



Waller Funeral Home
"An Oxford Tradition"

SEASONS

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Winter 2010
 Volume XXVII, No. 1

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HOPE SHINES THROUGH

Winter was upon us. The butterflies that meant so much to us were gone. The leaves that were so beautiful, making perfect pictures as they fell from the trees, were gone except for a few that were the ugliest brown. The cotton that stood behind our house, making a perfect picture that looked as if it had snowed, had been picked; the fields lay brown and barren; and, except for the deer walking through, they looked sad waiting for spring to come and bring back the signs of new life. The smell of wood burning in fireplaces filled the air around Clear Creek Road. The grass in our yard that I work so hard on every year was a light tan, and the ground was soft and springy as I walked over it. The only sign of color in our yard was the ugly blue-greenish dye that marked where the workers had sprayed poison. The bare trees stood almost still, but you better believe the cold winter air was blowing through them. The clouds were that dull gray color and were drifting straight from the north. It was not raining, but the windshield wipers were having a hard time keeping up with the heavy mist. With the death of Miss Patsy, the season looked the way I felt, cold and lonely, as our family waited uneasily for the Christmas season to arrive.

As I drove home from work that afternoon watching the clouds float by, between the swipes of the windshield wipers I saw something ahead that brought hope—an opening in the low-flying clouds with a ray of sunshine coming through. The opening was about the size of our den—small but large enough to see that hope was not far away. Behind

(continued on page 2)

BOB ROSSON BEGINS TERM AS SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



Pictured together after installation as officers of the National Funeral Directors Association are President Bill Wappner and Secretary Bob Rosson.

Bob (Robert T. Jr., CFSP, CPC) Rosson was installed as Secretary of the 2009-2010 Executive Board of the National Funeral Directors Association during the association's 2009 International Convention & Expo in Boston October 25-28. The NFDA is the leading funeral service association, serving more than 19,500 members representing approximately 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and internationally. As Secretary, Bob will attend and record Executive Board and Policy Board meetings and proceedings of the annual Convention & Expo. He will represent the association and its mission at state funeral association conventions, and he will serve on committees and subcommittees including the Spokesperson

Committee, Budget Committee, Pursuit of Excellence Committee, and Professional Development Committee.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION-BOB ROSSON

In his continuing professional development, Bob Rosson has recently qualified for recertification of the designation of Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP), by the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice. The Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice, since its 1976 founding, has had as its goals: (1) to recognize those practitioners who have voluntarily entered into a program of personal and professional growth, (2) to raise and improve the standards of funeral

(continued on page 3)

HOPE

(continued from page 1)

the clouds I saw blue sky and small soft white clouds. The sun came through and lighted up the road ahead and moved toward my car, and, as fast as I saw it coming, it was gone. To see blue sky and soft white clouds and the sunlight coming through was just enough to give hope for another day—always nice in the midst of hard times.

The opening reminded me of how so many of us are looking and hoping for a ray of sunshine to brighten our lives. No matter how bad it seems, a ray of hope comes into view. I am reminded most days at work about loss. The community of Oxford/Lafayette County/University we live in is a special place, and one of the things that makes me sad is that we are burying many of the people who made this the great community that it is today. The ray of hope I find as I think about those we have lost is the memory of how many of them touched my life in a special way.

When Miss Patsy was active at the funeral home, she had a note on her typewriter [You remember typewriters, don't you? We used them before computers, e-mail, twitter, blogs, etc. Heck, I even took typewriting in high school.]. The note said in shorthand, [another antique today's youth know nothing about] "This is not just another funeral." When I started work at the funeral home that note told me what the importance of working at the funeral home was all about. As we continue to help families, I say thank you for allowing us the opportunity to help families, because, to us, "It is not just another funeral." Each day we help families start the process of saying

QUOTES ON ADVICE

(Readers Digest, August 2009)

Columnist Jeanne Marie Laskas's advice from her mother: "When in doubt, do the positive."

I swallow this message daily, like a vitamin, and prescribe it to all my friends who suffer even mild indecisiveness. Should you go for that advanced degree even though it will eat up your evenings? Should you ask that cute guy out for lunch even though he might turn you down? Should you send a sympathy care to that coworker who suffered a loss even though you don't know her all

"Goodbye" to someone who was so important to them. They too are looking for that ray of hope, that opening in the clouds, to give them hope and the promise that better days are ahead.

Miss Patsy once wrote an article for this newsletter about the beauty of a dewdrop on a leaf with the sunshine coming through. She went on to say that if God could make a single dewdrop have that much beauty, just imagine what He has in store for us in heaven. I find comfort today thinking about the dewdrop and about that opening in the clouds on that misty, dreary day with the blue sky, small white clouds, and beautiful ray of sunshine. That is a great comfort but it does not stop the hurt that we have in our hearts. The days can be cold and lonely but no matter how lonely they seem, with some time and patience we will see better days ahead.

Just like we will see the butterflies, the cotton, green leaves and grass again when spring comes, we will someday again have the opportunity to see the family members and friends who are gone from us. We only have to do one thing to make that happen, and we know what that is—just have faith. My desire is that everyone will find in his/her heart that ray of hope that we all long for.

God bless!

Bob

P. S. The special ray of hope that touched our hearts this Christmas season was the news that Beth and I are going to be grandparents for the first time. Our son Brett and daughter-in-law Kate are expecting a baby in August.

that well? Should you put an extra cherry on top? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. When in doubt, do the active thing, not the passive. You won't make the right choice 100 percent of the time, but you'll significantly up your odds. Remember, the things people regret in life are almost always the things they *don't* do, not the things they do.

It is a little embarrassing that, after 45 years of research and study, the best advice I can give to people is to be a little kinder to each other.

-Aldous Huxley

ADVICE ABOUT FUNERAL SERVICES

The August issue of *Reader's Digest* featured advice on a wide variety of subjects from "Don't store bananas in the refrigerator" to "How to be Polite on Facebook." The "Lived and Learned" article led us to ponder what advice we could pass on from our more than thirty years of experience at Waller Funeral Home that might help others deal with the deaths of loved ones. Here are some thoughts that came to mind:

Let honoring your deceased loved one be your top priority. Consider the character and preferences of that one as well as your own ideas as you make funeral decisions.

Be prepared. If someone is critically ill, begin to consider final arrangements. Anything that can be taken care of in advance will remove some of the stress of preparing for funeral services. Feel comfortable coming to the funeral home in advance to discuss plans and getting instructions about information needed for the obituary and death certificate.

Select a funeral home with comfortable facilities and a thoughtful, dedicated staff. At Waller Funeral Home we want to help in every way possible with the decision, arrangements, and procedures to ease your way through difficult times.

Come to the arrangements conference with information about the deceased for the death certificate and obituary. Don't be surprised that many newspapers charge for obituaries beyond the most basic information.

Decide on a schedule of visitation and funeral services which will allow time to do the things that need to be done thoughtfully and with a minimum of rushing around.

Have information needed at the time of death readily available. Remember that bank safe deposit boxes are not available during weekends.

Make casket and outer container selections (the primary determiners of cost) within your financial means. Feel free to talk openly with the funeral home staff about financial considerations and expect to address payment options.

(continued on page 3)

ADVICE

(continued from page 2)

Let other people help. If someone asks what they can do, pass on some of your tasks.

Cry if you want to. Each person has his/her own way of dealing with death; do not feel concern about how others will perceive your show of emotion—or your lack of visible emotion.

Give careful consideration to whether or not to bring young children to the funeral service. For some, attending will help bring closure and understanding; others will not benefit from the service and may be a distraction to others.

Come early to the funeral service. Even if no visitation is scheduled during that time, some friends will likely come early for a chance to speak with family members.

Remember the good times spent with the deceased; if you feel any guilt or remorse for past actions or inactions, leave that behind.

However regretful the occasion, appreciate the opportunity of being with friends and having the family together. Sharing the joys and sorrows of life are bonding experiences.

Our experience has taught us that the needs and wishes of every family are different. Each family is special to us and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

-Waller Funeral Home Staff

QUOTES ON ADVICE

(Readers Digest, August 2009)

Take comfort where you find it. A man who had lost his brother gave us a good piece of advice. He said, "People will say the wrong thing. You just have to remember that they meant to say the right thing." It allows you to be so much more gracious.

- Elizabeth Edwards

Forgive others. You are giving the gift of peace to yourself.

When raising your kids, remember: The days are long, but the years are short.

Act the way you would like to be and soon you'll be the way you act.

WALLER FUNERAL HOME RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

For the eighth consecutive year Waller Funeral Home has been awarded the National Funeral Directors Pursuit of Excellence Award. The award was presented at the 2009 Convention & Expo in Boston on October 27, 2009. Ranked among the top 2 percent of funeral homes nationwide, Waller Funeral Home was the only funeral home in Mississippi to receive the award.

Criteria for the awards include maintaining a positive image for funeral service by consistently providing outstanding service to families, ongoing education to staff, and adherence to only the highest ethical and professional standards.

The Association recognizes the personal aspect as follows: "The best funeral homes, the best funeral directors, are compelled to do more than expected for their communities and the families they serve. From spending hours tracking down that



2002, 2003, 2004, 2005,
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009

special song for a service, to educating the public about cremation—the finest funeral directors have a passion for exceeding expectations."

Performing and documenting the specific and exacting requirements for this award require hard work of the funeral home staff and provide excellent opportunities for evaluation and improvement. Bob and Beth Rosson proudly accepted the award for the Funeral Home.

ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION

(continued from page 1)

service, and (3) to encourage practitioners to make continuing education a life-long process in their own self-interest, the interest of the families they serve, and the community in which they serve. To receive this award initially, the practitioner must complete a 180-hour program of continuing education activities and events. He must accumulate 20 hours per year to recertify. Credits are awarded by the Academy for work leading to personal and/or profession growth in four areas: Academic Activities, Professional Activities, Career Review (for retroactive credit), and Community and Civic Activities.

Bob's certification as a Certified Preplanning Consultant (CPC), has also been renewed. This nationally recognized certification is considered the standard of excellence in funeral service for individuals who help families plan funerals in advance. In order to become a Certified Preplanning Consultant, candidates must meet specific program requirements, pass an examination based on a standards manual, and demonstrate their ongoing professional commit-

ment by fulfilling learning requirements. Certification must be renewed every four years.

Bob's career in funeral service began in 1983 when he and Beth joined the family funeral service at Waller Funeral Home, where they are now co-managers. Bob graduated from Northwest Mississippi Junior College in 1985 with a degree in mortuary science, and he soon became a licensed funeral director. He has shown his commitment to the funeral service profession on both the state and the national level. He has held every office in the Mississippi Funeral Director Association's Board of Directors, including terms as District Governor and as President. He is a past chairman of the Mississippi Funeral Directors Trust and remains on its Board of Directors. On a national level, he has served on committees, as an At-Large Representative on NFDA's Executive Board, and as Mississippi's representative to the association's Policy Board.

Bob's professional activities are directed toward his personal and Waller Funeral Home's commitment to providing the best possible funeral service to each family we serve.

In Memoriam

We dedicate this issue of *Seasons* to those who died and whose families we served from December 2, 2009, to February 7, 2010.

- Mrs. Mable Gandy WebbDecember 2, 2009
- Mr. Harold Quitman "H.Q" LovelaceDecember 5, 2009
- Mrs. Charles Dwayne SeamsterDecember 8, 2009
- Mrs. Gladye Metts FudgeDecember 9, 2009
- Mrs. Beulah Parks AdamsDecember 11, 2009
- Mrs. Gloria Jones BaileyDecember 16, 2009
- Mrs. Rose Langston PattersonDecember 16, 2009
- Andrew Edward MitchellDecember 19, 2009
- Mrs. Ernelinda Cearley CrenshawDecember 26, 2009
- Mr. Jessie Lee BeardDecember 27, 2009
- Mrs. Jessie Kate Mooney McNeelyDecember 28, 2009
- Lt. Col. James Wallace MartinDecember 29, 2009
- Mrs. Renate Ursula CranfordDecember 29, 2009
- Mrs. Verna A. YeatsJanuary 2, 2010
- Mr. Joe Jim Hogan, SrJanuary 3, 2010
- Mrs. Juanita Avent McCormickJanuary 11, 2010
- Mrs. Maureen Regina HalloranJanuary 12, 2010
- Mr. Ray Woodson AddisonJanuary 16, 2009
- Mrs. Mary Lou SpencerJanuary 18, 2009
- Mrs. Shirley Babb McPhailJanuary 20, 2010
- Miss Bonnie Sue RayJanuary 23, 2010
- Mr. Thomas Alton Bickerstaff, Jr.January 27, 2010
- Mr. Thomas M. O'DonnellJanuary 30, 2010
- Mrs. Zona Dover WaldripJanuary 30, 2010
- Mrs. Carlene Reaves McDonoughFebruary 4, 2010

- Mr. Gerald "Jerry" George LexaFebruary 5, 2010
- Mr. Thomas Leo StottmanFebruary 6, 2010
- Mrs. Ruth Walker StumbaughFebruary 7, 2010

HOW TO COMFORT A FRIEND

When a friend receives a serious diagnosis, it's the rare individual who knows instinctively how to respond.

Rule No. 1: Assume nothing.

We think we might know how someone feels because we know other sick people, but everybody's experience is different.

Rule No. 2: Do more listening than talking.

False assurance is not helpful: "Don't worry, you'll be fine" won't help if your friend has, for instance, pancreatic or lung cancer. Take your cues from the other person. Is he saying "I know I'm gonna beat it" or "I'm really scared I'm going to die?"

Rule No. 3: "I don't know what to say" is okay.

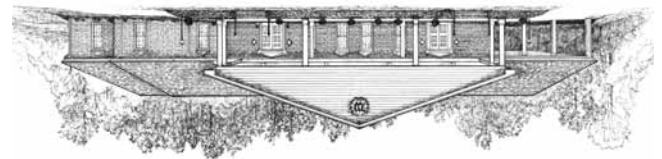
Most people do not know what to say. Admit up front "I don't know what will be of help to you. Do you need someone to pick up the kids, to make lasagna, to take you for a manicure?" You have to ask.

Rule No. 4: But don't push.

You can ask, "How are you feeling?" If you hear "I'm great!" that means "I don't want to talk." You can suggest or recommend then you just have to back off.

-Sara Goldberger, cancer survivor, oncology social worker, and Director of Program Support for Gilda's Club Worldwide Readers Digest, August 2009

2002 - 2009
NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Awards



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