

FCA REPORT

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Another area cemetery welcomes natural burial!

By Jon Shafer and Steve Nicely, FCA-GKC Board Members



We have good news for the growing number of people desiring a natural burial. The board of trustees of the Elmwood Cemetery, resting place of many of Kansas City's early leaders and builders, recently reapproved the option. This relaxes the cemetery's policy of requiring the use of burial vaults, also known as outer burial containers. Vaults prevent the natural burial purpose of bringing a body into contact with the earth, where it rejoins the cycle of life.

To our knowledge, this makes Elmwood, at 4900 E. Truman Road in Kansas City, Mo., the only public cemetery in the Kansas City metropolitan area to permit the practice and have space available. Area Jewish and Muslim cemeteries provide it, but are not open to the public. The historic Lee's Summit Cemetery allowed it but has no remaining grave sites. The Highland Cemetery of Prairie Village, another historic cemetery, sold the last of its available 150 gravesites in November.

Elmwood, which recorded its first burial in 1872, has 33,000 burials in its 43 acres. Most burials were natural in the cemetery's early years, before the advent of embalming, metal caskets, and vaults, none of which are involved in natural burial, also known as green burial.

See Elmwood, back page

The 2020 Funeral Price Survey is here!

The FCA-GKC Funeral Price Survey is a priceless resource for health care, religious, and social work professionals and for families at the time of a loved one's death. Please refer to pages 3-6 or visit funerals.kc.org.

Annual meeting to explore medical assistance in dying

By Steve Nicely, FCA-GKC Board Member



The speakers at this year's FCA-GKC annual meeting, from left: Peg Sandeen, keynote speaker; Fr. Thomas Curran; Rev. Melissa Bowers; Mahnaz Shabbir; and Dr. John Lantos.

Medical assistance in dying is the topic of the annual meeting of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City, to be live-streamed from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Friday, Nov. 6.

Sometimes known by the acronym MAID, medical assistance in dying is also called euthanasia or assisted suicide. Some view it as an immoral violation of God's natural law. Others say it is necessary, especially in extreme cases wherein death is inevitable and pain cannot be controlled.

All of those convictions will be addressed during the meeting by five highly qualified speakers. The meeting is open to professionals and the public at no charge. Three free ethics continuing education units will be provided to social workers, nurses, and physicians who register for them. A video recording of the meeting will be available later from our website, funeralskc.org.

Various forms of MAID are legal in eight states: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington, and the District of Columbia, representing 20 percent of the U.S. population. It is not legal anywhere in the Midwest. The FCA-GKC board of directors neither favors nor opposes MAID. Our role is strictly educational.

The common term "mercy killing" does not apply to MAID because that implies taking a life without a person's consent. All of the laws in effect in the United States require the informed consent of the persons involved. They must be mentally competent, diagnosed with a terminal illness leading to death within six months

See Annual, page 2

The big picture

By Kate Sargent
FCA-GKC President



The long, long silence of 1918

How does an important conviction/passion/mission get traction in the public mind? How does it capture people's attention and cause them to take action? This is a timely question in fall 2020, as politics hangs thick in the air and this "novel virus" has claimed at least 200,000 of our fellow Americans. Important issues abound.

Compare our present moment's Covid-19 experience with public television's "Influenza 1918," part of its American Experience series. This astonishing account describes the "...worst epidemic in American history," which killed more than 675,000 of the only 103 million Americans alive at that time. These losses were so traumatizing that a silence about it has persisted through the generations since. For nearly 100 years it was barely visible in our personal family stories or in our educational experiences. Before Corona, did you ever hear conversations about the flu pandemic? In school? Around the Thanksgiving table? If you did, did it help you engage our current challenge because you already knew getting through it was possible?

The historical silence was certainly amplified in October 1918, when, in only *one* month, 500,000 of those 675,000 flu victims died. Consider the trauma and loss of control from the simultaneous experiences of World War I and the flu pandemic. They created a post-traumatic cultural amnesia, not unlike the experience of soldiers returning from war hoping that shutting away what they have seen and felt will bring their deeply changed selves back to who they were before. In truth, such hidden realities become a barrier to living, an "elephant in the room" which, when added to other uniquely American denials around death, have arguably deformed our cultural ability to have a deeper, more conscious life and death.

What do you think? Will we learn from the cost of our forebears' silent response to their great pain? Without intending to, they left us untaught for multiple generations, unready, when 2020 roared in and our own challenge came, to resolutely face what we had no real model to understand. We have the power, now, to respond differently, emerging stronger, with more freedom to live deeply and well. This is an outcome to be hoped for, a mission that could honor all this loss.

Meanwhile, for our FCA goals, the "mission traction" question is especially vital. Overcoming cultural reluctance to make decisions that will certainly surround death when it comes to one of ours would help us all, especially before we are in grief. Remember, we are here to help. □

Annual, from cover

(confirmed by two physicians), and capable of self-administering and ingesting medications without assistance.

Speakers & logistics

Peg Sandeen, national executive director of Death With Dignity, keynote speaker

Fr. Thomas Curran, Rockhurst University president, on the Roman Catholic perspective

Rev. Melissa Bowers, Presbyterian chaplain, Kansas City Hospice, on the Protestant and hospice perspectives

Mahnaz Shabbir of Shabbir Advisors management consultants, on the Muslim perspective

Dr. John Lantos, professor of pediatrics at UMKC and director of the Children's Mercy Medical Center's Bioethics Center, on medical, ethical, and Jewish perspectives

The meeting originally was scheduled to take place at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, which is closed through the end of the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting now will be live streamed from All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in Kansas City, Mo. The FCA-GKC board expresses sincere gratitude to the speakers and to the church for hosting the meeting.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Why do nine states with 20 percent of the U.S. population permit it?

Why don't the rest of them?

This is the subject of the free Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City 2020 Annual Meeting, to be carried through live-streaming.

**Friday, Nov. 6
9:00 a.m. to noon**

Open to the public at no charge.
Three free ethics CEUs for social workers,
nurses, and physicians.

The FCA-GKC board neither supports nor opposes medical assistance in dying. The board's interest regarding this timely topic is strictly educational.

For annual meeting updates, registration, CEU instructions, and a link to live-stream, visit:

[Funeralskc.org/annual-meeting](https://funeralskc.org/annual-meeting)

2020 FUNERAL PRICE SURVEY



Funeral prices in times of need

Service	2020 average price	Change since 2018	Price range
Standard funeral	\$5,964	+1.45%	\$3,540–\$9,115
Immediate burial	\$3,096	n/a	\$995–\$5,605
Direct cremation	\$1,763	-4.08%	\$675–\$3,590

It's a different situation these days

This comprehensive listing of funeral prices in the Kansas City area assumes greater importance as families cope with job loss, illness, and death brought by Covid-19. The listing is available online at funeralskc.org. To request hard copies, email fca.gkc@gmail.com or call 816-561-6322.

Standard funerals

The elements of standard funerals leading to burial include embalming, a visitation, and a funeral service. The \$5,964 average price does *not* include a casket or cemetery costs, which could easily add \$3,000 or more to the total. Though a standard funeral was once the choice of most families, now the majority make less-costly choices.

Immediate burial

At an average of \$3,096, this option shaves \$2,868 from the standard funeral average by eliminating embalming, a visitation, and a funeral service. However, immediate burial still requires a cemetery's additional expense. The average price does *not* include a casket.

Direct cremation

With an average price of \$1,763, direct cremation is the least-costly method of body disposal. It involves taking the body to a funeral home or crematory, placing it in a container of fiberboard or cardboard, cremating it, and returning the ashes to the family. No embalming, visitation, or funeral service is involved unless consumers choose to add them to the cost. The crematory fee should be included in the price. Check with the provider to be sure that it is.

Cremation is now the choice of most families. Cemeteries sell niches in columbaria walls for ashes. Names and dates are inscribed on covers and recorded in the cemetery's records. Some families scatter the ashes in meaningful places or keep them for memorial services later. The chief disadvantage of cremation is its negative effect on the environment because of the huge amount of energy consumed in the cremation process.

Wide range of prices

The prices charged by each of the 113 area funeral homes for the three basic funeral types appear inside. They reflect a wide range of choices among providers. For instance, the highest immediate-burial price is 5.6 times higher than the lowest in the chart. The highest direct cremation is nearly 5.3 times higher than the lowest. The highest standard funeral is 2.6 times higher than the lowest.

Not appearing inside are the prices funeral homes charge for specific services such as embalming, transporting the body, visitation, and vehicle rental. Those prices can be found on the general price lists (GPLs) that federal law requires funeral homes to provide to families when requested. However, the *area-wide averages* for each of the services appear below. "Basic services," the largest price on the list, is the amount funeral providers charge for their expenses and overhead.

Area average prices for specific services

Basic services	\$2,251
Embalming	\$822
Transporting the body	\$424
Visitation	\$430
Funeral service	\$535
Hearse	\$419
Limousine	\$356
Graveside service	\$417
Body preparation	\$310

FCA-GKC 2020 Area Survey of Funeral Home Prices

All prices were taken from the General Price Lists (GPL) that funeral homes are required by federal law to provide to consumers

Missouri	Funeral Home	GPL Date	Direct Cremation	Immediate Burial	Standard Funeral	Telephone	Directory
KC Metro Kansas City; Raytown; Independence	Assurance Cremation Society -	Apr-20	1,125	n/a	n/a	816-941-2273	860 W. Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64156
	Carson-Speaks Chapel -	Oct-19	3,590	3,890	6,695	816-252-7900	1501 W. Lexington Ave., Independence, MO 64052
	Charter Funerals - Blue Ridge -	Apr-15	1,270	1,895	4,650	816-921-5555	5000 Blue Ridge Cutoff, Kansas City, MO 64133
	Cremation Society of KS & MO -	Jan-20	1,195	n/a	4,370	816-822-9888	5561 N.W. Barry Rd., Kansas City, MO 64154
	Duane E. Harvey Funeral Directors -	2/15 *	995	1,945	5,590	816-763-4042	9100 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64138
	E.S. Eley & Sons Funeral Chapel -	Apr-20	1,050	995	5,370	816-924-8700	4707 E. Truman Rd., Kansas City, MO 64127
	Elite Funeral Chapel -	4/08 *	995	n/a	4,675	816-765-0141	11525 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64134
	Newcomer's Floral Hills Funeral Home -	Jan-20	2,370	4,695	9,115	816-353-1218	7000 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64133
	Golden Gate Funeral & Crem Serv-	Apr-18	795	1,595	5,195	816-255-3676	2800 East 18th St., Kansas City, MO 64127
	Heartland Crem & Burial Soc-Raytown -	Dec-19	1,095	1,495	3,950	816-313-1677	6113 Blue Ridge Blvd., Raytown, MO 64133
	Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chpl -	Aug-18	1,090	1,495	5,655	816-921-1800	1800 E. Linwood Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64109
	Longview Funeral Hm & Cemetery-	May-19	1,195	2,360	4,015	816-761-6272	12700 S. Raytown Rd., Kansas City, MO 64140
	Louis Memorial Chapel -	1/16 *	2,608	5,605	6,906	816-361-5211	6830 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64131
	McGilley Antioch Chapel -	Jan-20	2,370	4,695	9,115	816-453-7700	3325 N.E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64119
	McGilley & George Funeral Hm & Crem-	Jan-20	1,670	3,495	6,785	816-966-0250	12913 Grandview Rd., Grandview, MO 64030
	McGilley State Line Chapel -	Jan-20	2,370	4,695	9,115	816-942-6180	12301 State Line Rd., Kansas City, MO 64145
	McGilley Memorial - Midtown Chapel -	Jan-20	1,970	4,095	8,015	816-753-6200	20 W. Linwood Blvd, Kansas City, MO 64111
	McGilley & Sheil Funeral Hm & Crem-	Jan-20	1,970	4,095	8,015	816-353-6555	11924 E. 47th St., Kansas City, MO 64133
	Mt Moriah,Newcomer & Freeman F.Hm -	Jan-20	2,370	4,695	9,115	816-942-2004	10507 Holmes Rd., Kansas City, MO 64131
	Muehlebach Funeral Care -	Oct-19	2,530	2,850	7,215	816-444-2060	6800 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64131
	Neptune Society -	Feb-20	2,017	n/a	n/a	816-361-2630	8438 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64114
	Newcomer's Noland Road Chapel -	Jan-20	1,670	3,495	6,785	816-252-8900	509 S. Noland Rd., Independence, MO 64050
	Park Lawn Funeral Homes-South Chapel -	Jan-19	1,295	n/a	5,275	816-523-1234	8251 Hillcrest Rd., Kansas City, MO 64138
	Passantino Bros. Funeral Home -	Jun-17	1,590	2,090	5,200	816-471-2844	2117 Independence Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64124
	Reflections Memorial Service -	Jan-16	675	n/a	4,870	816-561-0101	14 Westport Rd., Kansas City, MO 64111
	Royer Funeral Home -	Sep-19	990	1,995	5,790	816-796-8600	1823 N. Blue Mills Rd., Independence, MO 64058
	Sebbeto Frnal Home Inc. -	?? *	1,575	3,995	4,945	816-221-4400	901 E. 5th St., Kansas City, MO 64106
	Serenity Funeral Home -	Feb-20	2,060	1,195	6,145	816-599-2939	1101 E. Bannister Rd., Kansas City, MO 64131
	Signature Funerals -	Jan-20	1,195	2,135	6,305	816-214-5174	406-D East Bannister Rd., Kansas City, MO 64131
	Souder Family Funeral Home -	Mar-20	1,295	3,635	6,015	816-436-2900	1333 N.E. Barry Road, Kansas City, MO 64145
Speaks SuburbanChapel -	Oct-19	3,590	3,890	7,095	816-373-3600	18020 E. 39th St., Independence, MO 64055	
Terrace Park Funeral Hm & Cem-	Nov-18	2,875	4,090	7,130	816-734-5500	801 N.W. 108th St., Kansas City, MO 64155	
Watkins Heritage Chapel -	Aug-18	1,090	1,495	5,655	816-861-3030	4000 Em'l Cleaver Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64130	
North Excelsior Spgs Gladstone; Liberty; Kearney; Lawson; Lathrop; Parkville;	Bailey & Cox Family Funeral -	7/17 *	2,595	3,665	5,705	913-539-2162	614 Clay Ave., Plattsburg, MO 64477
	Bross & Spidle Funeral Hm & Crem Serv-	6/18 *	995	3,345	5,210	816-296-0097	214 Pennsylvania Ave., PO Bx 443, Lawson, MO 64062
	Cashatt Family Funerals -	Jan-20	895	1,995	n/a	816-587-8200	7516 N.W. Prairie View Rd., Platte Woods, MO 64151
	Charter Funerals - Northland -	Apr-15	1,270	1,895	4,650	816-921-5555	77 N.E. 72nd St., Gladstone, MO 64118
	Newcomer's Church-Archer-Pasley	Jan-20	1,670	3,495	6,785	816-781-2000	119 E. Franklin, Liberty, MO 64068
	Fry-Bross & Spidle Funeral H & Crem Srv-	6/18 *	995	3,345	5,210	816-628-4411	208 S. Jefferson St., Kearney, MO 64060
	Hidden Valley Fun'l Hm - Excelsior Sprgs -	1/18 *	1,500	5,200	6,285	816-903-8888	5951 E. MO Hwy 10, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024
	Hidden Valley Funeral Home - Kearney -	1/18 *	1,500	5,200	6,285	816-903-8888	925 E. 92 Hwy., Kearney, MO 64060
	Hidden Valley Funeral Home - Lawson -	1/18 *	1,500	5,200	6,285	816-903-8888	412 N. Raum St., Lawson, MO 64062
	Hixson-Klein Funeral Home- Edgerton -	8/17 *	1,695	n/a	4,345	816-227-3313	303 W. Frank St., Edgerton, MO 64444
	Hixson-Klein Funeral Home- Smithville -	8/17 *	1,695	n/a	4,345	816-532-9212	104 Mill St., Smithville, MO 64089
	Meyers Funeral Chapel - Northland -	12/17 *	1,995	3,875	6,465	816-741-0251	401 Main St., Parkville, MO 64152
	Park Lawn Funeral Homes- Lathrop -	Jan-19	1,295	n/a	5,275	816-740-4658	901 Clinton St., Lathrop, MO 64465
	Park Lawn Funeral Homes- Liberty -	Jan-19	1,295	n/a	5,275	816-781-8228	1640 N. State-Rt 291, Liberty, MO 64068
	Prichard Bross & Spidle F-H & Crem Serv-	6/18 *	995	3,345	5,210	816-630-3131	217 W. Broadway Ave., Excelsior Springs, MO 64024
Stith Family Funeral Home -	1/18 *	1,595	n/a	5,550	816-528-4261	408 East St., Lathrop, MO 64465	
White Chapel Funeral Home -	Jan-20	2,195	4,695	9,115	816-452-8419	6600 N.E. Antioch Rd., Gladstone, MO 64119	
East Side Lee's Summit; Grain Valley; Odessa; Buckner; Blue Springs	Chapel of Memories Funeral Home -	2/18 *	1,795	3,030	6,265	816-463-4030	30000 E. Valor Rd., Grain Valley, MO 64029
	Langsford Funeral Home -	8/16 *	2,290	n/a	6,010	816-524-3700	115 S.W. 3rd St., Lee's Summit, MO 64063
	Meyers Funeral Chapel - Blue Springs -	6/13 *	1,995	3,875	6,705	816-229-3276	1600 West Main St., Blue Springs, MO 64015
	Ralph O. Jones Funeral Home -	Nov-19	2,190	3,525	5,890	816-633-5524	306 S. Second St., Odessa, MO 64076
	Royer Funeral Homes- Grain Valley -	Sep-19	990	1,995	5,790	816-847-4441	100 Royer Lane, Grain Valley, MO 64029
	Royer Funeral Homes- Oak Grove -	Sep-19	990	1,995	5,790	816-690-4441	101 E. 15th St., Oak Grove, MO 64075
Royer-Hayes Funeral Homes -	Sep-19	990	1,995	5,790	816-229-5551	205 SW 17th St., Blue Springs, MO 64015	
Speaks Chapel - Buckner -	Oct-19	3,590	3,890	6,695	816-650-5555	300 Adams St., Buckner, MO 64016	
South Harrisonville; Archie; Belton; Raymore; Garden City; Drexel; Pleasant Hill	Atkinson Funeral Homes- Archie -	1/17 *	1,595	2,875	n/a	816-293-5566	104 W. Walnut St., Archie, MO 64725
	Atkinson Funeral Homes- Harrisonville -	1/17 *	1,595	2,875	n/a	816-380-3268	600 Wall St., Harrisonville, MO 64701
	Complete Cremation	Nov-19	895	2,195	n/a	816-613-0303	1505 Brookhart Drive, Harrisonville, MO 64701
	Cullen Funeral Home -	Dec-18	2,390	2,370	5,015	816-322-5278	612 W. Foxwood Drive, Raymore, MO 64083
	Dickey Funeral Homes-Garden City -	Jan-20	1,200	2,990	5,350	816-862-6345	711 Old Hwy 7, Garden City, MO 64747
	Dickey Funeral Homes-Harrisonville -	Jan-20	1,200	2,990	5,350	816-884-6244	2401 E. Mechanic St., Harrisonville, MO 64701
	Dickey Funeral Home - Pleasant Hill -	Jan-20	1,200	2,990	5,350	816-540-5550	203 Armstrong St., Pleasant Hill, MO 64080
	McGilley & George Funeral Hm & Crem-	Jan-20	1,670	3,495	6,785	816-322-2995	611 Chestnut St., Belton, MO 64012
Mullinax Funeral Home & Cremation -	Oct-19	1,495	1,525	3,540	816-657-4400	136 E Main St., Drexel, MO 64742	
Wallace Funeral Home -	Feb-20	1,475	2,350	5,000	816-987-2127	422 Lake St., Pleasant Hill, MO 64080	

Kansas	Funeral Home	GPL Date	Direct Cremation	Immediate Burial	Standard Funeral	Telephone	Directory
K-10 West	Cedar Crest Memorial Chapel -	Aug-18	1,295	3,950	5,825	913-583-1002	32665 Lexington Ave., De Soto, KS 66018
Lawrence; De Soto; Eudora	Chapel Oaks Crem & FnrI Serv-Lawrence -	1/13 *	1,400	3,315	3,810	785-841-3822	627 Monterey Way, Lawrence, KS 66049
	Greatful Gathering Funeral Hm & Crem -	7/18 *	1,090	2,972	5,015	785-727-4444	2004 E. 23rd St., Lawrence, KS 66046
	Rumsey-Yost Funeral Hm & Crematory -	Jun-18	2,325	3,745	5,800	785-843-5111	601 Indiana St., Lawrence, KS 66044
	Warren-McElwain Mortuary- Eudora -	Aug-17	2,980	4,565	6,945	785-542-3030	1003 John L. Williams Dr., Eudora, KS 66025
	Warren-McElwain Mortuary- Lawrence -	Aug-17	2,980	4,565	6,945	785-843-1120	120 W. 13th St., Lawrence, KS 66044
Central Johnson County	The Amos Family Funeral Home -	Oct-19	2,675	3,875	6,695	913-631-5566	10901 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, KS 66203
	A Better Place Funeral -	Jan-20	995	1,300	5,675	913-789-9600	5815 Nieman Road, Shawnee, KS 66203
	Charter Funerals Kansas Chapel -	Apr-15	1,270	1,895	4,650	816-921-5555	10250 Shawnee Msn Pkwy,Merriam, KS 66203
	Cremation Center of Kansas City -	Jun-19	1,095	n/a	n/a	913-384-5566	4926 Johnson Dr., Mission, KS 66205
	www.cremationcenterkc.com -	Jun-19	995	n/a	n/a	913-384-5566	Online only
	Cremation Society of KS & MO -	Jan-20	1,195	n/a	4,370	913-383-9888	8837 Roe Ave., Prairie Village, KS 66207
	Heartland Crem & Burial Soc-Kansas -	Dec-19	1,095	1,495	3,950	913-789-8998	7700 Shawnee Mission Pkwy, Overland Pk., KS 66202
	Johnson County Funeral Chapel -	Mar-16	2,875	4,090	8,020	913-451-1860	11200 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66210
	McGilley & Frye Funeral Hm & Crem -	Jan-20	1,970	4,095	8,015	913-782-0582	105 E. Loula St., Olathe, KS 66061
	McGilley & Hoge Jo Co Mem'l Chapel -	Jan-20	2,370	4,695	9,115	913-642-3565	8024 Santa Fe Dr., Overland Park, KS 66204
	Mid States Cremation -	Mar-20	1,095	n/a	n/a	913-815-8001	Lenexa, KS 66285
	Overland Park Funeral Chapel -	Jun-19	2,875	4,090	7,430	913-648-6224	8201 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS 66204
Penwell-Gabel Funeral Hm & Crematory -	Oct-19	1,995	2,990	5,735	913-768-6777	14275 Blackbob Rd., Olathe, KS 66062	
Porter Funeral Home & Crematory -	Jun-20	2,397	2,993	7,236	913-438-6444	8535 Monrovia, Lenexa, KS 66215	
Kansas City Kansas	Chapel Hill-Butler Funeral Home -	Jan-20	1,970	4,095	8,015	913-334-3366	701 N. 94th St., Kansas City, KS 66112
	George F. Porter & Sons Funeral Home -	Mar-20	1,997	2,896	5,711	913-621-6400	1835 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66102
	Highland Park Funeral Hm & Crematory -	Jan-18	795	1,995	5,345	913-371-0699	4101 State Ave., Kansas City, KS 66102
	Kansas City Funeral Directors -	May-18	750	1,695	3,825	913-262-6310	4880 Shawnee Dr., Kansas City, KS 66106
	Larkin & Garcia Funeral Care -	Feb-19	1,145	3,000	5,170	913-371-7000	1844 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66102
	Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chpl -	Jul-19	995	1,495	5,655	913-371-5352	2065 N. 5th St., Kansas City, KS 66101
	Maple Hill Funeral Hm & Cemetery -	Jan-20	1,745	2,795	6,405	913-831-3345	3300 Shawnee Dr., Kansas City, KS 66106
	Mary Butler Meyers Funeral Home -	Apr-20	950	1,990	6,305	913-334-6300	6300 Parallel Pkwy., Kansas City, KS 66102
	Mrs. J.W. Jones Memorial Chapel -	Jul-14	995	1,570	5,590	913-321-0253	703 N. 10th St., Kansas City, KS 66102
	Northern Star Mortuary -	3/17 *	2,525	2,471	5,510	913-400-3766	5029 Leavenworth Rd., Kansas City, KS 66104
	Skradski Funeral Chapel -	Oct-19	2,530	2,850	6,245	913-371-1404	340 N. 6th St., Kansas City, KS 66101
	Thatcher's Funeral Home -	Jul-19	1,090	1,495	5,655	913-321-1211	1520 N. 5th St., Kansas City, KS 66101
I-70 & North	Alden-Harrington Funeral Home -	Jan-20	1,250	3,210	6,460	913-422-4074	214 Oak St., Bonner Springs, KS 66012
Leavenworth; Lansing; Bonner Spgs Tonganoxie	Belden-Larkin Funeral Home -	Jan-18	2,500	2,450	5,200	913-682-2820	707 S. 6th St., Leavenworth, KS 66048
	Charter Funerals - Sunset -	Jun-15	1,270	1,895	3,795	913-682-5400	16731 Springdale Road, Leavenworth, KS 66048
	Davis Funeral Chapel -	May-19	2,125	2,550	4,775	913-682-5523	531 Shawnee St., Leavenworth, KS 66048
	Quisenberry Funeral Home -	Jan-18	2,325	4,275	6,515	913-846-2740	604 E. 4th St., Tonganoxie, KS 66086
	R.L. Leintz Funeral Home -	Jan-18	2,500	2,450	5,100	913-351-0200	4701 10th Ave., Leavenworth, KS 66048
South of K10	Bruce Funeral Homes- Gardner -	11/17 *	3,135	4,385	5,630	913-856-7111	106 S. Center St., Gardner, KS 66030
Baldwin City; Lansing; Gardner; Louisburg; Spring Hill; Osawatomie	Bruce Funeral Homes-Spring Hill -	11/17 *	3,135	4,385	5,630	913-592-2244	712 S. Webster St., Spring Hill, KS 66083
	Dengel & Sons Mortuary- Louisburg -	Mar-17	2,975	3,275	6,020	913-837-4310	120 S. Broadway St., Louisburg, KS 66053
	Dengel & Sons Mortuary- Osawatomie -	Mar-17	2,975	3,275	6,020	913-755-6500	605 O'Neal Ave., Osawatomie, KS 66064
	Dengel & Sons Mortuary- Paola -	Mar-17	2,975	3,275	6,020	913-294-2372	305 N. Pearl St., Paola, KS 66071
	Eddy-Birchard Funeral Home -	Oct-19	3,000	2,940	5,820	913-755-2114	203 Main St., P O Bx 430, Osawatomie, KS 66064
	Lamb-Roberts Funeral Hm- Baldwin City -	Apr-17	2,870	4,145	6,530	785-594-3644	712 9th St., Baldwin City, KS 66006

* No update provided for 2020 survey. Prices shown are from 2018 survey

Willed body programs

Two area medical schools accept bodies for use in anatomy classes and research when arranged in advance: The University of Kansas Medical Center, Dept. of Anatomy & Cell Biology does not pay for transporting the body, but the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences does. The bodies are cremated after use, with the ashes returned to families. See the fall, 2014 FCA newsletter on our website for details.

Speakers available

Contact us if your group would like to hear an unbiased presentation from one of our board members, either virtually or in person when it is safe. We are an independent, all-volunteer organization with no products to promote. We just provide information. We don't charge for our services but we do depend on contributions to carry out our mission.

Our mission...

It's to educate and support individuals and families in making informed decisions about death-related services consistent with their values and lifestyles.



Lowest-cost funerals among 113 providers

The least-expensive methods available—direct cremation and immediate burial—are explained on the cover. Below is a listing of the 10 lowest-cost providers in each category.

Direct cremation

Reflections Funeral Home	\$675
Kansas City Funeral Directors	\$750
Highland Park Funeral Home	\$795
Golden Gate Funeral & Cremation Svc.	\$795
Complete Cremation	\$895
Cashatt Family Funerals	\$895
Mary Butler Meyers Funeral Home	\$950
Royer Funeral Homes	\$990
Royer-Hayes Funeral Homes	\$990
See funeralskc.org for four providers at	\$995

Immediate burial

E.S. Eley & Sons Funeral Chapel	\$995
Serenity Funeral Home	\$1,195
A Better Place Funeral	\$1,300
Heartland Cremation & Burial Society	\$1,495
Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapel	\$1,495
Watkins Heritage Chapel	\$1,495
Thatcher's Funeral Home	\$1,495
Mullinax Funeral Home	\$1,525
Mrs. J.W. Jones Memorial Chapel	\$1,570
Golden Gate Funeral & Cremation Svc.	\$1,595

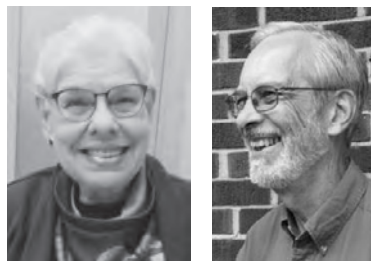
A different survey method this year

This 2020 Funeral Price Survey involved new challenges in our collection of the general price lists (GPLs) from the 113 funeral homes in our region. In doing past surveys, we first requested the prices through emails, phone calls, and letters. Most sent their prices to us, but if they did not, we visited them in person to collect their GPLs (because federal law requires that funeral homes comply when requested in person). This year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, personal visits were unwise.

First we divided the 113 funeral homes into 10 groups and assigned them to board members and volunteers, who contacted the providers to request GPLs. This yielded responses from about half of the total. Then follow-up requests were made.

Finally, FCA-GKC President Kate Sargent made it a personal campaign to call and email the non-responders in a redoubled effort. As a result, we received all but 25 of the 113 GPLs in our area—a 78 percent return rate, which is not bad. Funeral homes that still did not respond are marked with an asterisk after the dates of their GPLs on the chart inside.

Why wouldn't those 25 respond? Maybe because their prices are not competitive. We know that businesses with competitive prices *want* to be included in our survey. Maybe because they don't appreciate us "butting into their business." Maybe they forgot or were too busy to bother with it. Probably there is truth in all those possibilities. For those 25, we listed the same prices as appeared in our 2018 survey, with an asterisk to notate this fact. If you consider using an asterisked funeral home, be sure to obtain its latest GPL.



Kate Sargent, FCA-GKC president, and David Johnson, treasurer, spearheaded the 2020 funeral price survey with help from numerous volunteers and board members.

We sent all the GPLs we collected to FCA-GKC board member David Johnson, a retired accountant, who entered the data and calculated the averages. That's a short statement about David's efforts in a long, detailed process.

FCA-GKC is blessed with a group of willing, capable board members and volunteers who helped with the price survey. Besides David and Kate, the board members were Jon Shafer, Diane Etzel-Wise, Jacque Amweg, Angie Martinez, and Steve Nicely. The volunteers were Margaret Howieson, Dave Kraemer, Jim Fitzpatrick, and Marci Michnick. Special thanks to them and to the many cooperating funeral home operators who made this project a success.

We welcome volunteers to help expand our reach, and we have room for two more board members. Would you like to become involved with us? Call us at 816-561-6322 or email us at fca.gkc@gmail.com. Leave a message and we'll be in touch.

—The FCA-GKC Board

Penwell-Gabel closes ARA Cremation storefront in interests of transparency

By Steve Nicely, FCA-GKC Board Member



Penwell-Gabel has ended its subsidiary, ARA Cremation, and the building now houses Penwell-Gabel offices. A year ago, this newsletter featured a story about major area funeral homes that offered discounted cremations under other names—but did not always inform clients of that fact.

There is no more ARA Cremation, the storefront discount cremation service at 5695 W. 95th St. in Overland Park that was owned by Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home in Olathe.

ARA has been gone since May of 2019, after this newsletter reported that ARA and two other storefront cremation services were owned by major funeral homes in Johnson County yet charged vastly different prices than their owners for the same cremations at the same places.

The article was triggered by the complaint of a consumer named Clay. He reported to FCA-GKC that Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home & Crematory, Porter Funeral Home & Crematory, and Amos Family Funeral Home & Crematory were “ripping off” families by charging two to three times more for a direct cremation than their discount storefronts did under different names. The problem, according to the consumer, is that families arranging for services at the funeral homes were not told of their option to obtain cremation at much lower prices at the storefront subsidiaries with different names.

Amos, in Shawnee, owns Cremation Center of Kansas City in Mission. Cremation Center’s direct-cremation price in the FCA-GKC price list in this newsletter is \$1,095, compared with the funeral home’s price of \$2,675. Porter, in Lenexa, owns Cremation Society of Kansas and Missouri in Overland Park, which charges \$1,195 in the new price list for a direct cremation, compared with its owner’s price of \$2,397.

The former ARA building now functions as a branch office for Penwell-Gabel. It posts a single price of \$1,995 for direct cremation, which is \$1,150 less than the funeral home’s price two years ago and \$915 more than ARA’s price two years ago.

Christopher Holland, Penwell-Gabel manager, said that closing ARA means the funeral home no longer has to worry about consumer complaints like Clay’s. “We brought ARA under the Penwell-Gabel name and now have full transparency,” Holland said.

The practice may seem misleading but it is not illegal. The difference in direct-cremation prices between a funeral home and a storefront largely is wrapped up in a “basic services” fee that the Federal Trade Commission’s Funeral Rule permits funeral homes to charge. The fee covers the

cost of overhead and staffing. The storefronts have much lower overhead.

Rick Wiseman, owner-operator of Porter Funeral Home, said our 2019 story was suspicious because the complainer did not reveal his last name. He said the funeral home and the Cremation Society are separate businesses with different operating costs. For instance, the funeral home paid \$65,000 in property taxes last year and has eight full-time employees. The 700-square-foot Cremation Society has one full-time employee. Wiseman said the difference in overhead justifies the price differential, so the funeral home has not changed policies.

Parker Amos, president of Amos Family Funeral Home, said the firm has never tried to conceal that it owns Cremation Center of Kansas City. Asked whether clients seeking a direct cremation at the funeral home are informed of the Cremation Center’s lower prices, Parker said that depends on family circumstances, and noted that sometimes the storefront refers families to the funeral home when they need more services. □

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Elmwood, from cover

"We don't know exactly how many graves we have left," said John Weilert, Elmwood board president. "We know it's in the hundreds, scattered throughout the cemetery." The gravesites are available for \$1,200, plus \$1,200 for digging and refilling the grave.

Weilert said Elmwood has few burials these days and mainly functions as a peaceful park setting where people walk and ride their bicycles. Matter of fact, Elmwood was designed by landscape architect George Kessler, designer of Kansas City's parks and boulevard system. Cemetery visitors see ornate monuments and mausoleums inscribed with familiar names of Kansas City streets and institutions, including Meyer (Boulevard), Atkins (the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art), Della Lamb (Community Services), Loose (Park), Armour (Boulevard), and Oppenheimer (Industries).

Another Elmwood aspect that was unusual in the 1800s is that the entire cemetery has always been open to persons of all races and creeds.

"Kansas City is a traditionally segregated town," wrote former Kansas City Councilwoman Joanne M. Collins, an African American, in a book about the cemetery. "So it is interesting to observe that Elmwood Cemetery has allowed the burial of African Americans in any available plot of every section. In most cemeteries in the region ... African Americans were relegated to the least desirable section."

For all of its rich history, Elmwood struggles today. It has no paid staff and is operated by its dedicated volunteer trustees. It has no endowment fund for maintenance. It is designated as a 501(c)(13) tax-exempt entity under the Internal Revenue Code. In recent years the generosity of the community has enabled Elmwood to meet about 80 percent of its \$55,000 annual mowing expense.

"We rely heavily on donations to fund capital improvement projects, such as a section of our west wall, which is over a century old and in dire need of repairs," Weilert said.

Elmwood Cemetery in Kansas City, Mo., again offers natural burial and has many grave sites available. Elmwood may be the only metro-area cemetery to permit 'green' burial and to have plots available. Call or text 816-213-4750.



The Elmwood board hopes that opening the cemetery to natural burial will improve its financial situation.

Biodegradable containers used in natural burial may be made of wood, cardboard, wicker, or a simple shroud. The earth is not compacted after burial. A mound of earth is left on the surface to settle. Burial depth is three to four feet because the microbes involved in decomposition are located in that area. Natural burial does require some extra maintenance in mowing and in leveling the gravesite after settling. It is less profitable for the funeral industry, but can save families substantial sums.

To explore the use of Elmwood Cemetery, call or text 816-213-4750. □

Humanities grant award

FCA-GKC has been awarded a \$2,500 grant from the Missouri Humanities Council to explore "Funeral Folkways in Plagues and Pandemics." Jon Shafer, historian and FCA-GKC board member, will focus on funeral practices during the 1918 flu pandemic, the Black Death of 1348-49, and other health crises. He explains:

"Since the current condition of national life includes a Covid-19 pandemic in which low-income people and people of color are hurt the most, we thought it useful get a better sense of the big picture through the humanities. How have previous plagues and pandemics changed society? How will this one? Our focus will be low-income groups who need funeral cost savings the most."

If you have suggestions for Jon, call or text him at 715-733-0480 or email jonmshafer@gmail.com. □