

ICCFA YOU

A newsletter by, for and about ICCFAU students, faculty and alumni

2009: A New Year, A New U



By Michael H. Burke
ICCFA University Chancellor

ICCFA University's new venue at the Mid-South Convention Center presents something very special for our students. From the outside you might think, *well, it's just a nice hotel*. But if you look closely, you'll see it offers much more.

First, we can now accommodate classes of any size while still providing our legendary "comfort" in which every student is recognized and feels special.

Second, networking at the new U will be even easier. All of the colleges are located on the same floor – no more long

walks or climbing up and down stairs! The dining hall is also very close to our classrooms. The networking spirit at University has been a huge part of our success, and now our students' time together will in essence double because we are much closer together. More networking bang for the buck means even more learning.

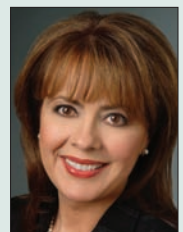
Third, we'll have ample hotel rooms. This issue has been a huge challenge for us as we outgrew the University of Memphis facility in recent years. Now everyone will be housed in the same state-of-the-art space, with rooms

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Burn Hired As Director of Cremation Services

ICCFA has hired Julie A. Burn, CCrE, CSE, as director of cremation services to lead the association's cremation-related program development.

Burn was formerly cremation services manager for Wilbert Funeral Services Inc. in Forest Park, Illinois. She is a frequent speaker at many industry-related meetings and conventions and is a professor at the ICCFA University College of Cremation Services.



Burn

"The addition of a 'cremation czar' is the next logical step in the evolution of the ICCFA, which continues to lead the evolution of the industry as a whole," said ICCFA President Mark Krause, CFuE. "Julie is an outstanding educator and is one of the most well-recognized experts on cremation issues in North America. She is the right person at the right time to build on the ICCFA's current cremation programming and to ensure our members have the tools they need to meet the demands posed by cremation now and into the future."

CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings and Happy New Year!

2008 brought the cemetery, cremation and funeral industry many changes. Our client families from every corner of North America and across the globe have changed in relation to our services and products. The economy is very tight.



So how do we stay in touch? The over-riding question I've heard over and over for 20-plus years now is, "Are we ready for the change that is coming?"

Amazing that I still hear this!

I, as always, offer you the perfect solution: the ICCFA University in 2009.

Our entire course curriculum is based on change and adjustment, and it has been for many years. We evaluate, adjust, create and, most important, listen to what our students say to us. We offer a comprehensive six-college course program designed to do five things:

- 1 Provide the absolute best practices from proven industry leaders.
- 2 Provide the absolute best networking opportunities in a friendly, collegial (pardon the pun!) college atmosphere.
- 3 Provide world-class facilities and food.

4 Provide a forum for challenging discussion and interaction from every student, every day.

5 Make you and your staff better educated at what you do in our business. Period. It's that simple.

I encourage you to make ICCFAU a regular part of your budgeting plans. Use it as an incentive for your staff's great accomplishments. Budget it internally as education. Whatever you do, make sure you spend that very special week with us again in the beautiful Mid-South.

Please read some of the testimonials printed in this newsletter if you have any doubt about whether ICCFAU is a wise decision.

If it's been a while since you've attended University, please join me as my "Special Alumni Guest" to help welcome everyone to our new venue facilities.

If you are an ICCFAU grad, please take advantage of our new special discount offer (see page 5 for details).

What a huge step forward we have made for 2009 and beyond!

ICCFA UNIVERSITY... The right growth. Right now. For our futures.

All my best,

Michael H. Burke
ICCFA University Chancellor

ICCFAYOU

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ICCFA UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Michael Burke
Chancellor

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Dean, J. Asher Neel College of Sales & Marketing

Jim Starks, CFuE, CCRÉ
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Jeff Kidwiler, CCE, CSE
Dean, College of Land Management & Grounds Operations

Katherine Scimmi
Dean, College of Administration & Management

Todd Van Beck
Dean, College of Funeral Home Management

Opportunity Is Knocking

Apply for an ICCFAU Scholarship Today

The Cemetery and Cremation Association of British Columbia offers an annual scholarship covering registration fees along with all housing and meals while attending ICCFAU. Complete details are available at www.ccabc.org.

Created last year, the ICCFA Educational Foundation awarded its first ICCFA University scholarships in 2008. The 2009 scholarship application may be found at www.iccfa.com and is due back to ICCFA by **February 28**.

The ICCFA Women's Forum offers scholarships that are funded through sponsorship by generous industry suppliers. Applications are due by **February 16** and may be found at www.iccfa.com.

The Southern Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association also runs a scholarship program and has begun awarding scholarships to ICCFAU. Visit www.scfainfo.com for complete details.

The Massachusetts Cemetery Association offers scholarships not only to ICCFAU, but to other educational programs. Visit www.macemetery.org for more details.

Clarification: The article "Scholarships: A Gateway to Opportunity" in the last issue should have stated that Ron Nestor received scholarships from the ICCFA Educational Foundation and the Massachusetts Cemetery Association.

A DEAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Beware the Sniveling Whiner!

By Ernie Heffner
Dean,
College of
21st
Century
Services



Feeling left out or disconnected from a growing number of your customers? If it's not your breath, maybe it's your business model for serving the contemporary consumer.

If you're wondering what happened to the business you thought you knew, it's time to remake your company into the go-to firm that wows today's consumers. Sign up for the 2009 College of 21st Century Services and start earning accolades from your clients while enhancing your revenue by delivering what today's families want to buy. And best of all, none of this requires a new wing on your funeral home or a new garden in your cemetery!

What the heck am I talking about? I'm talking about bad news and good news.

We've all heard people talk about the bad news. "This business isn't what it used to be. People sure are different. They seem to have different values. They don't want to buy what we offer. They don't care about what we do."

Knowing there's a problem is half the battle.

The good news is, there is a solution. Sign up for the 2009 College of 21st Century Services and start every day looking forward to helping families in the manner they wish to be served.

Of course I think it's a great program, but what about the people who count? Check out just a couple of the testimonials we've received from 2008 students of the college... and then check it out for yourself at ICCFAU 2009!

"I can't begin to explain how the College of 21st Century Services has changed my outlook on my career as a cemetery professional. The University has always been known for its forward and sometimes outside-the-box thinking and this class was just that. I wanted to thank you for pursuing such a refreshing curriculum. The extra money was worth every penny. Wow! You did such a phenomenal job with course content and presentation. I've come home with renewed enthusiasm and am preparing our marketing of the Celebrant service."

— Linda Cotton
Greenleaf Memorial Park Inc.
New Bern, North Carolina

"I just wanted to express my appreciation for the valuable training I received at the 2008 ICCFAU College of 21st Century Services. I have been attending national conventions and programs for many years as I have been a funeral director for nearly 30 years. This was absolutely the best program I have attended, and I look forward to coming back again next year. Even though I am approaching 60, I can't imagine why other funeral directors could not get excited about the valuable training you are providing. Thank you very much for a most rewarding experience. I have utilized the celebrant training class for two services since returning and, through staff training, am already incorporating many of the ideas into our arrangement conferences."

— Gene C. Black
Chapman-Black Funeral Home
Cleveland, Oklahoma

If you're still doubtful, don't be. You can either register or give up. If you don't register, stop reading and accept that you'll miss the next College of 21st Century Services and continue your existence of denial and Kleenex. However, please don't snivel and whine wondering why your customers have changed. For details about the curriculum, go to www.iccfa.com.

INSTRUCTOR EXTRAS

Serving the Littlest Ones

*Instructor Allen Dave Jr.
Allen Dave Funeral Directors and
Cremation Tribute Center
Houston, Texas*

We must always remember, the funeral is not about us! We do this every day, but the families we serve do not, and so we need to create unique experiences for them.



One way we can enhance our service offerings is to provide ways for young children who attend the funerals to become more involved in the ceremonies and activities. My firm does this in several ways, and with just a little added time and effort, yours can as well.

Art for Heaven—My own daughter is a little artist, and so I developed this idea based on one of her art classes. In our children’s room, we have a staff member who guides the children in creating drawings and brief messages for the deceased. Then, before we close the casket at the end of the service, we ask the children to come up and place their tokens inside the casket memento

drawer. Be advised that this works well if there is a group of kids, but it can be tough if there is just one or two as they may feel they are being put on the spot.

Cookies—We involve the children in baking cookies during visitation at the funeral home. This gives them an activity and helps them feel as though they are contributing. Once the cookies are baked, we ask them to take them around and serve their parents and grandparents. Older children enjoy playing host and hostess, and even the youngest ones can help out if you ask them, “Where’s Mommy? Can you bring her a cookie?”

Balloon, dove and butterfly releases—These appeal to all ages, and especially to children. At almost every service conducted by our firm, we gather outside the facility or at the cemetery for some type of release. We read a poem related to the release and then allow the closest family members to release the balloons, doves or butterflies into the air. The key to the dove release is placing it into the child’s hand. This truly gets them involved in the ceremony.

*Allen Dave may be reached at
allendaveusa@yahoo.com.*

Gone in 72 Hours — Tackling Direct Cremation

*Instructor Steven P. Schaal
Matthews Cremation Division
Apopka, Florida*

Many times when we hear the words “direct cremation,” we immediately think the family lacks funds, doesn’t care or simply doesn’t have time. ... the equivalent of saying, “Just put the ashes in the mail.”



Once upon a time, families chose a casket, had two days of visitation and made a stop at the chapel, church or cemetery for final memorial services. This was the majority of our services. The problem is, this model relied on a 72-hour platform. Unless we performed the service within that time period, it was over. Today, when people ask for direct

cremation, they may be saying, “I have nothing, can afford nothing and want nothing.” But, if you think of the way most of us live and what direct cremation represents, you may find yourself with a new service opportunity.

The Luxury of Time

Sometimes families find it impossible to gather everyone when an unexpected death occurs. Many cemetery and funeral service professionals close their arrangement books when a family requests direct cremation. But direct cremation offers a big advantage, both for the family and for us: the luxury of time.

Time is a valuable asset in today’s busy world. How can we be critical of a family that requests direct cremation if the purpose is nothing more than to leverage time? Consumers couldn’t care less about our service protocol and the “old” standard steps for completing a service.

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STUDENT, ALUMNI & FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Vickie King White, CFSP, a 2006 ICCFAU graduate, recently joined the faculty and staff of the San Antonio College Department of Mortuary Science where she serves as an adjunct instructor, teaching the Embalming I course. White has been a licensed funeral director and embalmer for 23 years. She also serves as embalmer for D. W. Brooks Funeral Home.



White

Charles Leon Harrison Sr., CFSP, MBIE, President/Chief Executive Officer of Harrison's Funeral Home Orange Mound Chapel, died on Friday, November 21, at his home. He had cancer.

Harrison attended ICCFA University in 1997 and was a professor in the ICCFAU College of Embalming & Restorative Arts in 2003. He was a licensed funeral director, mortician and insurance agent for more than 35 years.

He attended Tennessee State University and was a 1972 graduate of John A. Gupton School of Mortuary Science, attended University of Maryland European Branch, a 1978 graduate of the University of Memphis and Leadership Memphis Class of 1988. He was a life member and Past President of the National Funeral Directors & Morticians Association, Tennessee State Funeral Directors & Morticians Association, Bluff City Funeral Directors, and Epsilon Nu Delta Mortuary Fraternity.

Harrison was an Army veteran, an ambassador of the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice, and a member of the British Institute of Embalmers.



Harrison

Survivors include his wife and business partner, Adriana; four daughters, Christen Lynette Harrison, Charian L. Harrison, Cara L. Harrison-Jones, and Arlene Nicole (Quincy) Johnson; two sons, Charles L. Harrison, Jr., and Jerry M. Harrison; two grandsons; two brothers; nieces; nephews; cousins; and aunt.

College of Administration Dean

Katherine Scimmi danced the tango and the cha cha in a local "Dancing with the Stars" fundraiser on October 4 to benefit the Strangway Centre, a seniors center in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. Shown here with partner Rey Montemayor, Katherine said the event "took months of practice," and was "very stressful but fun." Though they did not win the event, Scimmi and Montemayor garnered the highest technical presentation scores of the competition.



Scimmi and Montemayor

We want to hear from you! Send your announcements to robt@iccfa.com.

\$PECIAL OFFER FOR ALUMNI

NEW FOR 2009—If you have attended ICCFA University for four years or more, you may register to attend ICCFAU and receive a special **\$100 DISCOUNT** off your registration fee.

Registration materials will be available this spring at www.iccfa.com.

FALL 2008 PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST WINNERS

Thank you for submitting these great suggestions in our first photo caption contest. Congratulations to our winners! For your chance to win, see this issue's contest on page 7.

"ICCF AU: Where I was taught how to 'terminate' the competition."

– John D. Dodgson
Ocean County Memorial Park
Toms River, New Jersey

"If you're going to 'go postal', at least have fun doing it!"

– Chris Keller
Sunset Memorial Park
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"All this could be yours for \$49.95; \$29.95 preneed."

– Jerry Sullivan
Cremation Society of Illinois, Inc.
Mount Prospect, Illinois



"There are bad hair days, and then there are reeeeeaaally bad hair days!"

– Chris Keller
Sunset Memorial Park
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"ELVIS FOUND ALIVE!!! But in desperate need of a haircut."

– John D. Dodgson
Ocean County Memorial Park
Toms River, New Jersey

"Who said Oscar Gamble retired?"

– Jerry Sullivan
Cremation Society of Illinois, Inc.
Mount Prospect, Illinois



"Okay, maybe tacks on the chair wasn't the best idea..."

– Chris Keller
Sunset Memorial Park
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Brand new at ICCFAU this year – electrochairs! Nod off just once, and you get a 20,000-volt wake-up call!"

– Chris Keller
Sunset Memorial Park
Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Boy, am I hungry! How long do you think it will take for a chicken sandwich to fly into my mouth?"

– Jerry Sullivan
Cremation Society of Illinois, Inc.
Mount Prospect, Illinois



CAUGHT ON CAMERA! CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with your own captions for the pictures below from ICCFAU 2008 and submit them to robt@iccfa.com. The best submissions will be published in the next issue of ICCFAYOU. Be sure to include the photo number when submitting your caption. Deadline: February 15, 2009.



EXTRAS, Continued from page 5

Our reaction to direct cremation is critical to the future of our industry. I don't believe there is a cemetery or funeral professional anywhere who isn't experiencing an increase in requests for direction cremation.

The most important things we can do for these families is to acknowledge the advantage of time to *reflect*, help

them choose an appropriate venue to *gather* (when the timing is right) and establish meaningful *memorial* tributes and products to support their decision. By doing this, we leave the door open to help them find meaningful ways to conduct the services that could be weeks or months away, and we keep ourselves in the equation.

Steven Schaal may be reached at sschaal@matthewsintl.com.

"Instructor Extras" offers advice from ICCFAU instructors – tips & tools to enhance what you learn in class. Instructors: If you would like to contribute to "Instructor Extras," please contact Rob Treadway at robt@iccfa.com.



Left: A common area lounge at the new ICCFAU venue.

Right: The entrance to the Mid-South Convention Center, the new home of ICCFA University.

NEW U, Continued from page 1

featuring plasma televisions, Internet access, granite bathrooms and more. (Be warned: Since we'll all be housed in the same building, distance and traffic can't be used as an excuse to be late for class anymore!)

Fourth, the resort offers excellent safety and security measures and parking, not to mention stunningly beautiful grounds. The center has plantation-style facilities with old-world charm and a staff that provides outstanding service. It also

boasts miles of walking trails, a beautiful pool and gorgeous common areas.

Those of you who know me understand how very selective I can be. ICCFAU has been an institution to me and is as important to me as my own past college experience, so it was important to me that we retain our "feel." Before I put my signature on our new location, the Mid-South Convention Center had to pass many tests from myself, the faculty and the ICCFA headquarters staff. I believe we've hit a big home run, but... you be the judge!



107 Carpenter Drive, Suite 100
Sterling, VA 20164

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
JULY 17-22, 2009
Mid-South Convention Center
Tunica, MS

IN YOUR OWN WORDS...

This week has been incredible. I have learned so many new things about this industry that I can take back and surely help to better assist the families I serve. I will be recommending the school to all the funeral directors and cemetarians I deal with. It was great having the photos being taken every day and seeing them on the slide show. I hope to be able to come back!

— *Michelle Mikkola, Guardian Angel Cemetery,
Rochester, Michigan*