



2022 Fall Newsletter

NOTICE

Cleveland Memorial Society's
Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 23, 2022

2 pm - 4 pm

Beachwood Public Library

12345 Shaker Blvd.

Shaker Heights 44122

Speaker: Dr. Heidi Barham

(see sidebar)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Heidi Barham

Topic: Dispelling the Myth of Hospice

Cleveland Memorial Society Board member, Rev. Heidi L. Barham, will be our featured speaker at the annual meeting on October 23rd.

Her presentation, "We All Have to Go Sometime," will explain the benefits to both patients and families of utilizing hospice and palliative care services and address some of the myths and misperceptions surrounding hospice care.

In addition to being the pastor of Ledgewood Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Novelty, Ohio, Rev. Barham is the Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with Hospice of the Western Reserve.

Please read more about Rev. Barham on page 5.

Want to learn more? Please join us!

Register today for the

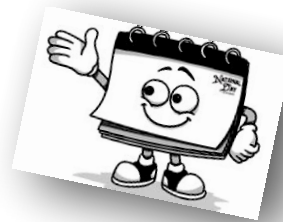
Funeral Consumers Alliance

Online Conference 2022

Friday, Oct. 7 - Sunday, Oct. 9

See website for session times and rates

www.funerals.org



Mark your
calendars!

Learning from the experts has never been more affordable or easier than right from your home. The FCA offers a truly interesting weekend for anyone who has an interest in end-of-life issues. There's comfort in knowing you can speak freely and hear from others who have similar questions and experiences.

Topics and discussions include the legalities of home funerals, the art of the condolence letter, funeral and burial alternatives, the responsibility-avoiding mistakes commonly made by families, Native American Graves Protection (led by Navajo doctor, Gregory Redhouse, and casket and funeral pricing. Sessions can be purchased as a whole package or by individual days and the corresponding presentations. To learn more and to register, go to www.funerals.org

Notes From the Office
Cynthia Lehman, CMS Secretary

I truly enjoy meeting you over the phone when you call CMS with questions or concerns. We don't have actual office hours because the office is a small space that isn't for visitors.

I make every effort to call you back as soon as possible, but please remember that you can call my personal cell phone—716.830.4330—if you have a pressing need that can't wait.

There are a few important things that I hope you will remember:

- Notify us when you change address or phone number
- Notify us if you want to receive the newsletter via email
- You are free to change your selected funeral director and/or change from burial to cremation or vice versa by contacting us via email or phone

PLEASE **complete the “What to Do at the Time of My Death” form** and GIVE IT TO FAMILY MEMBERS, NURSING HOME STAFF, HOSPICE STAFF — anyone who will need to know what your arrangements are.

Hope to see you at our Annual Meeting,
Cynthia Lehman

FUNERAL DIRECTOR NEWS

Strawbridge Memorial Chapel has become the newest funeral director to partner with the Cleveland Memorial Society. Started in 2008, Strawbridge Memorial Chapel is the first funeral home in the City of Cleveland to be established by an African American woman.



With over thirty years in the funeral industry, owner and president, Stephanie E. Strawbridge, along with her dedicated staff, is committed to caring for families from all walks of life. We are excited to welcome Stephanie and Strawbridge Memorial Chapel

to the Cleveland Memorial Society. Contact information:

Strawbridge Memorial Chapel
3934 Lee Rd., Cleveland, OH 44128
216.752.9801 email: strawbridgemc@att.net
www.strawbridgememorialchapel.com

Corrigan/Shapiro/Jardine News

Ms. Shapiro sold her business about a year ago, and the new owner has declined to sign a contract with us. We have reassigned members to other funeral homes and sent letters to the affected members. While this is certainly disappointing for all of us, we are fortunate to work with some fine funeral directors. We are proud of the relationships we maintain with many businesses and organizations dedicated to the sense of comfort in end of life planning. No matter which of our associates you choose, you can trust that you will be in good hands, and we are just a phone call away. If you did not get a letter or would like to select a different director, please contact our office.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT CHOOSING YOUR DESIGNATED FUNERAL DIRECTOR (OR NOT)

Everyone is welcome to join the Memorial Society and receive the benefits of membership, including current information about end-of-life topics, funeral and estate planning, meetings, discussion groups, guest speakers and the newsletter. **HOWEVER**, Should you choose NOT to choose your funeral director from our list of contracted funeral homes, you would not qualify for the CMS pricing.

What does Direct Cremation or Immediate Burial Mean?

Some funeral directors have mentioned that our members and/or their families don't understand what direct cremation or immediate burial means.

*if you select **direct cremation**, the funeral director will:*

- pick up the body at the home/hospital/hospice;
- provide a cremation permit;
- have the body cremated at the earliest possible time that is practicable for the cremator and in accordance with legal requirements;
- arrange for the crematory to dispose of the ashes or return them to the Funeral Director to return to the family or other responsible party;
- assist the family or other responsible party in composing and placing any death notice or obituary;
- assist the family in obtaining a Death Certificate. The family shall be responsible for any direct costs for this Certificate.

NOTE: There shall be no viewing by the family or others, and the remains shall be removed to the crematory by the Funeral Director without the family's presence.

*If you select **immediate burial**, the funeral director will:*

- pick up the body at the home/hospital/hospice;
- place the body in a container of the Funeral Director's choice and which is also acceptable to the cemetery;
- refrigerate the remains, but only if necessary to meet legal requirements;
- assist the family or other responsible party in composing and placing any death notice or obituary;
- assist the family in obtaining a Death Certificate(s). *The family shall be responsible for any direct costs for this Certificate(s).*
- cause the remains to be interred. The Funeral Director may use any burial container. There shall be no funeral procession. The family or other parties will not be present at the interment.

Should I Prepay the Funeral Home for my Direct Cremation or Immediate Burial?

It is possible to prepay the funeral home for cremations and burials. The money is put into a trust fund and cannot be accessed until the funeral director does the cremation or burial. The prepayment could either be a NON-price-guaranteed contract or a price-guaranteed contract. The idea of a price-guaranteed contract appeals to some people for obvious reasons.

However, the Memorial Society recommends that you DO NOT prepay for several reasons:

- The funeral home could change hands or go out of business. In that case the money can be transferred to the trust fund of the new owner or a different funeral home. But the new owner or funeral home has the right to ask you for more money than you originally prepaid.
- You could move out of the area or die outside of the area. Again, you can have the money transferred to the trust fund for a funeral home in your new area, but you will most likely be asked to add more money to the fund.
- If you haven't kept your records where they can be easily accessed or you haven't spoken to your family about your wishes, they could select another funeral home and not know that you have set aside funds to pay for your cremation or burial through the Memorial Society.
- Both times we have had changes in funeral directors, this has caused great anxiety among our members who assumed that they had paid and didn't have to think about it anymore. As you can see, prepaying requires you to maintain good records and talk to your family.

State law controls this. The prepaid money is NOT the funeral home's money. It is the customer's money. It is NOT kept in the funeral home's own bank account. Consumers have a right of refund or transfer.

You have the right to a refund of 100% of what they prepaid on a NON-price-guaranteed contract — note the "non". If what they prepaid is a guaranteed-price contract, they are due a 90% refund.

The Nominating Committee recommends
the following slate for 2023:

Officers:

President – Kate Smith
Vice President – Mark Binnig
Secretary – Doreen Kelleher
Treasurer – Gary Sherck

Trustee:

Sandy Wilson (2025) *see bio, pg. 5

Board Members renewing a three-year term:

Kate Smith (2025)
Mark Binig (2025)
Jackie Stimpert (2025)

Continuing on the Board, terms to expire as
noted:

The Rev. Heidi Barham (2023)
Chip Joseph (2023)
Megan Slatinsky (2023)
Doreen Kelleher (2024)
Gary Sherck (2024)

Please be advised of the
following proposed changes. In
addition to the slate, you are
asked to vote on these as well.

By-Laws Change

Article VI

Section 1. The officers of the
Society shall serve for a term of
one year. In the event of a
vacancy, the Board of Directors
shall elect a member of the
Society to fill the vacancy until
the following Annual Meeting.

Section 2. No officer shall serve
more than six consecutive
terms.

Section 3. The term of any
Trustee shall be for three years.

Retiring from the Board:

Mary Ellen Dawson - Mary Ellen joined us from the FCANCO Board (North Canton and Akron) a few years ago when that Society closed its doors. The CMS welcomed any interested members who were then reassigned to our new Akron director Hummel Funeral Homes. We thank her for moving from the Akron Board to ours to help with a smooth transition for the new members.

Don Stimpert – Don served as our Treasurer (or Assistant Treasurer) from 1986-2000 and again from 2012-2021, continuing as a Trustee until 2022. He has been officially on the Board for a total of 24 years but has been actively involved behind the scenes for 36 years. Don was instrumental in moving us from paper to computer in 1990 with a program he wrote for the Society, was involved in the designing of our website two different times and created our price survey. Giving us continuous computer support, in 2002 he updated our software, and in 2017 created a new program with all the bells and whistles to enable people to join online and notify funeral directors immediately of new members. His contribution has been invaluable and we have come to rely on his skills and expertise. We thank him for his generous donation of time and know-how during his many years of service. Though he is leaving the Board, he will once again slip behind the scenes to continue his technical support for Cynthia in our office. Thank you, Don!!

Jan Glasser - Her enthusiasm for our mission never diminished, but her other commitments demanded more of her time. We thank her for joining us for three years.

Meet Board member Heidi Barham (cont. from pg. 1)

Heidi currently serves as Vice President of the board for God Before Guns, a multi-faith coalition of individuals and faith communities working to reduce gun injuries and deaths. Additionally, Heidi is part of the clergy faculty for Job Opportunities Breakthrough Services whose mission is to provide faith-based job readiness and training skills to members of the Greater Cleveland community.

Heidi earned her Master in Business Education from Cleveland State and a Master of Divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary. Additionally, she is a 2013 graduate of the Lead Diversity program sponsored by the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio. Rev. Barham is a Certified Diversity Professional with a focus on Thanatology: Death, Dying and Bereavement through the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC).

Heidi and her husband, Ron, currently reside in the city of Cleveland.

Meet Board member Sandy Wilson

I'm very happy to have been invited to be a member of the CMS Board. It gives me an opportunity to express my gratitude for the years of solace my CMS membership has brought me, knowing I have already provided for the care of my mortal remains.

I retired from my first career, teaching, in 1998 after 34 years of service. Soon thereafter I went back to school and got a Master of Divinity degree from Meadville-Lombard School of Theology, a Unitarian Universalist seminary. I then had a short second career working as a chaplain in the Spiritual Care Department of Cleveland Clinic. Working full time was complicated as my parents had end-of-life issues and my grandchildren were being born right and left. Work became a lower priority. These days I enjoy hanging out with those grandchildren, especially in the outdoors.

Good death is important. I look forward to helping it be possible by serving on the CMS Board.



America's Changing Idea of Death

In 2020, 56 percent of Americans who died were cremated, more than double the figure of 27 percent two decades earlier, according to the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). By 2040, 4 out of 5 Americans are projected to choose cremation over casket burial, according to both CANA and the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA).

This seismic shift represents potentially severe revenue losses for the funeral industry. Costs are prohibitive: The national median price of a funeral with burial and viewing is \$7,848, according to the NFDA, while the median cost of direct cremation is a third of the price at \$2,550. Cremation with viewing and funeral is comparable to traditional burial, with a median cost of \$6,970.

For families scattered across multiple states, there often seems little point in investing the effort and expense to bury a loved one in a cemetery no one will visit. Like pet food and leisure footwear, cremation is now available through direct-to-consumer websites such as [Solace](#) and [Tulip](#).

It's leading innovators to create a growing number of green alternatives and other choices that depart from traditional casket funerals. *cont. on pg. 7*



*Are you curious enough about the end of life issues
to talk and ask questions?*

Dying in America is one of the best kept secrets that few are willing to discuss. Death Matters is just one option to get involved and have your questions answered, your voice heard. **Death Matters**, whose tagline is “Creating a culture of openness around death,” offers opportunities to explore, discuss, contemplate, dream, share, and plan for the final adventure we all inevitably experience. No doubt it will still come as a surprise, but perhaps not a shocking one.
“Let’s talk about it.”

The Vision Statement of Death Matters is in line with that of CMS’s interests: By creating numerous opportunities for conversation, Death Matters hopes to open up an area which has traditionally been in the closet..... that of dying and death.... an area of normal, healthy human experience which has been denied coverage by our death-phobic culture for far too long.

In exploring our fears about this great adventure, we encourage the possibility of approaching it with grace and perhaps joy. In fact, recognizing the mortal nature of our brief existence, may bring grace, joy and gratitude to every moment of our daily life.

To get more information, go to www.deathmatters.ca

Are you interested in attending or hosting a discussion group?

Please contact CMS for information on how to proceed.



Remembering Linda Betzer

It was with great sadness that we learned in 2022 of the death last year of our very long-time friend and Board member Linda Betzer. The following is a tribute to her that was written at the time of her retirement from our Board in 2013.

With the exception of a few years off for good behavior, Linda Betzer has spent the last 28 years serving on the Board of the Cleveland Memorial Society—four years as a trustee from 1986 to 1990, and then as our steadfast, reliable, motivating, and dedicated President between 1990 and 2013. How can we thank her for that tour of duty?!

She led us through war and peace—there were tough times in 1990 when all but two of our fifteen participating funeral directors severed their ties with the Memorial Society. Then came computerization of our operations and the need to raise some major money beyond our meager bank account of \$2000. Linda saw us through all of that, and on up to the current revamping of our brochures, procedures, website, and mission. In addition, for the last several years she has been a member of the Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, staying informed regarding the laws and workings of the funeral industry in Ohio.

After a law career in the US Attorney’s office, Linda now enjoys retirement and time to pursue volunteer work at Rescue Village, enjoy the theater and Ohio Light Opera, prepare tax returns for low-income folks, and prepare meals for the homebound.

Linda, we offer our deepest gratitude for your leadership, and our best wishes for your next chapter, retirement with Iris in Durham NC.

We offer our condolences to Linda’s loved ones.

Cleveland Memorial Society Primer

Those of us who work on the Board of Directors for CMS have our own “elevator speeches,” those 30 second sound bites that describe a concept, company or a product quickly and simply. Mine is something like this:

“The Cleveland Memorial Society is a nonprofit organization that offers affordable burial and cremation rates to its members by partnering with select area funeral directors to guarantee rates. We assist families with the planning process when requested. We also strive to be a source of information about end of life issues by working with our umbrella organization, the Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA).”



The FCA is headquartered in Burlington, Vermont, and oversees chapters in 32 states.

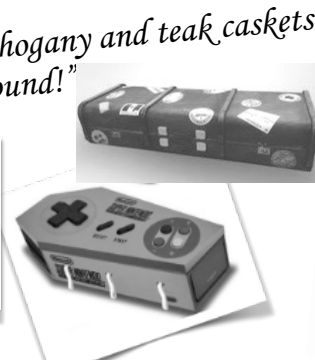
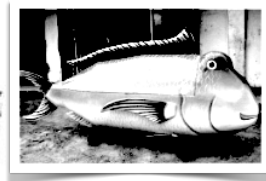
We in Cleveland are but one of such groups in 32 states. We all work under the FCA (Funeral Consumers Alliance), whose statement reads as follows:

“The goal of Funeral Consumers Alliance is to ensure consumers are fully prepared and protected when planning a funeral for themselves or for a loved one. We do this by offering objective facts about funeral planning so families can plan a meaningful goodbye that fits their needs and their budget.”

While the focus for both organizations is on funeral planning, the growing trend is to expand beyond the basics of costs and delve more openly and knowledgeably about the many topics on aging and dying. We at CMS try to bring some of the more pertinent topics to you, with this newsletter, on our FaceBook page and via our website (www.clevememorialsociety.org), our annual meeting in the fall,



“Oh, darling, haven't you HEARD? Mahogany and teak caskets are so....passè! Just LOOK at what I've found!”



America's Changing Idea of Death, *cont. from pg. 5*

Many new ideas pick up on people's willingness to eschew a casket, but are considered more environmentally viable than cremation. One of these options includes Recompose, the first full-service human-composting funeral home in the United States, that is now operational. After nearly a decade of planning, research, and fundraising...Recompose is finally converting people into soil.

Other possibilities include green burials (where the body is interred in a shroud or a biodegradable container so it naturally decomposes in the ground), natural organic reduction (human composting), promession (freeze-drying the body), infinity burial suits (a mushroom suit accelerating decomposition), and alkaline hydrolysis (a water-based, energy-efficient cremation process).

“If there's anything that is going to slow down or reverse the cremation rate in the United States, it is green burials,” says Kemmis, the CANA executive director. “People are looking to the greenest final disposition so that our deaths will reflect our lives.”

Excerpted from articles in The Washington Post (4/19/22) and The Chronicle (1/22/21)

Please join us in thanking our generous donors!

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My group would like to have a Memorial Society speaker. Call me at _____.

Please return your donation and this page in the attached envelope to:

Cleveland Memorial Society
21600 Shaker Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44122

Donations

Without your generous donations and assistance, we could not go forward with our work! We are reluctant to ask you again for a contribution, but since we do not have any annual dues, we must rely on your generosity. An envelope is included for your convenience and thank you for your continuing support.

If You Move

PLEASE let us know if you move. Whether it is moving in with your son or daughter, across town, into assisted living, or out-of-state, we do not want to lose touch with you! Did you know that if you move to another area you can transfer your Memorial Society membership to your new locale, usually for free? We'll help you do that if only you tell us where you are going! Help us help you – and your family!



....you can't spell FUNERAL without FUN.....

I want to be buried in a spring-loaded casket filled with confetti. That way some future archaeologist will have an amazing day at work.

If I choke to death on gummy bears, I hope people will just say 'He was killed by bears' and leave it at that.

I saw an ad for burial plots and thought that's the last thing I need.....

Cleveland Memorial Society
21600 Shaker Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44122
Phone: 216-751-5515
www.clevememorialsociety.org

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(440) 632-0818

**Busch Funeral and
Crematory Services**
4334 Pearl Road
Cleveland, OH 44109
216-741-7700

**Cummings & Davis Funeral
Home**
13201 Euclid Avenue
East Cleveland, OH 44112
216-541-1111

Dicken Funeral Home
323 Middle Ave.
Elyria, OH 44035
440-322-3224

Fioritto Funeral Home
5236 Mayfield Road
Lyndhurst, OH 44124
440-442-5900

Hummel Funeral Homes
500 East Exchange St.
Akron, OH 44304
330-253-6126

**Maher-Melbourne Funeral
Home**
5236 Mayfield Road
Lyndhurst, OH 44124
216-382-4500

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1575 W. 117th Street
Cleveland, OH 44107
216-221-3380

**McMahon-Coyne-Vitantonio
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6330 Center Street
Mentor, OH 44060
440-255-1655

**Strawbridge Memorial
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3934 Lee Rd.
Cleveland, OH 44128
216-752-9801

**Thompson, Smith,
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345 Main Street
Conneaut, OH 44030
440-599-8106