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### ICCFA Magazine author spotlight

► Burn is director of cremation services for the ICCFA. She is an ICCFA University faculty member.

► She previously was cremation services manager

at Wilbert Funeral Services Inc., Forest Park, Illinois, having started as manager of funeral service communications in 1991.

### More on this topic

► The ICCFA 2012 Convention & Expo will feature many exhibitors showcasing cremation products and include a live Cremation Coaching Center program:

- “The case of the botched cremation,” a mock trial moderated by ICCFA Special Cremation Counsel Poul Lemasters, Esq.

- Cremation best practices, moderated by Burn.

- Alkaline hydrolysis: A case study, presented by John T. McQueen, CFSP.

For information about the ICCFA 2012 Convention & Expo, March 19-22, at the Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, Nevada, go to [www.iccfa.com](http://www.iccfa.com) or call 1.800.645.7700.



► Go to [www.iccfa.com](http://www.iccfa.com) to the Cremation Coaching Center for information about the ICCFA’s First Impression Cremation Phone Shopper Program, which allows you to monitor the first impression your company is making on callers. Burn makes the calls, acting as a consumer requesting information on cremation.

► Contact Burn for information about conducting in-house cremation training.

► Go to [www.iccfa.com](http://www.iccfa.com) to the Cremation Coaching Center, where you can post a question for Burn to answer. [www.cremationcoach.com](http://www.cremationcoach.com)

► **ICCFA University**, which includes the College of Cremation Services, will be held July 20-25 at the University of Memphis Fogelman Center, Memphis, Tennessee. Go to Education/Events at [www.iccfa.com](http://www.iccfa.com)

► **Cremation Arranger Training Certification** will be offered at John A. Gupton College, Nashville, Tennessee, on March 30. Contact Burn for more information.

## CREMATION

**Cremation families may still call a funeral home, but do they call a cemetery? As cremation continues its inexorable increase, cemeteries struggle to achieve even a 40 percent memorialization rate with cremation families. Cemeterians need to become cremation experts if their organizations are going to thrive in the future.**

**This is what they need to know.**



Photo courtesy of Stewart Enterprises Inc.

**The recently constructed Tranquil Oaks Cremation Garden in Oakland Park Cemetery, Sanford, Florida, features a special area for golf enthusiasts, including a golf green, benches and custom pedestals.**

# What cemeterians need to know to become cremation specialists

**H**ow is your cemetery responding to the increase in the cremation rate? Are annual interments declining? How many people who choose cremation are ending up at your cemetery, or any cemetery? Do you feel you have an adequate array of choices to satisfy today’s cremation consumer?

Our profession has been and will continue to be challenged by consumers who choose cremation, pick up the cremated remains and either scatter them at a loved one’s favorite place or keep them at home.

In the case of families who decide to keep the cremated remains, one has to wonder what will happen with the long-

term custody of the urn or other receptacle. In the case of families who scatter, one has to wonder how many will regret their decision not to have some type of permanent memorialization or place to visit.

There are many cremation families who consider cremation final disposition, and we as a profession must accept part of the responsibility for not clearly explaining that cremation is simply the preparation of the body for final disposition. It is our job to try to educate families about the importance of permanent memorialization, and to provide them with a wide variety of choices.

► to page 98

Not sure where you would put cremation memorialization? Make it a point to walk the cemetery regularly with your staff and vendor partners and brainstorm areas that could work.



**Newly constructed columbarium niches included in a remembrance garden at Pine Forest Memorial Gardens, Wake Forest, North Carolina. The cemetery manager had nothing to offer cremation families since their mausoleum niches had been sold out, so families started going to local churches for memorialization.**

► *from page 96*

### Evaluate your situation

It does appear that permanent memorialization is becoming more popular with cremation families who previously seemed to automatically associate scattering with cremation.

The 2010 FAMIC Study found that 43 percent of those choosing cremation said they would use a cemetery, with 24 percent selecting ground burial and 19 percent a columbarium. Scattering was the second most popular choice, at 16 percent. In previous studies, scattering was always the most preferred method of final disposition, followed by burial.

In addition, a March 2010 online survey conducted by an independent marketing firm for the ICCFA also indicated that people are looking to cemeteries for a final resting place. In this survey, 40 percent said they would like the cremated remains of a loved one buried in a cemetery, and 6 percent would want to use a columbarium.

Twenty-four percent would prefer scattering.

But even though the latest research shows more cremation consumers turning to cemeteries in the future, a 40 to 45 percent memorialization rate is not good enough—though it's a rate some cemeteries would be happy to attain.

If your cemetery is in an area which is just starting to experience an increase in cremation, now is the time to seriously consider adding areas that will be appealing for cremation families and friends to remember, honor and celebrate their loved ones.

Do not make the mistake of ignoring cremation until you no longer can. It is much easier to establish a community's approach to cremation memorialization than to change it down the road, as many in our profession have learned.

Start by taking a look at the cremation rate in your area and comparing it to the percentage of cremation burials and inurnments in your cemetery. Often the

percentages are not the same, which tells you you're losing opportunities to the home mantel, churches, scatterings and maybe to your competitors.

Not sure where you would put cremation memorialization? Make it a point to walk the cemetery regularly with your staff and vendor partners and brainstorm areas that could work. A colleague recently told me she had walked a cemetery with the owner and identified places the owner had never thought about for cremation memorialization.

One of the positives about cremation for cemeteries is that often small or odd-shaped spaces that are unusable for traditional sections can be creatively used for cremation, and of course the same piece of land can handle many more cremated remains than traditional burials.

### Add cremation memorialization choices

Many people choose cremation because they will have more options than offered by traditional burial. They can choose when the service will take place and where it will be held, and they can choose from a wider range of memorialization offerings.

The Cremation Association of North America's June 2006 Container, Service and Disposition Survey disclosed that 36 percent of the cremations that took place that month resulted in cemetery burials. When cremation families choose to bury, the addition of a meaningful graveside service with tents and chairs adds dignity and offers families an opportunity for ritual often lacking in cremation service. The addition of unique monuments also appeals to many cremation families.

Consumer awareness of and use of columbariums is lower. Though columbariums have been around for a long time in some areas, especially the West Coast, parts of the country are just starting to see them. Only 3 percent of the people in that CANA survey chose a columbarium as a final resting place. Nevertheless, availability of a variety of columbarium choices—and marketing to let the community know what is available—is crucial for the future of cemeteries.

Mausoleums with indoor and outdoor

## CREMATION

After their counselors and funeral directors started using the form, Spring Grove found their retention rate in cremation cases improved about 20 percent almost immediately, a significant achievement, especially for one piece of paper!

**Disposition of Cremated Remains**  
Receipt / Acknowledgment Form



I/We ("Authorizing Agent") authorized the cremation services for \_\_\_\_\_ ("Deceased"). As part of the cremation, I/We have been informed and presented choices as to the final disposition of the cremated remains.

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We hereby understand and acknowledge the following:

- Private placement/Scattering typically offers no method of permanent memorialization, nor does it provide a permanent record for future generations (genealogy)
- Cremated remains may be divided into multiple containers and / or dispositions
- Scattering is a permanent and irreversible form of disposition and requires express written consent from any/all property owners to allow scattering to take place. (SGC XIV Section 6, Ohio Rev. Code, Section 4717 - Disposing of cremated remains)

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We have been presented and informed of the permanent final disposition options below and have elected not to use them.

- Ground Inurnment
- Mausoleum Inurnment
- Niche Inurnment
- Cenotaph

\_\_\_\_\_ I/We have been presented and informed of the Spring Grove 2 Year Refund and have elected not to use this option.

By Signing below, I/we acknowledge and understand all of the items set forth above. Further I/we agree to hold Spring Grove Cemetery and all affiliates harmless for any future non-cemetery disposition decision.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME Authorizing Agent                      Signature Authorizing Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME Authorizing Agent                      Signature Authorizing Agent

WITNESS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME Cemetery Representative                      Signature Cemetery Representative

**Gwen Mooney Funeral Home**  
4389 Spring Grove Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45223  
(513) 853-1035

**Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum**  
A National Historic Landmark  
4521 Spring Grove Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45232  
(513) 681-PLAN (7526)

**Oak Hill Cemetery**  
11200 Princeton Pike  
Cincinnati, OH 45246  
(513) 853-2280

Cremation gardens provide a fresh new approach to a cemetery's memorialization offerings. Families and friends can visit their loved ones in a serene park-like setting with lush landscaping, including waterfalls, bridges, even live swans. Benches, rocks, pedestals, plaques and ossuaries all allow for some type of permanent memorialization. Most cremation gardens will include a special place for scattering, with features that including a plaque where the loved one's name can be recorded.

You may want to also consider dedicating a section of a cremation area to honor those who have served our country. Over 1,000 veterans die each day, and many are Vietnam War veterans, baby boomers who often choose cremation. With a cremation veterans section, your cemetery can offer the convenience of one final resting place for all family members.

Private family estates for cremation or cremation and traditional burials is another premier offering cemeteries should consider if it makes sense in their market. There are people who will pay more for premium spaces, and the additional revenue is imperative for the survival of many cemeteries.

If you don't know where to get started on adding cremation memorialization offerings, start by talking to vendors. Their knowledge of what might work is invaluable and doesn't cost you anything. (The next step, working with a cemetery landscape designer, will involve expense.)

### Make sure cremation families are aware of their choices

For the most part, cremation families know they need the services of a funeral home, but many of them think cremation means they can bypass the cemetery. To change that thinking among families in your area, you need to be proactive.

Spring Grove Cemetery and its Gwen Mooney Funeral Home have adopted an excellent cremation best practice, a "Disposition of Cremated Remains" form. Both counselors and funeral directors use the form, which the family signs to verify that they have been informed of all choices

Spring Grove Cemetery's "Disposition of Cremated Remains" form, also used by its Gwen Mooney Funeral Home, ensures that all families are made aware of cremation memorialization options and the issues involved in scattering.

niches have been the most common such offerings, but self-standing columbariums, especially when surrounded by other cremation memorialization options, can add pleasing variety to a cemetery's landscaping.

Glass-front niches provide families with a way to display the urn they choose.

When families can include pictures and mementos in the niche, it often becomes an even more attractive choice. A cemetery can also offer families the option of seasonal or celebratory decorations for niches, similar to the Christmas blankets, anniversary wreaths or Memorial Day flags a cemetery might offer for traditional grave sites.

for final disposition of cremated remains in Spring Grove Cemetery.

Spring Grove President and CEO Gary Freytag had the form created to operate like a rental car insurance waiver. Families must sign a form indicating they are aware of the fact that scattering and private disposition do not offer permanent memorialization, scattering cannot be done without permission from property owners (state law) and cremated remains can be divided and disposed of several ways. Also, they must indicate that they have been informed about the cremation memorialization options at the cemetery. (See form, page 100.)

After their counselors and funeral directors started using the form, Spring Grove found their retention rate in cremation cases improved about 20 percent almost immediately, a significant achievement, especially for one piece of paper!

### **Promote your cremation offerings**

You also need to make sure your marketing efforts are welcoming toward cremation families.

Family counselors are the messengers for your offerings. Community presentations educating the public about the importance of memorialization and how it is an essential part of the grieving process, along with the memorialization choices your cemetery offers to both traditional burial and cremation families, should be part of your marketing efforts.

Your website is another vehicle for promoting cremation memorialization. Include cremation in your main navigation bar—don't make people search your website for information about cremation, since this tells them you consider cremation an afterthought.

A cemetery's website should include photos of gardens, mausoleums and columbariums. Every cremation option should be displayed. If you can include a video tour, all the better.

And don't forget to make it clear on your website that you are cremation specialists. Include educational material, such as an explanation of the cremation process and the history of cremation. (See the screenshot of Mount Hope Cemetery's educational section on page 102.)

Community events at your cemetery, along with scheduled tours, can bring people in to actually see what you have

to offer. You don't have to be limited to Memorial Day or other holidays. Read the community outreach stories in this issue, and research online to see what other cemeteries are doing to draw the public.

Check out the ICCFA KIP Award event winners. For example, Royal Oak Burial Park in Victoria, British Columbia, won first place in 2010 for its Summer So(u)lstice event. Royal Oak invited the

public to see newly opened interment areas. Poets, musicians, a local historian and other artists were on hand to create a friendly, non-threatening and upbeat environment. The event connected the cemetery to the community in a positive, upbeat manner and demonstrated the role cemeteries have as sacred spaces in the community.

►to page 102

## CREMATION

Offer them keepsakes and memorialization jewelry. A cabinet showcasing such merchandise can fit into a cemetery office or mausoleum as well as a funeral home, and even become a point of interest.

**Mount Hope Cemetery Corp. and Crematory**

Interment Records | Cremation History | Services | Photo Gallery | History | National Register | Contact | Home

Search Interment Records:

### Additional Information

- Cemetery Map
- Cemetery Rules
- Columbarium Rules
- Mausoleum Rules
- Cremation Documents

### History of Cremation

Scholars today quite generally agree that cremation probably began in any real sense during the early Stone Age - around 3000 B.C. - and most likely in Europe and the Near East.

During the late Stone Age cremation began to spread across northern Europe, as evidenced by particularly informative finds of decorative pottery urns in western Russia among the Slavic peoples.

With the advent of the Bronze Age - 2500 to 1000 B.C. - cremation moved into the British Isles and into what is now Spain and Portugal. Cemeteries for cremation developed in Hungary and northern Italy, spreading to northern Europe and even Ireland.

In the Mycenaean Age - circa 1000 B.C. - cremation became an integral part of the elaborate Grecian burial customs. In fact, it became the dominant mode of disposition by the time of Homer's 800 B.C. and was actually encouraged for reasons of health and expedient burial of slain warriors in this battle-ravaged country.

Following this Grecian trend, the early Romans probably embraced cremation some time around 60 B.C. and it apparently became so prevalent that an official decree had to be issued in the mid 5th Century against the cremation of bodies within the city.

By the time of the Roman Empire - 27 B.C. to 395 A.D. - it was widely practiced, and cremated remains were generally stored in elaborate urns, often within columbarium-like buildings.

Prevalent though the practice was among the Romans, cremation was rare with the early Christian who considered it pagan and in the Jewish culture where traditional sepulcher entombment was preferred.

However, by 400 A.D., as a result of Constantine's Christianization of the Empire, earth burial had completely replaced cremation except for rare instances of plague or war, and for the next 1,500 years remained the accepted mode of disposition throughout Europe.

Modern cremation, as we know it, actually began only a little over a century ago, after years of experimentation into the development of a dependable chamber. When Professor Brunetti of Italy finally perfected his model and displayed it at the 1873 Vienna Exposition, the cremation movement started almost simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the British Isles the movement was fostered by Queen Victoria's surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson.

### "Mt. Hope Cemetery - A 20th Century History"

The Year 2000 marks the 166th birthday of Mount Hope Cemetery in Bangor, Maine. A 264-acre institution listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Mount Hope is the second oldest garden cemetery in America - a cemetery designed to serve as a haven for the living as well as a final resting-place for the deceased. < read more >

Order "Mt. Hope Cemetery - A 20th Century History"

**Mount Hope Cemetery Corp. & Crematory in Bangor, Maine, uses its website ([www.mthopebgr.com](http://www.mthopebgr.com)) to educate consumers on the history of cremation and the cremation process, not incidentally positioning itself as an expert. Note that "cremation" is included in the main navigation bar, as it should be. Cemeterians in a state with a cremation rate of over 60 percent certainly need to be cremation specialists.**

➤ from page 101

### Create services for 'shelf people'

What about "shelf people" who have finally decided they want to provide their loved ones with lasting memorialization? Whether they had some sort of funeral or service at the time or simply had a so-called "direct cremation" before placing the cremated remains on the mantel or closet shelf, the time of memorialization deserves recognition.

When such people come to your cemetery to choose a final resting place, let them know you can create a meaningful service for them at the site, whether they choose ground burial, inurnment or scattering.

Make sure you can offer them the services of a celebrant or, if they prefer, a member of the clergy, to conduct a service. Have a menu ready offering music options, balloon/dove/butterfly releases and military honor guards—basically anything and everything you would offer an at-need family.

Offer them keepsakes and memorialization jewelry. A cabinet showcasing such merchandise can fit into a cemetery office or mausoleum as well as a funeral home, and even become a point of interest. You will find that most families are not even aware such things exist.

The options available in keepsakes, jewelry and art incorporating cremated remains seem to be growing exponentially,

so make sure your product knowledge is up to date.

If your cemetery includes an area where a reception can be held, you need to consider offering catering services, if you don't already. Many cremation families will see the value in having a breakfast or lunch after the service. The convenience of having everything at one location is very appealing to consumers.

This is a classic win-win situation, offering families—especially those who bypassed funeral ceremonies at the time of cremation—meaningful products and services and providing additional revenue for the cemetery.

### Make your entire staff cremation specialists

Counselors, office administrators and groundspeople all come in contact with families. Make it a point to include cremation training for your entire staff. They should be aware of cremation statistics, understand how the cremation process works and know the many ways one can memorialize a loved one who has been cremated.

If your cemetery operates a crematory, make sure you and all crematory personnel have completed operator certification.

The ICCFA offers a variety of programs to assist you with your training, including the annual ICCFA University College of Cremation Services.

You want cremation families who are making a permanent memorialization decision for the first time to perceive you as being a cremation specialist. Don't prove them wrong.

Whether your cemetery has been addressing the cremation market for a long time or is just starting to venture beyond niches tucked into mausoleums, you need to continually educate yourself and your staff, and to innovate.

The fact that cremation will continue to grow should provide enough incentive. If you don't provide what cremation families are looking for—and make sure they know it—they will turn to churches, universities and other establishments that have started to address the market. □