



eNews

A monthly news update for the Wilbert Licensee Network

August 2021



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upcoming events

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

September 26-29, 2021

WMA Annual Meeting

Park City, Utah at the St. Regis Deer Valley

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.

Honoring COVID-19 First Responders



In March, 2020 as the world was learning about the rapidly spreading COVID-19 virus, Wilbert Funeral Services management team needed to make a decision on how we would recognize COVID-19 deaths of First Responders. The biggest challenge we faced was receiving a timely official determination of whether a death occurred by contracting the virus in the line of duty. In addition, the governing bodies of First Responders had not made an announcement on how they planned to recognize COVID-19 deaths. Therefore, we made the difficult decision not to provide a burial vault or cremation product for a First Responder COVID-19 death. Instead, we committed to making a future donation to an organization that benefits law enforcement, firefighters and EMS personnel. For all line-of-duty deaths not caused by COVID-19, our First Responder program continued its mission of helping families.

COVID-19 deaths reached a peak in January of 2021. At the same time vaccinations were offered to essential workers and people over 65 years old. Over the past

several months millions of Americans have been fully vaccinated which has led to a slowdown of COVID-19 deaths.

Recalling the commitment we made last year to honor the memory of First Responders dying from COVID-19, we are pleased to announce Wilbert has made a \$100,000 donation to the First Responders Children's Foundation (www.1strcf.org). The First Responders Children's Foundation provides financial support to children of first responders (police, fire, EMT) who have lost a parent in the line of duty as well as families enduring significant financial hardships due to tragic circumstances. First Responders Children's Foundation also supports, promotes, and facilitates educational activities and programs created and operated by law enforcement and firefighting organizations whose purpose is to benefit children or the community.

Thank you all for your continued support of Wilbert's First Responder program. Since 2012 the Wilbert network has honored 1,071 First Responders. Without your commitment and participation, the program would not exist.

Granite Choices Participants Share Their Latest Installations



This month we wanted to share two beautiful designs that were recently installed by our Granite Choices participants.

The 48-niche custom 6x4 two-sided Maple and Mahogany installation was completed by Alberta Wilbert Sales of Edmonton, Alberta. Larisa Day worked diligently with a local cemetery for quick delivery and installation using existing Wilbert Memorial's stock.



Knauer Industries installed this beautiful custom columbarium designed to surround a fountain that was refurbished at a local cemetery. Chrissy Knauer-Fisk took the lead on this project turning previously unplotted space into a desirable, revenue-producing expansion.

WilbertEDU™ Updates

WilbertEDU continues to be a huge success! Thanks to all of you and your outreach to funeral professionals, we continue to see our webinar attendance rise each session and to date have seen over 8700 attendees since we began in November 2020. We continued to have informative industry experts in July.



Recapping the Sessions Sponsored in July



Jon O'Hara of Great Lakes Partnership presented "Video and Photos, Tell Your Story Your Way," stressing that in today's world, your

website is now your front door. Everything seems to be migrating from paper to digital and, more specifically, to video. One example was that children and grandchildren do not watch Saturday morning cartoons on the old TV, rather, they are watching YouTube on phones, tablets, or whatever they can get their hands on. With as much time and energy that you have dedicated to ensuring your curb appeal is pristine, it is equally as important to have your digital yard looking great with high-quality, well-produced video for your website visitors to see what you are all about. This can immediately change the experience of your modern-day funeral home visitor, so Jon explored options that you might consider. He discussed incorporating meaningful, value-based videography and photography into your funeral home and why humanizing your staff is so important in telling your story! Although Jon's presentation was interrupted by a powerful Michigan storm, he was still able to share so much information on telling your story your way.

On July 15th, Barbara Kemmis, Executive Director of CANA, shared "The Answers are in the Numbers," which reviewed the 2020 CANA cremation statistics with emphasis on current trends and market fluctuations.

Upcoming WilbertEDU Sessions:

Please join us on the WilbertEDU webinar August 12th to listen to Jzyk S. Ennis, Ph.D. (pronounced Jay-zick) speak on the embalming topic of renal failure. This is one webinar that your funeral professionals, especially embalmers, will not want to miss!

Dr. Ennis is a full-time instructor in the Funeral Service Education Program at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham, Alabama and a part-time funeral director for Deerfoot Memorial Funeral Home in Trussville, Alabama. He is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in both Alabama and Georgia, a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP) and a Certified Crematory Operator

Using straightforward exercises and some great poll questions, Barbara talked about using the statistics to investigate how these numbers may be impacting your business today. She also recommended determining whether the customers you are serving are "rooted or roaming." Can you serve your market demographics with services and products that they may be looking for? This session helped identify strategies that can enable you to remain profitable in today's market.

Rounding out July, David Kessler shared with us the topic "When a Child Dies." No parent expects to bury their child when the natural order of things is for children to outlive their parents. A parent expects to watch a child grow up, marry, and have children of his or her own. The death of a child takes away all the dreams and hopes a parent had for that child. No matter the age, a child's death is an immensely difficult loss and carries with it profound emotions. David spoke to the many feelings and emotions of those who experience the loss of a child and how best to address those families in this terrible time of loss.

Watch this corner for additional WilbertEDU webinars and take advantage of the WilbertEDU Licensee Resources page (www.wilbert.com/wilbertedu-resources) where you can find past presentations and other useful material for promoting WilbertEDU to your customers.

(CCO). Beginning in 2000 he taught as an adjunct instructor and was hired as a full-time instructor in 2005. Dr. Ennis has written two books related to embalming, *Embalming Standards of Care and Embalming and Renal Failure: A Silent Danger for Embalmers*. He is a nationally recognized speaker who has written numerous articles for national and state publications and is a subject matter expert in legal cases related to embalming and funeral service. He was the 2018-2020 President of the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), is a past president of the Alabama Funeral Directors Association and a former At-large Representative on the Executive Board of the National Funeral Directors Association.

In this webinar Dr. Ennis will talk about how the cause and manner of death seen by embalmers today is much different than it was years ago. Many people today are on medications that affect the tissues of the body which influences the process for successful embalming. One major consequence of long-term use of pharmaceuticals is diseases of the kidneys. This one-hour seminar will focus on the problems associated with renal failure and how the embalmer can recognize and properly embalm these types of cases.

On August 26th, John Heald, GM-Funeral Home Channel-Legacy.com, will join us to talk about "The Obituary, Your Greatest Marketing Asset!" John is a fourth-generation funeral director and has been licensed in Massachusetts for 19 years. A Massachusetts native, John earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Bryant University and an associate degree in funeral service

from Mount Ida College. In 2009, with his twin brother Jim, also licensed, he built a start-up funeral home in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. John was also one of the original members of the team that started Tributes.com in 2008, which was acquired by Legacy in May 2015. At Legacy.com John oversees funeral home and newspaper partnership development.

John will share with attendees how the obituary is becoming the single greatest marketing asset a funeral home can have. He will also discuss crafting an obituary that makes an impact and truly speaks to the life of the deceased as well as share some tips on what things you should avoid. We have learned that in today's world, with our ever-expanding technology, an obituary is where life stories live on and where the end of life begins!

Yes, NFDA is going to be live this year in the vibrant city of Nashville, Tennessee.

If you are planning on joining us, this is what you need to do.

Let us know you are coming!

Let [Kathleen Berry](#) know who is attending by [email](#) so we can add you to the Exhibitor Badge list. The cost for the Exhibitor badge is \$70. All badges will be able to be picked up at the Exhibitor registration desk on site at the Music City Convention Center.

NFDA Housing Block is open now so secure your room today!

The Wilbert room block is open and available for you to book your hotel room for NFDA 2021 Expo in Nashville. The hotel, the Renaissance Nashville Hotel is located at 611 Commerce Street in downtown Nashville just a few blocks from the Music Center. The nightly rate is \$236, plus tax. **MAKE YOUR RESERVATION TODAY as the room block expires August 25th!**

<https://registration.experientevent.com/showNFD211?bkgId=1005®GrpId=1029>

The FREE NFDA EXPO PASS is good for all 3 days. Pass it on to your customers!



This complimentary **three-day**, expo-only registration form is for you to give to your customers to attend the convention exhibits in Nashville. You may want to get this registration form to your customers quickly (before others do). **They will then need to fill the form out and send it to NFDA by Friday, September 24.**

Please note that this is only valid for funeral directors, crematory operators, and their staff. NFDA DOES check this, so please do not use these to register yourself or your employees.

https://www.wilbert.com/assets/1/7/NFDA_Free-Expo-Pass.pdf

Commemorating Firefighter/paramedic Jeffrey Rizzo

Jeffrey Rizzo, 43, suffered and succumbed to a sudden medical emergency soon after his shift on July 8th. He proudly served as a professional firefighter/paramedic with Loudoun County Fire and Rescue (VA) since 2017. He also worked part-time at Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company (2017-2019), Sykesville Freedom District Fire (2015-2019), and volunteered his time at West Friendship Fire Department (2010-2021).

Mr. Rizzo is survived by his wife, two sons, his mother and father, stepparents, and many brothers and sisters at Loudoun County Fire and Rescue and in the local community.

He was honored during services on Saturday, July 17th at Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, VA, with a procession and burial following at Crestlawn Memorial Gardens in Marriottsville, MD. Arrangements were made by Burrier-Queen Funeral Home & Crematory.

Washington Wilbert Vault Works in Laurel, MD, was honored to provide the family a Stainless Steel Triune® burial vault with a Treasured Tribute for the graveside service. Adding to the special details for the day, Omega Digital Press Company (Royden Wood IV-President) created a handmade heirloom register book with engraved wooden box, customized matching programs and prayer cards, all coordinating with the Treasured Tribute.

