

## **B.C. Bailey Funeral Homes, Wallingford, CT**

In the spring of 2020, we acquired a Tombstone Hearse that we could offer to the families we are honored to serve. It is a silver, Harley – Davidson Motorcycle Trike style motorcycle with a hearse trailer. It is a contemporary approach to a classic style hearse, reminiscent of the horse drawn hearses of the past. It is a unique offering that is appreciated by both motorcycle enthusiasts as well as the general population looking for a memorable, unique way to say goodbye.

The Tombstone Hearse features large, glass windows so the contents of the hearse can be easily seen. It is used for caskets; however, we are also able to use our urn ark carrier for those families who choose cremation and are looking for a memorable “last ride” for their loved ones. It is particularly striking when used for veterans and when there is a flag draped casket.

Upon acquiring the Tombstone Hearse, the funeral home experienced a great deal of publicity. The option was published in daily newspapers (the Record-Journal of Meriden, CT and the Republican-American of Waterbury, CT), a Connecticut based motorcycle blog (<https://ride-ct.com/funeral-home-offers-option-for-taking-that-final-ride/>) as well as a local news television broadcast (WTIC).

Posts of Facebook about the Tombstone Hearse went viral with any people commenting their appreciation for the offering. The funeral home has begun to use the Tombstone Hearse in advertising as well.

A video highlighting the motorcycle hearse was also produced to promote its availability on the funeral home’s website as well as on social media (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1QTLTM4Wcc>).

The simple approach of parking the Tombstone Hearse in front of various locations has led to a great deal of attention from the communities in which the funeral homes operate. Every time it is out front, pedestrians approach and drivers will stop to park their vehicles so that they can walk up and take a closer look. Cell phone cameras frequently come out as pictures are taken and shared by text and social media with those that people think would be interested (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXg1xTDkr7Y>). When possible, funeral home staff is outside near the Tombstone Hearse to talk and interact with those who come for a closer look.

The use of the hearse has garnered lots of attention and excitement whenever a family chooses it. Driving through the community, pedestrians will record the procession and those attending services will have themselves photographed with it. For those who are looking to incorporate a celebratory feel to funeral and memorial services, this provides a unique and memorable option.

## **Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home, Hammond, LA**

Brandon and Martha Thompson are no strangers to construction projects. As a licensed residential and commercial contractor, Brandon had already built the couple's first funeral home in Hammond, LA, in 2006 and managed an extensive remodel upon acquiring their second funeral home in Ponchatoula, LA, in 2011, along with many other projects. They knew that opening a third Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home location, while managing the demands and day-to-day operations of an already flourishing funeral business and full-service monument company, would be a huge undertaking (no pun intended); however, they could have never predicted just how challenging the project would truly prove to be!

On July 30, 2016, the land of the future site in Denham Springs, Louisiana, was purchased. Horrifically, on the same day, three members of the Thompson Team were struck and injured by a drunk driver. Still reeling from the accident, but eager to start the project, The Thompsons pressed on. The next month, in August 2016, a catastrophic 500-year flood, devastated the area, leaving 80% off all structures substantially damaged in Livingston Parish. This unanticipated natural disaster, coupled with the responsibilities of an already established and ever-growing funeral business, resulted in a lengthy delay of the groundbreaking. After 18 months of construction, Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home's Denham Springs location officially opened for business on March 10, 2020; coincidentally, Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic the very next day. Due to the sensitive nature of the business, the social climate pertaining to the pandemic, and Covid restrictions, the Thompsons chose to delay their Grand Opening Celebration and took a low-key approach with a soft opening. On May 10, 2021, a full 14 months after officially opening, the Grand Opening, Ribbon Cutting, and Open House of their beautiful, 15,000 square foot, state of the art facility, was a long awaited and extremely gratifying day to celebrate!

The celebration was promoted in a variety of ways. Invitations were mailed to all local churches, dignitaries, elected officials, law enforcement offices, hospice agencies, nursing homes and assisted living centers. A banner was displayed in front of the funeral home, local newspapers and radio stations advertised the event, and all were invited via the funeral home Facebook page. In addition to a ribbon cutting, the Grand Opening included a delicious, full buffet, custom cake, fun balloon arch, and tours of the funeral home. One unique way we chose to commemorate the event was to bury a time capsule, using a Wilburt urn vault. To be opened in 50 years, the time capsule includes a variety of items of today, such as a landline phone, hand sanitizer, coins, a newspaper, etc. In addition, all attendees were invited to write a note to be included. Approximately 100 people attended the event. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase our beautiful facility, to meet and visit with the people of our community.

**F.** Provide a statement, signed by the funeral home owner or general manager, stating that the funeral home gathers customer-satisfaction feedback (e.g., via surveys, comment cards, letters requesting family feedback, NFDA's Family Satisfaction Survey program, or an equivalent customer-satisfaction survey program) regarding the quality of services received. Include the method of gathering customer-satisfaction feedback and how the information is shared with staff in your statement.

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## *Cementerio del Mar*

Humans look to transcend leaving a legacy through time, that is the why we created a different concept, unique in Latin America and the first in Mexico.

Creating a marine cemetery where we'll pay tribute to our loved ones, guarding their ashes combined with special elements and carefully selected for this process, forming a beautiful memorial pearl that will be kept in the reefs and with time they will transform into colorful corals preserving marine lives and creating new ecosystems.

What is our goal? Pay special tribute to that loved one that was an ocean lover. How do we achieve it? Since the moment the service is asked we'll help our client with a delivery guide number to translate safely the ashes of the important family member that passed away.

We currently have three different sizes of reefs for the keeping of the memorial pearl, transforming their legacy in a life tribute that with time will contribute to the growth of sea life.

This process will be thoroughly documented so the families can follow updates.

The family and friends will be able to enjoy a virtual tribute ahead of the submersion of the pearl, with the goal of providing a unique tribute for this special being.

The magic of this service will change the lives of a lot of families because they will be fundamental keys for this beautiful concept where their loved ones will merge with the wonders of the sea, preserving life and every time they see a coral it will mean a tribute of a loved one that physically left but in spirit is more alive than ever.

The sea dresses with colors of hope and love, the dark blue of the ocean is decks the halls in the face of the arrival of this distinguished guests that from the moment of submersion will be the guardians of deep waters.

What better way to pay this kind of tribute in the beautiful waters of the Yucatan Peninsula, the colors, light and life touches will be an amazing touch, where the families can have a place to honor and remember all the moments lived.



## **Carmon Community Funeral Homes, Windsor, CT**

Due to the pandemic as well as the social challenges facing our nation, this has been the most challenging year in the seventy-five years of our company's existence. Our staff did outstanding work even caring for a fifty percent increase in families cared for as well as assisting colleagues in NY and NJ at our crematory this past year during this year of turmoil. The most significant issue we faced was dealing with the emotions and feelings surrounding the death of George Floyd and the violence in our country as well as the racial and social unrest and its effect on our very diverse staff. We believe that our staff is unique in our profession, with thirty-five percent being women, thirty-one percent of our staff identifies as people of color, seven percent of our staff is Alternative Lifestyles, and twenty-seven percent are White Males. Because of Carmon's feelings of inclusion and respect for all people we have functioned well over the years but this year with the emotions surrounding racism in all its forms we felt that we needed to do more. We decided to create a committee to truly learn and identify how we stand as a company relative to diverse religions, ethnic backgrounds, and lifestyles as related to our staff and the communities that we serve.

We serve families of all religions (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and those with no stated religion), ethnic, cultural, and lifestyle choices. We also serve West Indian, Asian, Black, White, Hispanic, and others. Our staff backgrounds reflect this same diversity and we needed to do more than just support them one on one when they had problems or issues dealing with one another or in more difficult circumstances when dealing with those we serve who may not be as all-inclusive. This is a delicate balance when serving families at their most difficult time and we do not want to set up barriers in our care for them. Yet we needed to take a leadership role in our communities that are very diverse and for many who feel polarized during these very emotional times. Our committee was tasked with coming up with a new mission statement that they would bring back to share with not only the staff but also the communities that we serve.

We formed a committee that was representative of the diversity that we have in our staff. They were charged with developing a statement we could share, print, and post in each one of our facilities to state how we feel. This needed to be a public statement of our core values and one we expect every one of our eighty plus staff to embrace and be able to communicate.

The statement is as follows: "We are dedicated to providing the most caring and compassionate service to everyone. We do this through our diverse staff, our continued commitment to learning, and by walking alongside the families we serve. We understand that this is an ongoing

process, and we are committed to continuous growth, innovation, and change as we strive to respect and honor all people."

The leadership of our firm feels that the following action points are imperative: Staff and those we serve will be treated with respect and kindness, regardless of Race, Religious Belief, Lifestyle Choice, Gender, or Disability; Leadership will make every effort to provide employment opportunities to all people listed above; Leadership will make every effort to afford learning opportunities about all people listed above for our staff; Leadership will require Diversity Training for all staff on an annual basis and for new employees; Leadership will require Sexual Harassment Training on an annual basis and for new employees; Leadership will make every attempt to create a work environment where all employees feel included, supported, and valued; Leadership will encourage employees to take an active role in interrupting bias or stereotyping in any form.

This statement is now incorporated into our staff manual; discussed at staff meetings; and printed, framed; and displayed in a prominent place in each facility. All our staff, full and part time including the owners, were required to take an on-line course in Diversity & Inclusion developed by New Haven Consulting Group and pass a test on its content. One hundred percent of our staff have passed this class and any new employees are required to take it as well. They also must take an on-line class in Combating Sexual Harassment and again one hundred percent of the staff have taken this class and passed the exam. This is a work in progress and takes vigilance and dedication on the part of all of us going forward. The fact that it is now a written and published part of our culture is extremely important.

While our family has always held these values, we needed to make it a stronger part of our business's culture going forward. We feel it will make our organization stronger and able to withstand these dramatic and polarizing events our world is facing. The basic education must begin "at home" and our company is the home that all our staff and their families look to for this leadership. We pray for our communities, our states, our nation, and our world and hope this outward expression of our beliefs will benefit all of us and the wider world we are part of.

We present this project as one we feel is extremely important to our company and funeral service in general and hope it may inspire other firms to consider this approach if they are experiencing any of these issues and concerns in their staff or community. We realize our diversity is unique but know how important these issues are to our staff and our communities.

## **Chicago Jewish Funerals, Buffalo Grove, IL**

### RESPECT OF THE DECEASED

Those of us in funeral service, particularly those of us as owners, realize what a unique profession we occupy. There can be financial benefits and the occasional public or private recognitions for our work for sure, but these are not the tenets of a sustained funeral service career. It takes more than money and a pat on the back to remain in funeral service for a life-long career. It takes a passion to serve others. It takes the innate drive to comfort the bereaved. It takes a commitment to respect the deceased. Those who do not possess an internal drive to serve others, will not remain in funeral service. In 1997, I founded Chicago Jewish Funerals, (CJF) on a promise to the Jewish community of Chicagoland. "You and your family deserve a highly personal funeral service that respects your wishes and the strong traditions of the Jewish people." Since 1997 we have provided compassionate, concierge-level service with a special sensitivity to Jewish customs and traditions. Though our company and our staff has grown significantly since our inception, our commitment to the highest level of service has never wavered. If anything, our shared experiences over time and our responsiveness to constructive criticisms and other suggestions from whom we have previously served, has improved our company immensely.

We operate under the dictum "whenever possible the answer will always be yes" and our company slogan is literally; "The Way it Should Be"™

As owners, we are aware there are circumstances, typically financially, which oblige owners to make substantive changes to their normal business operations. In some circumstances these exceptions to normal business are apparent. Highly publicized funerals, public interest funerals of the famous, first responders, our military heroes, children, crime victims etc., which may require additional staffing and other additional expenses, which are not easily transferred to the bereaved. It is "the cost of doing business" as they say and it is no surprise that funeral

directors nearly universally conduct themselves in this manner daily and whether acknowledged or not. The reality is that life and death can be messy. There is not always a loving surviving family to provide for the deceased at the end. There are not always people who care. Sometimes there are immediate family members who do not feel compelled to act, whether because of financial impact or other reasons. Unfortunately, and sometimes, people die alone and they have absolutely no one. Like most funeral homes we effort to do the right thing, simply because it is the right thing to do.

In 2011 and in honor and loving memory of my brother Michael, (died, 2010) I established the Michael I Jacobson Memorial Gomle Fund. The word "gomle" in Hebrew generally translates to nurturing. Since our founding in 1997, we have provided low or no cost funerals many times each year. The purpose of this fund as established, is to assist in providing for dignified Jewish funeral services and burials, regardless of one's ability to pay. Michael and I came from a funeral home family as our father Sanford (died, 2001) was a funeral home owner and director, in NY. Michael's and my life experiences while growing up, including our observations of our father working tirelessly to assist the bereaved, set both of us on a career in funeral service. Michael and I somehow both had internalized a call to serve others and whenever possible, to reduce their suffering.

From our company's inception there have been circumstances each year, where we are contacted by family members or clergy and where there are extreme financial difficulties within a family. This is not an uncommon occurrence for any funeral service operation. Each of us, I am sure, does what they can in the advancement of humanity by providing for the destitute. Chicago Jewish Funerals has been steadfast in our obligation by way of my promise, I made to the Jewish community.

Approximately 35 times a year, I, and my staff of 10 licensed funeral directors conduct funerals for the indigent and the unclaimed. Chicago Jewish Funerals will always provide for a dignified burial of a Jewish individual regardless of one's

ability to pay. In fact, it is frequently the case where Chicago Jewish Funerals will not only provide all services and merchandise for a funeral but will additionally pay the cemetery expenses, simply out of respect for the deceased and to ensure a dignified burial. The fact that there may be surviving family members pleased by our actions is appreciated, but irrelevant. This program is based on my promise to the Jewish community and was borne out of respect for and intended for, the benefit of the deceased.

Often, we are contacted by Rabbis or other clergy, who may have been attending to an individual in a nursing home or other setting, where a death has now occurred and where there is no one to act on behalf of the deceased and provide for burial. These individuals are typically enrolled in Public Assistance programs to provide for their care and are otherwise indigent. To gain custody of the deceased, we would then interact with The Cook County Office of the Public Guardian Offices or the Cook County Public Administrator's Offices to legally obtain custody of and to proceed with, the burial of an unclaimed or indigent person. As time went on and as these government agencies became aware of our willingness to provide dignified services, the number of free funerals we do, has escalated. We are commonly contacted weeks or months following a death, when their governmental "investigation" (searching for family members) has indicated cemetery ownership in a Jewish Cemetery or they are determined to have Jewish family members. While we are typically contacted regarding deceased Jewish individuals, we have never declined to provide funeral services when requested by any state agency or any clergy and regardless of the religion of the deceased.

Chicago Jewish Funerals serves all who call upon us and we make no religious judgement and we exclude no one, for any reason, religious or otherwise. However, as we primarily serve the Jewish community, we are cognizant of Jewish sensibilities and in some cases, religious requirement. In general, Jewish individuals are to be returned to the earth whole, and there should be no

unnecessary delay in the deceased returning to the earth. To that end Chicago Jewish Funerals will work to ensure a burial instead of cremation if the family is deciding based purely on financial considerations.

On any given day, there can be hundreds of “unclaimed” deceased individuals at the Office of the Cook County Medical Examiner. Most of these persons have been identified and many but not all, have surviving family members and yet remain unclaimed. Historically, Cook County would do mass burials of dozens of individuals at a time. This process would occur several times a year. Chicago Jewish Funerals would provide staff and hearses (as have many other funeral homes in Chicagoland) to assist in these burials at Homewood Memorial Gardens Cemetery and Mount Olivet cemetery, in Chicago. This activity is in addition to the individual 35 or so indigent funerals we continue to do in any given year.

As one can imagine, word of a funeral home which will bury for free, if necessary, travels fast. There have been occasions where families have taken advantage of our altruism. There have been families who have insisted they literally have nothing and then attend the “free” funeral, in their Rolls Royce, Bentley, Mercedes or other vehicles, which belie any true financial distress. Individual families taking advantage of us financially happens infrequently and remains frustrating but we recognize ultimately, it’s the cost of doing business. These individuals who deceive us and take advantage of our goodwill are merely debasing and embarrassing themselves. Fortunately, most people are kind and decent people who are extremely appreciative when others are kind.

Imagine you are a bereaved family member or even simply a friend of a deceased individual and you are aware that your loved one has died and they are currently being “stored” at the Cook County Morgue. You know your loved one will either be buried in a mass grave or they may be cremated but you do not know which disposition will occur, or when. You are aware regardless of the disposition, this process will take months to be completed and you will be notified

when it is completed. You will not be involved. Now imagine a funeral director calls you and is now telling you they are taking custody of their loved one and will provide for a funeral and absolutely for free. Additionally, the funeral director is now inviting you to come and to gather and to have a proper and dignified funeral for your loved one. I have always felt if one truly internalizes the concept of respecting the dead and comforting the mourners, most decisions related to my business are not very complicated.

Chicago Jewish Funerals will continue to focus on this program being for the benefit of the deceased – regardless of their circumstance in life. This program was instituted out of a profound respect for the dignity of the deceased, not their surviving family members. The fact that surviving family members may benefit and are additionally appreciative, is a collateral benefit, not a design feature. Most of the indigent burials we do, consist of our staff, cemetery personnel and clergy.

Some time ago, Cook County after many decades of mass burials of the unclaimed within the county, Cook County determined they would begin to cremate at least some of the unclaimed deceased. This decision by Cook County has ultimately caused a fundamental shift by Chicago Jewish Funerals within the last two years. Our position was simple. Although Chicago Jewish Funerals makes no judgement on what an individual decides as their own or a family member's disposition, we felt this change from burial (typical in Judaism) to potential cremation, warranted a conversation between Chicago Jewish Funerals the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office the Cook County Office of the Public Guardian and the Cook County Public Administrator's Office.

Essentially, we communicated to these offices if they become aware that any individual in their custody is Jewish or even presumed be Jewish, that we will take custody of the deceased and provide funeral services, free of charge. To our knowledge, there are no unclaimed, deceased Jewish individuals within Cook County, and we intend to keep it that way. The Way it Should Be™



1961 – 2010

*“My brother Michael’s contribution to the Jewish community will forever be remembered as we continue to follow his footsteps and light the path bringing those less fortunate home. In honor of my brother’s memory, I ask that all of us keep our beloved deceased’s perpetual light shining.”*

*– David I. Jacobson*

## I. Basic Requirement

- F. A large family in the gathering area had long planned to honor their beloved mother, wife, sister, among many other titles with an elaborate funeral at their church, followed by a graveside service and a luncheon to celebrate her life.

That was before the pandemic.

Traditional ways of saying goodbye — large gatherings of people sharing their stories and their grief — have been curtailed by restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the virus.

Telling a family that they cannot honor their mother just as her wishes were expressed in her prearrangement is one of the most gut-wrenching feeling one could express, even more so is to how all these feelings are stirring among the families and the questions of what will things look like in a year. Telling a family such things is devastating. Then the questions begin among the family members. Should we delay the service? Should we continue on with the arrangements of the service in her honor and simply do a little graveside service with only a handful of people able to attend? All these open-ended questions are ones that a family should not have to endure while trying to mourn the loss of their loved ones, but they do. Now it's weeks or even months later, but the family has decided to hold out for the large service and burial they had planned all along. And this beloved wife, mother and grandmother is still awaiting her burial.

For all deaths, the pandemic has forced us to change our practices. We used to meet grieving families to discuss funeral arrangements in person, with warm hugs, and handshakes. Now we meet families with a mask on and social distancing. If the family has been exposed to Covid, we meet them over a zoom call.

To look at the empty pews in church was even more devastating, many understood why, but it doesn't make it any easier. Even amid a pandemic, the natural human instinct to comfort one another is strong. It provides closure for the living and support for each other.

## Dobratz-Hantge Funeral Chapel, Hutchinson, MN

In the setting of COVID-19, we have seen more virtual spike and the use of technology became more prominent. We are all looking forward to see each other again and when you're grieving, there's nothing like seeing that person that has known you your whole life come through the door. We have found many ways to adapt with the ever-changing guidelines and regulations. From family members zooming into the service, using technology for signing documents or even making arrangements. We offer the option of placing the full funeral service onto our website page following the service for others to be able to view who were unable to attend in person. We also offer memory booklets which include pictures that were taken at the service.

We are so hopeful that we are able to move on from this pandemic and go back to how things used to be in the near future. We love serving families by holding a big celebration and honoring their loved one's life.

## **Feeney Funeral Home, Ridgewood, NJ**

### Joie de Vie. An Homage to a Life Well Lived

This innovative and unique concept is meant to pay tribute and honor a family member or friend that is ailing, aged, or infirmed. There are two parts to the “Joie de Vie” concept: the “It’s My Day!” Celebration and the “Legacy Remembrance” gathering. The idea for the first portion, the “It’s My Day!” party, is that the honoree is able to attend the celebration to experience all the love and joy that their family and friends have for them. They will be able to hear stories and memories, and share their own, about their life. The second portion, the “Legacy Remembrance” gathering, happens after the honoree has died, and is a continuation of the celebration of their life

#### Part 1: “It’s My Day!” Party

The “It’s My Day!” party, which can be held at Feeney Funeral Home or a location of the honoree’s choice, will be a most emotional, inspiring, and rewarding experience for all in attendance, especially the honoree!

When a date for the event is agreed upon, our staff will send out the invitations. At the same time, several weeks before the “It’s My Day!” event occurs, our trained staff will help the family and friends gather photographs, testimonial letters, and stories from friends and relations both far and near. It is compiled by professional into a gift set called BOOM BOX.

The BOOM BOX will be read at “It’s My Day!” In addition, party favors representing an important part of the honoree’s life will be handed out. Our staff will be taking photographs during the party, and there will be a videographer present in another room. The videographer will be asking participants questions about the honoree in an informal interviewing style. This will help to create a video filled with stories and memories of the honoree for their family and friends to cherish for years to come.

Our staff can also concierge food for the “It’s My Day!” party if the honoree and family so desire. Feeney Funeral Home has a close working relationship with local caterers. The staff will plan food and beverage selections with the family, and our staff will also serve as attendance to facilitate the distribution of food and drink to guests.

The event will be completely personalized and designed to bring joy to the honoree based on their hobbies and interests. For example, if the honoree is a Star Wars fan, then guests might be requested to dress as their favorite character. Also, the décor and favors will reflect the personality and interests of the honoree. At the end of the day, the “It’s My Day!” honoree will feel all the love that those in attendance have for him or her.

Of course, the family will be given the BOOM BOX and any remaining party favors, as well as a photo book that will be created several days after the event. This book will include all of the photos taken at the event by Feeney Funeral Home’s in-house photographer.

#### The Legacy Remembrance

Similar to a Memorial Service, the “Legacy Remembrance” is an event of remembering, honoring, sharing, and loving. This is the service that will be held after the honoree has passed. During the remembrance, we will play the Testimonial Video that was created during the “It’s My Day!” celebration. We will also hold a Community Eulogy, coordinated by our staff, where attendees share some stories and memories about the deceased. Of course, selected photos and quotes from the BOOM BOX will be available for all to see, and perhaps even read aloud to the attendees by our staff.

Our Life Celebration materials will be displayed, and the keepsake Life Celebration items out to all the attendance. These Life Celebration materials include personalized photo cards, banners, and collages made from photos of the deceased provided by their family and friends. We will also hand out another remembrance items, similar to the “party favor” given out at the “It’s My Day!” party, only this time it will represent a different important aspect of the life of the deceased.

Throughout the event, our staff photographer will once again be taking photos which will be made into a book given to the family at a later dated.

With the combination of the “It’s My Day!” party and the “Legacy Remembrance, it will be a fitting tribute to the “Joie de Vie” of a person’s loved one.



## CATEGORY 1: BASIC REQUIEREMENTS

### Criteria F: ESSAY – Innovative Program

We are definitely living in difficult and very hard times. The last fourteen months have been more complex than many of us ever think. However, at Funeraria del Hogar de Cristo (FHC), we have not stopped and we have continued to challenge ourselves in developing new and better services for our clients and better working conditions for our employees.

We believe in the value of people and we are driven by a deep conviction that we all deserve a respectful farewell. Also, we are driven by a deep vocation of service and understanding how difficult is nowadays – due to the pandemic situation – that only few people have the possibility to attend either the wake ceremony (keep vigil) nor the funeral ceremony, we have developed – among others - the following services:

- a) Filmed Funeral services (full video)
- b) Private Funeral Masses, Private Responses or Funeral Tributes via streaming
- c) Condolences via web
- d) Weekly Public Masses

a) Filmed Funeral Service: Mostly considered for the cases of Covid deceases, we offered the service of filming not only the ceremony of Mass or Response as well as the arrival at the cemetery and all the way to the mausoleum or grave.

This video is properly edited and complemented with ad-hoc music, including all the stages from different angles. This have been specially valued not only to share with relatives and friends that not only are not allowed to attend due the pandemic restrictions but to share with those ones who live abroad.

b) Private Funeral Mass: We give the service of celebrating a Funeral Mass with the minimum quorum allowed which is transmitted from one of our chapels and all the relatives and friends can participate through a private web link that is previously given to the client. This even gives the chance of keeping the video to watch it any time and at any moment afterwards. This service is also given in the cases of Private Responses or Funeral Tributes

c) Condolences Via Web: Through our web site on the obituaries of the services performed by our Funerary Home, any person can send their condolences by lighting a candle for example, remaining all the records to be given to the client.

d) Weekly Public Masses: Every Friday and also as a service to the community, we celebrate -with no public due to restrictions – that is broadcasted through a public link. In advance, and through our web site, the public can send the name of their deceased and of course during the Mass all the deceased names are mentioned. It is important to mentioned that his is not only for the services given by our Funerary but to ANY person who needs a relative o close deceased been mentioned in a Mass.

All the previously explained, has been developed looking for: giving a better service to the community and to our clients; giving the possibility of – in a way – participate in a funeral o ceremony; follow and respect the restrictions and provisions established by the authorities; but above all, to protect the life and health of our workers and our clients and the community. These have been very hard and difficult times not only for us as funeral workers but mostly for the bereaves and relatives that besides losing a beloved they do not have the chance to leave them as they would like.

In this world, we are all called to support each other in order to get ahead and overcome situations as complex as this pandemic. We – Funeraria del Hogar de Cristo – are fully committed to working for a better world for everyone and to continue giving our best to make this possible.

On the other hand - internally – we must remark how important is the wellbeing of our employees and therefore, we have made – and continue making big efforts for their personal safety and especially to improve - day by day – the organizational climate. Regarding to these subjects, we want to share with you at least two very good news that are the results of hard work and efforts. These are:

- Recertification as a BCorp & One of the Best for the World
- Our new warehouse at our headquarters

a) **The Recertification as a “B Company”** and above that... we are being recognized as **“One of Best for the World ™ 2021”**. As you can read bellow on the attached documents; this has been mainly for our best practices of the impact area: “Community”. Obviously, we are more than proud to receive this recognition and we are sharing this joy in the first place with those who have made this recognition possible: our employees!



PLEASE KEEP ALL INFORMATION RELATED TO  
BEST FOR THE WORLD CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL JULY 14, 2021

**YOU ARE ONE OF THE  
BEST FOR THE WORLD™ 2021!**

Your best practices and consistent efforts to **positively impact all your stakeholders** are being recognized: the score achieved by your B Corp in one or more of the impact areas evaluated on the B Impact Assessment, and later on verified by the verification team, is one of the **top 5%** in your size group worldwide!

We're asking you to **keep this a secret until July 14**, which is when the Best for the World (BFTW) 2021 B Corps will be announced publicly. In order to prepare you for the launch date celebrations, we're sharing **a participation toolkit with activation assets and tips** to help you amplify your achievement.

We're also hoping you'll join us for the multiple **local, regional and global initiatives** we're coordinating to help the worldwide B Corp community and the whole movement to continue to step forward and lead the way towards an economic system that benefits all people, communities, and the planet. If you're keen on taking part, please fill out this interest intake form and let us know **what type of knowledge you'd like to share and how**.



**¡FELICITACIONES!**

Por el RECONOCIMIENTO a su trabajo.

**Funeraria Hogar de Cristo**

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Fue reconocida en la lista "Best for the World™ 2021" por sus prácticas ejemplares en el área de impacto "Comunidad"

b) **Our New Warehouse:** Being able to build a new and modern warehouse was a longing we had for many years. And finally, on February 2020 we receive it.

This meant a great effort not only because of the investment itself that our Board of Directors endorsed, but also because we were able to maintain 100% active our operation in our headquarters while the new construction was being carried out and then the old one was demolished.

This new and modern warehouse complies with all current regulations and houses not only warehouses but also the offices of the entire Operations area such as: Supply, Warehouse Administration, Services Coordination and Supervisors.

Next pages, some photos and videos.

For all the above explained, we are convinced that we are on the right path to fulfill our purpose and continue to be a better company for our employees and for the world.

Sincerely,



  
JUAN ANDRÉS FUENTEALBA HERRERA  
General Manager  
Funeraria del Hogar de Cristo Ltda.

## **PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE - Category 1F**

Even before the realities covid provided, funeral service had changed in striking ways. Cremation was in large part the driver and funeral homes began to experience the decline in funeral services, participation in memorial services and even in-person arrangements. Families even began to provide their own obituaries, if they had one at all, due to the increasing cost of paid obituaries in the local newspapers. In many instances funeral homes were being asked to provide even less service to a family experiencing a death. Then covid hit and these realities became even more evident. Services were most often direct or postponed until a healthier time. When services were held it was for a small portion of individuals that were either related or knew the deceased. Opportunities to celebrate a life became more and more important - all while being less and less possible.

In these changing times we recognized the growing importance of, and need for, an obituary.... Not the template format that had served funeral service for decades but a storied version that emulated the life lived in ways that had not been provided through our funeral homes in times past. We studied our own obituaries and those of many other funeral homes and found that they all say the same thing: So and So of Such and Such a place, died at a certain age usually with their loving family by their side. They are predeceased by ... and survived by ... and may have loved a few hobbies, had a few accomplishments and would be having services a week or a month from now. And short of the name of the person it was written for they all looked and sounded exactly the same encouraging the reader to skip down to see when services were but never experience the story of the life that had been lived.....

What we learned is that one size should not fit all when it comes to writing an obituary. "We all have a story to share, in fact, we all become stories that are passed down to future generations." And, "We are the storytellers, the authors of our life novels, with all of the chapters intertwining every memory one hold so dearly. Our own stories are how we remember those we have loved, and will always remain the tales we recount at future family gatherings." We learned that it is not about the ending, but about the story... and so began "The Fine Print".

Eager to provide increased service to our families we engaged a team of professional writers who with the assistance of a survey answered by the family link personal stories together with different themes all while focusing on milestones and life lessons unique to a loved one. Our professional writers create a narrative that is both engaging and unique and pays tribute to a life well lived that can be placed in the local newspaper if requested by the family as well as on our website without the cost of the local newspaper fees.

The completed story finds the reader engaged in the first three lines and eager to read on about the life of the deceased and continues to be engaged throughout and comes to the ending wishing they would have known the individual as we write about what should not be forgotten – the unique characteristics of a life lived with every detail remembered in a meaningful storied format.

Usually our holidays and family gatherings include these stories and are recounted to future generations. It is at those gatherings that we teach our loved ones how to remember a life that was lived and we decided that we needed to make our obituaries the stories that focused on the milestones of the life that had been lived.

By utilizing “The Fine Print” our staff is able to engage the family, create meaningful connections for the family, and tell a story that is unique and detailed and increases the opportunity for personalized services at the funeral home or church and begins the healing process for both the family and the community now realizing the loss.

We learned that in many instances the obituary is the only connection we have that allows us to remain relevant with our families and keeps us from becoming transactional. It has provided great value to our families and they have taught us the importance of celebrating “the” life (not just “a” life) in the most unique way possible and it needs to start with a well written obituary that truly speaks to the life of the deceased in the way that only they would have lived and the family would have remembered.

**Category 1**  
**Achievement F**  
**Attachment 6**

**Professionals with Skill and Compassion: Offering Help in the Midst of the Pandemic**

No one makes the choice to go into funeral service as a career without having a heart for serving others. This is obvious to anyone who really gets to know funeral directors and the workings of funeral service in general. It is not easy to be on call, to miss Christmas dinner, to witness horrific deaths, and to attend to every minute detail- because it is incredibly important to have everything just right for a grieving family. Keeping a spirit of compassion alive when there is the busyness and stress of dealing with crisis situations, such as multiple deaths, is a true challenge. However, without a doubt, it is with the character and integrity of so many funeral directors that all of this is accomplished.

Gunderson Funeral Homes, in the Madison, Wisconsin area, has carefully put together, over these many years, a gifted and kind-hearted staff, willing to go the extra mile to be of service to those in need. Time and time again, it has been extremely evident that they are professionals in every sense of the word. Every single staff member strives to create a sense of good will and community service that has earned Gunderson Funeral Homes a very respected position in the greater community.

Attending to the physical, emotional, and, yes, the spiritual needs of grieving loved ones is often a juggling match with the other families, employees, and issues needing immediate assistance- especially during these heightened and compacted time frames. This has been the case for all these many years. But, this past year, the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic have compounded the stress, the need for clarity, and the vital need for proper protocols. These necessary changes were often very difficult for families to accept and even more difficult for funeral directors to employ. Yet, it was imperative that these new guidelines were followed by everyone. Gunderson's responded to the pandemic with professionalism and leadership, and with a deep understanding of how families were affected at such a difficult time.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things is telling family members that they cannot all be present at the funeral, and that only a small amount of immediate family can attend. All this, after having not been able to be with their loved one in the hospital when they were dying and at the time of death. This has created the greatest numbers of profoundly grieving persons throughout our country in any time other than perhaps during the Civil War and the two world wars. This is quite astounding when you think of it. It has created a difficult atmosphere in which the

Gunderson staff consistently aim to reach out in kindness and excellent bereavement support to their families.

Now, recognize that over 586,074 persons in the United States have died of the COVID-19 virus. And to date, 32,812,262 cases of COVID have been reported. These statistics are almost unbelievable. In the wake of the pandemic and its tragic victims, we have all come to recognize funeral directors as our “last responders.” Working alongside all the health care workers and first responders, this has been an exhausting time for everyone. We must wonder how much longer this will go on. This was truly a nationwide crisis that affected us locally in our city, county, state as well and helped us in the recognition of offering help to others in need

Some funeral homes and mortuaries were completely overrun and overwhelmed during this past year, especially in states where the death toll had reached major crisis levels. There simply were not enough personnel to complete the embalming and preparation of the bodies for funerals and burials. This, then, is when another special quality inherent in so many funeral directors became so evident. That quality is a generosity of spirit...and you can add kindness and a sense of responsibility to that.

In these recent cases of complete overwhelming numbers of Covid related deaths, funeral directors have risen to the challenge to help those most in need and in so many cases have gone beyond any call of duty to travel to those areas of need and assist and support the overworked care center specialists trying to respond to the massive amounts of deaths.

This was the case in the entire southern California region due to the extremely high incidences of Covid related deaths. The Selected Independent Funeral Homes Forum, an electronic communication venue was employed asking for immediate responses in the dire need for Care Center Specialist for assistance and support. Help was needed and it was needed immediately.

This is where Gunderson Funeral Home sprang into action. General Manager of Gunderson’s, Mike Smits, approached two gifted Care Center Specialists/Funeral Directors, Rachel Wartes and Leslie Todd, and asked them if they would be willing to travel to southern California to assist and support their fellow practitioners dealing with this imminent crisis. Both agreed immediately.

Things were put in motion, and they were on their way. Due to the urgent need for funeral practitioners to respond to California’s rising death toll, California passed an ordinance that allowed for their being able to practice in that state with a special conditional state license.

Rachel and Leslie both upon arrival immediately dove in and were doing embalmings, cosmetology, preparing the deceased, dressing the body. They both felt it was a marvelous learning experience. They felt immediately accepted and extremely appreciated.

Rachel, upon returning, said exactly what you might have expected a professional in the Funeral Service to say: "We are all in this business together. We need to help others when they are in need and be willing to make whatever sacrifice it takes to accomplish the task at hand. We all have to be humble enough to realize this could happen to any of us and be hopeful and grateful to those who would go beyond the call to lend a helping hand."

This statement, and all the work and sacrifices of this unbelievably difficult year confirms the quality of care, consideration, and compassion so evident in Funeral Directors and funeral service personnel today. We all should remember that the gift of these men and women who in their kindness, and skillfulness help us all in times of loss and bewilderment.

## Hughes Family Tribute Center, Dallas, TX

It is very rare in the funeral industry to be able to give families good news, but in April of 2021, we were able to spread the news to families that COVID-19 related funerals could be compensated by the government. Hughes Family Tribute Center has 3 pillars of service: helping, honoring, and healing. Through our innovative COVID-19 services, we were able to honor the loved one while bringing healing to the family. Now we wanted to provide a special form of aftercare by offering a COVID-19 Funeral Compensation Program.

As part of our COVID-19 Funeral Compensation Program contained two elements: answering questions via telephone, email, and social media and a COVID-19 Funeral Compensation Workshop. On April 20, 2021, Hughes Family Tribute Center hosted a COVID-19 FEMA Funeral Compensation workshop for families that we served as well as families within our community who didn't use our funeral home. The workshop was free to the public and was held from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM to work with people's schedules. Since many in our community speak only Spanish, we had two of our Spanish-speaking employees helping Spanish-speaking families and providing translations. Our owners and managers, DeWayne & Stephanie Hughes, educated themselves on FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Compensation and used various resources like NFDA's FEMA webinar training. In the workshop, we answered questions for families, gave them advice to better assist the start of their application, and also had a TV presenting the video FEMA released regarding information on the compensation. Through the phone calls and emails, we were able to assist even more families who could not make it to the workshop. Through our COVID-19 Funeral Compensation Program, our funeral home employees were able to connect with families that we've served in the past but also families who have never heard of us before. The people who attended the workshop and reached out to us with questions received the benefit of obtaining help and having face-to-face discussions with someone who cared. Overall, this COVID-19 Funeral Compensation Program helped many in the community that have already faced many hardships this past year by COVID-19 and losing someone to COVID-19. To date, we have helped between 50-60 families, and we continue to receive calls each week.

Our COVID-19 Funeral Compensation workshop was picked up and reported by a News-Talk radio show in Dallas, 99.5 WBAP. Many families who attended the workshop or reached out to us with questions told our employees that they greatly appreciated our funeral home opening our doors to help members of the community handle and navigate the COVID-19 Funeral Compensation.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE 2020

During the past year, when the country faced the pandemic, J. García López reaffirmed his commitment to work hand in hand with authorities, social organizations and civil associations in order to join forces to serve society and seek alternatives for economic reactivation.

### COLLABORATION WITH AUTHORITIES

Faced with the health contingency due to COVID-19, J. García López strengthened its health protocols that it had implemented in its nine branches for the management of bodies due to infectious diseases. In order to protect the health, well-being and safety of all families facing the dismissal of a loved one; as well as to safeguard his collaborators.

As part of this process, J. García López's team was the first company in the sector to meet - given that it already had prior information on what was happening in Spain through its counterpart Albia, a leading funeral services company -, with **the Health Protection area of the CDMX Health Secretariat**; in order to exchange information for the development of protocols to follow from the moment of first contact with a body reported by COVID-19; as well as measures in facilities and for personnel.

Initiating a campaign both in its call center and its 9 Branches (brochures, screens, banners, etc.) on the measures to be considered.

Sanitization of the Vigilance Rooms three times a day and disinfection every 30 minutes of the common areas such as toilets, doors, handles and entrance mats.

Thus guaranteeing a sanitary fence, with a professional and warm service to offer worthy Tributes.





Likewise, a Medical Office was implemented in our operation center, which monitored the health of our employees on a daily basis. With sufficient evidence to detect COVID-19.



A shower and personal hygiene area was installed so that First Contact employees - who collect the bodies - could have a thorough cleaning.

Throughout 2020, a free dining service was offered for the staff, with a chef and their own kitchen equipment, in order to guarantee the health of the food.

## REFORMA

### *Incertidumbre en las funerarias*

Empresas grandes, como J. García López, difunden sus protocolos, por ejemplo, que no más de 20 personas permanezcan en

la sala de velación, que sean ceremonias breves y que se limite el contacto físico durante las condolencias.

Since the beginning of the health emergency due to COVID-19, the company joined the efforts of the **Government of Mexico City**, through the **Command Center** to offer free funeral services for low-income families.

- **Realizado 1,828 homenajes.**

In collaboration with the **CDMX Government authorities**, a **Mobile Civil Registry Unit** was assigned to Casa Prim, to expedite the procedures corresponding to deaths.

## WORK WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Collaboration Agreement was signed with the **Citizen Council for Security and Justice of Mexico City**, to support families in the grieving process.

Developing material that was made available in its Branches and started a campaign to inform about the emotional support line

- or 24/7 through the Security Line and Trust Chat 55 5533 5533.
- o As well as the 800 FUNERAL number (800 38 63 725) for advice on funeral services.

According to data from the **Citizen Council for Security and Justice of the City**, from May 2020 to date, 505 people were attended, of which 76% are women and 23.7% men. Being Iztapalapa 36.3%, GAM, Álvaro Obregón 12.2% and Cuauhtémoc 6.7%; the municipalities where the families most requested the attention of a professional to overcome a loss or depression.



### Apoyo emocional para deudos por el Covid-19

GENOVEVA ORTIZ

A fin de apoyar a las familias que enfrentan el duelo de perder a un ser querido por causa del Covid-19, el Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad y Justicia de la Ciudad de México y el grupo funerario I. García López convinieron acercar a los deudos el servicio de contención emocional que ofrece el organismo de manera gratuita, las 24 horas los siete días de la semana.

El Consejo Ciudadano ha brindado apoyo emocional a más de tres mil personas que no sólo buscan herramientas para afrontar el duelo por la pérdida de familiares, sino otros sentimientos causados por la pandemia como angustia, miedo, estrés, depresión y hasta insomnio.

Convinieron Consejo Ciudadano y el grupo funerario I. García López ofrecer apoyo emocional 24/7 mediante la Línea de Seguridad y el Chat de Confianza 55 5533 5533.

Este acuerdo se da como un acto de corresponsabilidad social y ciudadana compartida entre el Consejo y las empresas, además se suma a las acciones que se impulsan junto con el gobierno local para ayudar a la población más vulnerable.

“No se puede tener un duelo sin dolor. Es importante respetar el proceso y el de quien está alrededor, por ello en el Consejo Ciudadano ofrecemos apoyo para que esos procesos de despedida transcurran con dignidad y de la mejor manera posible. Tenemos un grupo de 102 psicólogos y psicólogas dispuestos a ayudar a la ciudadanía afectada por el Covid-19”, expresó Salvador Guerrero Chipeles, presidente del Consejo Ciudadano.

En tanto Oscar Padilla, CEO de I. García López, mencionó que “este convenio de colaboración demuestra el compromiso social de las instituciones y las empresas mexicanas por sumar esfuerzos que nos permitan salir adelante a todos”.

Añadió que desde el pasado 24 de marzo a la fecha, la empresa ha ofrecido 900 servicios por Covid-19, de los cuales 300 servicios se han otorgado de manera gratuita a través del Centro de Mando del Gobierno de la CDMX.

Where 28.5% were due to the loss of a father or mother, 17.4% of grandparents, 10.3% by spouse, 8.5% brother (a), 5.5% another relative and 4.9% loss of child (to).

## CIVIL ASSOCIATIONS

### CRECER COLECTIVO

Initiative that I develop through the **J. García López Foundation**, with the aim of seeking social welfare through activities to reactivate the economy and support vulnerable groups, in times that are complicated by the pandemic.

Focusing activities through the Web to bring the products and services of entrepreneurial companies closer to new audiences, always under the premise of adding in favor of various social causes.

### Change the Chip Conference



Renowned speaker and writer **Helios Herrera** gave a free talk open to voluntary donations, in support of **Fundación México Vivo**; that works for the right of youth to have access to information on sexuality and sexual health.





- **Auction Tanya Moss**

- In favor of the Association for People with Cerebral Palsy **APAC**, focused on social inclusion.



- Auction Pineda Covalín

- o In support of World Vision México, which works so that children and adolescents live free of poverty and in sustainable communities.
- o In support of **World Vision México**, which works so that children and adolescents live free of poverty and in sustainable communities.



Yvelin Pineda · 19 de febrero

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn

Fue así como García López creó la iniciativa social **Decar Colectivo** con el objetivo de apoyar la realización de destacados emprendedores mexicanos que se enfrentan a una nueva adversidad para mantener sus proyectos y conservar fuentes de empleos estables que a su vez permitirán convivir con entornos adversarios de la sociedad cuando el caso de los sujetos mayores, niños de escasos recursos y personas con cáncer.

De forma que, a partir de conferencias, webinars y otros con presentaciones y debates, todo esto pagó el esquema de las plataformas digitales, los emprendedores continúan con su pasión en el mercado, además de recibir los recursos para sus diferentes acciones de apoyo a la Fundación J. García López. De esta manera se fortalece a la sociedad y se ofrece una solución para quienes quieren generar un impacto en nuestro país.

Tu idea es que merezca respeto como la participación de destacados emprendedores y personalidades. En la primera Encuentro virtual se dio un primer paso de la mano de la reconocida diseñadora de planes Tanya Méndez (páramo reconocida arquitecta) y así que la Fundación donó fondos de su primer mes de apoyo a APAC, además de ofrecer una sesión especial con expertos por diseño de las "Berkas", entregó la Lic. Guadalupe García, presidenta de la Fundación J. García López. Fortalecimiento obteniendo otras acciones al público en general a través de reuniones virtuales y conversatorios.

**Decar Colectivo** continúa sus actividades a través de la web para lograr una iniciativa que permita alcanzar a quienes padecen sus problemas y acciones de apoyo en favor de sus sueños, habilidades creativas y que por la emergencia sanitaria se enfrentan en estos momentos. Todo esto además un espíritu de apoyo a quienes buscan superar sus retos. Desde así J. García López sigue su camino y ha comprometido a su nombre a **Decar Colectivo**.

## MEDIA / CIVIL SOCIETY

Given the development of the pandemic, where for the month of May 2020 there is a considerable growth in deaths, and the information in the media becomes confusing regarding the saturation of cremations; J. García López assumed the commitment to inform society in a transparent and timely manner, about the actions taken in the face of the COVID-19 alert.

In this sense, it was decided to issue a weekly report to all the media, on the number of deaths from COVID-19 and other causes attended during that period.



**SERVICIOS FUNERARIOS ANTE LA EMERGENCIA SANITARIA**  
Ciudad de México a 11 de mayo de 2020.

Servicios Funerarios operados por J. García López, del 24 de marzo a la fecha:

- 466 casos COVID y/o Neumonia Atípica.
- Servicios atendidos del 5 al 11 de mayo: 89 servicios COVID y/o Neumonia Atípica
- 52 servicios funerarios en promedio por día, 18 en promedio por COVID y/o Neumonia Atípica. El resto por otras patologías.
- La empresa cuenta con el apoyo de las autoridades del Gobierno de la CDMX, a través del Registro Civil para agilizar los trámites correspondientes a las defunciones y operar sin contratiempos.
- J. García López cuenta con 5 hornos crematorios en sus propias instalaciones, para atender a las familias que así lo requieren.
- Actualmente se trabaja en la instalación de 3 hornos crematorios más, los cuales entrarán en operación la última semana de mayo.
- Los costos de los servicios funerarios son:
  - Planes a Futuro desde \$20,000.00 pesos a 20 mensualidades.
    - Trámites y sin costados.
  - Planes de Necesidad inmediata \$24,000.00 pesos (por muerte natural y/o COVID-Neumonia Atípica).

Es de suma importancia informar a la sociedad que la operación de J. García López se desarrolla de manera normal, con un aumento significativo como hemos venido informando anteriormente. Sin que esto se deba interpretar que están reducidos los servicios funerarios.

Contamos con el equipo tanto técnico como humano necesarios, para atender esta emergencia sanitaria. Nuestro objetivo es trabajar para brindar el mejor servicio, en estos momentos por tantas complicaciones por las familias mexicanas.

José J. García López  
www.jgarcialopez.com.mx  
Empresa 100% mexicana fundada en 1981 y que ofrece Homajes a la Vida, siendo empresa líder del sector en la Ciudad de México y su área metropolitana, al atender al 25% de los servicios funerarios del mercado de los funerales privados, a través de 9 sucursales y más de 500 colaboradores.



**SERVICIOS FUNERARIOS ANTE LA EMERGENCIA SANITARIA**  
Ciudad de México a 4 de junio de 2020.

Es importante tener presente que el sector funerario juega un papel importante en el proceso de salvaguarda de la salud pública, al ser el último eslabón encargado de dar destino final a los restos humanos, evitando con ello se rompa el ciclo sanitario.

Hay más que nunca es fundamental, reconocer la labor de todas las empresas de servicios funerarios formalmente establecidas, que están atendiendo a las familias mexicanas que enfrenta la pérdida de un ser querido en esta emergencia sanitaria.

El sector funerario formal trabaja en coordinación con las autoridades para implementar protocolos que brinden seguridad a sus propios colaboradores y a las familias mexicanas, garantizando un trato digno y sin discriminación.

J. García López tiene el compromiso de informar a la sociedad de manera transparente y oportuna, sobre las acciones que hemos realizado desde el pasado 23 de marzo reforzando nuestros procesos sanitarios ante la alerta de COVID-19.

Servicios Funerarios operados por J. García López, del 24 de marzo a la fecha:

- 855 casos por COVID-19
- 123 por Neumonia
- De los cuales se han otorgado 324 servicios gratuitos en apoyo a la sociedad a través del Centro de Mando de la Ciudad de México.
- La empresa trabaja en coordinación con las autoridades del Gobierno de la CDMX y cuenta con una Unidad del Registro Civil Móvil en Casa Fin, que permite agilizar los trámites correspondientes a las defunciones y operar sin contratiempos.
- Con el objetivo de apoyar a las familias que enfrentan el duelo de perder un ser querido por causa del COVID-19, el Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad y Justicia de la Ciudad de México y J. García López continúan apoyando a los dueños del servicio de atención emocional que ofrece el organismo de manera gratuita 24/7, mediante la Línea de Seguridad y el Chat de Confianza de todo México.
- Asimismo J. García López pone a disposición el número 800 FUNERAL (300 89 41 71) las 24/7, en caso de requerir orientación sobre cómo contratar un servicio funerario.
- La operación de J. García López se desarrolla de manera normal aun considerando el aumento del 40% en servicios durante la última semana.

De esta forma reafirmamos el compromiso para apoyar al país a través de nuestra actividad funeraria, preocupados siempre por nuestros trabajadores y clientes que día a día confían en nuestros servicios.

As well as responding to all requests from the press on the subject, through video calls, face-to-face interviews, tours of the facilities to verify the established protocols, etc.

## TANATOLOGICAL WEBINAR

The poster is for a webinar titled "EL DUELO EN TIEMPOS DE COVID" (Grief in Times of COVID). It is presented by J. García López, a funeral home. The webinar is hosted by the specialist María del Carmen Castro, who will explain how to live with grief during a pandemic. The event is free of charge and scheduled for Tuesday, September 22, at 19:00 hours. A registration link is provided: <http://bit.ly/jglregistro>. The poster features a circular image of María del Carmen Castro.

In order to bring free online support conferences to society, open to the public, to face the losses derived from the pandemic, a calendar is established starting in September to address issues in this regard.

Taught by the specialist **María del Carmen Castro**, Master and Mentor Coach of the International Federation.

### ADDRESSING THE ISSUES:

- Grief in the Times of COVID-19
- The sense of Pain
- I couldn't say goodbye to you.
- Learning to understand and manage my emotions.
- How to say goodbye to Mom?

With an average attendance in each session of between 3 thousand and 5 thousand people connected via the Web.

CULTURE

Even though the health emergency continued throughout the year with restrictions on cultural events, J. García López decided not to miss the *Día Muertos* celebrations, developing the **ETERNA** project a free *streaming* concert with a live orchestra.



Dedicated to nine locations with the most emblematic rituals of this tradition. Event that brought together on stage an Orchestra made up of 16 musicians, five outstanding Mexican singers of international stature and a narrator of the legends of each region.

Which was broadcast on television through the **EXA** and **Capital21 CDMX** channels.

**EXCELSIOR**

# Celebran la vida Eterna con música

UN HOMENAJE MUSICAL AL DÍA DE MUERTOS

Leyendas, música y buena voz en el concierto streaming en vivo de esta noche

**LA TOCATE:** Esculpir, el Pericoma de la Orquesta y el director musical de J. García López. En regalo de los días de muertos se entregará un CD de esta noche que participó en esta noche de transmisión en vivo. Para festejar los días de muertos una foto muestra un CD que se entregará en vivo en el concierto en vivo de esta noche de transmisión en vivo. El CD se entregará en vivo en el concierto en vivo de esta noche de transmisión en vivo.

El álbum se encuentra disponible de forma gratuita en musicasertora.mx y será llevado al día de esta noche. Un homenaje musical al Día de Muertos.

Decidieron hacer un concierto sinfónico. Felipe Pérez, quien tiene su propia orquesta sinfónica, se dio a la tarea de trasladarse toda la música y hacer los arreglos para convertirla en un concierto de este tipo. Es un concierto completamente gratuito vía streaming que lo van a hacer al aire libre desde van a estar todos los intérpretes.

En público y con todas las medidas de seguridad y vida con la presencia de músicos y cantantes como se realizó este show en el que una casa del siglo XVIII, Flores Blanca, responsable y artista son los protagonistas.



## Cost Neutral Embalming

*Innovation Essay - Pursuit of Excellence - 2021*

*While reading this essay, please understand the context of why this is revolutionary to our local market. While this might not seem that innovative for someone who practices in the Midwest where things are still very traditional, Johnston & Williams is in Washington State where the cremation rate is nearly 90% statewide.*

### Synopsis

In March 2021, Johnston & Williams Funeral Home began a program that is cost-neutral for families who wish for their loved one to be embalmed, even with a direct cremation/immediate burial level of service. This new program was announced to our community via a Facebook Live video (Unable to upload video to FileCloud, link to access [click here](#)) and is also included as part of our General Price List and in a specific section on our website.

### Rationale Behind the Idea

Johnston & Williams Funeral Home was founded on the belief that it is our duty as undertakers to help families cope, heal and begin the process of moving forward following a loss. One of the things that Henry Johnston determined would set his funeral homes apart is the way Johnston & Williams cares for the bodies of those entrusted to us. Since day one of Johnston's ownership, regardless of the method of disposition method or arrangements selected, we take time with the body to prepare them for disposition. While this might seem standard, not all funeral homes do this for direct cremations. At Johnston & Williams, nearly every decedent<sup>1</sup> entrusted to our care, regardless of disposition is bathed, clean shaven (if need be), hair combed and their features are set. The decedent is also dressed in their own clothing selected by the family (or a clean hospital gown) before being placed in their cremation container. Every package we offer also includes at least one hour of private time to say goodbye for immediate family, with or without embalming.

In July 2020, immediately after the acquisition of these funeral homes by owner Henry Johnston, most of the deaths were a result of COVID-19. Having been locked out of care facilities for almost four months, many families wanted to have time with the bodies of their loved ones to say goodbye. To give them that time, in the absolute safest way possible we knew how to, we began to offer families the option to give us permission to embalm without being charged for it, even if the family was selecting direct cremation. We truly felt that it was the right thing to do from both a health and safety perspective and from our desire to give these families the absolute best experience possible - without looking like we were taking advantage of the pandemic to make more money.

After eight months of watching trends in our client families, listening to feedback (both good and bad) and calculating the true net cost of being able to offer embalming as part of our basic level of services, we formally implemented our "Cost Neutral Embalming" program on March 1, 2021. We have created separate packages,

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<sup>1</sup> There are cases, such as advanced decomposition or other major trauma, that prohibit this level of care to occur. Additionally, families can opt not to have this care completed, but we work from a position of this care being standard unless instructed otherwise.

designed to be priced the same as a direct cremation or immediate burial, where the only parameter that changes is embalming instead of the cost of refrigeration and basic sanitary care.

On the direct disposition level, any steps above what is already included – such as adding longer viewing hours for family, public visitations, rental casket, or a ceremony – will incur an extra charge.

### **Benefits to the Funeral Home and Staff**

The benefits from the technical standpoint, as those who work in an embalming room understand, is that you generally get the best results if you complete the embalming as soon as you get back from the call. While this might not always be practical in all cases, there is no doubt that immediate embalming lays a better foundation for cosmetics and overall appearance of the deceased. Being able to obtain permission to embalm at the time of transfer – and being able to tell a family that it will not change their overall minimum cost – is beneficial to being able to provide the best possible results.

From the logistical side, we can improve service to families for their private family viewing time if their loved one is already embalmed. If we meet with a family at 10:00 a.m. and they come prepared with clothing and a photo, we can generally accommodate them for their private family viewing as soon as 2:00 p.m. that same day. While this is possible with an unembalmed body, there is always that concern about leaving someone unembalmed in a viewing room for an extended period. This program allows us the ability get loved ones ready without worrying about purge, odor or other unforeseen issues that may arise when they have not been embalmed and also helps expedite the overall process because the first half of the preparation process has already been completed.

Finally, this program is giving our apprentice/intern the ability to participate in the embalming of more cases overall. This will better prepare him for mortuary school, his eventual career in funeral service and for the profession as a whole because he will have first-hand knowledge and experience of why embalming matters.

### **Benefits to Families Served & Community at Large**

The most important benefit of this program is easy – it gives families flexibility and time to make decisions that are right for them that will also produce the best possible results.

As stated previously, embalming immediately upon our return to the funeral home sets the proper foundation for us to make loved ones look their best. Many of the decedents we care for have been on Hospice following an extended illness and embalming helps us set the stage to restore those entrusted to our care to an appearance more closely resembling a time before they became ill. Try as you might, one can't do that to perfection with a body that has not been embalmed.

This also gives the family time to process the loss, think about their options and provides the best possible outcome for any type of viewing that may occur – and does so without providing any pressure about how they will look after an extended period in the cooler or the additional cost that might be involved - even if the viewing is going to be just for the family.

Additionally, there is an inherent public safety/health benefit to this program as well. Everyone in the funeral profession understands that dead human bodies have the potential to be dangerous – its why we use universal precautions with every case. Embalming is one added step that we can use to help neutralize any potential infections (COVID, Hepatitis, AIDS, etc...) in a body so that the family can safely touch, kiss, and spend time with their loved one before disposition.

Finally, from an environmental standpoint, when compared to the energy consumption required to run a refrigeration unit, embalming should be seen as the option with the smallest environmental footprint for the temporary preservation of a body. Despite what certain environmental activists say about formaldehyde, once it cross links the protein, formaldehyde leaves behind a methylene bridge and a water byproduct. This process

continues until all the formaldehyde is neutralized as the body sits. Any formaldehyde that exits in drainage will encounter proteins in the sink, pipes, and sewer in the form of bacteria and other sources. Once the body has been properly embalmed, there is no need for further energy consumption through use of a refrigeration unit.

### **Conclusion**

We believe 100% in the importance of that time spent with the bodies of those we love before final disposition and we believe that time is best spent when a person has been embalmed. With the standards of care we already practice without embalming, the cost of time and materials is nominal to provide the best experience to the family.

Ultimately, we've decided to "put our money where our mouth is" and show our community that embalming isn't just an add-on they can expect to be "upsold" when they come to make arrangements, but something that has true tangible and intangible benefits for their family.

Attachments in FileCloud related to this essay:

**JWFH – POE 2021 – GPL.pdf** – Johnston & Williams General Price List (March 1, 2021)

**JWFH – POE 2021 – Website Content.pdf** - "Our Philosophy" page, outlining our belief in the importance of saying goodbye and the respect afforded to those who entrust us with the care of their loved one for cremation.

To serve the

# Community

## **Kemp Funeral Home: Where Lasting Memories Are Uniquely Yours**

Gone are the days of creating one type of service and fitting each family that comes to a funeral home into that service mold. Families have different beliefs, customs, and different ways of grieving. What we have found to be the best way of serving our diverse community is to encourage them to design the funeral to best honor their loved one.

Serving a diverse community means we have to employ a staff of diverse ideas, perspectives and understanding. Our staff should be diverse in gender, race, religion, financial means, and pansexuality.

We find that our motto: "Where Lasting Memories Are Uniquely Yours" serves us well not only to provide unique funerals, but to reach out to all members of our community. Reaching out to all members of our community is not just a good thing to do, but congruent with our aspirations as a for-profit business. Not serving all segments of the community would be like leaving money on the table.

We often find that KFH is serving populations which are historically underserved. Accommodating their customs, creates a loyal following.

At Kemp Funeral Home, it is not uncommon for a Caucasian family to come into the funeral home to make arrangements and hear the sweet sounds of Twi (the predominant language of Ghana) singing a familiar hymn. Our staff knows that members of a Nigerian family will come to visit the deceased while waiting the months before their loved one can be scheduled for tribal or state funeral services and shipped home for burial. Likewise, the staff is prepared with answers for a nervous Hindu, Vietnamese or Jewish family waiting for necessary documents and permits for cremation or burial so that we can meet the time requirements of their customs.

Our directors must be good listeners to understand what is important to capture in services. In the case of transgender decedents, proper pronoun usage is critically important without bias from the funeral director. Appropriate make up and dress is also important.

Eighty percent of our business is providing traditional African American services at the funeral home or at a church. However, what may appear to be traditional usually includes a slight but unique flair. Inside of a "traditional" funeral service there might be a tribute to the deceased, a professional musician, from band members or other musicians. There might be a favorite hat collection displayed among the flowers. And dogs who can no longer seem to find their master around the house, have come to the family's first view to stop

the search. One family whose funeral was next door to the entrance of the cemetery chose to dance behind the hearse with costumes and musical instruments in a New Orleans burial tradition.

Economic diversity is another key to winning the trust of the entire community. When a serviceman's mother was tragically murdered, we waited for the Red Cross to bring the serviceman home from overseas and accepted a \$1000 donation to prepare his mother and host her funeral.

Whether it is securing Yamakas for a graveside service or providing an appropriate basket for an infant service of mixed religion parents whose religious institutions would not perform the services, we have found our niche in the marketplace.



Lord & Stephens Funeral Home, Athens, GA

F.

Lord & Stephens Funeral Homes has been serving families since 1989 and we consider pets to be an important member of the family. With over thirty years of serving the Athens community and surrounding counties we recognized a need for local pet cremation. In 2020 we established a locally owned and operated pet crematory, Athens Pet Cremation. We are Athens first pet crematory ready to serve families with excellent care and sincere compassion. We use state of the art equipment and environmentally friendly products. We guarantee that each pet will be handled with care. We offer private and communal cremation for many kinds of pets with fur, feathers, scales, and shells. Pre-arrangement of services are available so that when the time comes to say goodbye, families will not need to worry about the details. Since we are local, we can bring a pet into our care and return their cremains much sooner. We guide each family through the cremation process and help them to honor the memory of their beloved pet.

Families grieve deeply when a pet dies, so we provide each family with grief support resources to help them navigate through the difficult time of losing a pet. Grief support resources are offered in our brochure which is available in all our funeral home lobbies and on our website. These resources encourage each family to accept the need to grieve. We help families understand the variety of emotions they are experiencing, such as confusion, disorganization, sadness, or guilt, are natural reactions to their recent loss, and they should not suppress them. Encouraging families to talk about and embrace the memories of their pet is another way in which we offer support. Reminding families that everyone experiences grief differently and to respect each person's need to grieve in his or her own way is an important grief support tool. A list of website resources, support groups, hotlines, and a list of children's books are provided on our website that aid both adults and help engage children in the discussion of losing a pet. For many children, losing a pet is often their first experience with death. We remind adults that children rely heavily on them to see how to openly express their feelings and their response during this time can determine whether a child's first exposure to death will be a positive or negative part of personal development. It is our goal to help families design a ritual that pays tribute to their pet and encourages family members to share their treasured memories of the pet they loved. Athens Pet Cremation in partnership with Lord & Stephens is here to care for the entire family.

Because pets are an important member of the family, we send out a monthly newsletter featuring important information, such as poison prevention for our pets, safety tips when it comes to heat or fireworks, and sometimes fun trivia facts. The newsletter includes information on how to sign up for our Daily Grief Support Email. In addition to the newsletter, we seek to engage our community via Facebook and Instagram by posting help tips, funny memes, and topics for discussion.

Athens Pet Cremation in partnership with Lord & Stephens has sponsored a golf tournament and a fall festival, as well as participated in a local Christmas parade, all of which were located within two of the counties we serve. We were grateful for the opportunity to interact and share with our community. By caring for the entire family, offering guidance through the cremation process, helping to honor the memory of a beloved pet, providing grief resources, and a monthly newsletter, we are able to serve our community in ways we never have before.

## **Mercer-Adams Funeral Service, Bethany, OK**

Mercer-Adams is just days away for executing an exciting new app for mobile devices. We have been dreaming of this vehicle for more than two years. A company called BFAC.com will be partnering with us as we strive to meet the growing needs of the families we serve. According to their website, BFAC.com is an award-winning technology company that provides mobile marketing and communication solutions to businesses such as ours. With the growth of mobile phone usage, mobile marketing has been growing by leaps and bounds. In recent weeks we have become aware that there are 1.71 mobile phones, in active use, per person in the United States alone. We were able to identify that currently, 66% of the individuals searching our Mercer-Adams website are using a mobile phone as opposed to a desktop computer. This means that when the majority of people access our site to view a memorial video, post pictures to an obituary, get directions, investigate pricing, caskets or grief information, they are using a mobile phone.

BFAC.com is working with us to create a very individualized application, specific to our needs as a local funeral home. They are located here in Oklahoma City and are excited to be partnering with us in the creation of this innovative app. The owner and president of BFAC is Brad McMullan. Brad lost his mother last October to COVID-19. He shared with us his journey, from initial contact with a funeral home, communicating information, and searching the offerings from the funeral home. He was frustrated that more of his out-of-town family could not be more involved in the process. Brad commented that if he had access to other selections of merchandise, he would have likely chosen upgraded items. "I kept thinking there has to be more available," he said.

At Mercer-Adams, we have been searching for a more interactive platform to reach and serve our community. With this new tool, families will be able to download the BFAC app. We envision printing our business cards with the QR code on the back, giving families the opportunity to scan them and start inputting death certificate details, pictures, information for obituaries and military records, all with just a few clicks. We can send grief information on pre-determined dates with links to helpful websites, e-books and literature to those who choose to activate notifications from us. Families will also have the convenience of paying their invoices through the app, even if there is more than one individual responsible for payment.

## **Mercer-Adams Funeral Service, Bethany, OK**

Additionally, we will have a unique opportunity to communicate with the app holder by what is called “geo-fencing.” Geofencing allows us to personalize the customer experience. By marketing to a specific area or group of people, we can customize messages accordingly. For example, we can send a support message to the local school or football field saying, “We are cheering on the Bethany Bronchos tonight! Go Bronchos!” or “We are proud to be Americans! Have a happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July and stay safe” at the local parade.

Here at Mercer-Adams, we realize that members of younger generations are starting to become the decision-makers for their families. We have a desire and also a responsibility to stay relevant and meet families where they are. With the advantages of cutting-edge technology such as BFAC, we believe we are moving in the right direction.

# Creation of the Remote Service Room

## Adapting infrastructure to families during the pandemic

Welcoming environment, nature, respect and safety. This is the atmosphere that permeated the creation of an innovative project that has just started operating in a new Morada da Paz funeral home: the Remote Service Room.

Amidst the pandemic, we came to realize that many people who needed funeral services were afraid to go to the funeral home. Like many other businesses, we were quick to adapt and created a new channel, naming it Funerária Digital (Digital Funeral Home), thus providing 100% remote service, via WhatsApp, digital signature of documents and online payment.

It had good acceptance, but not as much as we expected. We soon realized some clients were either unfamiliar with technology, too emotionally impacted or both. The challenge, then, was to embrace these limitations while providing a safe experience with minimal human contact. The solution: inverse the remote communication logic. We designed a room to welcome these grieving families in our facilities while removing our team member from the scene. The family is present. The team member is away.

The Remote Service Room is equipped with a professional video conference solution, so the experience is of superior quality. Since both endpoints have reliable high speed internet, we can deliver HD video and audio quality for every conference.

The room was designed following the same patterns of the conventional rooms. The predominating colors are green and blue, projecting tranquility and peace. The round table reinforces the principle of openness, without the existence of a counter separating family and attendant. The environment brings natural light and a view of the outdoor garden through a glass curtain, as a way to promote contact with nature. Everything was meticulously designed so that the family can feel embraced.

Everything was planned so that the client can come in and feel welcomed, even without physical contact and "human warmth", due to the very ambience of the space. The entire environment "talks" to the mourner so that he feels he is not alone.

"With the creation of the Remote Service Room, our purpose was, before anything else, to ensure the safety of all clients and employees during the pandemic. We could not think differently in the midst of the humanitarian crisis we are going through, caring for people has always been and will be one of the main pillars of Morada da Paz", explains the president of Grupo Morada, Eduardo Vila.

## Innovative Service

Our community just like everyone across the nation has experience the Coronavirus in full effect. While we try to provide our same care to our families, this year became extra hard to do all the regulations centered around gatherings. For the families we serve we gave them a chance with no additional cost to live stream their loved one services. In addition to live streaming services, we have given them copies of the services for them to have and watch whenever they would like along with also posting it on our website.

In preparation for our live streaming services, we have offered to the families we have served, we went through purchasing equipment that we would be able to use in most of our rural area, training on particular equipment, learning different ways to run equipment for less malfunction in order to optimized great qualities for each individual family we served.

When purchasing equipment, we decided to purchase iPads to record the services. When recording we decided to utilized Facebook Live Video, so family/friends who are not able to be at the services for either regulations and restrictions or because of being cautious of bigger groups could still watch the service as it was happening in real time. This also helped using Facebook by helping people share the services or go back and watch at their convenience. Facebook no matter if you are old or young most people know how to navigate throughout without having to learn new website or program to watch. This help families cut down on the confusion of trying to use another browser or engine to live stream. Along with using iPads and Facebook live we made purchases for a microphone that was able to be hooked directly to the iPad a long with our portal speaker that way we could maximize and get better sound quality weather at graveside services or in a church. Using an iPad allows us to either live-stream at a graveside, our own chapel, any churches or if network isn't available for live streaming we can still record and upload after services have pasted. We trained and made cards for each iPad for everyone to follow instructions when doing live-stream to cut down on staff confusing when operating.

Overall, this hasn't went without difficulty with learning how to deal with audio restoration. For the most part family have really enjoyed the live streaming and it has become a regular thing to now ask when serving family even with restrictions and regulations lifting.

## Pray Funeral Home, Charlotte, MI

Pray Funeral Home staff meet monthly, not only to keep on regular operations, but to bring together many minds in discovering new ways to better serve and educate our community. Typically, we also invest in our staff by encouraging their attendance at professional meetings and events, such as conferences and continued learning events. This year was much different. For obvious reasons, continued learning was limited to zoom meetings and virtual events. While these proved helpful and encouraging, they lack one very important factor – in-person humane interaction. Enter Mark Fletcher, a member of our staff.

Mark started with us parking cars and setting chairs a few years ago. He came from a successful career in customer service, and his insights and observations about our funeral services and procedures soon made their way front and center in our staff meetings. Soon he was asking for reading materials and bringing more and more to the table. It was clear that Mark “get’s it,” and his effective communication skills would help make sure the rest of our staff, from top to bottom, “get’s it” too.

He started with Dr. Wolfelt’s “A Guide for Funeral Home Staff,” which Tyler and Dana Pray brought from a presentation by Dr. Wolfelt in Chicago in 2019. Mark studied the guide and devised a teaching strategy to present to the rest of our staff. Furthermore, he delved into the new book, “The Right Way of Death: Restoring the American Funeral Business to it’s True Calling” by Eric Layer. Our core staff meet every Wednesday morning for an hour, sometimes two, to undertake exercises designed by Mark to keep us sharp, focused on customer service, and to learn how to tackle tough questions together. Through role playing, written and spoken workshop activities, and collective brainstorming, we developed strategies to respond to such questions as, “I just want direct cremation,” “He never wanted a funeral,” and “Let’s just get this done.” As referenced later in our Pursuit of Excellence Criteria Materials, you will see the second edition of “Ask the Funeral Director,” written by Tyler Pray for our local paper. This piece exemplifies the responses and sentiment we adopted for responding to the public, using Mark’s ideas and dedicated approach.

Certainly, these sessions have led us to produce and design many meaningful funeral services, and open conversations with families who just don’t “get it” the way Mark does. Mark continues to work alongside us on services and transfers, always observing our processes and the mechanics of making a good funeral. We continue our weekly meetings, and continue to learn from each other. This process has allowed us to bring high level training directly in-house, with ready-access. It brings our staff into sharp focus to the higher emotional and ceremonial needs of those we serve.

## Primaveras, Sao Paulo, Brazil

In March 2020, the world was surprised by the decree of the Coronavirus pandemic by the World Health Organization. From that moment on, the pandemic impacted life as we knew it. Borders between countries were closed and customs changed around the world to contain the spread of the virus.

In the funeral department, the impact and changes were very significant. In addition to the growing number of deaths, it was necessary to reinvent ourselves to accommodate bereaved customers with a series of restrictions and legal impediments to avoid the risk of contamination in the farewell rituals. In some cases, wakes were banned or had their duration reduced, as well as the number of participants.

In May 2020, the Primaveras Homage and Crematorium sector searched a way out to continue providing a dignified and personalized farewell to customers. With the support of our Engineering sector, and following the sanitary restrictions, the idea of creating a special tent to hold the tributes outdoors came up. Also with the support of landscaping and special lighting, the fixed white canvas tent, measuring 7m x 7m in length, was set up and began to accommodate bereaved families in record time.

To keep the environment safe and distanced, there are only 4 chairs and participation limited to 10 people. Ensuring comfort on rainy days, it is possible to lower side awnings, leaving the front opening for air circulation. With these precautions, the new farewell ceremony had unrestricted public acceptance. Between May 2020 and July 2021, more than 549 ceremonies of people who died from complications by Covid-19 were held in this environment, providing a unique possibility for family members to have some final moments with their loved ones.

The Primaveras Homage sector also developed a special ceremony adapted to the tent, reducing the time to 10 to 15 minutes, but with a lot of emotion and sensitivity. With a TV screen and special sound, a "film" is shown in honor of the loved one, created from selected photos. The broadcast is accompanied by songs that marked their stories. Based on interviews with family members, the team composes and delivers a personalized speech.

The innovation brought great recognition to Primaveras by the clients, who showed gratitude for being able to say goodbye to their loved ones, even in times with so many losses, restrictions and challenges.

**F.** Submit an essay describing an innovative program, service or activity executed by your funeral home. (You are encouraged to describe a program/service other than a personalized funeral service.) The essay must be a minimum of 400 words and will be used to determine recipients of the Best of the Best Award, Richard Myers Pinnacle Award, and Certificate of Honorable Mention.

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# Muro Natura,

a tribute to life that gives life

- **Construction start date:** August 21st, 2020
- **Construction time:** 15 days
- **Inauguration date:** September 20th, 2020
- **Link of presentation:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQUdWd7r3yU>
- **Gardening:** Isabel Aguilar
- **Extent of call:** 17,286
- **Tributes given to date:** 4 families
- **Bronze plaques placed in the wall:** 150 plaques with 5 names each.
- **Loved ones that are a part of the wall to date:** 750

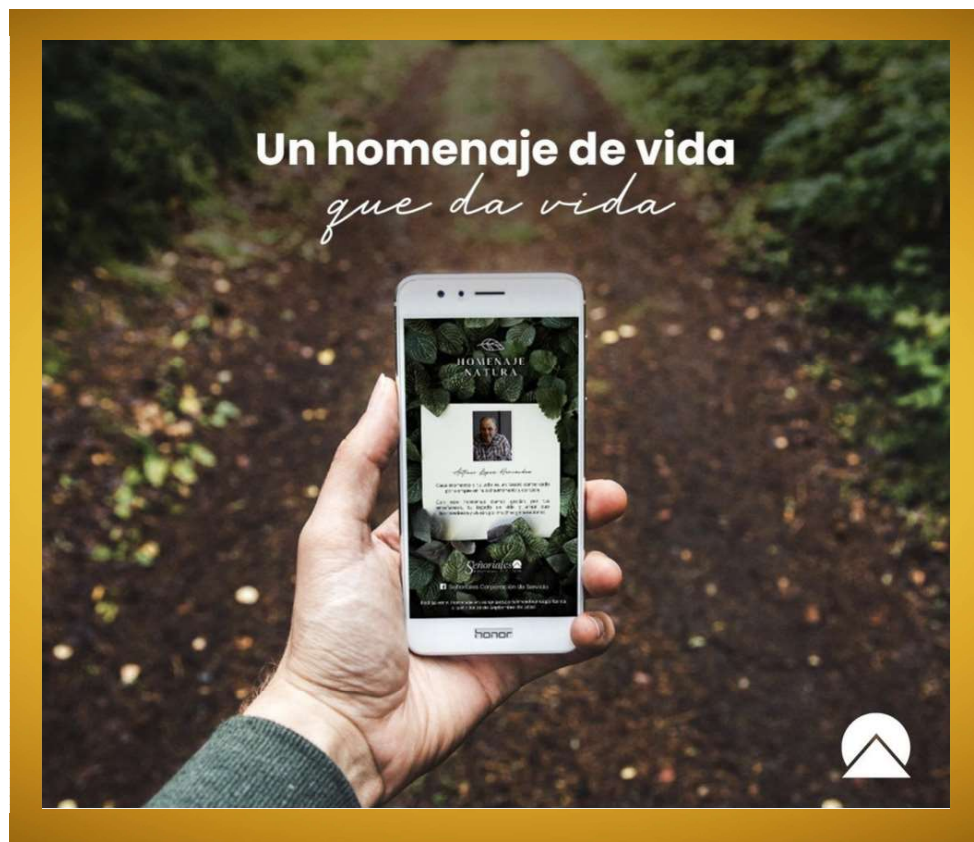
In Señoriales Corporación de Servicio our mission is to honor and commemorate the memory of the loved ones that are no longer with us, we understand the importance that comes with starting a process of mourning, especially in the moment of loss of a loved one and with the desire of being able to accompany the families in the most significant moments of their lives, we did a tribute of live that we named Muro Natura. Meaning that comes to live through the trails inside the Cementerio Los Parques, where we built a monument of antique style, that has bronze plaques that commemorate the life of love and light that each one of the loved ones that left us in 2020 and didn't get the proper good bye ritual thy wished for.

The Muro Natura and the preparation of 2 kilometers of trail in the middle of pure nature was built in record time, working shoulder to shoulder with providers and the support of our collaborators who with passion worked day and night without caring of the inclemency of the weather, sometimes they worked underneath an awning to avoid the rain but keep working towards the goal.





Facing this abrupt break of life, Cementerio Los Parques found an adequate and different way to accompany the families, reaching their homes through social media, to make them participate to pay tribute to the heroes and heroines of each family, with the construction of a wall at the end of a footpath filled with light, peace and tranquility in the middle of nature, surrounded by grand mountains, where the universe is present with air, sun, water and soil, to remind us that life is a journey and the end of it is a new sunrise, the perfect fusion of the melodic sound of birds singing, the music of our marimba and a sweet voice that caressed our thoughts, this came with us in a journey that immersed us in a paradise of the moments shared by their side and in this way celebrate their life.



Through history human beings have chosen walls to develop art manifestations and according to experts art manifestations occur when someone wants to express an important emotion and when words are not enough to represent this emotion.

For Señoriales Corporación de Servicio, Natura is the wall that for generations will perpetuate in a special way the names of thousands of heroes and heroines that during the pandemic couldn't have the farewell their families would've wanted, its imposing shape will guard their story, that will wake the interest of new generations that thrilled will again live invaluable moments with the memories or their loved ones, leaving in their hearts a sentiment of hope and the message to live and celebrate every minute because life is measured in moments.

In spite of the pandemic, the wall is still visited by a lot of families, clients, friends that symbolically visit their loved ones that are a part of the Muro Natura, in some cases their loved ones are in another cemetery, country or city, the families enjoy the natural environment, cozy and peaceful, where their memories are, a tribute of life that gives life, where adults and children have the opportunity to free energy after a long time of confinement.