

# Business

By Patti Martin Bartsche

# What's Ahead in 2020?

**A**s the new year dawns, few industries are more dynamic and challenging than the death-care landscape. All around we see experimentation and change in a time when the future of funeral service is evolving.

As we begin 2020, we asked some of death care's top experts and innovators to share their predictions for the year ahead. They share their visions of the future of cremation, education, memorialization, technology and more.



**Chris Trainor**  
President, Batesville

2020 will be another year of change – inside Batesville and across the industry. Whether you are on the supply side or in the funeral home, crematory or cemetery, there are things you can do differently to serve your customers better and drive greater success for your business. Change is difficult, but to paraphrase Jim Rohn, a respected entrepreneur and motivator, things don't get better by chance. They get better by change.

With a 125-plus year history, we find ourselves tethered to tradition as much as anyone. But we also know we have a responsibility to drive innovation and change to enhance the value of funeral service and aid families in honoring and memorializing their loved ones.

As I look at the year ahead, there are tremendous opportunities to drive improvements in our business and help funeral professionals provide better experiences for families. Here are some of the things that really matter in 2020.











child, or parent lived on through other friends and family members – but the funeral director’s primary function in all of that was simply to dispose of the body. This insight is a prime example of the growing disconnect between consumers and funeral service providers.

The CANA/Homesteaders research has raised some fundamental questions of identity. Are cremation providers merely body disposers, in the way the focus group participants perceived them? Some CANA members have built successful businesses on

the direct cremation model, but most have a hybrid business serving their communities at some variable point along the continuum of burial and cremation. We must grapple with these consumer perceptions and use the research insights to gain a better understanding of where cremation is heading in 2020 and beyond. Our business survival and our ability to best serve our communities depend on it.

Ignoring cremation did not slow consumer demand or prevent cremation from becoming the preferred form of disposition. Now

that you have embraced cremation services in your community, how are you demonstrating that expertise? A continued focus on body-centric products and services (embalming, caskets, etc.) does not appeal to baby boomer cremation consumers. Does your selection room align with your expertise in cremation? What about your marketing materials?

Stay tuned for more insights from this CANA/Homesteaders Cremation Motivations research in 2020. •



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