MISSOURI FUNERAL DIRECTOR

FALL 2026 VOL 22



Autumn in Missouri

District Event Recap & Photos

Membership Rate Increase



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(573) 635-1661

Editorial Staff

Publisher | Editor | Art Director

Bobbi Crowder

Advertising Sales

publications@mofuneral.org

Member Services

(573) 635-1661

bobbi@mofuneral.org

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Thank you to the content contributors in this issue.

Magazine Entries: Members are welcome and encouraged to share news, events, history, etc. Email photos with names and descriptions, along with a story or explanation of event to: publications@mofuneral.org

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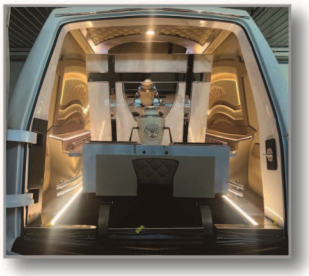
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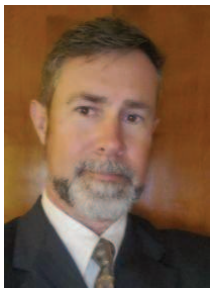


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ABOUT MFDEA

Our mission is to encourage excellence in funeral service, to provide members with exceptional resources and assistance, to represent and protect the common interest of our members, and to educate the membership and public about our profession.

All Missouri Funeral Director & Embalmer Association members have pledged to adhere to a code of ethics that protects consumers, families, and the public. MFDEA members strive to have the highest standards in service, value, and professionalism. Should you ever have any questions about funeral service practices or a concern about how any funeral home may be operating, please call our office at (573) 635-1661.

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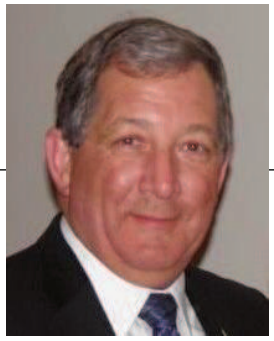
PAST PRESIDENT

Kent Trimble

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Message From MFDEA President



Good morning, folks;

I am writing this on the opening of fall, or at least what feels more like a true fall day.

This time of year our lives become more complicated with school openings, sports and events. If you are like many of us, this involves several times a day and week on top of working 24/7 at our funeral homes.

So, I bid you a hearty hello and want to remind you how important it is to take care of yourself. Sip a cup of your favorite hot beverage while breathing in the cooler conditions and letting your eyes glide over nature as it goes through the beautiful color changes of the season. Let your mind soak it in and hopefully you feel a release and some of the tension melts away.

And now I have association business to share with you.

First, be aware that Bobbi and Don continue to be the only ones available in the office. We are still trying to fill the admin position that has been mostly vacant since the end of June. We hired two but they already quit. As you are aware, finding good applicants isn't easy. So, please have patience when calling the office. If you leave a message, rest assured Bobbi or Don will return your call as soon as possible.

Second, membership renewals will be emailed the first couple of weeks in November. We appreciate our members and are grateful for the continued support and participation. Payment is due by 12/31/2026.

Third, the Missouri legislature will begin winding up soon. If you have feedback or interests in any proposed legislation, please call Don at the office.

And lastly, the Annual MFDEA Convention & Expo is at the St Charles Embassy Suites and Convention Center on May 16 – 19, 2027. So, it's time to brainstorm and share suggestions for speakers, topics, and events for our annual convention. Call or send any ideas you have to me or the office staff.

Thanks for listening,

J. Larry Carter

MEMBERSHIP RATE INCREASE

After careful consideration, the **Board of Directors** has voted to adjust our funeral firm membership rates. This was not a decision made lightly. Like many funeral director associations, we are facing a dual challenge: **rising operating costs** and a **shrinking membership base** driven by the ongoing consolidation and sale of independent funeral homes. To ensure we can continue providing the high-quality advocacy, resources, and support you rely on, this adjustment is necessary to keep our organization stable and effective for the future.

What You Need To Do

Watch for renewal notifications with payment links in your inbox during November. Renewal emails are sent from postmaster@mg.mofuneral.org. Make sure this email is in your contacts or use it to search your email folders if you haven't received them by the end of November.

Update Email Address Change

Contact the office if you need to change your email address: 573-635-1661 or bobbi@mofuneral.org

Past Due Payments: If your funeral firm has outstanding membership dues from the current year or prior, an automatic renewal email may not be generated. Please contact our office directly for assistance with your renewal.

Funeral Home Membership Rates Per Corporation

Funeral Firm 1 – 2 Locations	$730
Funeral Firm 3 – 6 Locations	$970
Funeral Firm 7 - 9 Locations	$1195
Funeral Firm 10 - 20 Locations	$1445
Funeral Firm 21 + Locations	call office

Individual Membership Rates

Individual - $135

Retired - $55

Student - $27

Trade Membership Rates

Trade Firm - $695

Trade Rep - $135

Need assistance? Contact the Membership Coordinator: bobbi@mofuneral.org or 573-635-1661

MFDEA Executive Report



2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo

I am representing MFDEA at the 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo the last week of October. This year's event is in Charlotte, NC. I'm excited to share that Missouri will be also represented by several of our members and directors who are attending.

We expect to experience top-notch education, unparalleled networking, and the world's largest funeral service expo! There are a number of special events, entertainment, and preconvention seminars as well as local happenings that showcase the charm on Charlotte.

Thousands of funeral service professionals, educators, students, and exhibitors descend on one of the fastest growing and most dynamic cities in the United States. It should be a busy week and a great time.

Hope to see you there!

Don Otto

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Missouri Funeral Trust Electronic Contract Usage Increase in 2026

UMB Trust staff are pleased that the majority of MFT providers have embraced the electronic system and are now using electronic contracts. At a recent board meeting the Executive Director announced that MFT providers were currently at 70% usage for electronic contracts.

Common responses heard by MFT staff are:

"The benefits far out weigh the effort it takes to learn the system."

"I was surprised! It's so efficient and user friendly!"

"It's so much easier than I expected!"

If you are not enrolled in the electronic system, please contact Darian Carter today.

All MFT contracts, payments, claims, and inquiries are processed by UMB Bank in Kansas City, MO.

MFT Contact Information

Send claims to: MFT@UMB.com

Darian Carter

Trust Officer & Administrator

P: 816-860-7027

E: darian.carter@umb.com

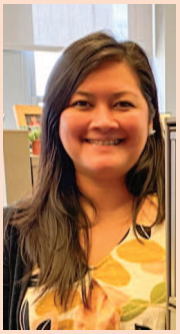


Tiffany Freeman

Associate Relationship Manager

P: 816-860-7366

E: mft@umb.com



Faster Processing

Share these contact details with families. To avoid processing delays of several weeks, please instruct them to mail all payments and contracts directly to MFT.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year the Missouri Funeral Directors & Embalmers Association recognizes a few members at the Annual MFDEA Business Meeting. These are students who are starting their funeral industry career and the association is proud to offer support.

Scholarships are available for students entering, or enrolled in, an accredited Mortuary Science Program.

We currently offer two scholarships which memorialize past members who valued and promoted education in the funeral industry.

- Ginger Hebner Memorial Scholarship
- Richard Dowden Memorial Scholarship

The number of scholarships given each year are based on applications that meet the criteria received by the deadline.

The deadline is April 15.

The amount is $1,000 per scholarship.

For more details and the application, please visit www.mofuneral.org/Resources, or call the office at 573-635-1661.

Lamcraft Launches Simple-to-Use Full-Service Premium Memorial Cards

Design Personalized Keepsakes Online—We Do the Rest!

Lamcraft now offers **Full-Service Premium Memorial Cards** for convenience and flexibility to the funeral home industry. With this new online service, families and funeral home staff can design custom laminated memorial bookmarks in minutes. Lamcraft then handles the rest: printing, lamination and shipping.

Customers choose a background design from one of our professionally designed templates, upload a photo (for front or back), select a verse, enter their loved one's obituary, preview the finished card and place the order. A live preview shows exactly how the card will look before it's printed.

Choosing the right words is often the hardest part. For families who need help, a built-in writing assistant drafts a heartfelt tribute from a simple form that can be edited. Customers can also paste in their own text. There are about 30 templates to choose from, including peaceful nature scenes, religious imagery, patriotic flag designs and a range of floral artwork. Or, elegant plain color backgrounds may be selected.

"Thank you so much for the memorial cards last week. They arrived on time, looked great and everyone loved them."

— A family member who ordered more

For funeral homes, the service is an easy addition to what they already offer. The name of the funeral home or crematory may be imprinted on each card as a reminder of your caring service. Funeral directors can offer families a durable custom keepsake with no extensive design work or production on their end—no shelf stock or laminator is necessary.

The cards are printed in a durable 3" x 9" laminated bookmark format. Pricing starts at $55 for 11 cards, and the per-card price drops with volume, down to $1.50 each at 203 cards. Orders ship Monday through Friday; those orders placed by 4:00 p.m. ship the next business day. In Missouri, ground delivery takes 1–2 business days, so cards arrive in time for the service. Overnight shipping is also available.



On your computer screen, you will see exactly how your custom Memorial Card will print and trim out.

Lamcraft also offers **Full-Service Prayer Cards** with the same laminated finish, or as 8-up pre-printed sheets to be separated and laminated in your facility.

To see how easy it is to make personalized Memorial Cards, visit **order.lamcraft.com/tribute** or scan the QR code below. No obligation to buy!

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Meeting Recap: DISTRICT 6 & 7

Meeting Highlights from Aug. 31, 2026

Place: Cyrano's Café in Webster Groves

Speaker: Shad Friend w/ Ben Davis Restoration



The MFDEA Districts 6 & 7 held their summer meeting at Cyrano's Café located in Webster Groves (St. Louis) on August 31, 2026.

Record attendance of over 50 guests including special attendance of two students who just started their journey in mortuary school: Becca Kotraba with John L. Ziegenhein, and Kody Zeugin with Ortmann-Stipanovich.

The meeting sponsors were Nick Giamalva with The Global Urn Company and Ann Morrow & Jess Carlson with MidAmerica Transplant.



The guest speaker for the evening was Shad Friend with Ben Davis Reconstruction.

Presentation Recap:

He was showcasing their extensive and detailed response to scene cleaning as it relates to unattended deaths, accidents, suicides and murders. They handle everything from coordinating with the family, insurance companies and of course the important task at hand of getting families back into their homes after tragedy has struck.

The evening highlight was honoring the career of longtime friend of the Missouri Funeral Directors & Embalmers, Sherri Arcobasso with Matthews-Aurora Casket company. She dedicated 18 years to serving our professionals so that we could better serve the families we care for. A tearful tribute was given by chair member, Cody Moore (Mizell).

Arcobasso was then presented with a plaque accompanied with flowers by Abigail Wippel (Oltmann) commemorating her service to the funeral industry for her years of service in casket sales. The evening concluded with dessert and fellowship.



We want to thank all those who attended, for it is through attendance that we are able to continue to hold district gatherings as well as the continued support. We encourage our members to invite those who have never attended so that we can continue to grow and keep this community of professionals connected.

~ District 6&7 coordinators: Kim Colbert (Hutchens-Stygar), Cody Moore (Mizell), and Rhonda Burgett (Williams-James)



Rhonda Burgett, Kimberly Colbert, Sherri Arcobasso, and Cody Moore



New Member Welcome

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The Power of Words: Helping Families Understand Eye Donation Without Pressure

by Michelle Brooker, Contributing Writer, Saving Sight

In the moments following the loss of a loved one, families are often navigating grief, uncertainty, and difficult decisions. A conversation about eye donation may become part of that experience, and **how we communicate can be just as important as the information we provide**.

For healthcare professionals and others who support families at the end of life, thoughtful language can create an environment of trust and understanding. Our role is not to persuade a family to choose donation. It is to ensure they receive clear, compassionate, and accurate information so they can make an informed decision that reflects what is right for them and their loved one.

Lead With Compassion

Before discussing donation, acknowledge the family's loss. A sincere expression of sympathy recognizes their grief and helps establish a compassionate foundation for the conversation.

For example:

“We are very sorry for your loss. I know there is a lot to process right now, and I would like to take a moment to explain an opportunity that may be available for your loved one.”

When appropriate, using the loved one's name can also make the conversation more personal and reinforce that the individual is being treated with dignity and respect.

Keep the Language Clear

Families should not need medical knowledge to understand eye donation. Use simple, straightforward language and avoid unnecessary medical terminology.

For example:

“Eye donation may provide tissue that can help restore sight through corneal transplantation. Donated tissue may also support research and education related to vision and eye disease.”

Providing information in manageable amounts also gives families time to process what they are hearing and identify the questions that matter most to them.

Choose Words That Don't Create Pressure

Even well-intended statements can unintentionally create a sense of guilt or obligation. Language that

suggests a family is responsible for another person's outcome may make an already difficult decision feel even heavier.

Instead, describe donation as an opportunity:

“Eye donation can provide an opportunity for donated tissue to help others through transplantation and may also contribute to research or education.”

This approach communicates the potential impact of donation while leaving the decision where it belongs—with the family.

Respect the Decision

Families come to these conversations with different experiences, values, beliefs, and traditions. Whatever their decision, they deserve compassion and respect.

Providing clarification is not the same as overcoming an objection. The purpose of answering questions is to help families understand their options—not to convince them that one choice is better than another.

Every Conversation Matters

The impact of a donation conversation extends beyond the decision itself. Families may remember the kindness of the person who spoke with them, whether their questions were answered, and whether they felt respected during an incredibly difficult time.

Success should therefore be measured not only by whether donation occurs, but also by the quality of care provided to the family.

When we choose our words thoughtfully, listen without judgment, and provide accurate information with compassion, we give families something especially important during a time when so much feels beyond their control: **the ability to understand their options and make an informed decision with dignity.**

Eye donation has the potential to create a lasting legacy through transplantation, research, and education. Our responsibility is to present that opportunity with sensitivity and respect.

Compassion opens the conversation. Education builds understanding. Respect gives families the space to decide.

Saving Sight®

Interested in having district meetings in your area?
Find out how to get started.

Thinking about being more involved by becoming a board member?

Learn more by contacting us
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or emailing one of the current board members
listed on www.mofuneral.org.

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Economic & Market Commentary - October 2026

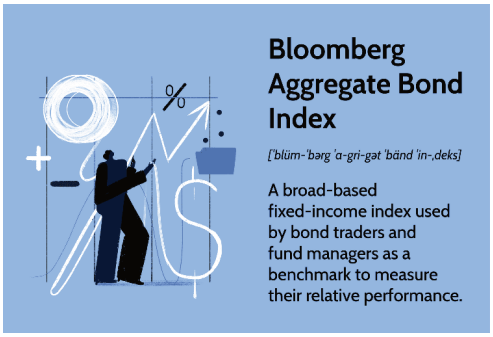
The third quarter of 2026 marked a reversal from the improving backdrop that supported markets in Q2. In the prior quarter a brief truce between the U.S. and Iran helped oil prices fall, credit conditions improve and equity markets rally. In Q3, the conflict intensified and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz drove significant volatility in oil markets.

WTI crude began July at $68.58 per barrel, peaking at $106.75 during the quarter, before ending at $90.42. The resulting energy shock, broader tariff escalation and rising fiscal concerns pushed inflation expectations and Treasury yields higher.

As a result, the Federal Reserve hiked rates 25 basis points in September, the first hike in three years. Even so, equities produced a positive headline return as the S&P 500 gained 2.30%, bringing its year-to-date return to 12.73%, supported by a narrow group of mega-cap technology companies and continued AI investment. The economy continued to expand at a 2.2% annualized Q2 real GDP growth but cooling payroll growth, a 4.2% unemployment rate and a decline in consumer confidence pointed to rising downside risks.

Q3 was defined by a monetary policy reversal as improving core inflation was overshadowed by the energy and tariff shock that led to a more restrictive Fed which pressured bonds, and left AI leadership carrying the broader equity market.

U.S. fixed income markets gave back the modest gains achieved in Q2 as the energy shock and a more restrictive Federal Reserve outlook pushed yields sharply higher.



The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index returned -3.51% during the quarter, bringing its year-to-date return to -2.91%.

Treasury yields rose across the curve, with the 2-year yield increasing 71 basis points from 4.18% to 4.89% and the 10-year yield rising 81 basis points from 4.48% to 5.29%. Both the 10-year and 30-year Treasury yields reached their highest level since 2002. The 2-year/10-year spread steepened modestly from 30 to 40 basis points by quarter-end, although it narrowed to just 17 basis points late in September as investors weighed the competing effects of further tightening and slower growth.

Credit markets also weakened, investment-grade spreads widened from 74 to 80 basis points. The additional yield remains modest relative to historical levels, but the widening reflected tighter financial conditions as investors reassessed the outlook for inflation, monetary policy, government borrowing needs and longer-term fiscal risks.

U.S. equity performance was positive in the headline indexes but weak beneath the surface. The S&P 500 returned 2.30% for the quarter, while the Nasdaq-100 gained 0.58%; their year-to-date returns reached 12.73% and 21%, respectively. Sector leadership followed the commodity and interest-rate moves.



Energy gained 12.2% as oil prices surged, while Health Care and Technology returned 10.2% and 5.8%. Utilities fell 11.8%, Real Estate fell 8.6%, and Consumer Discretionary fell 7.7% as higher yields increased financing pressures and tariffs raised concerns about costs and demand.

Small caps, which are generally more sensitive to the impact of higher financing costs, performed poorly during the quarter with the Russell 2000 returning -7.18%. The most important equity-market feature was the deterioration in breadth.

The equal-weight S&P 500 fell 1.87%, creating a 4.17% difference from the cap-weighted index, which means that a small group of very large companies masked declines across the average stock.

The concentration of gains leaves the market more dependent on continued AI earnings growth, particularly with the S&P 500 trading at 21.23 times forward earnings and the 10-year Treasury yield at 5.29%. With high equity valuations and elevated Treasury yields, the Shiller Excess CAPE Yield (the cyclically adjusted earnings yield of the S&P 500 minus the 10-year real Treasury yield) turned negative, indicating that bonds ended the quarter offering a higher real return than equities on a cyclically adjusted basis.

International markets were mixed, with developed international equities gaining 0.91% and emerging markets falling 0.40% as higher U.S. yields and a stronger dollar weighed on global risk assets.

The Federal Reserve shifted from a cautious hold to renewed tightening during the quarter. At the July meeting, the FOMC held the federal funds target range at 3.50%-3.75%, but the 9-3 vote was notable as three officials preferred an immediate hike. Fed Chair Kevin Warsh emphasized in late August that inflation was not meaningfully slowing and reiterated the Fed's commitment to returning inflation to its 2% target. In a later meeting, the FOMC unanimously raised the target range by 25 basis points to 3.75%-4.00%. The September projections increased the median federal funds rate for year-end 2026 to 4.125% from 3.75% in June and raised the 2027 median to 4.125% from 3.625%.

Markets see an 81% chance of another hike in December and are pricing an implied rate of 4.61% by April 2027. The Fed's decision came despite signs of labor-market cooling and gradual improvement in core inflation. Core CPI declined from 2.57% year-over-year in June to 2.45% in August, while core PCE remained at 3.00% over the same period. However, the oil-price shock and tariff increases kept headline inflation above target. Payroll growth was only 29,000 in September and unemployment rose to 4.2%. These crosscurrents left the Fed facing a difficult tradeoff between containing renewed price pressures and avoiding a sharper slowdown.

PARKWAYADVISORS

Summary

The third quarter demonstrated that the Q2 narrative of falling oil prices, broadening risk appetite, and a neutral Federal Reserve had reversed. The main question for Q4 is whether the energy shock continues to pass through to inflation and keeps the Fed tightening, or whether oil supply normalizes and ongoing core disinflation allows policymakers to pause after December. Further rate hikes, higher yields, renewed disruption around the Strait of Hormuz, rising unemployment along with the growing government deficit spending/debt represent the primary downside risks. Consumer confidence has already weakened materially, even though nominal spending remains positive. Further positive momentum could materialize through ongoing strength in labor markets, lower oil prices, improvement in core inflation and evidence that AI investment is translating into earnings. With valuations elevated and market gains concentrated in a small group of companies, high-quality fixed income presents a compelling opportunity, offering attractive yields and portfolio stability as investors assess whether Q3 was a temporary inflation shock or the beginning of a more persistent tightening cycle.

Disclosures

Parkway Advisors, L.P. is an investment advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and provides investment management for the Missouri Funeral Trust. The opinions expressed are our opinions only. Past performance is no guarantee of future performance and no guarantee is made by this document.

For More Information

We welcome your inquiry and can be reached by mail at Parkway Advisors, L.P., P.O. Box 5225, Abilene, Texas 79608 or by phone at (800) 692-5123 or by fax at (325) 795-8521. A copy of our Form ADV, Part II is available upon request.

For more information, please email info@parkwayadvisors.com or visit parkwayadvisors.com.

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Flute, formerly Aurora Payments, offers a no-fee card processing option, integration with popular funeral software, online payments, and convenient payment links by text for families.

MFDEA members receive the lowest processing rates and the most advanced payment collection technology for increased profitability, efficiency and productivity.

For a quick comparison of rates, to add a new location, or for questions regarding your existing service, please contact Jim Luff at 833-287-6722 or jluff@flute.com.

PreNeed Trust

The Missouri Funeral Trust (MFT) was created by funeral directors and owned by the nonprofit organization, Missouri Funeral Directors & Embalmers Association. The goal of MFT is to ensure safety and stability of payments used to fund your preneed funeral plan. No consumer has ever failed to receive the benefit of their pre-need funeral contract with the Missouri Funeral Trust.

Benefits Of Participating in Missouri Funeral Trust

Two Investment Options The Trust offers its

providers two ways to invest their pre-need funds. This allows for diversity and allows each provider to make his own choice.

Easy and Quick Claim Service The preferred method to submit a claim is by emailing mft@umb.com**.** Death request forms are provided and in most cases, checks are issued within 24 hours.

Contract Fees Yearly contract reporting fees to the Missouri State Board are collected from the purchaser and paid by the Trust to the State on contracts written through the Trust. MFT handles all of the paperwork and fees.

Transfers The Trust offers new providers the option of rolling funds from existing trusts into the Missouri Funeral Trust.

Forms Electronic contracts are the primary method for completing contracts with the exception of contracts written in the field. All forms (pre-need contracts, statement of goods and services, authorization to embalm, etc.) needed to be in compliance with Missouri Laws concerning preneed are provided at no cost to your firm.

Annual Missouri Sellers Report The Trust is the Seller on MFT contracts and therefore you do not have to file Seller's reports or undergo the Seller's audit on MFT contracts. MFT handles that for you!

Quarterly Reports All providers receive quarterly reports delineating all activity for each contract. This keeps the funeral home well informed on all contract balances.

For questions, or to begin participating in the Missouri Funeral Trust, contact Don Otto at 573-635-1661.

For contract questions contact, Trust Officer, Darian Carter, at 816-860-7027 or darian.carter@umb.com.

MEMBER **SERVICES**

These services are provided to MFDEA members only.

MFDEA assists funeral homes, commercial embalming establishments, and crematories looking for staff. Post job opportunities on the MFDEA website for 90 days for free. Posts are also included in the Missouri Funeral Director magazine. Using the online MFDEA Job Post can increase applicants and shorten search time. Visit Resources online at mofuneral.org to post jobs and view employment opportunities.

Music Licensing MFDEA members are eligible for low music and webcasting licensing rates. NFDA offers state association members discounts for music and webcasting licenses. This is a considerable discount over the price you would pay to become licensed directly with each agency (ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC). Failure to obtain an annual license may result in substantial fines. Visit Member Resources online at mofuneral.org or call 573-635-1661 for more information.

IN MEMORIAM



Delbert Lee "Del" Shaffer, 89, of Lee's Summit, Missouri, passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at Cedarhurst of Blue Springs.

Del was born on September 18, 1936, in Antioch, Missouri, to John Eston and Anna Mae (Kirchner) Shaffer. He grew up in the Kahoka area and graduated from Kahoka High School in 1954. He attended Culver-Stockton College before graduating from the Worsham School of Mortuary Arts in Chicago, Illinois, in 1957. In 1958, he became a licensed mortician and funeral director, beginning a career dedicated to serving families in their times of greatest need. He eventually became the owner and operator of Shaffer and Sons Funeral Home in Kahoka and was licensed to serve families in Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois.

Del dedicated his life to helping others. For many years, he provided ambulance service to Clark County and served as Clark County Coroner for 24 years. He was deeply involved in the communities he served and gave generously of his time and talents to numerous civic, professional, charitable, and community organizations.

A longtime member of the Kiwanis Club, Del joined in 1958, served as president of the local club, and later served as Lieutenant Governor of the Missouri/Arkansas District. He was instrumental in founding the Kahoka City-Wide Garage Sales and the Christmas Dinner for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas. He also served as president of the Kahoka Chamber of Commerce and on numerous boards and councils, including the Library Board, Child Welfare Advisory Board, Extension Council, Health Occupations Class Board, Boy Scouts of America, and Missouri Funeral Directors Association.

His commitment to his community extended well beyond his professional life. Del was a member of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Kahoka, where he served on the board and as a Eucharistic Minister. After moving to the Kansas City area in 1996, he continued his career as a funeral director with Speaks Memorial Funeral Home in Independence, Missouri, where he worked until 2020. He was a member of Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic Church and continued serving as a Eucharistic Minister.

Del was also a longtime member of the Knights of Columbus, including St. Patrick Council #2529, where he served as Grand Knight from 1995–1996, as well as the Fourth-Degree Knights of Columbus. He was a member of the TKE Fraternity and served in the U.S. Army National Guard.

Del lived a life of service, but he also knew how to enjoy life. He loved golf, boating, water and snow skiing, fishing in Canada, salmon fishing in Nova Scotia, gardening, his home and yard, and especially his beloved koi pond.

Above all, Del cherished his family. He and his wife, "Bernie," shared 66 wonderful years of marriage, and she remained the joy of his life. He was especially blessed to live close to his grandchildren and treasured the time he spent with them. His family, friends, and the many people he served throughout his career will remember him for his generosity, dedication, hard work, and genuine desire to help others.

IN MEMORIAM



The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is saddened to announce the sudden passing of Mike Nicodemus, NFDA vice president of cremation services and a nationally recognized authority on cremation.

Nicodemus joined NFDA in 2013 following a 35-year career with Hollomon-Brown Funeral Home in Virginia Beach, Virginia. During his 13 years with NFDA, he created and continuously elevated the NFDA Cremation Certification Program, staffed the association's Cremation Hotline, authored numerous cremation-focused resources and traveled throughout the United States and internationally to promote due diligence and best practices.

Over the course of more than 50 years in funeral service, Nicodemus became a respected educator and expert on cremation. He previously served as president of the Cremation Association of North America and was frequently called upon as an expert witness in cremation-related litigation.

Through his work with NFDA, Nicodemus educated thousands of funeral professionals and helped advance cremation education and professional standards throughout the funeral service profession. Under his leadership, the NFDA Cremation Certification Program, which was established in 2013, expanded to serve funeral professionals in the United States and around the world.

"Mike's impact on NFDA and the funeral service profession is immeasurable," said NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, CAE. "He was a true authority in his field, but what made Mike so special was how generously he shared what he knew. Whether he was teaching a classroom of funeral professionals or answering a call from a member who needed his help, Mike cared deeply about getting it right and helping others do the same. We have lost a treasured colleague, teacher and friend, and we will miss him deeply."

Nicodemus is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, and two children. Funeral arrangements and obituary information are not yet available. NFDA will share additional information as it becomes available.

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES To post an ad, email info and contact details to bobbi@mofuneral.org.

Posted September 24, 2026 **Ledford Family Funeral Homes – Odessa & Lexington, Missouri**

Pay: $55,000.00 - $65,000.00 per year

Job Posting: Licensed Funeral Director & Embalmer

Ralph O. Jones Funeral Home Walker-Nadler-Fuller Funeral Home

Ledford Family Funeral Homes is seeking a Licensed Funeral Director & Embalmer to join our growing, family-owned organization. With two locations just 20 miles east of Kansas City, we proudly serve approximately 210 families each year, with a strong focus on personal and compassionate care.

The ideal candidate is:
- Enthusiastic, compassionate, and service-minded
- A natural leader with strong communication skills
- Detail-oriented and adaptable
- Dedicated to delivering exceptional care to families
- Preferably **licensed in Missouri** as a Funeral Director & Embalmer, or able to reciprocate promptly

Position Responsibilities
- Meeting with families to arrange services
- Directing funeral, memorial, and graveside services
- Embalming and preparation
- Taking part in removals and on-call rotation
- Upholding high standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and care

This role provides opportunities to grow in all areas of funeral service, offering hands-on experience in both small-town and metropolitan-adjacent communities.

Why Join Our Family—Work/life balance is a core value at Ledford Family Funeral Homes. We offer a supportive, family-focused environment where your well-being matters.

We offer:
- **Competitive salary** (based on experience)
- **Overtime Pay after 40 hour work week**
- **3 weeks of paid vacation** (usable after 60 days)
- **Retirement plan eligibility after 90 days**
- **Health insurance stipend**
- **Balanced on-call and weekend schedule**
- **Fun-loving, team-oriented culture**

Odessa and Lexington offer affordable living, strong schools, and a small-town feel—while being just minutes from the opportunities and amenities of Kansas City.

How to Apply - If you believe you're the right fit for our family and want to join a passionate, service-driven team, please send your resume to: Austin Ledford, Owner, austin@ledfordfamilyfh.com

Posted September 21, 2026 **Cantlon-Otterness & Viets Funeral Home**

Immediate Career Opportunity - Funeral Director / Embalmer

Cantlon-Otterness & Viets Funeral Home in Buffalo, MO, is seeking a licensed or apprentice funeral director and embalmer for a full-time position.

Located in south-central Missouri, approximately 30 miles north of Springfield, this is an excellent opportunity to begin or advance your career while serving families in a close-knit community.

This position is available immediately. Send resume to Matthew Shannon at mattshannon15@gmail.com.

Posted August 27, 2026 **Ford & Sons Funeral Home—Cape Girardeau**

Ford & Sons Funeral Home is seeking a Missouri Licensed Funeral Director & Embalmer to join our award-winning, four generation family-owned firm. We have seven locations, two cemeteries, two crematories and a monument shop in Southeast Missouri. We proudly serve over 700 families each year.

We offer:

*** Competitive salary (based on experience)**
*** 1 week of paid sick time**
*** Full medical benefits**
*** 3 weeks of paid vacation time**
*** 401(k) plan (eligible after one year)**
*** Balanced on-call and weekend schedule**

License/Certification: Missouri Funeral Director License (Required or able to reciprocate quickly)

Work Location: In person – Cape Girardeau or Perryville, MO

How to Apply: If you believe you're the right fit and want to join our team, please email your resume to Joshua Ford, Vice President, at josh@fordandsonsfuneralhome.com.

Posted July 20, 2026 **Ortmann Stipanovich Funeral home—Overland & Creve Coeur**

The Ortmann Stipanovich Funeral Home is accepting applications for an experienced Missouri licensed funeral director/embalmer.

We are a family owned funeral home, stablished in 1935, located in St. Louis County operating two facilities in Overland and Creve Coeur.

This is a full time position with benefits. Applicants must have a professional appearance and possess a good work ethic in additional to being self-motivated and compassionate.

Contact: Mike Stipanovich at (314) 514-1111, or send resume to info@osfuneralhomes.com

www.osfuneralhomes.com

TRADE MEMBERS

Companies	Independent Reps
Ambulance and Coach—Jeff McKinley	Kim Beckerman FDLIC
Flute—Jim Luff	Teresa Carlson The Bancorp
ASD—Lauren Kress	Nick Giamalva Global Urn Co
DocuLock—Paul Janicek	Brad Marten Midwest Transplant Network
Express Funeral Funding—Dakota Bragdon	Lexi Smith Homesteaders Life Ins
Federated Insurance—Jake Spaniol	Kurt Torkelson CVI Funeral Supply
Funeral Home Gifts— John Sparacino	Jim Wright Dodge
PreNeed Systems—Lori Crabb	
SFLIC—C. Suzanne Eades	
The Wilbert Group —DJ Roshan	
Valor Technical Cleaning—Daniel McClune	

Members Only Offers from Trade Members

Find out what they can do for you!

Contact reps through the links above.

Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association



Springfield, MO