

So what is a funeral director doing speaking at the Chamber of Commerce Luncheon? When asked if I would offer a noon forum, I was reluctant to accept and even put it off. We speak at area schools, hospitals, hospice programs, Mt. HCC, churches and other groups throughout the year, but somehow this seemed different. How does the work we do at Bateman Carroll relate to Chamber of Commerce issues. The answer is to speak to how a funeral home, specifically Bateman Carroll fits into the fiber and fabric of this community. What do we give to the community and how have we benefited.

The greater Gresham-Troutdale and East County area including parts of Clackamas County have been good to Bateman Carroll. What once was two very small funeral homes, many years ago, have grown to be the largest funeral home, serving more families than any other funeral home in the state of Oregon from a single location. No other individual funeral home in the state serves more families than does Bateman Carroll.

Although these statistics are good for Bateman Carroll, They

are unimportant except as an indicator that we are doing a good job. We are primarily a service profession. As such, our philosophy is to "Do The Very Best To Serve Our Clients and The Rest Will Follow."

Bateman Carroll rests on a foundation which was established a long time ago. In the early 1800's the closest mortuaries were at 92nd and Foster Road and also in the Mt. Tabor District of Portland. In the 1860's Edward Metzger operated a funeral business from the back of a furniture store at the corner of 3rd and Main (now Dees Photo Studio). In the 1800's a man by the name of Boone Johnson had established a homestead on Roberts Street just two blocks off Powell Blvd. The Johnsons built a large two story home. Shortly before ¹⁹¹⁵1900 ^{no} a Mr. Gates, who had taken over Ed Metzgers business, purchased the Johnson home and began operating the Gates Funeral Home from the house. This was truly an ideal location since Roberts St. at that time was the main road through Gresham and the route to Damascus, Sandy, Boring, Estacada and beyond.

Just prior to 1930 a man by the name of Harold Jacobson opened a "store front" funeral service business on Powell Blvd. Although the exact building is not presently standing, the location was at about where the Ceramic Shop is located just east of the Rexall Drug today. Jacobson owned the Jacobson Family Funeral Home on 92nd and Foster and set up what in those days was known as a "curbstone" operation consisting of an office with a desk at the front of the building and a casket selection room behind the office. Embalming and other activities were done at their Foster Road location. Also, in those days, much of the work was done in the home of the deceased, embalming, dressing and viewing were all done at home. The body would be laid out in the home parlor until the hearse arrived the day of the funeral to go to church. At a time I have not been able to ascertain, Jacobson moved his business to larger quarters on Main Street in Gresham. Probably mid 1930's. That building still remains today and is occupied by the Tea House and Carrow Winds Framing Shop. That building has certainly seen a variety of uses. Prior to being remodeled for a

funeral home, it was occupied by a Buick Car Dealership. The two windowed areas on each side of the central entrance provided, for those days, a spacious showroom for automobile display.

In 1948 Jacobson sold that funeral business to a man named Lowell Nugent

In 1930 William C. and Anna Carroll moved to Gresham from Vancouver, Washington where Mr. Carroll had worked for Limbers Funeral Home for five years. The Carrolls purchased the Gates Funeral Home and added a new chapel on the south side of the old home.

In 1939 Lewis Carroll, Williams son, began work at the firm continuing through 1941 when he entered the U.S. Army and served as an officer until discharge in 1945. In 1945 Lewis returned to Gresham with his new bride, Florence. In 1955 the Carrolls added a new, modern and spacious chapel onto the north side of the building and the old smaller chapel became a casket display room. Lewis and Florence operated the business until merging with the Bateman Funeral Chapel in 1986 upon Lew's retirement. In 1988 the

Carroll Funeral Home was completely remodeled to become a wedding chapel, reception and banquet facility. The building and new business is called Parkside. In 1988 all funeral work was moved to the Powell Blvd. Funeral Home site next to West Gresham Grade School. A new name emerged from the merger to reflect the contributions of both firms and it is simply known today as Bateman Carroll Funeral Chapel.

But wait just one minute, the last we heard of the other funeral home in town was 1948 and they were on Main Avenue and the owner was Mr. Nugent. In 1950 Kenneth and Rita Bateman purchased the Nugent Chapel. Kenneth had been employed at Hennessey, Goetsch and McGee Funeral Home in N.W. Portland for 15 years prior to coming to Gresham.

In a small rural community the funeral directors are typically friendly, but fiercely competitive. So in 1955 when Kenneth Bateman watched the addition of a new and modern chapel going up over on Roberts at Carroll's, he determined it was time to do likewise. In 1957 he began construction of the new Bateman

Funeral Chapel at 520 W. Powell, it's present location. It was completed in 1958. And although the building has had numerous additions, it is still amazing that records show the 100% financed construction loan was made for \$65,000 and that included the furnishings. (Tell Stowger phone story)

Bateman came to select the Powell site for several reasons. First it was close to the local cemetery. Second it was on U.S. Highway 26 (Powell) the main road to eastern parts of the state and lastly because it was commercially zoned. At that time only the Gantenbine Dairy occupied the surrounding property on the south side of Powell and extended all the way to the top of Walters Hill (Gresham Butte) on the South, and from Walters Road on the east to Towle Road on the West. However, the city was anticipating commercial development would occur on this section of Powell for the same reasons Bateman made the selection. Ultimately, the continuation of Burnside from Main to Orient Drive altered the expected development patterns away from the West Powell Blvd. site.

In 1964 Stanley C. Morris began his apprenticeship work for the Bateman Funeral Chapel and in 1980 Stanley and Kathie Morris purchased the Business and in 1986 purchased the Carroll Funeral Chapel to complete the merger of the two firms.

One other funeral home has operated in Gresham. That firm began as the Autumn Chapel in 19 . It was founded by George Halvorson who had been an employee of the Carroll Funeral Home for about 15 years before beginning his own mortuary. Autumn Chapel was located on Division Street across from the Gresham Golf Course. Mr. Halvorson sold his interest in 19 to Uniservice Corporation who operated it until 1989 under the name of Gresham Little Chapel of the Chimes. In 1989 the name was changed to Forest Lawn Funeral Home but ownership remained under the Uniservice Corporation.

And so we are brought up to date with the chronology of events leading to the current providers of funeral service in Gresham.

Bateman and Carroll Funeral Homes have served thousands of

families since Carrolls founding in the early 1900's.

A provider of funeral service has a unique opportunity that few other professions offer. We are called upon when lifes most significant event has occurred. Survivors are shocked, confused, saddened, angry and searching for help. The funeral service professional becomes a surrogate family member. As a result, bonds are formed with our clients that few other professionals enjoy. It is within this environment that the funeral director achieves his greatest satisfaction.

How we serve families today is not significantly different from the ways families have been serviced in the past. Funeral homes are a 24 hour, 365 day a year job. When a death occurs, we are expected to respond quickly, knowledgeably and professionally. However, our work has in some ways, been made easier by the improvements in technology.

At the turn of the century I have heard stories of Mr. Carroll (W.C.) acquiring the impromptu services of a farmers team and sled to remove a body from snow laden Corbett. Today we can

drive most anywhere we need to go. The funeral director was in those days the coroner or coroners agent. That is true today in most rural counties of Oregon. Today Multnomah County has a full time coroner and deputies to handle the unusual and unaccountable deaths.

There were no pagers in early days. In fact, in my early career which began in 1964 in Gresham we had no pagers and it was mandatory that we always be available by phone, which certainly limited your movements and extracurricular activities. Back in the early 1950's Lew Carroll devised an ingenious method by which he could be out and about in the community and still know when he was needed at the mortuary. The tall two story Carroll Funeral Home was one of the tallest buildings in town. Early pictures of Gresham show a community relatively devoid of trees because of early timber harvest, clear cuttings and large tracts of land cleared for farming and dairies for grazing. By the mid 1950's replanted trees in the residential areas still were relatively sparse and small. Carrolls top floor could be seen from nearly

all areas of the town and as far away as 12 mile corner.

Therefore, a red light was installed atop the funeral home to signal when a director (Lew) was needed. Today a drive down Roberts past Parkside Wedding Chapel will still reveal the light on the top north east corner of the building. And except for the removal of paint from the protective glass cover and installation of a new red bulb it is ready to work to call Lew back to work.

Funeral directors have been an integral part of the community civic life. W.C. Carroll was a Chamber of Commerce President. Many other of the funeral directors have either served on this chambers board or been it's president.

There are few community positions which have not been filled at one time by an area funeral director. City government has had councilmen, council presidents, budget committee members, planning commission members and chairmen. Both Kenneth Bateman and Florence Carroll have been selected Mt. Hood Community College Patron Saints for their in depth commitment to the College. Mt. Hood Medical Center Board and Foundation Board have been served,

the Boy Scouts, 4-H, Elks, Lions, Optimists, Kiwanis, Snow Cap and many others have all felt the funeral directors presence and support. And though other professions can claim similar involvement, I would point out that our profession is small in numbers in this community thus making the intensity and scale of involvement an impressive achievement.

Today the involvement continues. Various boards and organizations continue to be served. Additional activities include participation in tissue donor programs. The most notable being cornea transplant...(Give history if time permits).....Oregons first Widow-Widower Program, a support group was begun by Bateman's 17 years ago and is today still active.....(give history if time permits).....Batemens and other area funeral homes will be an integral part of the Oregon Disaster Management Team if and when such a team is needed.

Today the funeral home is far more than an office front on Powell Blvd. We are still on Powell but that is where the similarity ends. Our Powell location is a modern, contemporary

facility. This begins with the landscaping, which includes an oriental court yard garden. In addition to the traditional facilities such as a chapel and visitation areas, we have a large reception area available for pre and post funeral gatherings.

Modern laboratory facilities are designed to meet the health concerns of the 1990's, most notable Hepatitis B and AIDS.

Bateman Carroll is the only funeral home housing its own crematory on the premises. The other closest is at N.E. 42nd Ave.

Our services today range from pre-death counseling in the form of speaking to various groups about death and how it may impact our lives to after-care services such as the Widow-Widower Program. When the actual need for our services occurs, we can be expected to be the source of knowledgeable information and help.

Dealing with a death has become unfamiliar territory for most people in modern society. We no longer live in a world where early death is normal and the family home parlor is where the deceased remains before services and burial. As a result we often receive comments of appreciation by families who have called the

funeral home confused and stunned following a death who have been grateful to hear the voice on the other end of the phone say, "Yes we can help, and we will be right there".

Funeral chapel owner sells

The Outlook - April 17, 1996

**Stan Morris sells
Bateman Carroll
to national firm**

**by SHARON NESBIT
The Outlook staff**

Stan Morris figures he has taken part in 11,500 funerals since he came to Gresham in 1965 to apprentice at a funeral home.

Tuesday, Morris and his wife, Kathie, announced the sale of Gresham's Bateman Carroll Funeral Chapel to a national firm called The Loewen Group, a kind of last rite for what began as two locally owned funeral homes. And the Morrises attended a funeral, the service of the mother of a Bateman staff member, this time as semi-civilians.

Out of habit, Morris noticed a sign was missing from one of the registers outside the chapel and saw that his successor, Craig LaFollette, noticed it, too. The maestro of 1,500 funerals told himself that kind of detail is now in the hands of someone else.

The decision to sell to The Loewen Group came, Morris said, after investigating both the possibility of selling to Bateman staff members and several other national

funeral service firms.

"Basically we chose the organization that will keep the staff the way they are and try to maintain the service and the community commitment," Morris said. He acknowledged that the change resulted in a price increase that he describes as "modest," adding, "We did that, too, when we bought the business in 1980. You need to pay the mortgage."

The Morrises join Troutdale's Ege brothers, who recently sold their family-run garbage service to a national firm, in a growing trend — home-owned businesses going into the corporate shelter of national firms.

"We know that no one can do it exactly the same way, just as Disney won't run the newspaper (The Gresham Outlook) in the same way (Lee) Irwin ran it," Morris said, referring to the recent sale of The Outlook's parent company, Capital Cities/ABC to the Disney Company.

Morris, 51, who last year founded and is chairman of the board of Gresham's Merchants Bank, will serve as consultant to the new owners. And he and his wife, who handled the books and the paperwork at the funeral chapel, still own Parkside, a wedding and meeting

facility that was originally Carroll Funeral Home.

Those activities, he joked, will keep him in his funeral clothes. "Hey, I love dark suits," he said. "You can't beat a dark suit, white shirt and bold tie."

Craig LaFollette will manage the Bateman operation for The Loewen Group, which owns and operates 851 funeral homes and 202 cemeteries employing nearly 10,000 people.

The funeral chapel with 10 staff members is located at 520 W. Powell Blvd. For nine consecutive years, it has had the largest service volume from one location in the state. It includes a crematory and Forest Lawn Cemetery with a mausoleum and columbarium.

The partnership of Stan and Kathie Morris, who met in grade school, began shortly after their purchase of the business from Kenneth Bateman, the founder.

"I asked her to take over the books, and she's been there ever since," he said.

"It was his profession. It was my job," Kathie Morris elaborates. Kathie Morris is a golfer who works in the national ranks of the sport. Her job, they laugh, was sometimes

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MARK GOING/for The Outlook

Kathie and Stan Morris announced Tuesday the sale of Bateman Carroll Funeral Chapel to a national firm.

2005

As clients' wishes change, so does Bateman

Funerals | The Gresham fixture is remaking itself to accommodate both traditional and unconventional services

By CATHERINE TREVISON
THE OREGONIAN

GRESHAM — Bateman Carroll Funeral Home is doing away with its pews.

By next September, digital videos of people's lives will roll on big flat monitors rather than on the chapel television. Soundproofed dividers will keep small groups intimate and let the big ones sprawl.

Tables and movable chairs will allow friends and relatives to gather in rows or circles or any other shape they like.

Part of the \$2.5 million rebuilding of one of Gresham's oldest businesses will connect it with one of the funeral indus-



Remodeling plans at Bateman Carroll Funeral Home are in step with changes in the industry, especially on the West Coast, says general manager Merlene Drapela.

try's strongest new trends on the West Coast — services that can be as church-like or as unconventional as people

choose. Services that, as one funeral director put it, are "not so funeraly."

Many Oregon funeral homes are transforming their layouts, retraining their staffs and even changing their names by replacing mortuary or funeral home with words such as "tribute center."

"Baby boomers are really individualistic. They really want to have things their way," said Mark Musgrove, past president of the National Funeral Directors Association and co-owner of the Musgrove Family Mortuary in Eugene, which went through a similar transformation three years ago.

The baby boomers are part of a generation that ushered in marriages on mountains, in scuba gear and in hot-air balloons, he said.

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Carroll Funeral Home



Photos by ROGER JENSEN/THE OREGONIAN

Bateman Carroll Funeral Home first hoped to build an entirely new building to the rear of the current home, but city officials want businesses to stay near the street, says general manager Merlene Drapela. The \$2.5 million project will take place at the same time the city is performing its \$11.6 million facelift on Powell Boulevard, which runs in front of the business.