



**Waller Funeral Home**  
"An Oxford Tradition"

# SEASONS

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## LOOKING BACK

When we began to express some ideas appropriate to mark the passing of the our 30th anniversary in business, we focused on the physical growth of Waller Funeral Home. As we did, we realized that a more important aspect of these years has been our relationships with the people we have encountered.

From the beginning, the principle of "our family serving your family," was considered primary. We wanted to feel personally connected to the families we served and we committed ourselves to treating every person with compassion and respect. We resolved allegiance to the Golden Rule—doing unto others as we would have them do unto us. We wanted to be a funeral home with a heart.

During the first years of operation, Patsy was the person mainly responsible for day-to-day operations while Don spent much of his time on the farm. With her strong religious faith and her experience in dealing with people, she set a wonderful example of showing kindness and reaching out to the bereaved. She read extensively and attended workshops on grief management. In 1983 the Wallers bought Elliott Funeral Home, which was well established and respected and which was getting most of the death calls, and Patsy and Don's daughter and son-in-law, Beth and Bob Rosson, came back to Oxford to assist in the business. In 1988 Patsy gave up active daily participation in activities at the funeral home because of worsening ear problems, and Bob and Beth and the staff continued the traditions of compassion and helpfulness.



**Then.** *Waller Funeral Home was completed and ready for use in December 1977.*



**Now.** *Many changes have been made through our 30 years of operation.*

We have been deeply touched by the sorrow we have seen. Personally we have lost dear friends and relatives. Because of our own close relationships with our families and friends, we understand the hurt others feel. To carry out our professional responsibilities we must keep our emotions in check, but we have at times struggled.

We strive to be nonjudgmental. We

have served people from all walks of life, and we have done our best to adjust to individual needs. We have seen that people react differently to grief and have respected the differences.

To make our facility more comfortable, in 1993 we made a large addition to provide more space for offices, arrangements, funeral supplies, and

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## LOOKING BACK

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restrooms. We added a children's playroom. In 2003 we added a new portico to provide a large covered space for those who require assistance entering and exiting their vehicles and shelter for visitors in inclement weather. A new parking lot, well lighted and with a handicap ramp, was added.

We realize the importance of every funeral. We provide high quality listening equipment, sound system, organ, and piano in our chapel to enhance services. Technology not dreamed of 30 years ago has been incorporated into our operations allowing us to develop our e-mail obituary service, website, Tribute Program/A Video Presentation of a Life Remembered, video recording of all funeral services held in our chapel, personalized memorial folders, printed programs of order of service, and digital photographs of all floral arrangements.

In honor of a veteran, we fly the flag of his/her branch of service under the American flag during the time we are serving the veteran's family.

We keep up-to-date vehicles for transportation of the deceased and pallbearers to the cemetery. In hot weather we provide bottled water and fans and in cold weather heaters and blankets during graveside services.

Participation in professional activities at the state and national levels has helped us improve our service to families. Bob has held numerous leadership roles in professional organizations and now serves on the Executive Board of the National Funeral Directors Association. Beth, also active in professional groups, presently serves as a District Governor of the Northern District of the Mississippi Funeral Directors Association. Bob has earned professional certification as a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner and as a Preplanning Consultant. Working to earn six National Funeral Director Association Pursuit of Excellence Awards has helped us to evaluate and improve our funeral service and our commitment to the community. The awards are based on outstanding service to families, commitment to the community, and dedication to upholding the highest ethical and

professional standards.

We love this community and we endeavor to be involved in civic projects. With help from veterans organizations, the 4th of July Committee, and enthusiastic participation of the community, we sponsored a successful balloon release on July 4, 2000, to help raise funds for the World War II Monument in Washington, DC. We, along with other funeral services nationwide, joined the effort to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina with some of the staff of Waller Funeral Home making two trips to the coast. We have worked with the North Oxford Baptist Church and North Mississippi Hospice to present the annual Memorial Christmas Tree. Many other opportunities for community service have arisen and have been accepted.

Astounding changes have taken place in Oxford and Lafayette County during these past 30 years. Through the many changes, our commitment to providing compassionate and professional assistance for the bereaved, their families and friends has not changed. We feel privileged to be a part of this community. We value the friends and acquaintances we have made at the funeral home. Thank you for letting us serve you during these 30 years!

Patsy and Don  
Beth and Bob

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## HEALING A GRIEVING HEART

Losing a loved one is a heart-wrenching experience. The powerful, complex, and conflicting emotions that survivors struggle with often leave a person feeling alone and helpless. Understanding the basic elements of grief and learning key coping skills can help individuals heal and move forward after their loss.

There is no correct way to face the loss of a loved one. However, there are some emotions that are commonly experienced while grieving. These feelings include disbelief, shock, numbness, denial, sadness, anxiety, guilt, depression, loneliness, and frustration. They can even include anger directed at the person who died, other family members, medical staff, or toward religious convictions.

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## MERGING MEANING AND MOURNING

A funeral can be as unique as the individual being remembered. Even while adhering to traditions and ceremony, a funeral service should reflect personal values, interests, and experiences—all the things that formed the rich tapestry of a life worth celebrating.

A meaningful funeral service is also an essential element in the healing process after the loss of a loved one. A funeral provides family and friends with closure after the death and an opportunity to reminisce about the deceased's life.

As you reflect on the life of your loved one and begin to plan a fitting tribute, focus on the unique aspects of their life and work those key elements into the ceremony. Was your husband an amateur painter? Consider holding a retrospective of his work. Was your grandmother a teacher? You may want to ask a school choir to perform at the service. Weaving your loved one's personality into the event provides a lasting and honorable representation of who they were in life. Through special music, asking key individuals to speak, involving friends and family, and other special touches, you can creatively bring your loved one's individuality into the funeral service, evoking fond memories for those mourning the loss.

A few things you can consider to help organize your thoughts include:

Some of my loved one's most important accomplishments include. . . .

Some of my fondest memories of him or her are. . . .

People who had the greatest effect on my loved one's life are. . . .

My loved one's favorite music was. . . .

My loved one's hobbies and interests included. . . .

Other things that gave him or her enjoyment were. . . .

The causes and beliefs my loved one was passionate about were. . . .

If my loved one was planning this service, he or she would include. . . .

You can find many unique ways to bring your loved one's qualities into the funeral service.

*-National Funeral*

*Directors Association  
Educational Packet*

## THE SEASONS

When we began publication of this quarterly newsletter in 1978, we chose the title *Seasons* as we thought of the changes the seasons of the year bring to our lives. I am happy to live in a locale where we experience distinct differences in the seasons, and my life as a farmer's wife has evolved around these changes. Each season has its own appealing features which we can enjoy while at the same time we look forward to coming changes.

Winter is my favorite season. (Perhaps it would not be if my life involved more outdoor responsibilities.) In winter all of nature seems to rest. The trees are not bursting forth to bud, bloom, leaf, and bear fruit. The leaves are not falling to be raked. The grass is not growing to be mowed. Fruits and vegetables are not waiting to be harvested and preserved.

In winter life here on the farm moves at a slower pace. Don no longer has cows, hogs, or chicken to feed and care for, so he is able to coast a bit. Schedules are not so binding. Meals need not be quite so prompt. We, with nature, can take a respite.

Even so, it is difficult for us to be still. As with most people, we are geared to be always moving—if not physically then mentally. Many of you remember my stepmother-in-law "Miss Emma." Miss Emma could sit in a room full of people with her hands folded in her lap for hours. Though she had a hearing loss, she never asked for repeats. She was a diligent person, but when her tasks were completed, she sat in her chair gently rocking. I envied Miss Emma her ability to remain quiet and serene. Her innate ability to relax completely, portraying a still quietness and serenity, seemed to give her much strength when needed.

I strive to attain this spirit of quiet and stillness. I think of God's admonitions: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10); "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:14NIV). I often have one of these verses on a message plate given to me by granddaughter Mary Beth which I keep on my kitchen desk. I find that staying physically still is easier than quieting my mind. Yet when I do succeed, I feel blessed and seem to hear with my heart as well as my mind. I realize that we do not have

to stop all activity to hear that "still small voice" (I Kings 19:12), but by stillness we show reverence and can truly listen for His voice. I find it easier to be still in winter as I gratefully shut myself into this warm house. I can claim the privilege that my present stage of life allows of more time for enjoyment with fewer "must do's" and "should do's." Old age has a few benefits.

Winter is not without its beauty. The stark bareness of branches has a special beauty. As I took holiday evergreens from a basket on the back porch, I replaced them with an arrangement of branches. I especially like the graceful elm, and I added runners of wisteria and smilax.

I enjoy the puzzling shadows cast by trees stripped of their foliage. The moon is beautiful seen through limbs of our huge pecan tree, the same tree Don remembers from childhood. Our children had a playhouse under the tree and now our great grandchildren play in its shade.

Snow is one of the beauties of winter. I remember as a child waking up to see that snow had covered everything with a blanket of white while we slept. Snow falling any time continues to be a marvel to me and snow that falls during the night and surprises us must be the best of all.

Our children enjoyed snow to the fullest. I bundled them up in layers of clothes and the neighborhood children joined them for joyous winter play. I took longer to help them dress to go out and later to dry their clothes than the time spent out playing, but they enjoyed it to the fullest, and an old butane heater speeded up the drying. Their little hands and cheeks and noses would be red and almost stiff when they came in. They thought I had created a wonderful thing when I made snow cream, reliving a childhood delight. Don and I differ on the making of this rare treat; I grew up with an uncooked mixture heavy with vanilla and he wanted a boiled custard. The children weren't interested in how this grand novelty came about, they simply wanted to eat the ice cream made from snow as they sat around the kitchen table chattering excitedly about what they had already played and what they planned once they got back out.

I have many pictures of my much loved Clear Creek Baptist Church. A favorite is one was made with "a crest of new fallen snow" before any tracks had been made. The picture was made while the rooms added from the Dillard school building were still there. The building appears small in comparison to the present plant with its several additions.

Other pleasant snow memories of when the children were little people include our taking goody trays to older people in the community. Going to "Miss Carrie's" (Mrs. Turnage Bunch) was always a treat for me, usually catching the aroma of preparation for everything wonderful a Christmas dinner could offer. I remember opening the door one particular day to a especially pleasing aroma. Stepping into her kitchen, I saw that Miss Carrie was mixing dressing. As I looked into the bowl, my mouth watered as it did when I beheld her caramel cake icing and caramel pies. I treasure my copy of her recipes for these wonderful desserts. On this visit Miss Carrie gave me an apron—another treasure—which a few years ago I passed on to her granddaughter Rita Vasilyev.

Pansies are the lone blooms of winter. They vie only with the evergreens for attention. If we have snow, their blooms will peep through the snow as do the wildflowers of the Swiss Alps.

As I see the bare trees and the barren flowering shrubs, I know it will be a blink of an eye before they will be blooming again. First will come the quince, forsythia, spirea, then dogwood, wygelia, and lilacs, all adding their special seasonal beauty to the landscape. I visualize the lovely jonquils, tulips, hyacinths, and lilies that will come from the bulbs beneath the soil that are even now preparing to push their way out and bloom beautifully.

I am amazed at how God speaks to us through His creation. For now I will enjoy the winter and use this time to prepare for the busy months of spring and summer and to store spiritual truths to draw on after winter has passed.

*Sincerely,*  
*Patsy*

# In Memoriam

We dedicate this issue of *Seasons* to those who died and whose families we served from November 15, 2007, through January 28, 2008.

Mrs. Sarah Morrow Brooks	November 15, 2007
Mr. Joe Jim "Tres" Hogan, III	November 16, 2007
Mrs. Faye Simpson Rotenberry	November 21, 2007
Mrs. Newtie Louise McGregory	November 25, 2007
Mr. James "Joe" Jackson	November 25, 2007
Mrs. Mozelle Rice Tucker Fesler	November 26, 2007
Mrs. Valerie Nicole Sanderson	November 30, 2007
Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Boyd	December 5, 2007
Mrs. Ella Grace Ragland Barbee	December 6, 2007
Mr. Henry Burlon James, Sr.	December 6, 2007
Mr. Harold Dean Tucker	December 9, 2007
Mrs. Emma Lee Smith Ray	December 12, 2007
Mr. Baxter Orr Elliott, Jr.	December 13, 2007
Dr. Donald Shores Vaughan	December 13, 2007
Mrs. Frances Lewis Howington	December 14, 2007
Mrs. May Varner Hartin	December 14, 2007
Mrs. Nancy Jo Stripling Ratliff	December 15, 2007
Mrs. Lavee Hillhouse Webb	December 16, 2007
Mrs. Janet Ruth Hall Crawley	December 16, 2007
Emily Elizabeth Hamm	December 23, 2007
Dr. Hester Christine Boyd Stokes	December 28, 2007
Mr. William Campbell Little	January 1, 2008
Mr. George Albert "G.A." Liles	January 3, 2008
Mrs. Bessie Marie Conner Webb	January 6, 2008
Mr. Coy Len Sanders	January 6, 2008
Mr. James Samuel Wells	January 11, 2008
Mrs. Marianne Parsons Herzog	January 11, 2008
Mrs. Myrtis Ruth Gatlin Ray	January 15, 2008
Mr. Ervin Cecil Eugene Tidwell	January 16, 2008
Mrs. Genera Fay Steward Hinton	January 27, 2008
Mr. David E. Rozier	January 28, 2008

## HEALING *(continued from page 2)*

Often grief manifests itself in physical symptoms such as tightness in the chest or throat, chest pains, panic attacks, dizziness or trembling, and disturbed sleep patterns.

During the healing process, crying is healthy because it is an emotional and physical release.

It is also perfectly normal for a person to feel like they are "going crazy." Everyday tasks can become difficult or demanding. Suddenly driving a car, paying bills, or shopping for groceries can feel overwhelming. A good rule of thumb during this period is not overexert yourself. Carry a small notebook and record things that need remembering. Alert your boss and coworkers that you may not be operating at maximum efficiency. Ask friends and family for support. Above all else, be patient with yourself.

How long grief lasts is different for everyone. However, many experts agree that the grieving process is complete when you are able to think of the deceased without pain. This doesn't imply that you won't still miss that person, it only means that your sadness will be different, gentler, less wrenching.

Here are some additional ways to cope with the pain from a loss:

Seek out supportive people

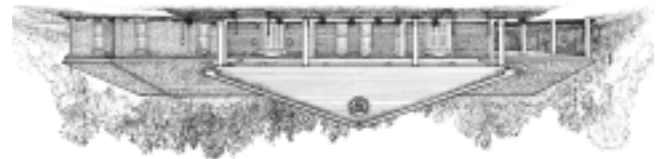
Join a support group

Take care of your health

Find outside help when necessary

*-National Funeral Directors Association  
Educational Packet*

NFPA Pursuit of Excellence  
2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007



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