



eNews

A monthly news update for the Wilbert Licensee Network

April 2021



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upcoming events

CANCELLED until April 10-13, 2022
WMA Regional Meeting
Gulf Shores, Alabama at the Lodge at Gulf State Park

May 17-21, 2021
International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association Annual Convention
Virtual

August 1-5, 2021
National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association Annual Convention
Grapevine, Texas at the Gaylord Hotel

August 11-13, 2021
CANA's 103rd Annual Cremation Innovation Convention
Seattle, Washington

September 19-24, 2021
Catholic Cemetery Conference Annual Convention
Miami, Florida at the Doral Hotel

October 17-20, 2021
National Funeral Directors Association Annual Convention
Nashville, Tennessee

Any Personnel Changes for the Directory or eNews Subscription?

Kindly report any changes in your Licensee information to Kelly Kubicz at kkubicz@wilbert.com or call Kelly at 708-865-1600 at your first opportunity when changes occur. Thank you!



We'd Like to Hear from YOU!

What have you found that works in your experience? Anything poignant or tastefully funny that you would like to share? Old photos of Wilbert products or employees from days gone by that would be interesting? Please email your stories to Ken Moore at kmoore@wilbert.com. If you're not comfortable writing, don't worry – he will be happy to help.



We encourage you to circulate this issue of eNews to others in your organization.

Wilbert Now Offers Same-Sex Couple Options for the Together Again Companion Urn

Coming Soon in May

In order to serve a broader and more diverse spectrum of our market Wilbert is proud to announce the P3024 Together Again Companion Urn is now available with same sex couple options.

This 3D solid walnut and oak urn features a couple walking down a country path. There will now be three versions –

P3024 - Male-Female Couple

P3024M – Male Couple

P3024F – Female Couple

Use this [fillable PDF](#) to send to your funeral home customers.



Wilbert Now Offers Same-Sex Couple Options for the Together Again Companion Urn

This is the story that culminated in designing a new urn for same-sex couples.



A gay couple in Victoria, British Columbia who have been together for 35 years wanted to complete their preneed funeral arrangements.

After calling several funeral homes and industry suppliers to inquire about an urn that would represent their relationship and life together, "one of true love and commitment," as they put it, they were turned away cold from every avenue. "We don't have what you want," was

the prevailing attitude.

They finally reached out to Wilbert after seeing the name prominently displayed in their Google search. At that time they were upset and frustrated, feeling disrespected. They spoke with administrative Assistant, Kelly Kubicz, who listened to their plight.

They had seen "Together Again," the 3D wooden companion urn carried by Wilbert that shows a man and woman walking down a country path. This was something that represented their love of nature and would give them a three dimensional representation of their love for each other after they passed. Initially, Kelly explained that the urn came from the manufacturer with the male-female couple, but said she would ask Mike Devaney, the Merchandising Manager, to contact the manufacturer about options.

Mike reached out to Doug Tobey at Mabrey Products, the manufacturer of the "Together Again" companion urn, and explained the situation and the emotional nature of the

Wilbert Now Offers Same-Sex Couple Options for the Together Again Companion Urn *(continued)*

couple's dilemma. Mike asked if Mabrey could design a male couple for the same urn.

Mabrey's artist came out of retirement to design a male couple to replace the male-female couple on the original "Together Again" urn. Since then, the artist has also designed a version with a female couple. There is nothing like this on the market today.

The finished urn was sent to the couple's funeral home in Victoria. The fact that Wilbert was willing to listen, not to mention work with their vendor to produce an urn, was perceived as an implausible feat.

The couple could not have been more thrilled to receive their personalized urn. Attached is one of their Facebook posts expressing their joy and deep gratitude for receiving the urn. Obviously, the strong social media impact of this message to their community is immeasurable. This is just one of many posts they made referencing Wilbert. They made a point in subsequent

posts to mention that anyone reaching out to a funeral home should make sure they carry Wilbert products. This clearly shows a strong emotional commitment to the product and supplier.

The couple's story was later picked up by Xtra Magazine, one of the world's leading LGBTQ2S+ online publications. Founded in Toronto in 1984 by Pink Triangle Press, Xtra is an award-winning digital magazine and community platform covering LGBT politics, culture, sex, relationships and health. The magazine interviewed the couple, Mike and Ivan, as well as Kelly Kubicz and Mike Devaney.

To further our understanding of the market, Wilbert is planning a comprehensive focus group from different geographical market segments specifically recruited from the LGBTQ community to determine cremation product needs and preferences. The goal is to design and source specific cremation products based on input from the participants.

WilbertEDU™ Updates



WilbertEDU is a success! Thanks to all of you and your outreach to funeral professionals, we have had record-breaking attendance

for our two March sessions. Based on feedback, attendees are enjoying and learning from the sessions as well as appreciating the convenience of obtaining CEUs without having to leave their homes. At this point we have additional sessions in development that would take us through July, so keep up your good outreach knowing that WilbertEDU is going strong! Of course, many of the WilbertEDU sessions will satisfy core requirements for most states.

This past month, Dan Welzenbach and Michael Nash presented "Back to Basics: Burial Vaults." Dan, the Executive VP of Operations for all internal licensees and Mike, the Director of Sales and Customer Support for Wilbert Funeral Services, talked about outer burial containers and burial vaults. Their presentation provided an overview of the manufacturing of outer burial containers and their role in the interment process. They even demonstrated the "Twinkie" test to demonstrate

what loads can do to an outer burial container in the subsoil environment. Additionally, they shared tips on merchandising information, especially virtually in the world of COVID and what can be done to personalize the graveside service through Treasured Tributes.

The WilbertEDU webinar series also welcomed Jon O'Hara of Great Lakes Partnership. His presentation "Connecting the Dots: How to Properly Network with Deathcare Influencers" showed how deathcare providers have an unprecedented opportunity to use both digital and traditional methods to connect with those in their community who have influence when a death occurs. Jon explored the do's and don'ts of networking and relationship-building with those who have influence over decisions when it is time to choose a funeral home or deathcare provider. For better or worse, hospice, clergy, estate attorneys, and social workers are just few professionals who are driving decisions in funeral service. Jon gave the audience some great ideas on how to approach and connect to influencers in the community.

If you have ideas on subjects or presenters for WilbertEDU, please feel free to reach out to Kathleen Berry at kberry@wilbert.com.

WilbertEDU™ Sessions



On April 8th, David Kessler is going to join the WilbertEDU platform talking about Death by Suicide.

Death by suicide is one of the most devastating losses a family can face. Old beliefs are being replaced by new information on mental illness and brain science. Tune in to listen as David shares helpful information on how to help families deal with the why of suicide as well as techniques to help families cope with the “what-ifs” and “if-onlys.” He will talk about how there are ways to test if consoling techniques will help after this type of loss as well as help us learn new ways to understand mental health. David Kessler is the world’s foremost expert on grief and loss. His experience with thousands of people on the edge of life and death has taught him the secrets to living a happy and fulfilled life, even after life’s tragedies. He is the author of six books, including the new bestselling book, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*. He coauthored two books with Elisabeth Kubler Ross, including *On Grief and Grieving* updated her 5 stages for grief. His first book, *The Needs of The Dying* received praise from Saint (Mother) Teresa.

Presenting on April 22nd, Wayne Stellmach of Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. will speak on “Better Communications with Families.” Currently a marketing consultant for Wilbert, many of you know Wayne from his time with Wilbert as Director of Marketing where he provided marketing and communications to the various Wilbert Group organizations. He also has written articles for funeral service publications and served on the boards of the International Memorialization Supply Association (IMSA) and the Funeral and Memorial Information Council (FAMIC), chairing the marketing committees of both. His presentation will outline the challenges of communicating with families during arrangement conferences, including the emotional state of families, distractions that are ever-present, and the different learning styles of family

members. This course presents research on families’ knowledge of OBCs, three basic learning styles that people have; how people evaluate major purchases, and how to engage and communicate with all the learning styles in the presentation of burial vault information.

May 6th, Mark Panciera, CEO and Partner of the Pacific Institute and fellow funeral professional, will present “Mindset Matters: The Performance Mindset for Funeral Professionals (By a Funeral Professional).” His dynamic presentation will provide proven insight to learning how your mindset impacts results, both positively and negatively. He will show you that your mindset also impacts the client-families you serve and how you can change it for the better. Mark will help uncover 'blind spots' that are holding you back and fix them so you can provide the best service and more.

Mark Panciera is an accomplished business owner, community leader, executive and entrepreneur. Applying his personal formula for professional success. Mark has distinguished himself as an advisor to a diversified group of clients in a variety of industries. As the CEO and Partner of The Pacific Institute, Mark focuses his efforts on driving the growth and performance of organizations, teams, and individuals, working with Fortune 1,000 companies, government agencies, healthcare systems, educational institutions, athletic teams, and non-profit organizations. Mark is very proud of his funeral service tradition as the owner of Boyd-Panciera Family Funeral Homes, led by his wife Tiffany and son Mark Anthony, the fourth-generation caregiver in the business.

Watch this corner for additional WilbertEDU webinars and take advantage of the WilbertEDU Licensee Resources page (www.wilbert.com/wilbertedu-resources) for collateral which you can use to promote WilbertEDU sessions to your customers. On this page you will be able to access recordings of previous presentations.

Last Responders in Their Own Words



COVID-19 has impacted everything, including funeral service. Kates-Boylston Publications invited death-care professionals to share their experiences with our readers.

Jerry Beyer
Professional/Public Relations Adviser
Wilbert Vault of Paducah, Kentucky & Southern Illinois
West Paducah, Kentucky

I transport COVID confirmed cases to our crematory. Amusing story ... an Illinois State Trooper stopped me when I was driving 78 in a 70 mph speed zone. I let the trooper view the red COVID sticker on the authorization form. He simply told me to get the hell down the roadway and slow down. It's been very trying for our Wilbert Vault companies as we have had a major increase in cremations and graveside services.

Several employees have tested positive, thereby placing an additional workload on available staff. Some funeral homes are having visitation at the gravesite, requiring our

staff to only be available for one service a day. Funeral directors are assisting by consulting or verifying with our staff prior to making final arrangements.

Not sure if all deaths are COVID-related or maybe it's the start of baby boomer deaths and/or a combination of both, as well as people who have delayed treatment for emergent conditions.

Funeral home staffs are true heroes in this COVID pandemic as they are literally working day and night under the most difficult conditions while assisting families to have meaningful services for their loved ones. May our Heavenly Father continue to watch over these special caregivers and bless them and their families.

I have been a licensed Kentucky funeral director since 1968.

What has COVID-19 taught you?

To use whatever type of PPE necessary to protect myself, my family and the general public. Also, how important it is for families to have closure with the death of their loved ones. Families are not able to be with their loved one in hospital settings, so the open casket viewing is so very important for that closure we all need. Delayed services will never make up for that community, family or church support that is such a vital part of the grieving therapy.

Wilbert Events Page

Reminding you that Wilbert.com has an events page that is available for you to share events that maybe happening in your neighborhood! Do you have something going on at your plant? in your city? how about your state convention? We are looking for events to add to the page and we are looking to you to share yours! Licensees can submit events, especially state convention information to info@wilbert.com for inclusion on the events page.

<https://www.wilbert.com/events/>



Check Out the Newly Launched Wilbert Funeral Services Facebook Page



You asked for it and we have answered with the creation of a new Facebook page for Wilbert Funeral Services! This Facebook page will be a resource for all funeral professionals to learn about new product announcements as well as hearing about the latest news and updates from Wilbert. This will be a great tool and resource for them to assist the families they serve every day.

NCBVA Graveside Recommendations

The nation is experiencing an unprecedented number of deaths, and the strain on the burial vault industry continues. NCBVA hopes you are healthy and well and endorses best practices to help mitigate the spread of COVID.

Current CDC considerations for gatherings are as follows:

- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and clean and disinfect them between use.
- Consider ways to significantly reduce the number of attendees.
- Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use masks at the event.

On May 21, 2020, NCBVA believed it was the appropriate time to safely reintroduce tents and chairs, assuming you were confident in your supply of disinfectant. In addition, the NCBVA continues to recommend the following best practices:

- Use gloves when setting up and handling equipment – grass, tents, chairs, lowering devices, dollies, etc.
- Properly sanitize and disinfect tent poles and sidewalls.
- Properly sanitize and disinfect chairs.
- Extend the discontinuation of chair covers and lap blankets unless you have a way to disinfect them.
- Extend the discontinuation of water cooler service.
- If you utilize disposable chair covers, make sure they

are disposed of properly and safely.

- Feel free to space chairs in pods for each family and use safe social distancing of 6' between the pods. For example, a family of four that lives in the same household may be seated together as long as they are 6' away from the next pod of family members.
- Consider an alternate tent/chair set up to allow 360° seating around the vault, if possible, to aid in social distancing.
- The vault crew should refrain from approaching the grave if two or more people are present. Workers should maintain social distancing of 6'.



Amended to include:

- Vault/cemetery crew and graveside attendees should bring and wear masks.

We realize everyone will do what they think is best for their company to meet the needs of their local area and the frequency that they are able to disinfect. This document serves as the NCBVA position and what we, as a unified voice representing all major brands, are recommending for the burial vault industry.

National Police Week

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the inability to secure the necessary permits for in person gatherings, the National Police Week in-person events will be held in Washington DC October 13-17, 2021. The in-person National Police Weekend in October will offer the same honor, remembrance, and peer support as National Police Week, while allowing law enforcement, survivors, and citizens to gather and pay homage to those who gave their lives in the line of duty. In addition to the in-person events in October, the virtual programs and several Memorial and Officer Safety & Wellness programs will still be held during Police Week in May, including the virtual Candlelight Vigil on May 13th. This October, Wilbert Funeral Services will honor the 491 Police First Responders that died in 2019 and 2020.

