

# DIRECTORS

## *Digest*

MONTANA FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

PUB. 1 ISSUE 1, 2022



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# 2022 MFDA AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENT

## 5 YEARS

Troy Knutson  
Robert Pulver  
Mark Graziano  
Brienne Mulvaney  
Daniel Dahl  
J. Scott Dyer

## 10 YEARS

Stephanie Peterson  
Donna Amaro  
Shaylene Lockard  
Ryan Avison

## 15 YEARS

Nicholas Stevenson  
Wayne Egbert  
Chris Holt

## 20 YEARS

Rick Walter

## 25 YEARS

Todd Carmichael  
Irene Dahl

## 40 YEARS

Rick Evans  
Jonathan Stevenson

## 45 YEARS

Niles Nelson  
W. Kent Bell  
Rickey Clemes

## 55 YEARS

Gary Croxford

## 60 YEARS

Harold Whitesitt

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Chris Holt

Hello and welcome to 2022. Here we are in a brand new year, and yet it seems we are still dealing with the last few years of issues.

A new year also means it is time for the Annual Trust Report filings to the Board of Funeral Service. Try to jump on that early instead of waiting. Speaking of the Board of Funeral Service, inspections are in full swing; be prepared. Also, auditing of CE's is in full swing. Make sure you and your staff are up to date with those.

I am still waiting for the Board of Funeral Service to meet; they haven't had a meeting for almost a year now. Jim sent a letter to them expressing MFDA's

concern that they have not met in person. Also, in the letter, Jim expressed that MFDA members are concerned about finding qualified staff, and we would like the Board to propose legislation on Student Apprenticeships. There will be some openings coming up on the Board if anyone is interested.

The NFDA continues to send updates on the FEMA program, and they have a lot of good information to pass along to our families to make sure they take advantage of all that is offered.

We recently had an MFDA Board meeting here in Helena. The Association is doing very well, and despite national averages, we are growing. The MFDA is on a strong financial footing, and we must thank our Executive Director, Jim, and Association Assistant Terri, for all their hard work and our Board members for their time and effort. Much thanks!

Upcoming events to look forward to are the Spring District Meeting in April, which will be a webinar; look for details on that. Set your dates for the in-person MFDA Convention June 2-5 in Helena. I am looking forward to seeing our members and vendors in person for a great convention. Stay tuned for details. And, it looks like the first couple weeks of November will be in-person district meetings in each district, so keep that on your calendars.

I am sure you are all busy out there serving your communities and families. I applaud everything you do and the time and effort you all put out there for your families. We at the MFDA are here to help in any way if needed. Just reach out to Terri, Jim, or me.

Please mark your calendars for the June MFDA Convention. It will be a great opportunity to connect with colleagues and attend some great CE opportunities, plus fellowship. I am also looking forward to seeing the vendors; it has been a while.

I hope everyone stays safe, and may God bless you and yours. Until the Spring District webinar, I bid you farewell. Thank you! ■



I applaud everything you do and the time and effort you all put out there for your families.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

James Brown



Welcome to the first 2022 edition of the Director's Digest. You will notice we have a new look to our magazine. MFDA has partnered with The newsLINK Group to bring you this professional magazine. We here at the Association hope you enjoy the "new and improved" format.

I trust the start of this new year finds you well and prospering. As we move into the new year, it is important to reflect upon all the challenges we have collectively faced over the last two years. But, it is also important not to let the negatives of 2020 and 2021 keep us from looking forward and recognizing all the positives in our lives.

When I sat to write this article, I recognized it is an even-numbered year, which means one thing – the start of candidates filing to run for the Montana legislature and other political offices. As of January 22, more than 110 candidates have filed for legislative seats.

A complete list of those prospective candidates can be found on the Montana Secretary of State's website at [app.mt.gov/filing](http://app.mt.gov/filing). Please take time to determine who is running for office in your House and Senate districts. The MFDA is always interested in hearing from our membership about candidates you support because of their support of Montana's funeral industry.

In addition to the state legislative seats, because of the 2020 census, you are likely aware that Montana regained a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

As a result of this additional congressional seat, Montana has been split into Eastern and Western congressional districts. Matt Rosendale, Montana's current U.S. House member, has indicated he will run for election in the Eastern District. That means there will be a new and open race for Montana's Western U.S. House seat this year, with the general election held in November 2022.

Speaking of events happening on the national level, at the end of 2021, MFDA had been closely tracking the Biden Administration's OSHA-issued Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) that required employees (of employers with 100 or more employees) either get vaccinated or test negative weekly. In late December, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision staying the OSHA ETS. However, in early January, the U.S. Supreme Court had the last word on the matter: they permanently barred enforcement of the ETS.

The ETS is just another example of the challenges Montana's funeral industry has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's response to it. While the outcome of that litigation was out of our hands, MFDA's members can continue to control the positive manner in which you help your customers and communities.

One of the ways the industry has responded positively to the pandemic is by helping families – who lost

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loved ones to COVID – receive financial help from the federal government to cover the cost of associated funeral expenses.

FEMA has provided over \$1.47 billion to nearly 226,000 people to assist with COVID-19-related funeral costs for deaths occurring on or after Jan. 20, 2020. In Montana alone, grieving families have received over \$2 million in federal COVID-19 loss support. Over 800 applications are being, or have been, processed in the state, thanks to the help of our funeral directors and the association's guidance.

You may have seen that the MFDA sent out its membership renewal notices in late December. The MFDA Board strongly encourages you to renew your membership or, if you are not a member, to join the Association.

Legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts – tracking the implementation of the ETS, advocating for passage of the Federal BRAVE Act, obtaining a secure and adequate source of funding for the Montana Board of Funeral Services – are only some of the many benefits you receive as an MFDA member. Other benefits include a copy of this trade magazine – the written

forum by which the Association provides coverage to MFDA members of industry trends and developments, new and proposed legislation, regulatory issues, and association events and updates. Other important member benefits are the various quality education programs hosted by MFDA to help you fulfill your continuing education requirements.

Finally, we encourage you to attend the MFDA Convention & Trade Show, which, COVID-19 permitting, is planned for June 2-5, 2022, in Helena. Because of the pandemic, the MFDA has been unable to host its annual convention since 2019. The Board hopes we can gather back together in person this year. To this end, the Association has already begun to prepare the convention schedule and activities. You can learn more about the 2022 convention by visiting our webpage at [montanafda.org](http://montanafda.org).

I hope you enjoy this edition of Director's Digest. MFDA Board of Directors and staff are proud of the quality of this publication. And we thank those of you who continue to be members of the MFDA, and for all you do on behalf of the industry.

Best wishes for a fun and productive winter and spring. ■

# MFDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2022

## **MFDA Spring District Meetings**

Online Webinar — 2 CE  
April 22 — 6-8:30 p.m.

## **Advocacy Summit- Canceled due to COVID**

May 4-6  
Washington, D.C.

## **MFDA Convention and Trade Show**

June 2-5 MFDA Convention and  
Trade Show Great Northern Hotel,  
Helena

June 2 — 6-7:30 p.m. Past  
Presidents Reception-Rotunda  
of Montana Capital, Helena  
*All MFDA members invited*  
June 3 — MFDA Annual  
Golf Tournament

## **MFDA Summer Board Meeting**

June 3 — 1 p.m.  
Great Northern Hotel, Helena

## **NFDA Leadership Conference**

July 10-13  
Orlando, Florida

## **NFDA International Convention & Expo**

October 9-12  
Baltimore, MD

## **MFDA Fall Board Meeting**

November 1 — Billings  
MFDA Fall District Meetings-Live  
Locations and time TBA  
November 1 — Billings  
November 2 — Miles City  
November 3 — Butte  
November 9 — Great Falls  
November 10 — Missoula



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# In Loving Memory



## Brandon Stevenson



Brandon loved well and showed up for so many. Brandon's humor, wit, and smile will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Funeral services for Brandon Stevenson, 37, of Colorado Springs, CO, were held at 10:00 a.m., Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, at the Stevenson Funeral Home in Dickinson, with Pastor Scott Skones officiating. A second funeral service was held at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021, at the Woodmen Valley Chapel at the Rockrimmon Campus in Colorado Springs, CO, with Pastor Matt Ferrell officiating. Burial was in Colorado Springs. Full military honors were presented by the Dickinson Drill Team and the Army's 10th Special Forces Group. Due to a sudden and brief illness, Brandon passed away Dec. 12, 2021, at St. Francis Medical Center in Colorado Springs, CO.

Both services were live-streamed at [stevensonfuneralhome.com](http://stevensonfuneralhome.com) under Brandon's obituary.

Brandon Dale Stevenson was born Feb. 28, 1984, in Miles City, MT, to Jonathan and Marlys (Kolka) Stevenson, where he joined a brother, Nicolas.

Brandon was raised and spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Baker, MT, before moving to Dickinson, ND, in 2001. Brandon graduated from Trinity High School in 2003, where he excelled in football, wrestling, and track.

Brandon was nominated to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point after high school. He graduated in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in History and was commissioned as an Army Infantry officer. During his 10 years in the Army, Brandon earned many distinguished awards, including the Army Rangers and Special Forces Tabs, Combat Infantryman, Combat Action, Air Assault, and Airborne badges. Brandon entered the United States Army Special Forces in 2012 and earned the coveted and distinguished Green Beret. Brandon faithfully served the nation with seven deployments that took him all over the world to include three tours to Iraq, Libya, Jordan, Germany and Niger, where he was awarded two Bronze Stars

for his valor in combat. Perhaps Brandon's greatest military accomplishment was the deep and life-long friendships he built with his Army brethren.

Brandon married his best friend, Wendy Junelle Jorde, in Dickinson, ND, on May 26, 2012. Brandon and Wendy lived in four states and settled in Colorado Springs, CO, after Brandon was stationed at Fort Carson with the Army's 10th Special Forces Group. Brandon and Wendy have two beautiful children, Adler, 3, and Hadley, 16 months. Brandon wholeheartedly enjoyed being a dad to Adler and Hadley, and being a dad brought immense joy. Brandon was the best at being the bedtime story narrator, lyric creator, song singer, fire camp starter, tickle monster, and so much more. Adler's and Hadley's first word was "dada" which is evident by Brandon's sweet-sweet love, commitment, humor, and happiness that he shared with the kids and the love they felt for their dada. Although so young, we know that Brandon's attention, love, and connection will carry Adler and Hadley through life with his insurmountable love.

Brandon separated from the United States Army in 2017 and went to work for Northwestern Mutual, which allowed him to explore and become grounded in the financial sector. This past summer, Brandon embarked upon his entrepreneurial journey and created his financial practice, Imperium Capital. Brandon was well on his way to creating greatness in the financial world. This endeavor brought great love, commitment and passion to his life, and he was determined to make something big out of nothing, following in his father's footsteps.

Brandon was a committed son, brother, husband, father, and friend. This is evident by the number of people around the United States and the world who have shown their support and love during this incredibly difficult time. The profound amount of sadness is indescribable. Brandon loved well and showed up for so many. Brandon's humor, wit, and smile will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. The overwhelming love and support, like his commitment to country and others, has been unwavering. Although it seems impossible, those who loved him will weather this storm, and love for Brandon and God will lead them through.

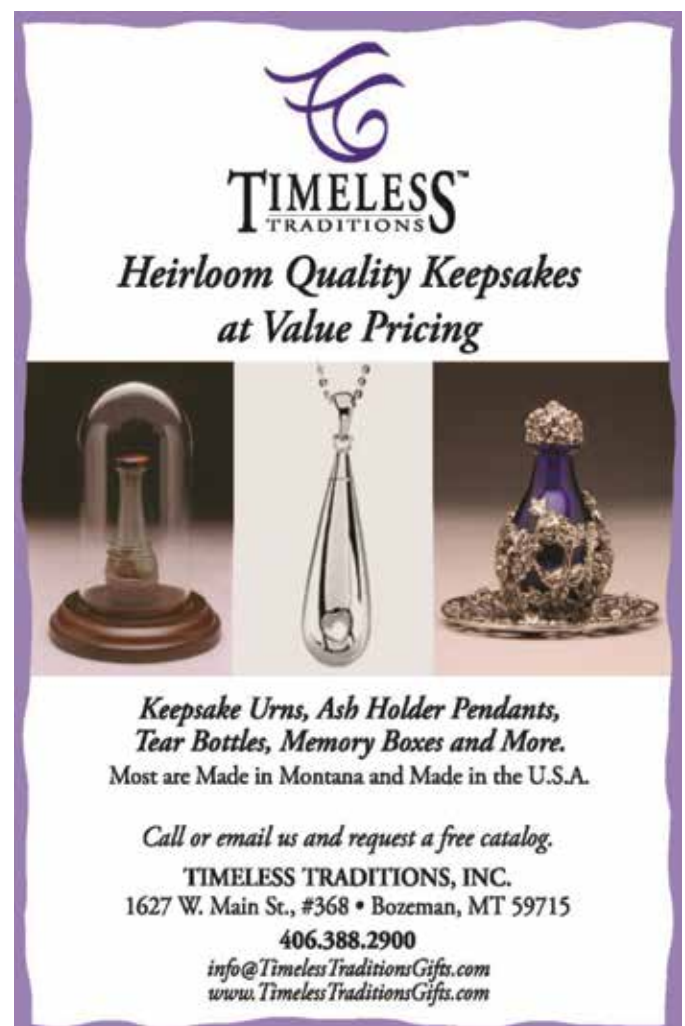
Survivors include wife, Wendy and children, Adler and Hadley, Colorado Springs, CO; parents, Jon and Marlys Stevenson, Dickinson, ND; brother, Nic (Terri)

Stevenson, Dickinson, ND; father and mother-in-law, Wayne and Vangie Jorde, Dickinson, ND; grandma, Marlene Stevenson, Miles City, MT; brothers-in-law, Justin (Lisa) Jorde, Thornton, CO; Joshua (Lindsey) Jorde, Dickinson, ND; sister-in-law, Angie (Bryan) Muri, Colorado Springs, CO; half sister-in-law, Angela (Steve) Bagan, Fargo, ND; nieces and nephews: Sadie, Nathan, Ali, Patrick, and Delaney Stevenson; Marisa and Aralynn Panasuk; Addison, Scarlett and Payton Jorde; Kinley and Levi Muri.

Brandon was preceded in death by his grandfather Dale Stevenson, niece Ava Jorde, Grandpa Whimp, and his brothers-in-arms Captain Jay Jones and Major Sean Maples.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested contributions to the Brandon Stevenson Memorial Fund to ensure Adler and Hadley could live out their dreams.

Arrangements by Stevenson Funeral Home. ■



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# In Loving Memory



## Barbara Jean Montgomery



She loved reading romance novels. In fact, she would head to work an hour or more early so she could sit in the parking lot and read before work.

Barbara Jean Montgomery, 66, of Black Eagle, passed away on Oct. 5, 2021. Four years ago, a stroke took away her “spark of life.” COVID took away anything that was left.

Barb was born in Minot, ND, on Oct. 10, 1954, to Wesley and Erma Munson. Shortly after that, they moved to Billings, MT. One of Barb’s biggest dreams was to own a horse, which her parents said she could have if they ever lived out in the country. Much to their surprise, her dad eventually found a job as a country school janitor. This meant that Barb could now have her horse. She spoke fondly of having the horse neck-deep in the ditch and jumping off his back to go swimming. Barb became the first in her family to graduate from high school when she graduated from West High School in 1972.

After graduation, she married Steven Harren but divorced shortly after that. Barb tried to work as a

waitress but ended up pouring a pitcher of beer onto someone who got a little too loud and a little too friendly. She agreed with her boss that she needed a different profession. She determined that it should be a sitting down job, so she became a secretary and worked for Weissman’s in Billings and then the City of Billings at the water department.

She met David Montgomery and gave birth to her daughter, Nicole. She moved with Dave to Bozeman and attended Montana State University for a couple of years and the couple married. School was not her thing, and she went to work for Weissman’s again in Bozeman. At the time, she drove a blue Volkswagen Beetle she named “George” to work. One day the temperature was about 20 below, and everyone’s expensive vehicles would not start, but “George” did. The shotgun rider was in charge of scraping the window on the inside since that air-cooled engine could not keep up with four people breathing in that bitter cold.

After Dave graduated from MSU, the family moved to Great Falls, and Barb gave birth to Karom David. Karom's kidneys were destroyed soon after birth, which meant Barb and Dave did around-the-clock dialysis at home to keep him alive. He was a happy boy with a great smile. Unfortunately, SIDS came to call, and he died the day after Thanksgiving.

A year later, Danielle was born. In Great Falls, Barb worked for a group of accountants and was then hired as a secretary and insurance adjuster for Crawford and Company. She ended her career as an Administrative Assistant at the Great Falls Community Food Bank. She truly enjoyed working for George Paul and Gayle Carlson. While working there, she was excited to welcome her grandchildren, Emily and Jacen. She was planning to work a few more years, but one day she came to work and could not remember how to do things even though she had worked there for 10 years. The stroke had happened, and she retreated to her home.

She loved reading romance novels. In fact, she would head to work an hour or more early so she could sit in the parking lot and read before work. Sadly, her stroke

caused such memory problems that reading became impossible for her.

Summer was her favorite season, and her backyard was always full of colorful geraniums, petunias, and one cherry tomato plant for Dave. Her Basset Hound, Frank, was her constant companion the last few years. She also enjoyed collecting goose and duck-themed figurines, cookie jars, and other items to decorate the house. She asked that her remains be placed in her goose cookie jar and be interred at Hillcrest Mausoleum. Those wishes were honored.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, Milton (Darlene) Munson, and her son, Karom.

She is survived by her husband; daughters, Nicole (Ben) Jetland and Dani (MaryAnn) Montgomery, and grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at Hillcrest Lawn Memorial Chapel on Friday, Oct. 15, 2021.

Condolences for the family may be shared online at [SchniderFuneralHome.com](http://SchniderFuneralHome.com). ■



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# Compliance Alert: Handling Vendor Surcharges

By Chris Farmer, NFDA General Counsel

As many of you may have read, in response to the soaring inflation gripping the country (an increase of 6.8% compared to 12 months ago and its highest level in 39 years), many vendors have begun instituting surcharges on their products. Perhaps you've read about these surcharges, or you might have received a letter directly from your vendor. Because the price of raw materials and supplies has surged due to a worldwide shortage of supplies, companies favor a temporary surcharge instead of a general base price increase, which would be instituted to address the inflationary pressures that continue to drive up costs.

The increasing commoditization of funeral goods has resulted in more price sensitivity than in years past. While everyone wants to provide the families they serve with quality products, increasing competition — especially from overseas — has resulted in heightened competition in price and quality, forcing vendors to keep their prices in line with ever-increasing market pressures.

Tacking on a surcharge, as opposed to increasing the base price, is a way to recover increased costs while conveying the temporary intent of the fee and keeping the base price competitive. How “temporary” these surcharges and the factors that necessitated them remains to be seen.

## How Should Funeral Homes Handle Surcharges?

While some vendors have not commented on how funeral homes should handle the surcharges, a few have advised their funeral home clients to add the surcharge as a line item on the GPL. However, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has previously admonished funeral homes about adding a surcharge as a line item on the GPL since it is a violation of the Funeral Rule.

This came up several years ago when gas prices spiked, and some businesses imposed a fuel surcharge on their customers. Several funeral homes wanted to do the same for removal, hearse and limousine charges, but the FTC staff stated that they considered such an addition to be a potential Funeral Rule violation since the consumer should be able to look at one price to determine whether they want to purchase a service and not be required to add up various fees for a service the Funeral Rule requires be itemized.


The FTC Staff stated that funeral homes should simply raise prices for these items to cover higher gas prices, rather than separating the fees for the service. The same rationale would apply here. If the funeral home incurs a commodities surcharge, it should simply


raise its casket prices or basic services fee to capture increased costs or surcharges.

If you'd like to increase your non-declinable basic services fee to include recovery of overhead, such as surcharges, you may add the phrase "and overhead" after the word "services" on your GPL:

*The goods and services shown here can provide to our customers. You may choose only the items you desire. However, any funeral arrangements you select will include a charge for our basic services **and overhead**. If legal or other requirements mean you must buy any items you did not specifically ask for, we will explain the reason in writing on the statement we provide describing the funeral goods and services selected.*

This advice also applies to additional fees and costs you may incur to cover additional PPE and sanitation measures needed to protect funeral home staff from COVID-19, as the FTC does not permit surcharges for PPE or other measures. As with vendor surcharges, you may increase your fees on the GPL to cover additional costs to the funeral home, but you cannot impose a surcharge. ■



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 SightLife

# The Lake Funeral Home Continuing a Caring Tradition



The Lake Funeral Home and Crematory follows a history of several funeral home names, one still well known in the state: the Retz Funeral Home.

The Retz Funeral Home operated in Lake County as early as the 1930s. It was purchased by Oliver Mosley, Jr. in the 1950s after his discharge from the service following the Korean War. It operated as the Mosley Funeral Home until 1986 when the Shrider Funeral Home in Ronan purchased and ran it as Mosley/Shrider for many years. Ron Grogan joined the Mosley/Shrider Funeral Home in the early 1990s and worked alongside Ron Shrider before purchasing it in 1996, renaming it the Grogan Funeral Home.

In 2001, the funeral home was enlarged by adding a generous arrangement office to the front foyer, opening up the chapel for a more sizable seating

area, and adding a retort on site. Rick Evans and Tom Vertin purchased the funeral home in 2012, renaming it The Lake Funeral Home and Crematory. Along with an extensive update of the facility, it included new carpeting, furniture, new lighting in the selection room, a redo of the preparation room, and another body refrigeration system.

Mr. Evans and Mr. Vertin purchased the Shrider/Thompson Funeral Home in Ronan in 2016 that operates as a satellite of The Lake Funeral Home. These funeral homes service the Mission Valley and all of Lake County. The staff has been with the firm for many years; Kim Congdon has been the manager for 10 years; Fred Nelson has been with the funeral home for 23 years, and Charlie Wilson has been with them for nine years. ■



# Retz Funeral Home

## A Look Back in Time



Circa 1930



Retz Funeral Home Today

The Retz Funeral Home in Helena, Montana, has been serving the needs of the community for over 100 years. Formerly known as Opp & Conrad, it is located at 315 E. 6th Ave and is a contributing property of the Helena Historic District. The Retz Funeral Home is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The listing reads:

Opp and Conrad Funeral Home (315 E. Sixth Ave.) Jacob Opp and his sons Lawrence and Arthur worked for the longtime undertaking firm of Herrmann and Company before opening their own mortuary with partner Ralph J. Conrad in 1926.

Both Lawrence and Arthur Opp were graduates of Chicago's prestigious Worsham College of Mortuary Science. Unlike the Opps, Conrad was new to the funeral business; he previously managed the Bozeman telephone exchange.

The partners hired builder George Jacoby to construct this facility, specifically as a funeral home. Its gently pitched roof, exposed rafter tails, and mixed materials of brick and stucco harmonize with the urban landscape. Concrete-capped brick piers flanking a sleek panel of glass blocks, centered beneath the roof's peak, emphasize a horizontal orientation popular at the time. Finely crafted leaded, beveled,



and stained-glass windows enhance the façade while handsome wood finishing completes the interior.

The state-of-the-art facility was Helena's first undertaking firm to use limousine-type vehicles, thus eliminating antiquated conveyances traditionally associated with funerals. Opp and Conrad operated until 1954 when the name changed to the Retz Funeral Home."

Retz Funeral home is still in service today and is a thriving member of the Helena community – it is locally owned and operated by the Stevenson & Son's Funeral Homes group. ■

Credit: helenahistory.org



# How to Package and Ship Cremated Remains

The United States Postal Service® offers Priority Mail Express® and Priority Mail Express International® service for shipping human or animal cremated remains domestically and internationally. Whether you are shipping the remains of a loved one or a pet to or between family members or to an artisan to incorporate the remains into blown glass or other works of art, this publication is designed to provide the necessary preparation and packaging requirements that will aid in protecting this special mailing during transit.

## General Instructions

Cremated remains are permitted to be mailed to any domestic address when the package is prepared as described below and in the referenced postal manuals.

Cremated remains are permitted to be mailed to an international address when the designating country does not prohibit the contents and when Priority Mail Express International service is

available to that country. You can verify this by checking the Individual Country Listing in the Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, International Mail Manual (IMM®) (see Postal Service References at the end of this article).

## Packaging

You will need a primary inner sift-proof container, cushioning material, and an outer shipping package.

**Note:** A sift-proof container is any vessel that does not allow loose powder to leak or sift out. There are many options available to store cremated remains — from simple wooden boxes to decorative urns. USPS® recommends consulting with a licensed funeral director to help you select the best container.

## Inner Primary Container

- **Domestic Shipping:** The inner primary container must be strong, durable, and constructed in such a manner as to protect and securely contain the contents inside. It

must be properly sealed and sift-proof.

- **International Shipping:** A funeral urn is required as the inner primary container. It must be properly sealed and sift-proof.

## Seal and Address the Inner Primary Container

In the event the shipping label becomes detached from the outer container, the Postal Service™ recommends that you put the sift-proof container in a sealed plastic bag. Then, attach a label with the complete return address and delivery address on the sealed plastic bag and the wording “Cremated Remains.”

## Cushioning Material

For both domestic and international shipping, place sufficient cushioning all around the inner primary sift-proof container to prevent it shifting inside the outer shipping package during transit and to absorb any shock to prevent breakage.

## Outer Shipping Package

For both domestic and international shipping, cremated remains must be shipped by USPS Priority Mail Express or Priority Mail Express International Service utilizing either a USPS-produced or customer-supplied shipping package. If using a customer-supplied shipping package, it must be strong and durable to withstand transportation handling.

For convenience, the Postal Service has a Priority Mail Express Cremated Remains box that may be used for domestic or international shipments using the applicable Priority Mail Express service. The Priority Mail Express Cremated Remains box can be ordered online at the Postal Store on USPS.com® and is available as part of a kit.

Before closing and sealing the shipping package, the Postal Service recommends adding a slip of paper with both the sender's and recipient's address and contact information inside the package. This extra step will help to identify the sender and receiver in the event the shipping label becomes detached.

## Labeling and Markings

To increase the visibility of mailpieces containing cremated remains, the outer shipping box (USPS-produced or customer-supplied) containing cremated remains must be marked with Label 139, Cremated Remains, affixed to each side (including top and bottom). Label 139 is available at the Postal Store on USPS.com or can be obtained at a retail Post Office™ location.

## Address Your Package

### Domestic Shipping:

- A complete return address and delivery address must be used. The address format for a package is the same as for an envelope. Write or print address labels clearly. Use ink that does not smear and include the addresses and ZIP Codes™ for you and your recipient.
- Double check the mailing address, especially the ZIP Code. You can use Look Up a ZIP Code™ on USPS.com.
- Mailers may generate single-ply Priority Mail Express labels through Click-N-Ship® or other USPS-approved methods.

### International Shipping:

A complete return address and delivery address must be used. The mailer must indicate the identity of the contents (Cremated Remains) on

the required applicable customs declaration form. To determine the applicable required customs form, see IMM Section 123.61.

Note: If available, the cremation certificate should be attached to the outer box or made easily accessible. The sender is responsible for adherence to any restrictions or observances noted by the designating country.

## Postal Service References

For more information on the Postal Service's requirements for shipping cremated remains:

### For domestic shipping, see:

- Publication 52, Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail, Section 451.22:  
[https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4\\_017.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4_017.htm) and Appendix C, Packaging Instruction 10c:  
[https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc\\_036.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc_036.htm).
- Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 503:  
<https://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/503.htm>.

### For international shipping, see:

- Publication 52, Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail, Section 451.22:  
[https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4\\_017.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4_017.htm) and Appendix C, Packaging Instruction 10c:  
[https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc\\_036.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc_036.htm).
- Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, International Mail Manual (IMM) Section 139: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc1\\_018.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc1_018.htm) and the Individual Country Listing for observations, prohibitions and restrictions: <https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immctry.htm>. ■

- Visit a Post Office to speak with a Sales and Service Associate.
- Call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777).
- FAQs on USPS.com.
- Video – How to Package and Ship Cremated Remains: <https://www.youtube.com/user/uspstv>.  
For postal supplies, visit the Postal Store on USPS.com: <https://store.usps.com>.
- Publication 139
- September 2019
- PSN 7610-17-000-1503

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# MFDA SPRING DISTRICT MEETING

APRIL 22, 6-8:30 PM  
ONLINE WEBINAR-2 CE



**Dr. Walter "Willy" Kemp**

Montana State Medical Examiner  
State of Montana, Forensic Science Division

**Professor Jeff Zeally**

"Where to Draw the Line: A Discussion of  
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Also with association updates  
MFDA President Chris Holt  
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# Save the Date!

## Montana Funeral Directors 2022 Convention and Trade Show June 2-5, 2022 Helena, MT

As part of the Education section of the convention, this year, we feature a number of dynamic speakers. Below we feature three of these dynamic speakers: **Linda Cohen**, **Leili McMurrough** and **Rose M. James**.



Linda Cohen

**Linda Cohen** is the author of *“The Economy of Kindness: How Kindness Transforms Your Bottom Line.”* She will explain why kindness is so crucial in the workplace, that a culture of kindness can improve team performance and company morale. She will review and determine core kindness practices for acknowledgment and recognition, training opportunities and work-life balance. She contends that acts of kindness strengthen employee engagement and reduces burnout, and she will discuss kindness opportunities between funeral directors, staff, community and families.

Part inspiration and part motivation, your members will gather actionable ideas to bring back to their workplace and immediately implement what they’ve learned.



Leili McMurrough  
Program Director  
Worsham College

The second feature speaker is **Leili McMurrough**. She holds an impressive pedigree: she is the Program Director at Worsham College, is a licensed funeral director and embalmer, and she is also a licensed attorney. Ms. McMurrough received her B.A. from Lehigh University, her J.D. from Syracuse University College of Law, and her Associate degree from Simmons Institute of Funeral Service. She works at McMurrough Funeral Chapel in Libertyville, Illinois, and is a member of the American Board of Funeral Service Education Committee on Accreditation.

Her areas of discipline will make for interesting commentary.



Rose M. James  
Estate Planning & Elder Law

**Rose M. James** graduated with honors from Michigan State University College of Law in 2017. Before moving to Montana, Rose worked with Michigan’s leading estate planning and elder law attorneys. Rose is licensed in both Montana and Michigan, where she focuses her practice in estate planning, probate, and estate and trust administration. She received her juris doctorate Cum Laude, Michigan State University College of Law 2017, B.S. Political Science, Summa Cum Laude, Lake Superior State University 2014 ■

For more information about the 2022 Convention and Trade Show, please call 406-449-7244 or email us at [info@montanafda.org](mailto:info@montanafda.org).

# Academic Scholarships



Dozens of academic scholarships are awarded annually in two application cycles. Scholarships range from \$2,500-\$5,000 and are open to full-time or part-time students in good standing enrolled in ABFSE- or Canadian-accredited institutions/programs. Candidates must attend classes and actively pursue a degree in funeral service at the time of application. Academic scholarships are also available for U.S. and Canadian military veterans.

## Enrollment Periods:

February 15-April 1 &  
September 15-November 1

## Available Academic Scholarships

### Dennis Schoepp Memorial Scholarship

Preference will be given to students from MONTANA who *intend* to return to MONTANA after graduation to work in funeral service and are also affiliated with a Montana Funeral Directors Association Member Firm (MFDA). In addition to Foundation submission requirements, students interested in the Dennis Schoepp Memorial Scholarship must also submit a letter of reference/support from an MFDA Member Firm to MFDA (info@montananfda.org).

### Foundation '45 Scholarship

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### Joseph E. Hagan Memorial Scholarship

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### Memorial Classic Scholarship

Made possible with proceeds from the annual Memorial Classic Golf Tournament.

### Shipley Rose Buckner Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is open to women in honor of Shipley's desire to become a funeral director.

### Steve Lang Scholarship

Named in honor of Homesteaders' former CEO, Steve Lang.

### SCI National Scholarship Program

We also promote the Brenda Renee Horn and Steve Mack Memorial Scholarships in partnership with the SCI National Scholarship Program. Please direct any questions regarding SCI's scholarship program to [Campus.Relations@sci-us.com](mailto:Campus.Relations@sci-us.com). ■

To apply, visit [funeralservicefoundation.org/scholarship-opportunities/](http://funeralservicefoundation.org/scholarship-opportunities/).



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# A Post-Pandemic Strategy for Strategic Planning

By Mark Athitakis

*Boards have become more attentive to strategy since the onset of COVID-19. Two governance experts share suggestions for keeping that momentum.*

Governance is governance, as Target founder Ken Dayton famously put it. But governance in the pandemic era is a bit different.

Shifting strategy discussions to Zoom, combined with heightened focus on social justice issues in the past two years, have prompted association leaders to collaborate differently and pay more attention to strategic matters, especially around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). During the first year of COVID, according to the software company OnBoard, boards reported that they were “more effective, more collaborative, and are spending more time on vital strategic issues than prior to the pandemic.”

But the increased (remote) face time that has often come with online board work shouldn't let

associations be complacent. That's something I explored in a recent Associations Now Deep Dive piece on whether associations should overhaul their strategic plans due to the pandemic. Short answer: probably not, if that plan is well thought through and aligned with your overall organizational goals. But it's a good time to double-check the processes you use for strategic discussions and the pipeline you have in place for the next group of leaders.

Glenn Tecker, co-CEO of Tecker International, is skeptical that online governance gives association decision-making the necessary gravitas. “While there is intellectual commitment to the decision, there tends to be less emotional commitment, less trust and satisfaction, less of a feeling of engagement,” he says.

To counter that, Tecker recommends that board agendas be crystal clear on brass-tacks matters: that they include time to drill down into a specific issue



that's important in the near term and also to review the current strategic plan to make sure progress is being made (and if not, explore why not). Staff and board members need to work together to define the shape of the strategic plan, he notes; if the two sides neglect each other, the plan will be neglected too. "If the board and senior staff are not participating together actively in the process, we won't work with the association," Tecker says of his consultancy. "We know whatever they come up with will never be implemented."

One upside of the pandemic-era shift to remote, says Vista Cova CEO Lowell Aplebaum, FASAE, CAE, is that it gave associations an opportunity to slow down and do this work, to pay more attention to strategic matters and the strategic-planning process. After the initial anxiety from the onset of the pandemic subsided, he says, association boards proved capable of adapting and responding.

"There's only so far that adrenaline is going to get you," he says. "I don't see much panic now. Organizations have recognized that they've been given an opportunity for innovation and an opportunity

to rethink their direction, now that they've developed some innovation skill sets."

But they shouldn't squander what they've learned as things ease back to something more normal. Like Tecker, Aplebaum recommends that associations use their experiences in the past two years to drill down into particular challenges that have emerged. That doesn't mean jettisoning the overall strategic plan, but honing it.

"Organizations are definitely looking to try to focus," he says. "Hopefully there's an awakening that what they've been doing for breadth, because they were always doing them that way, they're sacrificing in depth. How can a strategy help them do fewer things but do them better?"

It's an especially relevant question these days, and one that can better guide strategic discussions after the pandemic crisis is over. ■

Mark Athitakis, a contributing editor for Associations Now, has written on nonprofits, the arts, and leadership for a variety of publications. He is a coauthor of *The Dumbest Moments in Business History* and hopes you never qualify for the sequel.

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