



eNews

A monthly news update for the Wilbert Licensee Network

September 2021



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Any Personnel Changes for the Directory or eNews Subscription?

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



upcoming events

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

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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.

Welcome Susan Barry

When you call Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. in Broadview and speak with the operator you will be welcomed by a new voice, her name is Susan Barry. Susan joined our team as our new Administrative Assistant on August 16th and is training with Kelly Kubicz who was promoted to a new position, Technical Training and Transition Coordinator. Susan's background is in graphic design and office management, and we are confident she will fit in well with the rest of the team. The next time you call the Broadview office, please give Susan a warm Wilbert welcome.



WilbertEDU Webinar Attendees' Successful Fundraiser for the Wilbert Foundation



Last month at the beginning of David Kessler's "Death of a Child" WilbertEDU webinar, Mark Bates, CEO and President of Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc., challenged the audience to donate to the Wilbert Foundation. Mark announced that for every dollar raised because of David's presentation, Wilbert would match it to purchase more Bertie Bear kits. The kit is designed largely for chaplains to help comfort grieving children. Because of Mark's challenge, the audience sent in \$1400 which, when matched by Wilbert, will send 140 Bertie Bear kits to children in need.

For more information about the Wilbert Foundation or to donate, visit www.wilbertfoundation.org.

Team Wilbert Takes on IRONMAN 70.3



What started out as friendly competition between colleagues, turned into a fun weekend of team building and a lot of sore muscles. The weekend of August 6th, Mark Bates, President & CEO of

The race was held on August 7th, 2021, in Boulder, Colorado. The IRONMAN 70.3 is a triathlon which combines swimming, biking, and running, in that order. The miles are broken down with a 1.2-mile lake swim, 56-mile bike ride and, lastly, a 13.1-mile run. All these activities must be completed in under eight hours and 30 minutes for a total distance of 70.3. Each of the Team Wilbert participants possessed a certain strength within the triathlon: Mark and Marvin excel at swimming; Matt finds his strength in cycling, and Lance's strength is running.

Although sore after the race, all were proud of what was accomplished, and those of us who watched the tracking of these four were amazed at their strength and endurance! Well done, gentleman, well done!

Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc., Marvin Smith, Executive Vice President – Strategic Asset Management, Lance Ray, Executive Vice President of Pierce Chemical, and Matt Stewart, Sr. Vice President over the states of TX, FL, OK, and AR, traveled to Colorado to participate in the IRONMAN 70.3!

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 9500 attendees since we began in November 2020. We continued to have informative industry expert presenters in August.



Recapping the Sessions Sponsored in August



Dr. Jzyk Ennis covered “Renal Failure: A Silent Danger and An Embalming Reminder” where he talked about the cause and manner

of death seen by embalmers today being much different than it was years ago. Dr. Ennis reminded the attendees that many people today are on medications that affect the tissues of the body and the outcome for successful embalming. One major consequence of disease and long-term use of pharmaceuticals is diseases of the kidneys. This one-hour seminar focused on the problems associated with renal failure and how the embalmer can recognize and properly embalm these types of cases.

As a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Alabama and Georgia, a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP), Certified Crematory Operator (CCO), and full-time instructor in the Funeral Service Education Program at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham, Dr. Ennis’s presentation really showcased his experience and knowledge gained throughout his career. He left a very valuable message with our audience.

John Heald, GM Funeral Home Channel of Legacy.com joined us to talk about “The Obituary, Your Greatest

Marketing Asset!” A Massachusetts native, John is a fourth-generation funeral director who has been licensed in Massachusetts for 19 years. In 2009, with his twin brother, Jim, also licensed, he built a start-up funeral home in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. Many of the discussion points that John shared with the audience were things that he has encountered in business over the years.

John also shared with attendees how the obituary has become the single greatest marketing asset a funeral home can have. He was happy to present tips on what can make the most impact in crafting an obituary that speaks to the life of the deceased and what things you should avoid. As we learned in John’s session, in today’s world with our ever-expanding technology, an obituary is where life stories live on and where the end of life begins!

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.

WilbertEDU coming for September



Doug Gober is certainly no stranger to the funeral service profession, and he will be joining the WilbertEDU stage on

September 9th. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Doug graduated from the University of Alabama in 1977, where he earned a Business Degree in Accounting. Subsequently, he became a Certified Public Accountant specializing in industrial audits and corporate taxes. Doug began his funeral service career 42 years ago as a sales representative in the casket industry. He has earned national awards from various organizations with the death care industry and has served as a consultant on various marketing and merchandising projects on an international scale.

Over the years Doug has been a driving force for several organizations serving the Doody Group as European Operations Manager, a pioneer in developing the York Merchandising System, Director of Development and Marketing with Carriage Services, an Industry Liaison and Senior Loan Officer for Live Oak Bank, and was owner of Gober Strategic Capital where he combined his experience to bring counsel and resources together to work with funeral professionals. In 2018, Doug partnered with The Foresight Companies in his quest to provide funeral and cemetery owners successful business solutions. Foresight enables Doug to expand his service offerings to include accounting, business valuations, human resource services, strategic business analysis, family surveys, accounts receivable management and market research as well as financing.

Doug will be presenting "The Devil's in the Details; Customer Loyalty is Not Built from 30,000 Feet," pulling together a variety of key branding considerations and applying them directly to funeral homes and cemeteries today. He will look at each potential point of customer contact with our business then delve into how each of these impacts our existing and potential customers. He will also define the elements that comprise customer awareness and then examines them in depth, offering advice and examples of how to use techniques that have been successful in other businesses. Lastly, he will tackle each area from the perspective of how to differentiate yourself in your marketplace.

On September 23rd Frank Rosenacker joins the WilbertEDU stage to speak about cremation liabilities. Frank grew up in a funeral home, and his funeral service career spans nearly 60 years starting with washing cars and writing mass and memorial cards. Frank is a fourth-generation funeral director/embalmer who still serves as the secretary of his family funeral home. He is also a practicing attorney specializing in all areas of estate planning, probate, taxation, and corporate-business matters. Frank owns and operates Rosenacker and Associates, an international consulting firm located in Cincinnati that assists funeral directors and funeral homes, offering a wide range of services including legal representation.

After attending Wharton for a few years, Frank graduated from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in 1973. Deciding to further his education, he went on to graduate from Edgely College (now a part of Xavier University) as the first graduate with a B.S. in Mortuary Science (once CCMS and Edgely formed an alliance). In 1983 he graduated with a Juris Doctorate from Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law and served 4 ½ years on active duty as an Air Force JAG Officer and 2 ½ years in the Ohio National Guard. In addition to owning his own consulting business and law practice, Frank is also Chairman of the Board at the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science.

Frank has lectured extensively on the national, state, and local levels with topics including legal issues, succession planning, business plans and policy manuals, business appraisals and evaluations, sales of funeral businesses, regulatory laws, taxes, and cooperative efforts. In this session he will be addressing the topic of Cremation Liability.

As the cremation rate rises each year, Frank asks, "Are funeral directors becoming a glorified disposal company, or are they functioning as funeral directors with cremation just another form of disposition?" Learn the difference and helpful tips to avoid cremation liability issues in your business life. He will also share real-life case scenarios that he is currently working on or has completed. Join us on September 23rd to learn more about the cremation liabilities that funeral homes face in today's world.

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 Nashville Update!

The Wilbert room block at the Renaissance Nashville is now closed. Please continue to check the NFDA Website by going to [NFDA International Convention & Expo](#) to see what may be available.

<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

National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association Convention



The annual NFDMA convention took place this past August at the Gaylord Texan Hotel in Grapevine, Texas. Wilbert had a corner booth showcasing the many products that Wilbert Group has to offer. All the divisions were represented well at this convention. Staffing the booth throughout the two-day show were Kathleen Berry and Kenn Kirkland, both of Wilbert, and Randy Emmert, representing Pierce. Many attendees visited, and we were able to have some solid discussions with old friends and new prospects.

Next August this convention will travel to the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans. Watch this corner for more convention updates.

Understanding Cremation Statistics

Mike Devaney, Merchandising Manager



Each year the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) publishes its Annual Statistics Report detailing cremation trends to serve the needs of the death care industry and consumers.

For 20 years, CANA has been collecting death and cremation data from state and provincial vital statistics departments or other designated regulatory agencies in the United States and Canada. From these figures, CANA has determined the annual percentage of cremations to deaths, which includes all states and provinces. CANA has also been able to use these figures to forecast future cremation percentages.

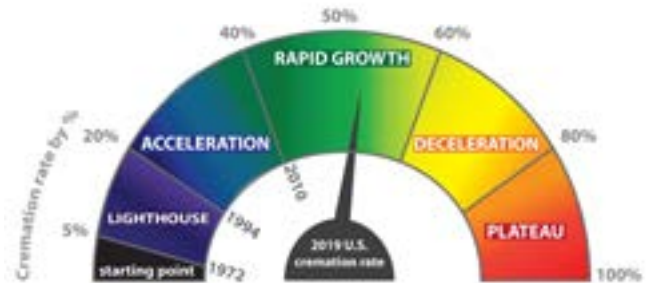
Highlights from the 2021 report show a year of unprecedented cremation numbers and a continued predictable growth rate. CANA states:

Over the past 50 years cremation rates have grown predictably and followed a growth curve, and 2020 was no different. The 2020 U.S. cremation rate of 56.1% reflected an increase of 1.5% over the 2019 rate of 54.6%. 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. More families than ever before have selected cremation, so this could impact the adoption of cremation for future deaths.

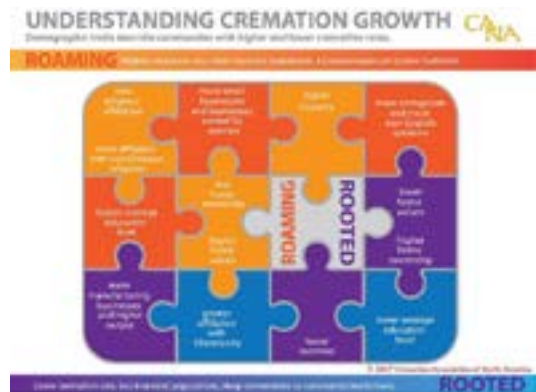
Below you can see the 2019 and 2020 death rate, cremations and cremation rate for U.S and Canada.



Projections show that the national cremation growth rate is reaching its peak velocity and will begin to slow, but cremation rates will continue to grow across most of the country. Some regions are just now entering a period of rapid growth, while others may have already reached saturation. We are currently in a period of rapid growth that will peak around 60% and then begin to slow until it reaches an eventual plateau.



CANA research models highlight demographic traits that correlate strongly with cremation rates. More of the U.S. population has chosen to roam across the country and around the world. Many have loosened their connections to their geographic origins and increased their exposure to new traditions. Conversely, there are significant portions of the population who are rooted to their hometowns and remain deeply connected to the traditions they grew up with.



To read the complete 2021 Industry Statistics Report click on this [link](#).