



Waller Funeral Home
"An Oxford Tradition"

SEASONS

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THE SEASON AND MEMORIES

As I write this, we are enjoying the wonderful fall season. I love this season—the feeling of the air and the sights and smells. Don is picking cotton, the fruit of his diligent spring and summer labor. The trees are parading through their beautiful changing colors, and fall decorations abound inside and outside homes and businesses. Fall clothes are displayed in stores and are replacing tired summer wardrobes. Autumn festivals are being held throughout the area, and students are rallying around their school sports teams. At our place, the geese are more active, flying over, moving from Bob and Beth's lake to ours. Their honking is a pleasant, happy sound, and, as they land on the water, they are grace in motion. We cannot count the geese, but we know there are more than sixty. Bob began with twelve.

Excitement for the coming holidays is building. I look forward to this time of bringing families and friends together. I seem to look forward to Thanksgiving a bit more than Christmas. It comes before the hurried and too often harried Christmas season. By Christmas our palates have been dulled by too much eating and our bodies are often weary from the tasks of shopping, cooking, decorating, and attending special events. We leave too little of ourselves for this day of days.

I enjoy remembering Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons of the past. As the family has matured and increased, we have adjusted our traditions. Food and presents are part of our celebrations, but our greatest joy is the feeling of family love and togetherness. Several years ago we began

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WALLER FUNERAL HOME RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARDS



Bob and Beth Rosson accept for Waller Funeral Home the National Funeral Directors Association Pursuit of Excellence Award from Robert J. Biggens, CFSP, CPC, president of the National Funeral Directors Association, at the 2006 National Funeral Directors Association Convention and Expo in Philadelphia October 15-18.

Bob and Beth Rosson also accepted the Best of the Best Award presented at the same 2006 NFDA Convention.

Continuing the tradition of the previous four years, Waller Funeral Home has again been awarded the National Funeral Directors Association Pursuit of Excellence Award, which was presented at the annual meeting of the Association in Philadelphia October 15-18. This award honors funeral homes for their outstanding service to families, commitment to the community, and dedication of upholding the highest ethical and professional standards.

No other funeral home in Mississippi has received this recognition. This year 184 awards were presented to funeral homes in the United States.

In addition, Waller Funeral Home was awarded the 2006 National Funeral Association Best of the Best Award. This new recognition was designed to highlight innovative and

creative ideas developed and carried out by Pursuit of Excellence participants. No more than 10 firms are chosen from the Pursuit of Excellence Award recipients for the outstanding ideas of the year.

The innovative idea that earned this recognition for Waller Funeral Home was providing small embroidered red heart stick-ons to members of the families of the deceased during funeral visitations and services. The people who gather to express respect for the deceased and sympathy for the family often do not know all of the family and this little marker helps direct them to family members. Red-heart use has been favorably received by families served at Waller Funeral Home, and many funeral directors at the NFDA convention were interested

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in using the idea at their funeral homes.

According to National Funeral Directors Association Chief Executive Officer Christine Pepper, CAE: "The Pursuit of Excellence Program recognizes those exceptional funeral homes that go above and beyond the standard level of service to families. The Best of the Best award winners have exceeded those standards of excellence, developing unique, quality programming that goes the extra mile for the families and communities they serve."

The National Funeral Directors Association is the leading funeral service association, serving more than 18,500 individual members who represent 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and other countries. From its headquarters in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and its Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., the association provides advocacy, education, information, products, programs, and services to help members enhance the quality of service to families.

FOR THE BEREAVED AT CHRISTMAS

This week a beautiful letter came saying, after telling me the circumstances of the death of their nineteen-year-old son last spring, "Could you write a column for all of the people who have lost loved ones this year? Our home is sad and our holiday will be lonely."

Death has not walked so close to me that brother, sister, parent, child, or husband joined him as he passed. He has seemed to hover over each of our boys, in turn, so I have fought back and struggled against the possibility of death. Only to that fullness of understanding am I able to sympathize with people grieving through the death experience. In all my years as a pastor's wife, I never learned what to say or how to act in the presence of death-grief.

Now I hardly know what to write. If I knew words which could be caressing and tender to reach into your heart like finger tips and massage away the pain which must be a million times worse than muscle cramps, I would write them.

If I knew words which could keep your breath from backing up into your throat when you have to pick up a

plate because you forgot and set the table for everyone, I would write them.

If I knew words which would keep the tears from dropping onto your coat when you see someone at a distance who looks like him, I would write them.

If I knew words that would keep everybody from walking or whistling or running or talking like he did, I would write them.

If I knew words which would make it easier for you to swallow his favorite food or hear his favorite song or walk into his room or give away his possessions, I would write them.

But if I knew all these words, and I wrote them, and they did what I said they would do, I would have robbed you, for I would have taken away your memories of him.

Next to live music, a record is the best thing; next to a live person, memories are the best thing. Without the music there could have been no record; without the person there would be no memories. Like music with joyful strains suddenly replaced by haunting melodies, and like music with haunting melodies suddenly replaced by joyful strains, your relationship goes on every day.

If James dies before I do, probably the most difficult time of day for me will be the time when I go to the post office and there is no letter from him. He has written to me almost daily when he is away. But I will, for awhile, I'm sure, go home and read some of the letters from him that I have saved and remember gratefully the love that prompted those letters.

On this Christmas Day, every ache will be deeper and every pain will be sharper. It would seem totally proper to me that you weep a little while, but not all day. As you weep, it would seem totally proper, also, to let the joyful strain of faith in Christ well up in your heart and wipe your tears away with poignant happy memories. Bring out a few of the not-so-happy memories too, for it is unrealistic to remember someone as having been perfect.

When your heart has settled and you feel a miracle has worked there, breathe a prayer of thanks to God for it is a miracle, indeed—this Christ in Christmas, whose "Peace on Earth" includes your heart, even on this first Christmas with one missing.

-Wilda Fancher
The Last Word, a Woman's Privilege

A BOOK SUGGESTION

Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse deals in a very specific and comprehensive way with the death of a spouse. It was written especially for younger widows and widowers. The authors, Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert C. De Vries, are extraordinarily qualified to discuss this issue. Both have impressive educational credentials. She is a licensed psychologist, certified social worker, and registered nurse. He has a Ph.D. and a D.Min. and is a seminary professor and a pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. Further, both of the authors had spouses who died. Each doing research about dealing with the death of a spouse, they met, became friends, dated, and then married. They regularly conduct workshops and speak on grief issues together. Their open discussion of their own personal experiences illustrates effectively their recommendations. Also lists of "Helpful Suggestions" are found throughout the book.

Recognizing that men and women often deal with grief in a different way, the authors examine grief from both perspectives. They view life as a journey and the death of a spouse as a part of that journey. The remaining spouse must deal with his/her feelings and emotions so he/she can continue the journey as free of previous baggage as possible. Discussions cover many issues that must be faced when a spouse dies: grieving; financial and employment problems; children's grief; changes in relationships with friends and family; remarriage; and much more. They also discuss issues like "What about your wedding ring?" "Where to live?" "When to give away spouse's things?"

Two people who have lost spouses have reported that they found this book helpful and recommended it for others in similar situations.

The book is in its 11th printing—another evidence of its merit. The book may be found in some Christian bookstores, and it is available from Baker Books, P. O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287 (\$14.99). You can see our copy of the book at the funeral home.



The above Family Circus cartoon is very meaningful to me. I've been there. I love the visits, and I don't mind the tidying up that gives me the opportunity to remember the visit.

Don and I are fortunate to have our family close by; all three children and their families and also my sister Ava, her husband, and some of her family live within a fifteen-minute drive. We have enjoyed watching the grandchildren grow up. It seems like last year when they were small and now we have the pleasure of another generation.

I like for our house to be a comfortable, friendly place for all ages. Providing toys and removing the most

fragile items helps the children and parents feel happy and welcome. We keep toys for the toddlers and crawling babies in the kitchen area in an old large dough bowl, and the little children are quick to find this spot when they come. A small basket of books, including the classic *Good Night, Moon*, is close by. A closet off the family room holds toys for the older children.

Recently as grandson-in-law Chad walked in the kitchen door, he stopped briefly and said, "Your house smells just like my grandmother's!" I considered this a compliment to cherish.

These days, the past sometimes seems to be replaying. I love listening as

four-year-old Murphy Grace holds school at the blackboard in the utility room. Her mother, Mary Beth, now a 29-year-old elementary school teacher, began her "teaching" in that same spot, holding "classes" for sister Joanna Briscoe, now 26, and cousins Brett Rosson and Sally Kate Walker, now 26 and 23.

Now that Don and I have far exceeded the three score and ten years promised, our aches and pains are to be expected and not noteworthy. How thankful we are to be able to enjoy our family!

- Patsy Waller

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seating our grandchildren in the dining room with Don and me for the Christmas morning breakfast. Granddaughter Mary Beth wrote names on tree ornaments for placecards, and with each addition to the family, she adds an ornament. This year we will happily add Jonathan Walker and Houston Briscoe.

Along with family remembrances, I recall early holiday services at our church. Though mostly simple, there were meaningful nativity scenes, recitations and songs by the children, choir specials, congregational singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. Later the choir presented more challenging music—including cantatas. In the 60's, Don's singing of the spiritual, "Sweet Little Jesus Boy," pleased the congrega-

tion. Having grown up working beside our black friends, Don could assume their dialect quite naturally. I was thrilled the Christmas that daughter Susan sang "O Holy Night."

Thanksgiving was emphasized, though not as much as Christmas. On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, the congregation sang the familiar "We Gather Together to Ask the Lord's Blessing," "Come Ye Thankful People Come," and my favorite, "Count Your Many Blessings, name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God hath done." We read Psalm 100 responsively. In the early 50's we brought monetary offerings and also nonperishable gifts of potatoes, onions, nuts, canned vegetables, jellies, and preserves for the Baptist Children's Village in Jackson. Like other churches, we took these gifts to the nearest depot for shipment to

Jackson. The railroads kindly cooperated in this effort.

As I think of the happy times of the past and present, I am also mindful that all is not and has never been happiness and peace. War continues in the world. Families have disagreements, struggles, and losses; I have myself experienced some of these. Stories of murders, abuse, and poverty fill the news, but, through it all, much goodness and happiness exists, and the holidays are a time to dwell on the good that people do, the love we have for each other, and the opportunities we have to show the compassion Jesus showed and taught.

My very best wishes to each of you for a blessed holiday season!

*Sincerely,
Patsy*

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

The annual Memorial Christmas Tree Service jointly sponsored by North Oxford Baptist Church, North Mississippi Hospice, and Waller Funeral Home will be held on December 3, 2006, at 5 p.m. in the Family Life Center at North Oxford Baptist Church.

The service provides the opportunity to celebrate the life of deceased family members and friends by placing ornaments on a Christmas tree. You can bring an ornament or you can personalize one of the ornaments provided. The service will include carol singing, special music, prayer, and a spiritual message. Refreshments will be provided, but you can bring a dish to share if you desire.

We have been pleased with the meaningful way this event has developed. Participants have expressed appreciation for this time of reflection and encouragement during the holiday season, and some come back year after year.

This is a community-wide event for people of all denominations. You are cordially invited to attend.

. . . .

Grief helps for the holiday season are being sent to families we have served since last Christmas. If you know of others who you think might benefit from these helps, please let us know and we will include them in our mailing.

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Inspirational and dashboard calendars are available at the Funeral Home on request.

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Thank you for another year of your friendship and the confidence you have shown in us by letting us serve you through the pain of death and grief. We take very seriously our opportunities to serve in this wonderful community, and we are committed to providing compassionate, professional service to each family we serve.

Our very best wishes to each of you for the holiday season and the new year!

. . . .

In Memoriam

We dedicate this issue of *Seasons* to those who died and whose families we served from August 16, 2006, through November 3, 2006.

Mrs. Wilma Jean Hudson	August 16, 2006
Mr. Phillip Cameron Cooper.	August 17, 2006
Mrs. Betty H. Pruitt	August 21, 2006
Mrs. Mary Sue Roark.	August 22, 2006
Mr. Burwood Baggett.	August 27, 2006
Mrs. Dale Hill Ragland.	August 28, 2006
Mr. Walter Blake Barnes, Jr.	August 29, 2006
Mrs. Dorothy Bridwell Lovelady	August 29, 2006
Mr. Frank Jones	August 30, 2006
Ms. Rhonda Kay Ferguson	August 30, 2006
Mrs. Velma Fay White.	September 11, 2006
Mrs. Ann L. Prunty	September 13, 2006
Mr. Carl Warren Nabors	September 14, 2006
Mrs. Gladys Weeks	September 16, 2006
Dr. Joseph Charles Kiger	September 17, 2006
Dr. Joseph Herbert Bruening, Jr.	September 19, 2006
Mrs. Peggy Dowdell Woods	September 21, 2006
Mrs. Mary Neill Duvall	September 27, 2006
Mr. Thomas Duke Nelson.	September 27, 2006
Mrs. Edith Wright Rogers	October 2, 2006
Mrs. Mildred McRaney Lee.	October 3, 2006
Mr. Johnny Michael Williams	October 7, 2006
Mr. John William Berryhill	October 9, 2006
Mrs. Marie Kathleen Carrington.	October 21, 2006
Mrs. Marine Winter Morrow.	October 23, 2006
Mrs. Mary Alice Smith.	October 25, 2006
Ms. Debra Annette Bridges.	October 29, 2006
Mr. Dean Harland Enlow.	October 29, 2006
Mrs. Mary Irene Vinson.	October 30, 2006
Mr. Audrey Hugh Cook	November 1, 2006
Mr. James Thomas Whitehead	November 1, 2006
Mrs. Martha Susan Henderson.	November 2, 2006
Mrs. Eloise Harris Davis	November 3, 2006

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