

NEWSLETTER

Dear Members,

We hope this message finds you well.

As we navigate through 2024 together, we want to extend our gratitude to each one of you for your continued support and dedication to our association's mission. Your commitment is what drives us forward.

In the coming months, we have several exciting initiatives and events including the 2024 Spring Trip and The Fall Conference in Gatlinburg. From educational workshops to networking opportunities, we aim to provide valuable resources and connections to help you thrive both personally and professionally.

We encourage you to stay engaged and involved in our association. Your participation makes a significant difference, not only in your own growth but also in the strength and vibrancy of our community.

Remember, we are here for you every step of the way. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Together, we can overcome any challenges and achieve great things.

Thank you once again for being a valued member of our association.

Best regards,

The Independent Funeral Group





Death & Faxes

by Alex Lewis

Office insights on paperwork and procedures

Engineering Efficiency

When a manufacturing facility wants to streamline their efficiency and perfect their methods, they know exactly who to call—process engineering is an entire field in the industrial sector, focused not on designing a product or piece of equipment, but on designing the process itself by which a product is made. Every step, every transition between machines or human hands, is engineered with purpose and intent to work as smoothly as possible, with no wasted time or resources and the least chance of mistakes.

We're not exactly in the manufacturing business, but the concept of process engineering can help our workflows all the same. Consider your daily operations as a process, like the processes of an assembly line. What are the steps? When someone calls, who answers? What information do they gather, and how is it passed on to the next person in the line? How do those people pass along the information they have, and alert the next set when their part is complete? Who is involved, and how are tasks moved between them?

Most often— and understandably— we focus on the results of the process, or the results of the individual steps, and not on the design and flow of the steps themselves. Where in the process do mistakes come in? Does everyone know who writes the obituaries, and how to tell if one needs to be written? How long does it take to find out whether a specific permit or death certificate has been sent in for signatures? Are there parts of the process that are often missed, like checking off an item on a checklist or noting a task on a call board? A step that's inconvenient or out-of-the-way will always run the risk of being skipped— where are you when you receive the information that needs to be noted? Where is the checklist at the time? Can a step be eliminated, or a file rack moved, or the information recorded in a different way? By purposefully examining the process, you can find parts that may be good in theory but inefficient in practice, and redesign them to match your needs.

In the past, working in a funeral home setting, I found it helpful to restructure that nearly-ubiquitous call board to match the particular funeral home's own workflow. Using multiple physical inboxes on the desks and color-coded post-it flags helped ensure everyone knew what task was in progress and whose task it was, as well as how to move those files on to the next step so nothing fell through the cracks.

More recently, at our crematory, the sharp spike in call volume we saw in the last few years made it an absolute necessity to consciously and carefully streamline our processes. Every file that comes to us passes through the same workflow, and with a glance at our tracking system, all of our staff can tell exactly where each case is in the process, where the physical paperwork can be found, and whose task is at hand. Likewise, from a glance around our workspaces, we know what tasks are waiting for us, and exactly where to move them when they're complete. Magnetic hooks by our delivery door hold clipboards with the files pre-entered and scheduled for receiving— their receipts have already been partially completed, and can be finished while they hang on the wall with pens from the magnetic cup beside them, while the delivery is in progress. Completed files currently in-progress are filed by customer name in a dedicated file rack. Incomplete files are marked and noted in our system, and also tagged with a color-coded flag, so we know what we're waiting to receive. From the initial receipt of paperwork to the release of the cremated remains, each step has been considered and consciously designed as part of our process.

Every workplace requires its own process, designed expressly to suit its needs. It can make a world of difference to take time to examine the flow of tasks and information, and engineer it to be well-defined, repeatable, and efficient for everyone involved.

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Generations features 3 new casket designs using fast-growing, abundant U.S. hardwoods, water-based finishes with low VOCs, natural cotton interiors, and minimal metal elements. Crafted for use in burial or cremation, Generations makes a statement in the showroom with distinct styles and aesthetic qualities that appeal to today's environmentally-conscious families.



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Source: Batesville 2023



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The “Why’s” of Small Case Cremations Answered

Dealing with deceased children, infants and stillborns absolutely ruin our days as funeral professionals. We don’t like it and the whole situation of how or why they came into our care just makes us sad for too many reasons that our minds often can’t comprehend. Although we take care of our deceased with dignity and care, I would easily say that we’re much more compassionately gentle with these precious little beings and what we will refer to as smaller cases.

When it comes their cremations, we have learned a few things over the years, including practices and tools necessary to care for them properly and safely. Because, fortunately, we deal with fewer of these cremations versus adult cremations, there are details about their cremations we don’t know because we just don’t know. So, hopefully, we can provide answers to some of the questions of “why?” Let’s go over a few...

Small cremation cases should be placed into an appropriate and dignified combustible cardboard container, cloth covered wood casket, seagrass container, bamboo, etc. All plastics should be removed that may encase that smaller case. Why? Because they are smaller cases and there will be much, much fewer cremated remains to retrieve, plastics tends to melt and adhere to what we’re trying to recover to return to the family. Also, plastics can sometimes cause discolorations of the cremated remains. Several of our endorsed partners have cremation appropriate containers that will avoid this being an issue for smaller case cremations.

Cherokee



Willow Casket
Floral Arrangements Not Included

A stainless-steel small case pan is vital to their cremations. They come in several sizes, but the larger ones are better to accommodate multiple sizes of combustible containers. Why? This allows placement in the cremation unit to be more accurate and isolation of their cremated remains through the cremation process. It also keeps their cremated remains more manageable and intact when the recovery process begins.

Safety equipment to maneuver this pan is also important. Why? A roller placement pole will help you position the small case pan where it needs to be, but also to remove it when the cremation is complete. This pan will be inconceivably hot and will pop stainless steel “flecks” when it begins its cooling process. As always, safety glasses and thicker thermal gloves should be on because these flecks are hot and pose a risk of popping onto your skin or even worse, into your eyes.



Just because they are smaller does not necessarily mean that these cremations don't take more time. Why? There are several factors that slow this process down versus adult cremations.

- 1. Flame retardants have been used when manufacturing children's clothing, bedding and toys. While they are used less often now because the chemicals have been found to be harmful to children who tend to use their hands to their mouths, some flame retardants are still found in products today, especially hand-me-downs.**
- 2. Their size requires that there be less air on in the cremation unit. The use of hearth air can displace much of the container or even the cremated remains themselves.**
- 3. The use of the small case pan requires a longer cooling down period because it must be completely cool for the crematory operator to safely handle.**
- 4. Small cases cannot be placed into in a regular processing drum. They have to be processed by hand. Patience is key at this stage because all non-organic materials and "flecks" should be removed as carefully as possible, and this will take some time.**

Smaller cases mean smaller urns, temporary urns, and receptacles. Why? Whether going into a keepsake urn or temporary receptacle, it's good to have size appropriate urns and containers so our little ones don't look lost. Not all small cases will fit into a keepsake urn but typically will fit into the next size up, depending on the smaller case weight and size. It's always good practice if this is a concern to speak with your crematory operator so you have a better idea as to what size urn will best accommodate your family's needs.

Sometimes our smaller cases have a larger impact on us, but their small stature and size does play a significant role in the process of cremation and being able to explain what, if anything, their family will have returned to them when all is said and done.



2024 Fall Conference



September 10, 2024 - September 12, 2024
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Universal Precautions vs. Standard Precautions

Death Care Workers (DCW) work in direct contact with a decedent and may include funeral directors, embalmers, crematory operators, coroners, investigators, and transportation drivers. In addition, both universal and standard precaution guidance applies to any worker who handles infectious tissue, fluid, or airborne pathogens.

Universal precautions and standard precautions are both sets of infection control guidelines designed to minimize the risk of transmission of infectious diseases in healthcare settings. While they have similar goals, there are some differences between them.

Universal Precautions

- Universal precautions (UP) were initially developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the 1980s in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Universal precautions were designed to protect healthcare workers from exposure to bloodborne pathogens. It assumed that all blood and certain bodily fluids are potentially infectious.
- Under universal precautions, healthcare workers were required to use protective measures (such as gloves, masks, and protective eyewear) when handling blood and other bodily fluids, regardless of whether the patient was known to have an infectious disease.
- While universal precautions were effective in preventing the transmission of bloodborne pathogens, they did not cover all possible sources of infection.

Standard Precautions

- Standard precautions were introduced by the CDC in 1996 to expand the scope of infection control **measures beyond bloodborne pathogens to include all bodily fluids, secretions, and excretions (except sweat), regardless of whether they contain visible blood.**
- Standard precautions are based on the principle that all patients/decedents are potentially infectious, regardless of their diagnosis or presumed infection status.
- Under standard precautions, healthcare workers are required to use protective measures such as gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection when handling blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes.
- Standard precautions also include other infection control practices such as hand hygiene, safe injection practices, and respiratory hygiene.

Table 1. Bodily fluids to which Universal Precautions, The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard, and Standard Precautions apply

Exposure to...	Covered by		
	Universal Precautions (as originally defined)	Bloodborne Pathogen Standard	Standard Precautions
Blood	X	X	X
Semen	X	X	X
Vaginal secretions	X	X	X
Cerebrospinal fluid	X	X	X
Synovial fluid	X	X	X
Pleural fluid	X	X	X
Pericardial fluid	X	X	X
Peritoneal fluid	X	X	X
Amniotic fluid	X	X	X
Any body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood	X	X	X
All body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids		X	X
Urine			X
Feces			X
Nasal Secretion			X
Sputum			X
Vomit			X
Breast Milk			X
Saliva			X

In summary, while universal precautions focused primarily on protecting death care workers from bloodborne pathogens, standard precautions expanded the scope to include all potentially infectious materials, regardless of the presence of blood, and emphasized a broader range of infection control practices. Standard precautions have largely replaced universal precautions in modern healthcare settings and could potentially supersede universal precautions in the funeral industry.

If you have any questions regarding OSHA and compliance regulations, please reach out to:

Dr. Brad Kuchnicki
www.365osha.com
 Email: brad@365osha.com
 Phone: 865/405-7085



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The artwork of Bonnie Mohr speaks for itself - with a passion for living life to the fullest and a love for the country life that surrounds her. Bonnie's oil paintings, steeped in rich earthy colors and a charming realism style, are a true reflection of this artist's heart.

It is from her second floor farmhouse studio, in the early morning hours, that Bonnie creates these labors of love. Bonnie finds inspiration from her earlier childhood years and revealing tributes of her full life today as a dairy farmer wife and mother of five. It is from these life experiences that she paints who she is, and what she lives – engaging and inspiring her audience, capturing the genuine beauty of everyday life and reminding us to savor the “now.”



- Oversized memorial register book
- Original artwork by Bonnie Mohr
- Cover features embossed details and foil stamped verse
- Features three full color gallery pages with poems
- Coordinated stationery

Oversized Memorial Register Book
Closed: 8.25" x 11.5"

Box Set
Featuring Tribute Box

Coordinated envelopes with
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What is the Matthews Aurora™ Difference?

We are committed to providing the tools and training to help funeral professionals educate families about all of their choices for cremation. Our industry-leading cremation program, I'll Remember You®, has proven success growing cremation revenue by promoting the value of funeral service along with a flexible, wide-ranging merchandise selection to build a memorable farewell. Contact us today to learn how I'll Remember You® can help grow your business while better serving your families.

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TIFG Members will receive an **EXCLUSIVE** offer by contacting your Matthews Aurora Funeral Service Consultant and mentioning this ad. You may also contact Brent Baird, Vice President of Sales, at 812-926-5608 to receive your exclusive offer.

How to Donate a Pacemaker

Do you have a place where I can dispose of or donate a pacemaker? This is a common question at the crematory. In the past we had recommendations that are no longer accepting pacemakers. However, as we continue to research, there are many available options. One such example is as follows:

The University of Missouri (MU) Veterinary Health Center Cardiologists are leading experts in minimally invasive procedures and place life-saving pacemakers in companion animals using donated pacemakers every year. Your thoughtful donation will be evaluated and repurposed to save and improve the quality of life of someone's beloved pet. If you would like to learn more about our services and how your donation could help please visit <https://vhc.missouri.edu/the-beat-goes-on/>.

Many people who currently have a pacemaker inquire about donating their unit upon their passing, as pacemakers cannot be re-used in human medicine but can continue to save lives in veterinary care. If you currently have a pacemaker unit you wish to donate, the most important step to take is to speak with your family and doctors about your wishes. When you are able, putting your wishes in a will or advanced directive ensures your family and care team are aware of your desire to donate.

If you are in current possession of a pacemaker you would like to donate, we kindly ask you to...

1. Wrap the pacemaker in a paper towel to absorb any potential excess moisture.
2. Double Ziplock bag the pacemaker for sanitary reasons.
3. Place pacemaker in a bubble envelope or small box.
4. Ship to...

MU Veterinary Health Center

**Attn: Cardiology
900 East Campus Dr
Columbia, MO 65211**

To arrange a pacemaker donation, or for more information, contact the cardiology team at 573-882-7821.

MU VHC Cardiology Team

<https://vhc.missouri.edu/the-beat-goes-on/>



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 capacity, personalization
 option



MAXIMUS BURIAL VAULT
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URN VAULTS



ELLA URN VAULT
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 weight: 3 lbs,



LUXOR URN VAULT
 injected mold,
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 lid and box
 weight: 10 lbs,
 personalization option



OLYMPIA URN VAULT
 injected mold,
 with light texture
 lid and box
 weight: 8 lbs,



ROMAN URN VAULT
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 weight: 14 lbs
 beautiful smooth
 finish, white polymer

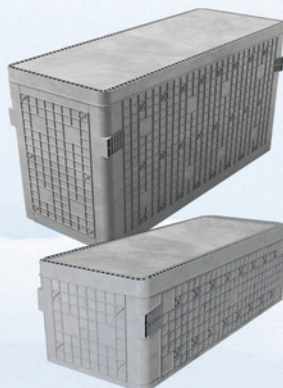


ATHENA URN VAULT
 injected mold,
 beautiful smooth
 finish, white polymer
 weight: 12 lbs



DOUBLE URN VAULT
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 Available in black and white
 weight: 15 lbs

Contact:

Mark Landford

East Coast Sales Manager
 Polyguard & Co. LLC
 Cell: 864-590-1200
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This discount is exclusive only to Homesteaders clients who sign up by June 1, 2024.



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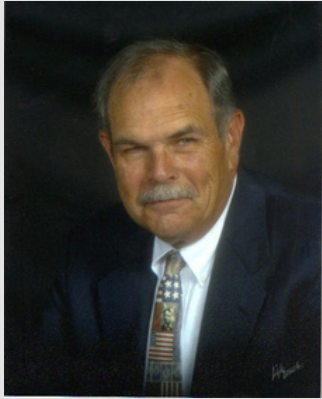
Bernard Harrison Wilson and his wife, Norma Lee Giffin Wilson, were the founders of Wilson's Funeral Home, purchasing Williamson Funeral Home in Ava, Illinois in September of 1946. Side by side, they worked to instill the trust of the families in the surrounding communities for many years. Bernard was the licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer, and Norma was behind the scenes, applying cosmetics and answering the telephone day in and day out. Together, they made the Wilson's Funeral Home what it is today.

Their son, William L. Wilson "Bill" graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with an Associate's Degree in Mortuary Science in 1969 and has been employed by Wilson's Funeral Home since his graduation. He is a member of the First Baptist Church in Ava, Egyptian Funeral Directors Association, IFDA, NFDA, Alma Lodge A.F. & A.M. #497, Steeleville, IL, Ainad Shrine, Jackson County Shriner Club, Trico Lions Club, Trico Boosters Club, and the Jackson County Farm Bureau. He is President of the Ava Evergreen Cemetery Association, and Chairman of First National Bank of Ava board and sits on the Board of the Headquarters Holding Company. He has two children, Aaron Lee Wilson and Amy Lyn Wilson-Dallas, whom both work with him in the family business. He enjoys spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, and they are the highlights of his life.

Carlos J. Barbour graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with an Associate's Degree in Mortuary Science in 1979 and has been employed by the Wilson's Funeral Home since. He is the former Chief of the Steeleville Fire Department and is the Coroner in Randolph County, Illinois. He is a member of Peace Lutheran Church in Steeleville, IL, the Alma Lodge A.F. & A.M. #497 in Steeleville, Illinois, Egyptian Funeral Directors Association, IFDA, and NFDA. He enjoys spending time with his family, working with the coroner's office, and working with the fire department.

Aaron Wilson graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale with an Associate's Degree in Mortuary Science in 1993 and been employed at the Wilson's Funeral Home since graduation. Aaron is a member of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Raddle, IL, Chester Eagles, Egyptian Funeral Directors Association, IFDA and NFDA. He sits on the First National Bank of Ava board and the Randolph Mutual Insurance Board. He enjoys spending time with his two boys, working on the farm, and taking care of his cattle.

Amy Wilson-Dallas graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale in 1998 with an Associate's Degree in Mortuary Science and has been employed at the Wilson's Funeral Home since graduation. Amy is a member of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Raddle, IL, former member of Trico Boosters Club, Egyptian Funeral Directors Association, IFDA, NFDA, and the Jackson County Farm Bureau. She is the Secretary/Treasurer for the Ava Evergreen Cemetery. Amy is the Founder and Former Owner of the Brick Wall Boutique in Ava. Amy started with the Jackson County Coroner's Office the summer of 2016, as a Deputy Coroner and enjoys the time spent working with that office. Family means to the world to her, and she enjoys spending any free time she gets with them.



William L. Wilson
Owner Funeral
Director/Embalmer



Aaron L. Wilson
Funeral
Director/Embalmer



Bernard H. and Norma L. Wilson
Founders



Amy L. Wilson-Dallas
Funeral
Director/Embalmer



Michael Rathert
Mortuary Science
Apprentice



Carlos J. Barbour
Funeral
Director/Embalmer



Chris Ehlers
Secretary



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618-426-3121**



**509 West Illinois
Steeleville, IL 62288
618-965-3312**

**701 East Pine
Percy, Illinois 62272
618-965-3312**





**1011 South Sterling Street
Morganton, NC 28655**

Sossoman Funeral Home (Established February 28th, 1949), which began as a small enterprise to provide helpful services for families in grief, remains today a family operation still committed to a high standard of professional, compassionate care. J.C. and Smaro Sossoman (originally from Cabarrus County) moved to Morganton, North Carolina from Winston-Salem, founding Sossoman Funeral Home. Today, the firm is still family and locally owned and operated by Jimmy Kirksey. He is the 4th generation to work in the business.

In 1966, Sossoman's moved from the large two-story home on College Street (where the Morganton Department of Public Safety is now located) to its present location on South Sterling Street, near the entrance to Broughton Hospital. Over the years the funeral home facility has been remodeled and upgraded, including a complete exterior facelift in 1986. Recently the interior was completely refurbished, and an additional 5,000 square feet of space added.

Sossoman's has long drawn attention for its collection of paintings and small antiques in its lobby areas. Outside, Sossoman's commands a sweeping view of Blue Ridge foothills and is noted for the elegantly manicured grounds, reflecting the firm's attention to the families they serve.

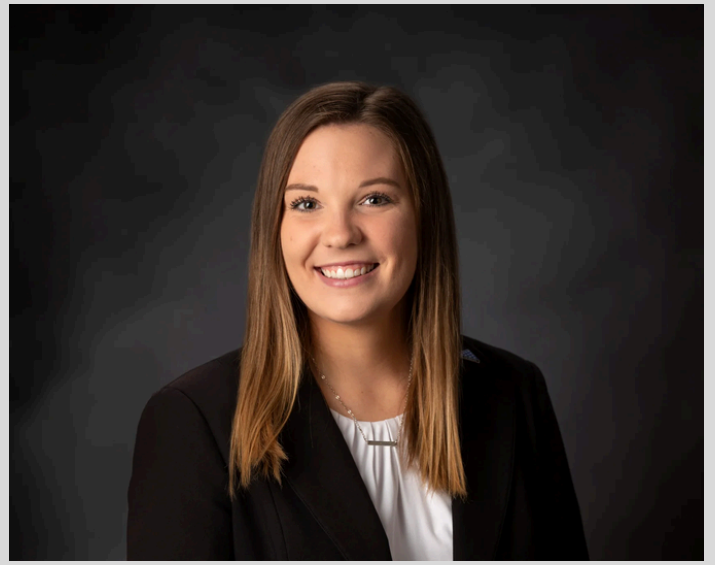
Jimmy has deep roots in Morganton, as his grandfathers were all civic members of the community, active members of the church and even held positions such as Mayor. Jimmy's grandfather, W.L. Kirksey, opened a hardware store over 100 years ago in 1905 that sold materials to make caskets. Three years later W.L. opened the first funeral home in Morganton. The first funeral home operated for many years, just in various buildings. His two sons, L.H. and Ed Kirksey, operated the funeral home.

Jimmy joined the Sossoman Funeral Home family in 2004, after Herman and Robert Kirksey sold the Kirksey Funeral Home business to a national funeral conglomerate. Jimmy keeps the funeral business in the family so much that he even met his wife, Dotty, at a funeral he was directing. They hit it off so well they were married only 9 months later and have been married for 31 years.

The staff at Sossoman's Funeral Home values the loyalty that area families have, in turn, shown to the firm, and is continually striving to find additional ways to better meet the needs and wishes of the families they serve.



**Jimmy - Funeral Service / Dotty -
Office Manager Owners**



Hannah Kirksey Lipford Funeral Director



