

Peer Support Meeting, Tuesday, June 22, 2021
8pm ET / 7pm CT / 5pm PT.

Visit GoCANA.org/selfcare for details and specific Zoom links.

Don't Miss Out on the Updates!

Some members have indicated that their CANA Update and other email communications from CANA have been going to spam. If you haven't heard from CANA in a while by email, please add Info@CremationAssociation.org to your email contact list to train your spam filters. 

Ballhorn Chapels Funeral & Cremation Care Center
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1201 N. 8th St.
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Desert Cremation Society
Alex Matthews
5416 Jillson St.
Commerce, CA 90040

Goes Funeral Care & Crematory, Inc.
Rachel Metzgar
3665 Canal Dr., Suite E
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Going Home Cremation & Funeral Care
Daniel Simons
519 Mabe Drive
Woodbine, MD 21797

Johnson Funeral Service
John Johnson
208 S Main St
Bridgewater, VA 22812

Joiner-Anderson Funeral Home & Crematory, Bulloch Memorial Gardens
Tracy Joiner
502 Miller St. Ext
Statesboro, GA 30458

Just Cremations Inc.
John Laureano
10011-166 Street
Edmonton AB T5P4Y2

Littleton & Rue Funeral Home and Crematory
Rob Rue
830 N. Limestone St.
Springfield, OH 45503

McArthur Cremation Service
Derrick McArthur
7009 Copper Sky Ct
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Peebles Fayette County Funeral Homes & Cremation Center
Michael Tilghman
18020 U.S. Highway 64
P.O. Box 250
Somerville, TN 38068

Qico Holdings Inc.
Jevon Truesdale
4660 La Jolla Village Dr., Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92122

RJ Slater IV Funeral Home & Cremation Service
Raymond Slater IV
1000 Freeport Road
New Kensington, PA 15068

Ruffner-Wakelin Funeral Homes
R. Todd Noecker CFSP
303 S Cortez
Prescott, AZ 86303

Serenity Funeral Home and Cremation Society
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1632 Sycamore View Road
Memphis, TN 38134-7310

Shannon Funeral Homes
Tammy Valenti
1015 14th Street W
Bradenton, FL 34205

SMART Cremation of Florida
11005-A U. S. Hwy. 301
Thonotosassa, FL 33592

SMART Cremation of Nevada
9708 Giles St Suite A-106
Las Vegas, NV 89183

Southeastern Kentucky Mortuary Service
Benny Gibson
40 Glenview Rd
London, KY 40741

StoneMor Inc
Bob Page
7217 Laramie River Dr
Fort Collins, CO 80525-4353

Trinity Funeral Home Ltd.
John Laureano
10530-116 Street NW
Edmonton AB T5H3L7

Zimmer Westview Funeral & Cremation Care Center
Fawn Schaefer
W2132 Garton Rd.
Howards Grove, WI 53083

Students

American Academy McAllister Institute - Hannah Bjornson - New York, NY

Arapahoe Community College
Tony Gilreath - South Jordan, UT

Commonwealth Institute Funeral Service - Kendal Wade - Fort Washington, MD

Fayetteville Technical Community College - Claudette Johnson - Roxboro, NC

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