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FOCUS

... on the activities of the OHIO EMBALMER ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 621320 • Cincinnati, OH 45262-1320

No. 141
Spring 2025

Spring Seminar Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Cleveland, Ohio

**Brennan's Party Center, 13000 Triskett Rd
Cleveland, Ohio 44111 • (216) 251-2131**

**6 Hours of Continuing Ed have been
applied for in Ohio & West Virginia**

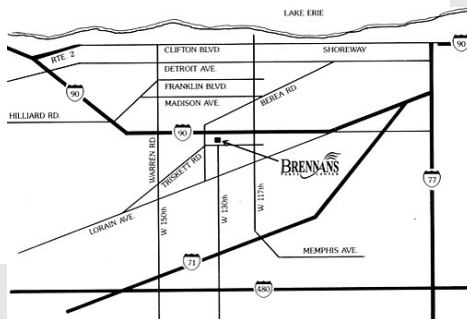
**Cost: \$110 Members • \$220 non members (includes dues).
Walk ins/On site \$125**

DAY AT A GLANCE

- 8 - 8:45** Coffee, Registration
9 - 11 Dominick Astorino – Defending the Truth: Embalming, Social Media & Bias.
11 -12 Dominick Astorino – Restorative Treatments for Difficult Cases
12 - 1 Lunch
1 - 3 Joe Stopak – Imperial Avenue, A detailed look at a multi-death crime scene
3 - 4 Dr. Linda Spurlock – When is it time for Forensic Art?

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations - rooms are being held for \$189/night at the Hilton Garden Inn, Cleveland Airport – 4900 Emerald Court SW Cleveland OH, 44135. (Exit #9 off I-480). Call 216.898.1898 or use link found on our website – www.ohemb.com.



OEA Spring Seminar - May 7, 2025
Brennans Party Center • 13000 Triskett Rd Cleveland, OH
\$110 Members and \$220 Non Members (includes dues)

If non-member, please use space below for your current mailing address:

Name _____
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Contact the
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513.384.7846 or
hchicks@me.com

Please complete form (or photocopy) and send with the appropriate check and postage to:
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Visit www.ohemb.com or Contact David Hicks 513.384.7846

President's Message

Greetings,
May is almost here along with one of the long-honored traditions for OEA. Our combined spring seminar with EAC, a partnership of over 80 years. The Spring Seminar in Cleveland is such a time-honored tradition, Bob always knows to “turn here.”

Woody Wilson,
President OEA 24-26

Secretary's Message

Ramblings of the Secretary
Stop by the OEA booth at OFDA this year. OEA is helping Sponsor John Hill as he presents a technical oriented talk at this year's convention.
Many times, I get the question what my member ID or No. is. It is located next to your address on each FOCUS you receive. If you have no changes in information, you can just mail that registration form back with your check.

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Dominick J. Astorino holds degrees in cellular biology, mortuary science, and forensic medicine; he is on faculty at the Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago and Wayne State University in Detroit, where he teaches courses in embalming, restorative art, and pathology.

His work in the field of restorative art and embalming is highlighted by publications as well as frequent invitations to present lectures across North

MEET THE SPEAKERS

America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Dominick believes in the power of education and the global value that viewing the dead offers to society. Because of this core belief he has worked to improve the standards of care not just in the United States but also in places such as Kenya, Trinidad, Hong Kong, and South Africa. He is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Michigan and Illinois, has sat on the restorative art curriculum review committee for the American Board of Funeral Service Education, and offers expert witness testimony in legal proceedings related to mortuary science.

Dominick is fully committed to elevating educational standards and fostering a deeper understanding of restorative art, especially as it correlates to embalming and forensic medicine. He is the author of the textbook *Postmortem Restorative Art: Principles, Methods & Applications*, which has been described as a seminal work in the field of mortuary science. This textbook reflects over 20 years of research and practical experience aiming to provide an accessible yet thorough examination of restorative art.

Joe Stopak began his career as a Forensic Pathologist Assistant in 1999 what was then the Cuyahoga County Coroners Office. He presently serves as the Manager of Investigation and Morgue Operations for the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiners Office; a position he has held since 2007. In this capacity, he supervises and oversees the Investigators, Receiving (morgue intake) and Property Department, identification of unidentified persons and is responsible for Mass Disaster Planning for the office. Prior to joining the staff he was an Anatomical Pathology Technologist at University Hospitals of Cleveland, a former licensed Embalmer and Funeral Director and Recovery Technician with experience in recovering and processing tissues for the purpose of transplant. Mr. Stopak obtained his Bachelor of Mortuary Science



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degree from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. He also completed training at the St. Louis School of Medicine and is a registered Diplomat Medicolegal Death Investigator (D-ABMDI) from the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators. In addition, he has completed course work for the Center of Domestic Preparedness (FEMA). In 2017 he co-authored the book, Medicolegal Death Investigation – A Step by Step Field Guide

Dr. Linda Spurlock is a Professor of Anthropology at Kent State University and has a broad background in several of the subfields within Anthropology. She received her Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences from Kent State University in 2001.

At Kent State she teaches courses in biological anthropology, forensic anthropology, primate behavior and archaeology. Spurlock is a forensic facial approximation artist whose mentors were Betty Pat. Gatliff and Karen T. Taylor. Spurlock provides sketches and sculptures of unidentified persons for law enforcement offices throughout the region. At the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, she works as a forensic anthropology consultant. She specializes in primate fossil reconstruction, particularly of the pelvis. In 2006, she co-edited *Caves and Culture: 10,000 Years of History in Ohio*, Kent State University Press. During the summers she teaches a forensic art course in Florence, Italy, and often works in prehistoric caves in Israel.

TOPICS

Defending the Truth: Embalming, Social Media & Bias. Dominick Astorino 2 hr

In an age of YouTube and Instagram morticians and media bias, where does the funeral profession and the public get their information about embalming? How do we know what is true and what is biased agenda? This lecture uses well researched facts, data and science to address some of the hardest issues our profession faces today and will answer questions such as “is

formaldehyde harmful to the embalmer?”, “are dead bodies dangerous without embalming?” and “isn’t embalming bad for the environment?”.

Restorative Treatments for Difficult Cases. Dominick Astorino 1 hr

Keeping the casket open is a passion for Astorino. He states that one of the first things asked by a family member is “can we see him/ her”. It is true. In this talk Astorino will present methods and techniques in embalming and restorative art to have that open casket.

Imperial Ave, A Detailed Look at a Multi-death Crime Scene. Joe Stopak. 2 hr

To recognize the challenges associated with a large area which needed to be documented and processed with complex multi-victim crime/ death scene investigations. Explain the recovery of multiple sets of human remains located both inside and outside of the residence that occurred over a multiyear time span. Try to identify patterns from both deceased found inside and out to integrate and formulate cause and manner of death. And finally summarize methods utilized for identification purposes of decomposed remains and the timeline from start to finish.

When is it time for forensic art? Dr. Spurlock. 1 hr

In 2017 and 2018 the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office was eventually able to identify skeletal remains whose biological profiles and DNA did not match anyone in the missing persons' database. For each case Spurlock produced a forensic approximation sketch, and these were circulated widely in the Cleveland community (television news programs, billboards). The adult individual was recognized quickly, but the child took much longer because of rather sad and complicated reasons.

Age and sex indicators present on the skeletal remains are illustrated. The process of developing a forensic facial approximation sketch is described, and the importance of unique features on bones and teeth is highlighted.