NFDA NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

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This Issue:

NFDA Releases 2016 Cremation and Burial Report

Brookfield, Wisconsin – The U.S. national cremation rate is projected to exceed the burial rate for the first time in 2015, according to the 2016 Cremation and Burial Report issued by the National Funeral Directors Association. The number of cremations in 2010 was just one million. However, over the next 20 years, the current cremation rate is projected to grow to 78.3 percent of deaths, with the number of cremations expected to rise from 1.33 million in 2016 to 1.88 million by 2025 and 2.76 million by 2035.

Historically, there have been regions of the country that have been way ahead of the cremation curve and areas that have lagged behind. Over the next nine years (by 2025), cremation rates will likely exceed the 50 percent mark in 43 states, up from only 16 states exceeding the mark in 2010. By 2035, Mississippi will likely remain the only state with a burial rate that exceeds its cremation rate.

Even with the expected increase in U.S. deaths from 2.6 million in 2016 to 3.5 million in 2035 – a 34 percent increase – the increasing consumer preference for cremation will result in the number of burials declining from 1.2 million in 2016 to 907,100 in 2025 and only 559,050 in 2035. In 2010, the number of burials was 1.3 million.

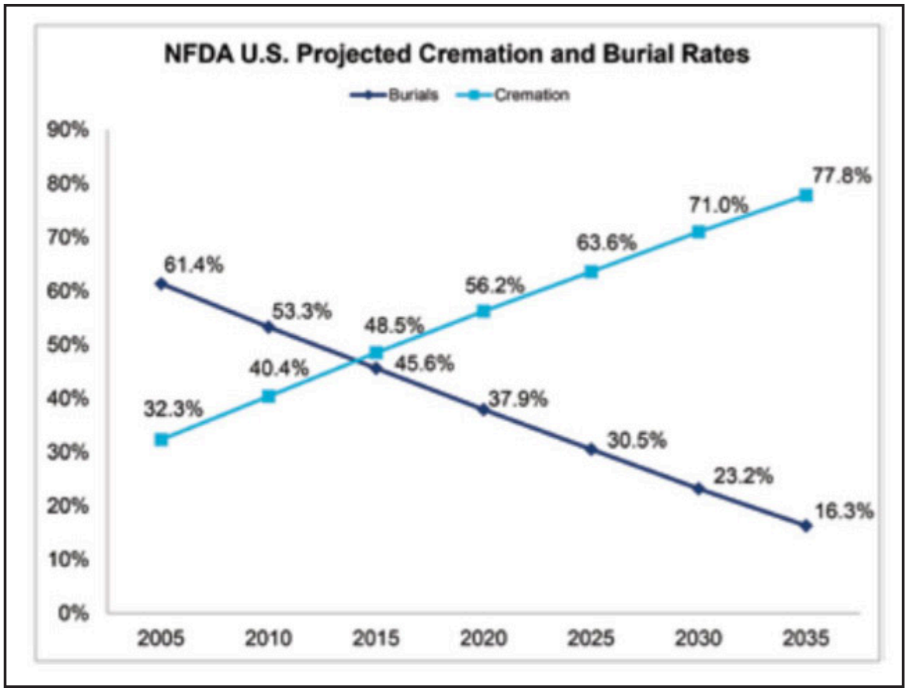
The report also found that direct cremation accounted for approximately 37 percent of all cremations in 2014. Cremations with memorial services accounted for 36 percent and casketed adult funerals with a viewing and cremation accounted for 27 percent of all cremations (latest available data).

Influence of Rising Cremation Rates

Crematories are owned by 26.7 percent of funeral homes in the 45 states that allow them to do so. Of the 65 percent of funeral homes in these states that use third-party crematory facilities, 8 percent plan to build their own crematories within the next five years. Nearly 70 percent of funeral homes operating crematories, the same number as in 2015, now offer a viewing area so families can witness the beginning of the cremation process.

Thirty-eight percent of cremated remains are returned to families, 35.8 percent are buried at a cemetery, 2.1 percent are scattered at a cemetery, 20.2 percent are scattered at non-cemetery locations and 7.4 percent are placed in a columbarium.

With 27 percent of funeral homes in the United States operating their own crematories and another 8 percent planning to open their own within the next five years, the majority of funeral homes remain in competition with stand-alone crematories in the 45 states that allow funeral homes to own crematories, particularly in view of the growing trend of consumers selecting direct cremation. The primary reason for selecting direct cremation (no formal viewing, visitation or ceremony with the body present) is the perceived cost-effectiveness of this choice. There is a trend to follow direct cremations with some type of memorialization event with family and friends, but it's frequently without the services of a funeral home.



The steadily rising popularity of cremation is attributed to a number of factors, including consumer cost considerations, environmental concerns, fewer religious prohibitions of the practice and changing consumer preferences, such as the desire for simpler, less ritualized funeral practices. Cremation has become socially acceptable as more Americans are thinking and talking about death in new ways, and its popularity is expected to intensify.

A surge in the number of Americans who no longer identify with any religion has contributed to the decline of the historically traditional funeral in America and the rise in cremation as the disposition of choice. According to research by the Funeral and Memorial Information Council (FAMIC, 2015), those who are non-religious are the most likely to consider cremation for family and friends.

A study by Pew Research Center found that from 2007-14, the percentage of unaffiliated adults increased from 16 percent to almost 23 percent of the U.S. public. Since 2012, the percent of U.S. consumers 40 and older who feel it is very important to have religion as part of a funeral has decreased from 49.5 percent in 2012 to 42.1 percent in 2016.

According to IBISWorld data, as cremation numbers increase, the forecast for funeral home revenue gains is moderate since cremation services, in general, produce lower revenue. Typically, cremations cost less than one-third of funerals with burials. In the last five years, however, IBISWorld statistics show that the average cost of a cremation has increased. Many of the same product and service options are available, regardless of whether one chooses cremation or burial, and the cost difference between cremation and burial lessens when like products and services are compared.

Key External Influences

Key external drivers that influence funeral service are the number of deaths, number of adults aged 65 and older, number of cremations and U.S. per capita disposable income, all of which are projected by IBISWorld to increase from 2016-21 and in subsequent years.

NFDA also cited IBISWorld studies that, based on analysis of key external influences on the funeral service industry, suggest business conditions are projected to slightly improve for the industry over the five-year period from 2016-21, with revenue anticipated to expand at an average annual rate of 1.7 percent for funeral homes, crematories and cemeteries. In 2016, direct cremation services are estimated to make up approximately 5.6 percent of total industry revenue.

IBISWorld data also predicted that per capita disposable income in the United States would increase at an average annual rate of 1.9 percent over the next five years as economic conditions continue to improve. This means that consumer price concerns about funeral costs may somewhat diminish.

Of note, only 11 percent of funeral homes in the United States now offer pet cremation services; another 13 percent plan to offer these services within the next few years. Most funeral homes (70 percent) have no plans to offer pet cremation in the future.

Canadian/Global Cremation and Burial Rates

The current cremation rate in Canada is estimated to be 66.6 percent and is projected to grow to 89.4 percent of deaths by 2035.

The number of cremations is expected to rise from 178,730 in 2016 to 239,110 by 2025 and 334,520 by 2035. The number in 2010 was just 142,942.

Over the next nine years (by 2025), cremation rates will likely exceed the 70 percent mark in all provinces except

Year	Annual Deaths per 1,000 Population	
1995	8.8	Final Data
2000	8.7	
2005	8.3	
2007	8	
2008	8.1	
2009	7.9	
2010	8	
2011-2012	8.1	
2013	8.2	
2014	8.1	Projected Data*
2015	8.2	
2016-2020	8.2	
2025	8.6	
2030	9	
2035	9.3	
2040	10	
2045-2050	10.3	

Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island, where the projected cremation rates are 44.6 percent and 51.3 percent, respectively.

Even with the expected increase in Canadian deaths from 268,650 in 2016 to 374,800 in 2035 – a 39 percent increase – increasing consumer preference for cremation will result in the number of burials declining from 85,720 in 2016 to 65,520 in 2025 and just 35,810 in 2035. In 2010, the number of burials was 94,473.

Cremation is the prevailing practice where the custom is ancient and most of the population adheres to Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and/or Jainism. Nations with the highest cremation rates – 80 percent or higher – include Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Sweden and Thailand. In Japan, the practice is nearly universal (Cremation Society of Great Britain, International Cremation Statistics, 2013). The 2011 Cremation Society's international cremation report noted that in concentrated urban areas around the globe, the cremation rate is often more than 70 percent, reflecting population density and decreasing burial space.

Related Surveys: The 2015 FAMIC Study

In support of its Cremation and Burial Report, NFDA cited several related surveys that contribute additional depth to the findings.

The 2015 FAMIC study, American Attitudes Toward Ritualization and Memorialization (conducted every five years since 1990), corroborates that the number of consumers choosing cremation for themselves continues to increase steadily. In 2005, 33 percent of consumers stated that they would definitely choose cremation for themselves; in 2015, that number has grown to 45 percent of consumers age 40 and over, with an additional 23 percent stating that they are somewhat likely to choose cremation for themselves.

Overall, consumers who would not choose cremation cite personal preference (30 percent) as the most common reason; the second most common reason not to choose cremation (11 percent) is because the consumer does not believe in the practice.

Across U.S. geographic regions, a ceremony with the body present in a casket prior to cremation is preferred by 32 percent of consumers in Eastern states and 30 percent in the South – significantly higher numbers than in the West, where only 15 percent of respondents would choose this type of funeral. Correspondingly, more respondents in Western states (20 percent) than in the East (8 percent) and South (10 percent) would choose to have no ceremony at all. In the Midwest, 20 percent of consumers age 40 and over would choose a ceremony with the body present prior to cremation and 18 percent would choose to have no ceremony. Across all regions, 23 percent to 32 percent of Americans would prefer cremation ceremonies with the body present in an urn.

Of those who chose cremation for a loved one in the past, according to the 2015 study, more than half (59 percent) indicate that there was a permanent memorial of some type, down from 67 percent of respondents in 2010.

Saving money is the prime reason for choosing cremation among the general population age 40 and over; it is also the prime reason among African Americans 40 and over. Among Hispanics in this age group, the prime reason for choosing cremation is convenience for the family. Family tradition was cited as the primary reason by only 2 percent of the general population age 40 and over but by 13 percent of Asian Americans.

2016 NFDA Consumer Study Findings

When planning their own funerals, fewer than one-quarter (19.9 percent) of consumers age 40 and over would prefer burial; 12.5 percent are not sure or are undecided about choosing burial as the mode of final disposition.

More than one-third (36.6 percent) of consumers associate cremation with a memorial service; just 10.4 percent associate cremation with a funeral that includes a viewing. Only 7.4 percent do not associate any type of ceremony at all with cremation.

Nearly 18 percent of consumers indicate they would personally wish to have a complete funeral service with a viewing and visitation prior to cremation. Overall, 53.4 percent of consumers aged 40 and over feel it is important

NFDA Projected Deaths by Method of Disposition, by State, 2005 – 2030, Percent of Total

	Burials						Cremations					
State	2005	2010	2015	2017	2020	2030	2005	2010	2015	2017	2020	2030
Alabama	88.9%	81.6%	73.1%	70.0%	65.5%	50.7%	9.9%	17.2%	25.9%	29.0%	33.5%	48.3%
Alaska	33.6%	31.6%	28.4%	27.1%	25.1%	18.9%	57.2%	61.1%	66.9%	68.3%	70.2%	76.5%
Arizona*	38.1%	30.4%	24.2%	21.5%	20.0%	10.0%	59.5%	62.5%	66.9%	69.7%	73.9%	87.9%
Arkansas	76.2%	68.4%	61.7%	58.6%	54.0%	38.5%	19.7%	27.7%	36.2%	39.3%	44.0%	59.4%
California*	42.2%	36.1%	30.9%	28.7%	25.2%	14.0%	52.2%	58.5%	64.1%	66.4%	69.8%	81.0%
Colorado	36.0%	28.5%	21.7%	20.0%	18.9%	9.2%	55.8%	63.3%	70.0%	72.1%	73.2%	82.9%
Connecticut	61.7%	53.8%	44.2%	40.7%	35.5%	17.8%	35.4%	43.4%	52.9%	56.3%	61.5%	79.3%
Delaware*	66.4%	54.8%	44.9%	40.8%	34.7%	15.0%	32.1%	40.7%	48.2%	51.4%	56.3%	75.5%
District of Columbia	68.9%	60.3%	54.6%	51.7%	47.3%	33.4%	25.1%	34.7%	44.1%	47.0%	51.4%	65.3%
Florida	35.5%	30.1%	23.0%	20.8%	19.5%	9.4%	50.8%	58.1%	64.4%	67.0%	69.3%	79.4%
Georgia*	74.0%	63.6%	56.0%	52.6%	47.5%	30.4%	20.9%	30.2%	38.9%	42.3%	47.6%	64.9%
Hawaii	28.6%	24.1%	20.4%	18.8%	16.4%	8.7%	63.9%	69.0%	73.5%	75.1%	77.5%	85.3%
Idaho	42.6%	35.0%	30.2%	27.6%	23.6%	10.7%	45.2%	51.5%	60.6%	63.6%	67.7%	80.7%
Illinois	70.0%	60.6%	51.5%	47.7%	42.0%	23.4%	25.3%	35.2%	45.1%	48.9%	54.6%	73.2%
Indiana	71.0%	64.1%	54.7%	51.4%	46.5%	31.2%	20.0%	29.8%	39.4%	42.7%	47.6%	62.9%
Iowa	72.6%	60.9%	51.7%	47.6%	41.5%	21.5%	21.4%	31.4%	44.6%	48.7%	54.9%	74.8%
Kansas*	68.5%	58.3%	48.5%	44.5%	38.5%	18.5%	26.2%	36.7%	46.7%	50.7%	56.7%	76.8%
Kentucky*	85.7%	77.5%	69.9%	67.1%	62.8%	48.0%	12.4%	19.3%	25.8%	28.6%	32.9%	47.6%
Louisiana*	81.9%	76.4%	68.4%	65.5%	61.3%	48.1%	15.7%	21.2%	27.2%	29.6%	33.3%	46.4%
Maine**	33.7%	26.0%	16.9%	15.5%	13.5%	7.4%	55.8%	64.7%	72.9%	75.6%	77.6%	83.7%
Maryland	67.2%	59.0%	50.8%	48.0%	43.8%	29.8%	27.8%	35.2%	42.4%	45.2%	49.4%	63.4%
Massachusetts*	62.7%	55.3%	48.3%	45.3%	40.9%	26.5%	30.0%	37.7%	45.1%	48.0%	52.4%	66.9%
Michigan	60.9%	50.7%	42.2%	38.5%	33.0%	14.7%	37.1%	47.3%	56.3%	60.0%	65.5%	83.8%
Minnesota	60.1%	48.4%	37.9%	33.5%	27.0%	9.8%	38.3%	49.5%	59.0%	63.3%	69.8%	88.6%
Mississippi	88.8%	84.6%	77.6%	75.4%	72.3%	62.0%	9.9%	13.8%	20.7%	22.7%	25.8%	36.2%
Missouri	72.5%	62.6%	52.6%	48.6%	42.7%	23.2%	22.7%	32.6%	42.2%	46.0%	51.7%	71.2%
Montana	36.7%	30.5%	24.5%	21.7%	19.4%	9.7%	59.0%	65.7%	72.1%	74.8%	77.1%	86.9%
Nebraska	70.6%	60.9%	50.2%	46.2%	40.1%	19.8%	26.7%	36.1%	46.6%	50.6%	56.7%	77.0%
Nevada	19.8%	16.1%	13.0%	12.1%	10.6%	6.3%	65.1%	70.0%	73.8%	74.8%	76.2%	80.5%
New Hampshire	39.9%	33.8%	26.2%	23.1%	19.6%	9.6%	53.6%	61.6%	69.7%	73.2%	76.9%	86.8%
New Jersey	60.9%	53.0%	46.4%	43.4%	38.9%	24.3%	27.6%	35.1%	42.6%	45.3%	49.3%	63.8%
New Mexico	46.0%	38.7%	33.4%	30.7%	26.8%	13.8%	46.0%	53.6%	58.6%	61.3%	65.3%	78.7%
New York	65.8%	58.6%	51.0%	48.2%	43.9%	29.5%	26.7%	33.9%	41.7%	44.5%	48.8%	63.1%
North Carolina	74.5%	64.5%	53.2%	49.4%	43.8%	24.6%	23.4%	32.8%	42.6%	46.3%	52.0%	71.1%
North Dakota	67.4%	68.1%	55.5%	51.5%	45.7%	26.1%	19.9%	29.2%	41.0%	44.9%	50.8%	70.3%
Ohio	66.9%	58.0%	48.7%	45.5%	40.6%	24.3%	26.8%	35.5%	44.2%	47.7%	52.9%	70.0%
Oklahoma	75.3%	65.5%	53.0%	48.7%	42.1%	26.5%	20.7%	30.8%	42.1%	46.5%	53.0%	69.0%
Oregon	28.2%	22.2%	17.8%	16.3%	14.4%	7.8%	63.7%	69.4%	74.9%	76.4%	78.3%	84.9%
Pennsylvania*	66.1%	57.0%	49.4%	46.2%	41.3%	25.1%	27.3%	36.1%	44.7%	48.1%	53.1%	70.1%
Rhode Island**	70.1%	62.3%	55.6%	52.5%	48.0%	32.6%	28.6%	36.4%	42.9%	46.0%	50.6%	65.9%
South Carolina	73.8%	64.3%	55.0%	50.9%	44.9%	25.0%	20.9%	30.2%	40.0%	43.6%	49.3%	69.2%
South Dakota	76.0%	64.2%	55.3%	51.1%	45.2%	25.3%	21.4%	28.8%	38.1%	41.4%	46.7%	66.6%
Tennessee**	81.4%	73.9%	65.7%	62.7%	58.2%	43.0%	15.4%	22.5%	30.4%	33.4%	37.9%	53.1%
Texas	69.5%	59.3%	50.4%	46.6%	40.9%	22.1%	22.2%	32.0%	41.3%	44.9%	50.3%	69.1%
Utah	75.7%	64.5%	58.9%	56.0%	52.2%	38.3%	20.8%	26.1%	32.3%	34.5%	38.3%	52.3%
Vermont	35.6%	27.8%	16.0%	14.9%	13.3%	7.1%	51.4%	59.9%	67.5%	71.0%	76.2%	82.4%
Virginia**	75.6%	66.6%	59.6%	56.7%	52.2%	37.2%	18.5%	26.5%	35.8%	39.0%	43.7%	58.8%
Washington	30.6%	24.3%	20.2%	18.5%	16.5%	8.6%	64.0%	70.9%	76.3%	78.0%	80.0%	87.9%
West Virginia	75.9%	67.0%	63.5%	60.6%	56.5%	43.6%	14.2%	21.8%	31.9%	34.7%	38.8%	51.7%
Wisconsin	57.5%	47.6%	37.9%	34.0%	28.3%	9.8%	34.1%	44.9%	55.7%	59.5%	65.2%	83.7%
Wyoming	38.8%	32.8%	28.6%	25.5%	21.7%	11.0%	42.5%	56.6%	68.8%	71.9%	75.7%	86.4%
UNITED STATES	**61.4%**	**53.3%**	**45.4%**	**42.3%**	**38.0%**	**23.2%**	**32.3%**	**40.4%**	**48.5%**	**51.6%**	**56.0%**	**71.1%**

^Final data
***States with fewer than six years' data in base period 2002-2014, indicating greater uncertainty in the projections.*

to have the body and/or cremated remains present at a funeral service and 28.9 percent report that, over the last five years, they have attended funeral services with a viewing that was followed by cremation.

The number of consumers that reported attending a cremation service that included a visitation where the body was prepared but not embalmed increased to 32 percent from 23.5 percent in 2013. Nearly 55 percent of American consumers today are unaware that a prepared but unembalmed body can be part of a funeral that includes cremation. When planning a cremation service, half of consumers feel it is important for a funeral home to have an onsite crematory.

Consumers are seeking more nontraditional funeral service options. Almost half of consumers (45.3 percent) have attended a funeral in which non-clergy presided over the service. More than one-third of consumers would consider using a celebrant, and just over one-third have attended a funeral at a non-traditional location, such as an outdoor setting, cemetery, personal residence and/or public venue).

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NFDA members can download the full report at www.nfda.org/resources/business-technical/cremation/cremation-exclusive-member-resources.

Employers Modernizing Performance Management Process

By William E. Ford
President and CEO of SESCO Management Consultants

Bristol, Tennessee – Despite dissatisfaction with performance management programs and attention-grabbing headlines, most employers have no intention of eliminating their use of performance ratings. Instead, many are making significant changes to fix the overall process, such as replacing annual performance review cycles with more frequent employee and manager interactions, applying a more future-oriented definition of performance and potential, and implementing new technology, according to a survey by Towers Watson.

Less than 4 in 10 (37 percent) companies say their performance management programs are effective. Additionally, only a quarter (26 percent) say their managers and employees are satisfied with the process. Half of respondents agree that employees and managers just don't spend enough time on performance management.

For many organizations, performance management as we know it today is not working. These programs haven't delivered on their promise to improve performance and there are widespread signs of frustration among managers and employees. Employers recognize the importance of these programs and that significant changes, not tweaks, are needed. That said, most employers believe scrapping performance management programs, including the use of performance ratings, is not the solution.

Other findings indicate that many companies are rethinking the purpose and business alignment of performance management altogether. Nearly a fourth of companies are taking a more future-oriented approach, changing the focus to include performance achievement and future potential.

While too many organizations are still spending an inordinate amount of time making marginal improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of their core performance management processes, the most progressive organizations are taking more of a forward-looking approach by including the possession of skills needed for future business success in both the performance management process and in pay decisions to increase the impact of performance management on the execution of their business models.

The survey also identified several barriers contributing to ineffective performance management programs. Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents don't believe their managers and supervisors have the necessary skills, while just over a half (56 percent) say there is a lack of effective feedback. One-half (51 percent) think managers don't have the time to do performance management well.

While most organizations are good at planning the strategy and design of their performance management programs, they are falling woefully short when it comes to executing and delivering these programs. Unfortunately, managers who are pressed for time tend to give performance management a backseat and view it more as a compliance exercise.

According to the survey, 81 percent of employers say managers spend too little time in ongoing conversations with employees about their performance. More than 6 in 10 (62 percent) also say that managers spend insufficient time helping employees set goals. Interestingly, 63 percent of employers say their managers spend four hours or less per employee on performance management each year.

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William E. Ford is president and CEO of SESCO Management Consultants in Bristol, Tennessee. SESCO Management Consultants is an NFDA Endorsed Provider for human resources.

The Notebook

Ray Brent Marsh, the operator at **Tri-State Crematory** in Noble, Georgia, where more than 300 bodies that were supposed to be cremated but instead were unceremoniously stacked and strewn around the property just waiting to be discovered, has been released from prison after serving a 12-year sentence. The discovery of the bodies at the crematory was one of the most bizarre, unsettling stories in funeral service history. Marsh pleaded guilty to nearly 800 criminal charges related to fraud and corpse abuse.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) has advised the UN ECOSOC Council to grant NGO Special Consultative Status to the **International Federation of Thanatologists Associations (FIAT-IFTA),** according to an announcement by Teresa Saavedra, FIAT-IFTA international president. In accordance with this status, FIAT-IFTA shall nominate a special delegate in order to represent the international funeral sector on this level. In addition, FIAT-IFTA shall participate UN ECOSOC events, including regular sessions of UN ECOSOC, its functional commissions and its other subsidiary bodies.

FIAT-IFTA shall also:

- Attend official meetings
- Submit written statements prior to sessions
- Make oral statements
- Meet official government delegations and other NGO representatives
- Organize and attend parallel events that take place during UN ECOSOC sessions
- Participate in debates, interactive dialogues, panel discussions and informal meetings with the goal to create awareness for the accomplishments and services of the global funeral sector.

The **International Order of the Golden Rule** (OGR), in partnership with the New York Department of Health, is hosting a free, informational webinar for funeral service professionals on how to address the opioid overdose crisis. The webinar, "So You Think the Opioid Crisis Won't Impact You? How Funeral Directors Can Respond," is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19, at 3 p.m. EDT and is open to any funeral service professional. Facilitated by Cheryll Moore, medical care administrator of Erie County, New York, and Charles Castiglia of Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home in Hamburg, New York, the free webinar will shed light on America's drug epidemic and the implications it has for funeral professionals. Funeral home staff will learn about special circumstances that may impact how they interact with the deceased's family and friends. They'll also be alerted to potential safety issues and learn how to take an active role in addressing this epidemic as a member of the community. Families dealing with a life cut short due to drug addiction are turning to their funeral service professional for comfort and answers. This webinar will help prepare directors and staff on how to take a leadership role when walking survivors through this difficult and unexpected journey. Register online at *www.ogr.org/webinars#opioid*. OGR is not offering CE credit for this webinar.

Bailey & Bailey has named Alexa Baerga-Nunez to its engraving team. Baerga-Nunez's background includes experience with a number of art mediums.

Foundation Partners Group (FPG) has acquired several locations in the Portland, Oregon, area: Wilhelm's Portland Memorial Funeral Home, Portland Memorial Mausoleum, Heritage Memorial, Sunnyside Little Chapel of the Chimes, Sunnyside Chimes Memorial Garden, Oregon Cremation Company, Valley Memorial Park and Valley Memorial Funeral Home.

"We are excited to build on our presence in the Pacific Northwest with these incredible locations and establish our first operational base in Oregon," stated Brad Rex, FPG president and CEO. "David Schroeder and Michael Ashe are well known and respected throughout funeral service and highly regarded for their exceptional operational skill set. We look forward to their involvement in growing the Foundation Partners Group network in Oregon and surrounding states."

FPG has also announced the acquisition of Funeral Alternatives of Washington, which was launched in November 2002 by Clair Ferris and his wife, Sharon. It has locations in Centralia, Lacey and Tumwater, Washington. In addition, the purchase includes South Sound Manor, a full-service banquet and event center adjacent to the Tumwater location. Funeral Alternatives was developed as a new business model for funeral service in 2002. The operation is based on the concept of not "selling" families but simply walking them through the funeral process. At its foundation, Funeral Alternatives is dedicated to doing what is in the best interest of families. From traditional mortuary services to special requests, the staff at Funeral Alternatives works hard to incorporate a family's traditions and customs in the funeral service at an affordable price. South Sound Manor serves the community with a unique venue for funeral services, weddings, anniversary parties and other life celebrations.

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From the Editor's Desk…

"Do You Want to Be Average?"

"Attitude is a choice. What you think you can do, whether positive or negative, confident or scared, will most likely happen." – Pat Summitt

Everyone has heard the term "highway hypnosis," which is when you drive from point A to point B, but by the time you reach your destination, you don't remember the trip at all. Routine and complacency are the enemies of innovation and drive, and when people flip that switch to autopilot, they are giving up far too much control.

Every now and then, people need a jump-start. Every time I travel to a convention, I hope to hear the right combination of words from a speaker that will, at the very least, help me to think of things in a different way or at the very most, inspire me to not only look at things differently but to set out to do things differently in order to accomplish more.

After learning about basketball coach Pat Summitt's diagnosis of early-onset dementia back in 2011, we all knew her time was short, but she met this challenge like she met all challenges – head on. Said Summitt: "This will not be a pity party." And she went on to found the Pat Summitt Foundation to help find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. It was with great sadness this week that we heard she was gone.

Whenever I feel the need to recharge my motivation, I reread *Reach for the Summitt*, written by the head coach of the Tennessee Lady Vols following one of her many championship seasons. The book describes her "Definite Dozen System" for succeeding at whatever you do.

One of the most motivating things I ever heard Summitt say was in a 1999 interview with *60 Minutes*, when she asked, "Do you want to be average? There's so many average people in this world; it just annoys me." To this day, whenever I am about to let "good enough" be my end game, those words ring in my ears and send me back to the drawing board to do better.

Since Summitt's death, her inspirational words have been all around. Here are some I have always found inspirational and motivational: and will continue to take with me.

"Here's how I am going to beat you. I am going to outwork you. That's it. That's all there is to it."

"You can't always be the strongest or most talented or most gifted person in the room, but you can be the most competitive."

"It is harder to stay on top than it is to make the climb. Continue to seek new goals."

"The absolute heart of loyalty is to value those people who tell you the truth, not just those who tell you what you want to hear. In fact, you should value them most because they have paid you the compliment of leveling with you and assuming you can handle it."

Ed.

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