

>>> NEWSLETTER <<< SUMMER 2025

Current News and Comments from the Pennsylvania
Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all involved in the cemetery industry! My name is Paul Simms, and I have the privilege of serving as your president for the next two years. I would like to extend my gratitude to Ernie Petersen for his steadfast leadership as the outgoing PCCFA President. Fortunately, Ernie will remain active on our PCCFA Board of Directors, as well as being involved on various committees.

To provide a brief overview of my background, I graduated from Butler Area Senior High in 1983 and earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Political Science in 1987 from Grove City College. As a young child, some of my earliest memories include visits to the cemetery my parents just bought, Butler County Memorial Park. Throughout my teen years, I pushed lawn mowers, powered string trimmers, and drove tractors during the summer to help maintain the appearance of the cemetery. Eventually, I was allowed into the Administration Building, where I began to learn the sales and administrative aspect of the business.

Unfortunately, my Father suddenly passed away in 1993 and I was vaulted into the position of President at the age of 28. My Mother worked closely with my Dad, serving as Secretary/Treasurer of the cemetery since their purchase of it in 1967. She worked at the cemetery every day until she retired in 2004. I have been married to my wife, Mary, for 28 years, and we have four children. During the COVID lockdown, we decided to get an F1B Golden-doodle and luckily, I am very compatible with him and his fur!

As I look into the future, I see some challenges and changes ahead for our industry. The "Boomers" are currently the leading demographic passing followed by the "Millennials." Each have their own separate and distinct buying habits, and sets of norms and mores. Knowing each of their characteristics, and how to deal with each of these groups, as well as "Zoomers" or "Gen Z," will help in maintaining relevancy for your organization with each generation.

Also, alternative forms of disposal are appearing, such as Aquamation or Resomation, which uses heated water and potassium hydroxide to liquefy the body leaving only bones behind. There is also Human Composting. Green or natural burial has also appeared on the scene. Plastination involves preserving the body in a semi-recognizable form. The newest trend on the eco-burial stage is a process called “Promession,” or to put it more plainly, freeze-drying.

These alternative forms of traditional burial are the result of demographic shifts from each of the generational layers that make up the American Consumer. Our future success will depend on just how we are able to adapt to these and other changes.

I look forward to tackling the challenges and seizing the opportunities that lie ahead for the PCCFA in 2025 and beyond. As always, I encourage you to share any concerns or suggestions for improving the PCCFA with me or any board member. Let's prepare for a productive year. I hope to see each of you at our upcoming events!

SPRING CONFERENCE RECAP

Geoff Behrens and Scott McNulty, Conference Co-Chairs

We had an action-packed two days in June at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in the Pocono Mountains! Thank you to this year's conference co-chairs Geoff Behrens and Scott McNulty. It takes a lot of coordination to schedule our annual conferences and we thank you both for your time and efforts!

The board elected new officers, and we welcome and thank our new leadership, including:

- **President Paul Simms**
- **1st Vice President Eric Wolverton**
- **2nd Vice President Jude Abraham**
- **Secretary Nancy Goldenberg**
- **Treasurer John Yeatman**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION IN HARRISBURG

David Michener and Gary Buss, Legislative and Government Affairs Co-Chairs

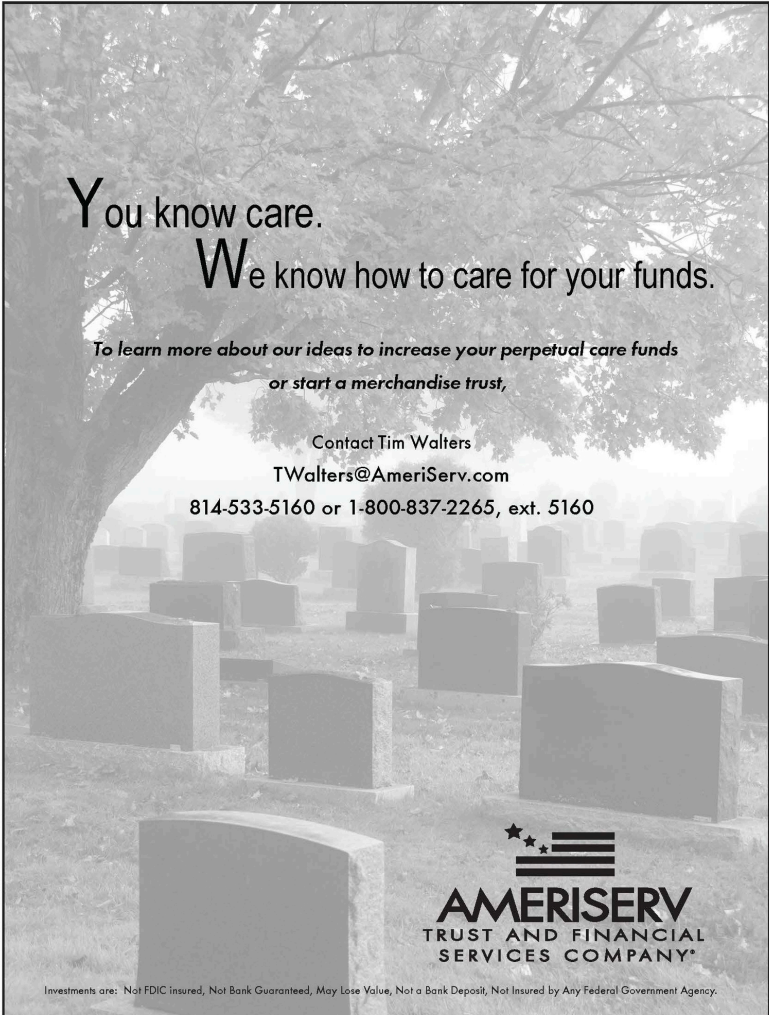
This notice is to all members of PCCFA setting forth the date, time and place of our Legislative and Government Affairs Reception. The day includes an afternoon visiting your local representatives from 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. followed by the Legislative reception 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Please email to confirm your attendance at the Legislative and Government Affairs Reception to pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com and [visit our event page](#) for more information on inviting your representatives to the Legislative Reception.



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Follow along for more information on events, news, happenings, tips, stories and more. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/pccfaAssoc/.



PAC AND LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS

Who works with our state representatives to protect your business, consumer grievances and protects us from overly burdensome laws? PCCFA does!

Support our efforts with your personal donation to the [PCCFA PAC Fund](#). If you want to support PCCFA, with a business contribution, consider donating to the [Legal Defense Fund](#).

For more information, contact Ernie Petersen at (814) 243-3837 or e-mail pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com

SUMMER CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

By Ernest L. Petersen, III, President

Summer cemetery maintenance is essential for keeping gravesites looking their best and ensuring the safety and comfort of visitors during the warm months. Here are some important tips for maintaining a cemetery during the summer.

Regular Lawn Care: Mow regularly for a neat look and water as needed, preferably in the early morning to reduce evaporation.

Weed Control: Regularly inspect the cemetery for weeds that can detract from its appearance. Hand-pulling or using a natural herbicide can help keep weeds under control.

Mulching: Apply mulch around trees, shrubs, and flower beds. Mulch helps retain moisture, suppress weeds, and improve the overall look of the cemetery.

Headstone Care: Clean headstones and markers to remove dirt, algae, and lichen buildup. Use a gentle cleaner suitable for the material (such as stone or metal) and a soft cloth or brush.

Flower Planting and Maintenance: Plant seasonal, drought-resistant flowers for color; and deadhead blooms for growth and neatness.

Tree Care: Prune any trees or shrubs that may obstruct pathways or headstones. Ensure no overhanging branches to prevent damage.

Pathway Maintenance: Keep pathways clear of debris and safe for visitors. Fill in any holes or uneven areas ground to avoid tripping hazards.

Trash and Debris Removal: Regularly clear trash, debris, and wilted flowers. Remind visitors to use bins.

Monitor Wildlife: Be attentive to any wildlife that may damage flowers or greenery. Install barriers or deterrents if needed.

Visitor Amenities: Ensure seating areas are clean and comfortable. Provide shade options to enhance visitor experience.

By implementing these summer maintenance tips, cemeteries can provide a scenic, safe and well-preserved environment for visitors and families honoring their loved ones.

Truist's dedicated Funeral and Cemetery Trust Services team is proud to support PCCFA.

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MID-ATLANTIC'S CELEBRANT TRAINING

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Hosted by the Mid-Atlantic States Cemetery & Funeral Conference

Calling all members across PA 🗣️ Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your professional skills and make a lasting impact on those you serve. By becoming a Certified Celebrant, you can help families create meaningful tributes that truly honor their loved ones.

Certified Celebrant Training is an intensive three-day certification program designed to equip individuals with the skills to create and lead unique and meaningful funeral services. This training specializes in serving families who prefer a personalized, non-traditional, or non-religious approach to honoring their loved ones. Participants will learn how to craft ceremonies that reflect the values, beliefs, and stories of the deceased, ensuring a heartfelt and memorable experience for grieving families.

Details:

- Monday, November 10th – 1:00 pm-6:00 pm
- Tuesday, November 11th – 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Wednesday, November 12th – 8:00 am-12:00 pm.

Registration Information:

- Mid-Atlantic States Conference Registration + Celebrant Training Registration – \$1,500
 - Register before September 15th for a \$100 discount!

Who Should Attend:

- Funeral professionals seeking to expand their service offerings
- Clergy, chaplains, and bereavement specialists
- Anyone interested in officiating personalized funeral services

CE Information for Funeral Directors

- The Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice provides 17 hours of attendance
- State Funeral Service Board approval: Approved hours vary by state, please contact Glenda Stansbury at InSight Books, Inc. for more information, glenda@insightbooks.com

This training is part of the **Mid-Atlantic States Cemetery & Funeral Conference** which happens once every two years with the purpose of bringing together cemetery and funeral professionals from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. This year's theme, "*Celebrate: Life, Honor, Heritage,*" emphasizes the profound role funeral and cemetery professionals play in commemorating lives, preserving legacies, and honoring traditions while embracing innovation. Register before September 15th for a \$100 discount!

[Become a Certified Celebrant](#)

YOUR MEMBERSHIP PORTAL

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PCCFA members can update and renew their membership instantly online! For all new members, once your application and reviewed and approved by the executive team, an account/login will be created automatically after you make your first membership payment. **Please take a moment and login and keep your contact information up-to-date with phone, email, and company address!**

>>> BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- The KeyNews, a quarterly publication, delivered by e-mail and post.
- Two conferences a year with continuing education credits for funeral directors at PA locations. (Every other year, our fall conference is held in Atlantic City with four other states and there the education program provides credits and certifications.
- A discount on the MemorialPro insurance product from the Regan Agency, Inc.
- Constant Contact available for rapid communications. Suppliers take note!
- Access to our supplier members network.
- The PCCFA complaint hotline helping us help cemeteries with consumer issues.
- An annual legislative reception, to make sure your representatives know they can come to us for assistance with pending legislation and constituent issues.
- A lobbyist looking out for our best interests in Harrisburg.
- Access to other cemeterians to network and brainstorm amid the changing and evolving death care industry: Green burials, litigation, invasive species, cremation, etc.

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