

THE THANAGRAM

SPRING • 2016

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JOHN GAMBLE, PRESIDENT • TFDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Greetings TFDA Members!

I feel safe in saying we all share the same winning attitude that comes with surviving another winter. As we hurry along the coming spring we also realize next year when we share the same emotion the United States will have celebrated the inauguration of new president. I'm sure by now most of have decided upon which candidate they think is most qualified to receive this installation; and, like the changing of the current seasons, as long as we share the same sentiment I hope your candidate wins!

To date, this year's TFDA advocacy agenda has progressed reasonably as planned although with a few surprises. I would like to thank the members of the TFDA Governmental Affairs Committee, and others, for the many hours spent on phone conferences and meetings. It has been my honor to work alongside these dedicated professionals. TFDA will present the progress of this year's agenda at the Spring District meetings; I hope all of you will make a special effort to attend.

This spring's schedule and advocacy progress will begin with Middle Tennessee District meeting March 28th in Murfreesboro. On Tuesday March 29th, the West Tennessee District meeting will be held in Jackson, TN at the Jackson Country Club. Along with advocacy NFDA President Bob Arrington will present some insight regarding national funeral trends effecting funeral service in TN. Bob has done an amazing job during his tenure with NFDA; I hope you all will make every effort to attend and show Bob our appreciation.

And, something a little different this year, on Thursday March 31st, the East Tennessee District meeting will be at Smith Mortuary Life Event Center in Maryville, TN. I have asked Mr. Joe Jarrett, Attorney at Law and Federal Civil Mediator, to present his program on "The Funeral Professional's Responsibility of Serving all Religions". This program is specific to religions involving the handling of serpents. I have heard Mr. Jarrett's presentation on this subject and found it to be fascinating. So, ladies wear your high top boots and men wear long leather gloves!

Internationally acclaimed speaker Mr. Todd Van Beck has been gracious in agreeing to perform the CEU seminar for all districts this spring.

At our convention in June we are planning a display of antique hearses spanning the period of horse-drawn to modern day. I would like to ask if anyone who has an antique motorized hearse to call me and let's discuss displaying it at 2016 TFDA Convention.

This is my last letter for the Thanagram as president of TFDA. I want to thank the TFDA membership for your generous for your support toward myself and the TN funeral profession. I would especially like to thank all Directors and Board Members I have served with as President. And, Dawn Elliott, I want to also thank you for being a member of the TFDA staff.

I hope to see all of you at the Middle, West, and East Tennessee district meetings.
John



Our Mission:

To be the Tennessee Funeral Professionals leadership advocate, through communication, education and legislation; thereby empowering the licensed funeral professional the ability to serve at the highest level.

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jeffersjustin@yahoo.com

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Dawn Elliott
Tennessee Funeral Directors Association
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Happy New Year

The beginning of a new year is always a great time of review, reflection and planning. Please consider some of the following regarding your preneed program for 2016.

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- The occasion to benefit your TFDA with every policy you write.

Please feel free to contact me in the weeks ahead. I will be glad to sit down and go over your current preneed program and see if there are opportunities where we can help you grow your business and better serve your families.

ROSE GREENE
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Phone: 540-354-8852
Email: RGreene@goldenconsiderations.com

2016 TFDA SPRING SEMINAR AND DISTRICT MEETINGS (PENDING TN STATE APPROVAL OF 2 CEUs)

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MIDDLE DISTRICT

Monday

March 28, 2016

Embassy Suites Hotel,
Murfreesboro, TN

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Seminar

TODD VAN BECK

“The Magic Bullet”

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

District Meeting Program
(dinner included)

BOB BATSON - Legislation

WEST DISTRICT

Tuesday

March 29, 2016

Jackson Country Club,
Jackson, TN

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Seminar

TODD VAN BECK

“The Magic Bullet”

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

District Meeting Program
(dinner included)

BOB ARRINGTON
National Funeral Directors
Association

EAST DISTRICT

(Please note change in location)

Thursday

March 31, 2016

Smith Mortuary Life Event Center
1404 Tuckaleechee Pike • Maryville, TN 37803

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Seminar

TODD VAN BECK

“The Magic Bullet”

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

District Meeting Program
(dinner included)

JOE JARRET
Attorney at Law and Federal Civil
Mediator

Funeral Professionals Serving all Religions...When Serpents are Involved

There are several areas in Tennessee, especially in the eastern portion, where religious ceremonies involve the handling of snakes. This is a very controversial issue among many and begs the question: Are churches performing religious ceremonies involving the handling of serpents protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution? Depending on the answer, this question arises: If these ceremonies are protected by the Constitution, what are my options or obligations as a funeral professional when called to serve families of these religions when a death occurs?

These are very important questions when facing such a dilemma. Attorney and Civil Mediator, Mr. Joe Jarret will be our guest speaker at the 2016 TFDA East District Meeting to answer those questions.

THE MAGIC BULLET

by Todd Van Beck

Description:

Funeral service is a wonderful profession, no question about that. One of the wonders of our beloved profession is the rich traditions that communities, religions, and cultures have embraced to care for the dead and the living. Tradition is one of the heritage hallmarks of our great profession.

But...In the year 2016 it is clear that our time-honored traditions are in a process of rapid transitions. Funeral professionals across the country are on a quest to re-define, re-invent, and re-create and many are in search of the magic bullet.

This program is devoted to an exploration of this important and timely topic for funeral professionals in the year 2016.

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KEYS TO SERVICE EXPERIENCE

BY TODD W. VAN BECK

I have often thought, and I have often said that most funeral professionals deserve a PhD in Experiential Expertise. In other words their life knowledge really goes way beyond the standard academic degree. There is nothing comparable in the world to the experiences of the average funeral director across the globe.

Platitude or not, I believe there is deep substance in the idea that the more we quest to know about ourselves, the better we can understand, evaluate, and control our behavior and the better we can understand and appreciate the behaviors of others. **This is what experiential expertise is all about and this type of deep knowledge takes time, a ton of time to bear fruit.**

Such an attitude will definitely help the bereaved client family to trust us. They will know who we are, for we the funeral professionals, having accepted what we are, shall feel no need to hide behind a mask, to be a phony, to be an arrogant snob. As most veteran funeral professionals have learned extremely well it is very important in the funeral interview that as funeral professionals we need not be preoccupied with ourselves but can concentrate wholeheartedly on the client family; and this skill does take time; the more you do it the better you get – or that is the idea anyway.

We can be free to listen, to attempt to understand just as much as possible –in brief, to be genuinely interested because nothing in us gets in the way of what comes from our task which is to build a trusting and respectful relationship with the client family which lasts. It is in the exclusive arena of human communication that truly experiential expertise blossoms.

CASE STUDY: Years ago I worked with a young person who had just graduated from mortuary college, and was serving their internship at the funeral home I managed in Iowa. She interviewed very well, she made a great first impression but after one month most everyone who worked in the mortuary realized that she was not devoted to funeral service. She was devoted to the drama in her “soap opera” lifestyle. Her normal day would revolve around play by play reports of her latest argument with the latest of her suitors, and if in the middle of her theatrics she needed to go on a death call she actually gave every indication that she was being “put out” by having to respond to the death of a human being which is one of the glaring missions of the funeral home. Her addiction to her own life dramas was so self-consuming that she even began sharing (more like boring) her theatrical life issues with people who came off the street to innocently attend a visitation or service. To be sure she was young, terribly young, and to be sure

we had conversation after conversation about her improving, but in the end her soap opera life prevailed and she found employment in another funeral home – a place in her own words “that understood and appreciated her” but most sad of all here, potentials of developing solid experiential expertise simply froze, it stopped, it was paralyzed. Have you ever encountered any such type in our profession as this young lady?

Looking back, weighing this situation against the substance that experiential expertise in funeral service requires I have concluded that this young lady was not derailed by her personal crises’ but she was derailed because she missed one essential ingredient concerning being a funeral professional with experiential expertise substance. **This one essential ingredient is: A genuine love of funeral service.** A genuine love of our great and beloved profession is one of the foundational bedrocks in the quest to explore the substance and meaning of the funeral expertise. Without genuine love of funeral service anyone’s efforts will always be less than they could have been. When this happens it is a pity for everybody involved.

Because of the immense power that a genuine love of funeral service **possesses** in purity of purpose, the authentic funeral professional developing experiential expertise sees as its very antithesis, as it stellar opposite, the concept of funeral professionals possessing out of control ego’s, or like this young lady being so caught up in her own agenda that she in the end had nothing to offer others. True she was licensed, true she passed the National Board, true she passed her state law exam, but that was it. She was stuck!

Hence the overall professional results being often that the selfish funeral professional (now there is an oxymoron – a selfish funeral director) actually ends up helping enhance the insecure funeral professionals ego and/or a salve or a tonic for their own dysfunctional life instead of actually helping the client family make once in lifetime decisions. This is where all this PhD in Experiential Expertise comes from in the first place.

This approach in pursuing the quest of the substance of the funeral expertise holds that at its core is the basic human concept of selfless humble service to others. Without this the funeral profession loses its pure unadulterated sacredness. Without this genuine love of funeral service the funeral experience, the interview conference, descends into an experience which might be analogous to having an appointment with H&R Block, or your insurance representative.

Trusting our own ideas and feelings constitutes another important quality of funeral expertise. To me this type of trusting in no way entails us telling the client family what to do. Most veteran funeral professionals would not do that even should it be asked of us. Instead this type of rare expertise centers around the funeral professional's openness, ability, and knowledge of presenting **options, alternatives, and suggestions.**

It will be valuable for us to remember that the very definition of a suggestion is when we are told about an idea that we had never thought about before. One of the new responsibilities of the contemporary funeral professional is to take on the role of the suggestion maker. People who genuinely love something or somebody usually have a myriad of suggestions on how things can be done better, more safely, more creatively, and more lovingly. Most parents understand this approach to "suggestion making" very well indeed! If you love something your experiences, your developed expertise naturally then follows the course of offering thoughts, counsel, advice, - this is an essential in funeral professional expertise.

The result of suggestion making is that because most funeral professionals possess utterly priceless experiential expertise which cannot possibly be found anywhere else we (you and I)

have a very important and valuable story to tell, and we ought to be able to making one suggestion after another, simply based on that we have the experience, we have that priceless form of knowledge that comes from being in the trenches, being on the front lines confronting death on a hour by hour basis – this is indeed honorable experiential expertise. We need to tell our client families what we know, we always need to tell our story, we need to not be timid or shy in telling our story, and our story in and of itself will aid us in the admirable task of moving far beyond being stuck in traditional role of the old-fashioned order taking method of making arrangements.



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JUNE 5 – 7, 2016

ALONG WITH NFDA ALL DAY SEMINAR

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2016

“The Changing Phases of Funeral Service”

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER • MURFREESBORO, TN

Saturday, June 4, 2016

NFDA Certified Crematory Operator Program presented by Mike Nicodemus, NFDA Vice President, Cremation Services (Approved for 7 Continuing Education Credits by APFSP and TN State Approved for 7 CEU's)

Sunday, June 5, 2016

12:00 Noon

The Silent Auction Begins

Seminars



1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Todd Van Beck presents “Abraham Lincoln’s Funeral”



3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Mike Nicodemus presents
“Communication Skills for
Connecting with Cremation Families”

4:30 pm

TFDA/TFSSC Memorial Service Family Gathering

Mr. Todd Van Beck will reign as the Convention Chaplin for this year’s convention. The family members will be escorted to the Memorial Service by Mr. Van Beck and the TFDA Board of Directors.

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

TFDA/TFSSC Memorial Service

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Grand Opening of the Exhibits
(Pending TN State Approval 1 CEU)

Monday, June 6, 2016

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Joint TFDA/TFSSC Business Meeting
50 Years of Service Plaques Awarded



Mr. Bob Arrington, NFDA Bob Arrington, 2015-2016 President CCO Arrington Funeral Directors, Jackson, TN

10:00 am – 11:00 am

TFDA Business Meeting
(Pending Approval of 2 CEU's)

10:00 am – 11:00 am

TFSSC Business Meeting



11:00 am – 1:00 pm

TFDA Joint Luncheon

Mr. Mike Hayes – “You Can’t Keep a Possum in the House” – and Other Stories for Funeral Directors

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Open Exhibit Floor
(Pending Approval of 1 CEU)

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Monday Night Live and Silent Auction Dinner

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

TFDA/TFSSC Golf Tournament

Aurora Casket Sponsoring the Tournament

Wilbert Vaults of TN Sponsoring the Tournament Lunch



1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Mr. Jack Adams Presents

“Competence In Analyses

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(Pending Approval of 3 CEU's)

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Dodge

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Past President's Reception

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Grand Banquet



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2016 TFDA/TFSSC ANNUAL CONVENTION

EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER • MURFREESBORO, TN



Memorial Service

SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016

What a great honor for our association to participate in celebrating the lives of our deceased loved ones who have left us this past year.

Barbara Jean Manes Burkhart
Luther Davis West
Hazel Hoyle South
Vida E. Chaffin
Rex B. Jeffers
Stephen Roy "Digger" Mize
Jessie Lou Duncan
William "Mike" Smith
Harlon M. Saylors
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James Roosevelt Baldwin

Marke Kevin Fults
Robert Eugene "Bob" Thomas
Joyce Forehand Taylor
Pam Mundy
JL Austin
Mary Sue Thompson Looney
Mabel Greene Jones
Mattie Raybon Butler
Jane Gray "Bunny" Sowell
Paul "Moon" Roberson
William "Bill" Brevard Smith
Willene Agee

Mary Gladys Hudgens Nash
Ernest "Bruce" Frazier
Marjorie "Margie" Nell Parish Myers
James Silas Wilson
William Edward Dickerson
Reverend Charles Marvel South
Emily Jo Gamble Lawson
Michael Wayne "Mike" Capps
James "Jimmy" Lawrence
Clyde Stephens, Jr.

Please contact the TFDA office if there is a loved one not listed that should be included,
(615) 321-8792, or by email office@tnfda.org.



TENNESSEE DONOR SERVICES UPDATE

BOB ARRINGTON, CCO, TDS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Working Together To Advance Our Service To Families

As many of you know, I was invited to participate as a member of the Tennessee Donor Services (TDS) Advisory Board. Along with TDS leadership and me, the Board is comprised of a diverse and talented group of leaders in Healthcare including CEOs, transplant surgeons, and pastoral care staff throughout the state. Rounding out the Board are government officials and a wide variety of public members that include a donor family member and an ethicist.

I am pleased to be member of this Board, and very impressed with the caliber and composition of the individuals who make it up. I am especially excited about their commitment and expertise in providing valuable feedback and advice based on their experience and vision in their respective fields. I am thrilled with the engagement these leaders have

with the TDS Board, and their enthusiasm is palpable and refreshing. It gives me great hope that this Board is as dedicated as it is distinctive.

The charge of the TDS Advisory Board is to recommend policies relating to organ donation, procurement, and distribution as directed by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. I have observed that the goals of this Board are clear and focused. The Board is working to improve its service to donor families and recipients and is resolved to:

- Concentrate on education and training to both its professional partners and with the public

- Reduce TDS' time in the initial contact with families as well as the time it takes for hospital staff to contact TDS

- Collaborate with nurses and other hospital staff to improve sensitivity and awareness of families' grief and state of mind

continued on the next page

-Work with funeral directors to improve communication and minimize delays

The TDS Advisory Board continues to work with the priorities established by the focus groups TDS conducted a few months ago with funeral homes across the state.

-TDS staff has already been able to reduce the time in speaking with families by working with hospitals to contact TDS more quickly and by shortening the time it takes for TDS to then speak with the families. This is a priority with TDS.

-TDS has developed a new training program for Bridge2Life (call center) staff that incorporates both triage and consent. Not only is working medical knowledge now mandated for Bridge2Life staff, the new training program incorporates a more streamlined and integrated approach, benefitting family members in a time of real stress and grief. One call center staff team member is able to be with a family member during the whole process.

-The pilot program initiated at Jackson Madison County General Hospital is now expanding to hospitals throughout TDS' service area. A plan describing the priority hospitals and areas of focus will be ready by mid-March to mid-April. As a reminder, the pilot program was designed to educate nurses to assist in a transition conversation with families to TDS in order

to minimize delays in contacting families.

-TDS continues to work and adjust their reconstruction process based on funeral home feedback.

Let me say again, how happy I am to be a part of this work, and how impressed I am with TDS' work. TDS has asked for, and values our (funeral directors) feedback to refine the processes they develop to best serve families. Their mission to save lives. I am proud to represent funeral directors in our state on this Board and in this work. Ongoing dialogue about how we continually improve the processes that drive our missions is vital to all our successes.

Mine and other members in related fields' involvement provides an excellent bridge to continue to find ways to strengthen our relationship with our partners in the Tennessee donor program, and to improve our service to families who rely on us.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2016. I am confident I will have more to report following this session. I invite and encourage your support as we move forward to improve how we serve Tennessee families even more compassionately and tenderly than ever before.

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THE TENNESSEE FUNERAL DIRECTORS WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!

The Funeral and Memorial Information Council (FAMIC) is a membership organization comprising organizations in nearly all areas of the death care profession. FAMIC's mission statement reads they are committed to making available to the public direct and open information regarding death care and memorialization from the leading associations of service providers and businesses. FAMIC is promoting values and traditions of which funeral directors should be proud to support.

TFDA acknowledges and appreciates the effort FAMIC demonstrates and financially supports their endeavors. TFDA would like to thank the following members for their generous donations allowing TFDA the opportunity to continue supporting FAMIC in their efforts to enhance the process of memorialization.

Affordable Cremation Society
and Mortuary Service - Memphis
Anthony Funeral Home - Hartsville
Arrington Funeral Directors - Jackson
Atchley Funeral Home - Sevier
Bordwine Funeral Home - Etowah
Christian-Sells - Rogersville
Farrar Funeral Home - Dandridge

High's, Inc. - McMinnville
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Smith Mortuary Company, Inc. - Maryville
Spann Funeral Home - Dickson
Williamson Memorial Funeral Home - Franklin
Woodard Funeral Home - Westmoreland
Woodbine Funeral Home, Inc., Nashville, TN

We would also like to acknowledge the following members for providing the monetary support allowing TFDA to remain the leading advocate for funeral professionals in the State of Tennessee.

Anthony Funeral Home - Hartsville
Bodkin Funeral Home, Inc. - Milan
Carl Barker - Kingston
Christian-Sells Funeral Home -
Rogersville
Cooke-Campbell Mortuary, Inc. -
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Jerry Griffey - Knoxville
Karnes and Sons - Dyer
Kyker Funeral Home - Sweetwater
Layne Funeral Home - Palmer
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*Thank
you!*

Ken Collins
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Obituaries

JAMES "JIMMY" LAWRENCE, age 78, died Monday, February 1, 2016 after an extended illness. Mr. Lawrence was the former owner of Lawrence-Sorenson Funeral Home in Jackson, TN and the owner of Replogle – Lawrence Funeral Home in Medina, TN. Jimmy Lawrence is also the uncle of Danny Hurt, Wilbert Vaults and Secretary of the Tennessee Funeral Supply Sales Club.



CLYDE STEPHENS, JR., of Franklin, TN died February 15, 2016. Clyde was the founder of Williamson Memorial & Spring Hill Memorial Funeral Homes. He also served as President of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association 2004-2005. He is the father of David (Dawn) Stephens and Gary (Pam) Stephens; daughter, Pam (Tim Kalthoff) Stephens all of Williamson Memorial and Spring Hill Funeral Homes. Pam Stephens also served as President of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association 2013-2014.



A memorial donations have been made in memory of Clyde Stephens, Jr. by:

Lester McAlister, Ansercall, Inc., Laurel, MS
Christian-Sells Funeral Home, Rogersville, TN
Curry Funeral Home, Dyersburg, TN
The Griffey Family, Knoxville, TN
Tennessee Funeral Supply Sales Club, Nashville, TN

A memorial donation has been made in memory of Joan B. Griffey by:

The Griffey Family, Knoxville, TN

A memorial donation was made in memory of Emily Jo Gamble Lawson by:

Walters Funeral Home, LaFollette, TN

A poem in memory of Joan Griffey, sent in by her husband Mr. Jerry Griffey, Knoxville, TN

The Funeral Director's Wife

I'm not merely the funeral director's wife.
Sometimes I think I've a double life.
I'm in the background of every scene.
As life goes on, it becomes routine.
Now let me tell you what all I do.
In my small role in the funeral home crew.
I am attendant maid, and keep the books,
Secretary, driver and best of cooks.
I'm on committees and ever excused,
No matter the job, I just can't refuse.
I go to all the clubs and the minutes I type,
And listen to people with the fearsome gripes.
I wait my meals 'til the spuds are soggy,
Or rust my cooking until I'm groggy.
I've taken in calls on the phone by the score,
And have written obituaries and notices galore.
I play the piano, I sing in high 'C',
I'm always available, without any fee.
I wait on tables, and teach the Church School,
I'm active in everything as the general rule.
When Townsfolk get sick, I cannot send
A get-well card to an ailing friend.
For while they have the breath of life,
They think of me as the "undertaker's Wife!"
I press my husband's funeral pants,
And listen to his raves and rants.
I know that onions he must not eat,
When there are people he has to meet.
I've been all dressed from shoes to hat,
Then, hour by hour, I've simply sat.
Out of the window vacation plans fly,
For that's the time "big" people die.
I've loaned out china and vases rare,
Linens and pillows, and the easy chair,
Candlesticks, silver and the chandelier,
Even Grandma's old bustle, if I'd had it there.
But thinking it over, it's quite a position,
To live, help and act with the local mortician.
So when you're bored with your kind of life,
Just try being a funeral director's wife.

Author Unknown

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TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER – BOOK REVIEW COLUMNIST

Terri Schlichenmeyer, Book Review Columnist, has been reading since she was 3 years old and she never goes anywhere without a book. She has worked with more than 200 newspapers and nearly 50 magazines scattered in 46 states, the Virgin Islands and six provinces of Canada. Terri lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 12,000 books.

“Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye”

by Marie Mutsuki Mockett

c.2015, W.W. Norton \$16.95 / \$21.95 Canada 336 pages

You didn't know where to turn.

Sometimes, it's bad enough standing up to an impossible decision, but acting on it can be the bigger challenge. You don't know where to turn and so, as in the book **“Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye”** by **Marie Mutsuki Mockett**, maybe it's best to ask your ancestors.

Until March 11, 2011, the biggest “great tragedy” that befell Marie Mutsuki Mockett's maternal family was World War II. They'd survived Nagasaki's bombing then, through coincidence and good fortune. On that spring day five years ago, they hoped their luck held when Japan was hit with an earthquake, followed by a tsunami.

Mockett's cousins ran a Zen Buddhist temple that her mother's family owned in Japan and, concerned for their safety, Mockett spent hours frantically phoning for word, her feelings exacerbated by other familial losses and by grief she couldn't let go. She'd been “struggling,” and she wanted to move on. She'd hoped that the help she sought might lie in the country of her mother's birth and so, three weeks after the disaster, on a mission to bury her grandfather's bones, she traveled to Japan with her mother and son.

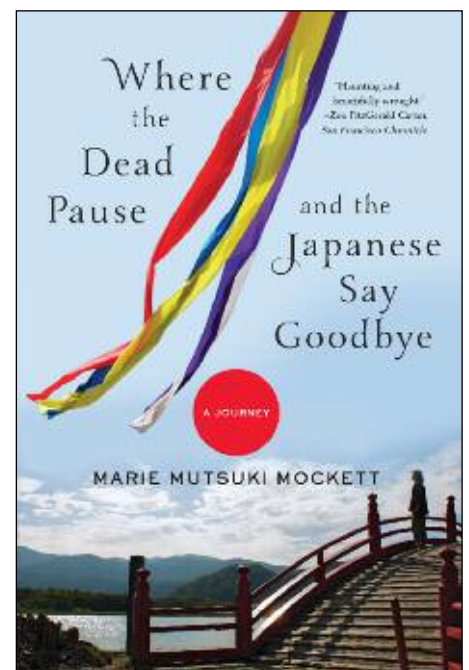
Because of the radiation that had seeped into the ground, it would be months before that mission was completed; in the meantime, Mockett went in search of a release for her grief in a way that made sense. She spoke with Buddhist monks, “blind mediums,” and “Mountain Women.” She reached back to experience ancient Japanese religions, visited temples, and learned that being present lent strength and that silence and meditation were refreshing and mind-clearing. She began to understand the Japanese belief in ancestral ghosts; she visited Sai no Kawara, where the dead go to wait; and she participated in Oban, in which the Japanese call their dead home.

“I thought that of all the cruel and futile things that can happen...,” she says, “the very worst is when we are separated.” And yet, “The love we have for people, after all, never truly goes away, even if they leave us in *owakare*, the great parting.”

Now out in paperback, “Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye” is as lovely and calming as the Zen Buddhist temples it features so elegantly. It's a tale you'll want to read slowly; in fact, speedy reading may be impossible.

The reason, ultimately, is that this book consists of *many* stories: author Marie Mutsuki Mockett offers her family's history, as well as that of Japan, and of Japanese culture and religion. Though that's integral, there are pages where you'll read details that seem to have been stated before, particularly in the middle of Mockett's journey. There's a lot to absorb and, when added to the quietness of the narrative, it can crawl.

Still, if you stick around, you'll be rewarded with an ending that's insightfully refreshing and definitely worth the time. Stay with it, because “Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye” is, at last, a good turn.





1616 Church Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37203