

10 Reasons to Use a Funeral Director

A list of arguments for your services, your expertise and your value.

BY ALAN D. WOLFELT, PH.D.

If you follow trends in deathcare, then you are well aware that funeral service is a profession experiencing massive transition. One of the most significant trends with which you are being confronted is the reality that people are questioning the need for not only funerals but also funeral directors.

If you are concerned about the future of the profession, I hope you will embrace what I have termed the “reclamation initiative” (as seen in the March 2026 issue of *The Director*). This initiative is anchored in the need for community education about the value of funerals and the meaningful role funeral directors play in their creation.

What follows is my perception of the reasons why people should use funeral directors. My hope is that you heed the demand for education about the significance of funerals and the importance of your services.

10 Reasons to Use a Funeral Director

1 A funeral director can help you understand your options for a ceremony that truly honors the unique life lived. For some, this might be a traditional funeral. For others, it might be a memorial service or celebration of life. Funeral directors will have a number of ideas to help you create a service that best meets your needs.

2 A funeral director gives attention to the many details



that arise at a time of death. There are dozens of particulars that require attention when a death occurs. The funeral director is not only aware of these details, but they also know how to ensure they are extensively explored and completed. Details include, for example, the obituary and the ceremony elements that result in a meaningful experience for attendees.

3 A funeral director is a licensed professional. Educational requirements ensure a standard of knowledge in the care of the dead and their survivors. The majority of states require annual education to certify that funeral directors are continuing to refine their knowledge and skills to remain up to date.

4 A funeral director can help you bring together the various moving parts of the funeral

This article is available in brochure form to help you educate the community you serve. For more information and to order, please email info@CenterForLoss.com.



by, say, locating an officiant for the service, finding meaningful music, arranging military honors, communicating with cemetery personnel, and assisting with meals and receptions as needed. This allows you to focus less on minutiae and more on time with family and friends.

5 A funeral director can help you navigate legal requirements, as there are a number of legal matters that follow a death. Examples of these to-dos include but are not limited to: filing the

death certificate, Social Security notification and Veterans Administration notification, in addition to obtaining the burial and cremation permits. Regulations and requirements change over time, and a funeral director can ensure appropriate compliance.

6 A funeral director works to ensure public-health protection. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we watched as funeral directors worked tirelessly to protect the public from the virus. With extensive knowledge in communicable diseases, funeral directors protect you and the general public from illnesses that would otherwise cause harm.

7 A funeral director can help you plan funerals in advance. This is referred to as “preneed funeral planning.” If you document wishes and select meaningful elements such as readings and music ahead of time, your survivors will be able to focus on support and remembrance at the time of your death. Whether you are looking at options for yourself or talking with family and friends, a funeral director can be helpful as you make important decisions without any sense of urgency.

8 A funeral director can provide designated facilities for the care of the dead. Funeral homes are designed and constructed specifically to provide care in a dignified, professional manner. Until the funeral service is held and final disposition takes place, you can be sure your loved one is being cared for in a safe environment. These facilities also provide a place for people to come together to acknowledge the death and remember the life.

9 A funeral director’s role does not end at the conclusion of the ceremony. Funeral directors can recommend grief support groups, provide referrals for in-

dividual grief counseling or offer resources that might be helpful to you as you mourn.

10 A funeral director is a vital part of your community. They are not only professional caregivers but also your neighbors and friends. They often sponsor worthwhile causes and develop programs that meet specific needs related to the well-being of your community.

Sadly, in our mourning-avoidant culture, more and more people are questioning the value of funerals. As gatekeepers of the funeral ritual, you have the opportunity to help the families and communities you serve understand they must mourn in order to heal. Ceremony at a time of death is not a rite of closure but a rite of initiation.

Meaningful funerals provide us with a forum to give testimony to the value we place on life. My hope is that you will use the above information as you advocate for the funeral service reclamation initiative for which I have called.

Author’s note: I would like to thank my colleagues Dan Densow, Luke Densow and John Horan for contributing ideas for this article. ☰

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., is recognized as one of North America’s leading death educators and grief counselors. His books on grief for both caregivers and grieving people, including Creating Meaningful Funeral Ceremonies: A Guide for Families, have sold more than 1 million copies worldwide and been translated into various languages. He is founder and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition, as well as a longtime funeral service consultant. Contact him at drwolfelt@CenterForLoss.com.



Madelyn
CO.
KEEPSAKES

MadelynPendants.com
608-758-0807
orders@madelynpendants.com