

The History of the Matteson Funeral Home

by The Matteson Family
September 2023

The Matteson Funeral home has been honored to serve the families of West Salem for the past 70 years. For anyone who has not known the Matteson family or who would like to read some history about the funeral home. The Matteson family has put together the history of their establishment to share with the public. They hope you enjoy their story.



David Matteson graduated from Creston High School in 1943. After graduation he spent 3 years in Europe serving in the US Army during WWII where he received two purple hearts.

Lois Matteson graduated from Creston High School in 1948 and Wooster Business College in 1949.

Then Dave went to mortuary school in Cleveland, Ohio half way through his schooling they closed the school so he transferred to Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science where Dave graduated in October of 1950.

After graduation Dave served his apprenticeship for the Murray Funeral Home in Creston, Ohio.

Dave married Lois Gerstenslager on September 8, 1951. They had two children; Mark and Michele Matteson.

Dave and Lois moved to West Salem in 1953 and started the Matteson Funeral Home.



In 1929 B.W. Mowrey established the Mowrey Funeral Service in West Salem for 18 years. Bert Mowrey sold the funeral home to Wayne and Lois Addis.

David and Lois Matteson purchased the funeral home in West Salem on June 1, 1953 from Wayne and Lois Addis.

When Dave and Lois Matteson purchased the funeral home located at 40 East Congress Street, it was a regular frame house with a one-story brick addition to the side. After they bought the funeral home Dave planned for several months and did complete remodeling.

He removed the old flat roof over the funeral parlor, raised the addition to add another story and built a large addition to the rear of the parlor, so that the capacity was increased about a third of its original space.

Above the parlor, Dave added an office and large showroom and an elevator which Dave designed and built so that caskets could be raised and lowered from floor to floor.

The front of the building was also completely changed. A large front porch of the house was squared off with colonial pillars being added on to the front to support the overhang.

As the need arose for off street parking Dave and Lois purchased two adjoining lots and added a parking lot for the convenience and safety of the funeral business.



Dave was quite active in the village and was honored by Village Council for his 36 years of service to the village. He served on Village Council for two years and served as council president; he then resigned to become mayor of the village. He served 12 years as mayor. He had also served as village council clerk for two years.

Dave served on the Town and Country Fire Department as a firefighter and rescue squad emergency medical technician for

35 years, and also served as assistant fire chief and emergency rescue chief, retiring in 1987. He served on the cemetery board since its formation.

Lois Matteson is still active in the funeral home family business after 70 years of caring for families. Her roles during the 70 years include; door greeter, bookkeeping, dispatching calls for the fire department and rescue squad, baking, canning and raising a family. For many years there were no cell phones so someone was required to be at the funeral home to answer the telephone 24/7. She has received many calls during the years about the town's history. She was an emergency medical technician for the Town & Country Rescue Squad, 50 Plus Club, West Salem Senior Citizens and card club. She is a member of West Salem United Methodist Church, Order of Eastern Star, Garfield Chapter # 324 for over 50 years and James Stevenson American Legion Post 499 Auxiliary. For the past two years Lois has made and donated a quilt for the quilt raffle. All the proceeds are used for a scholarship in memory of her grandson; David James Devore.

David Matteson 63 retired due to health reasons after a 36-year career. His daughter Michele succeeded him. Dave died on April 5, 1991. During Dave and Lois's years of service to the community the funeral home provided home care items to the community which included hospital beds, walkers, oxygen tanks, wheelchairs and chairs for family gatherings. They provided emergency and non emergency ambulance services for the community. They had two fully equipped ambulances and provided emergency ambulance service for 25 years until the Town & Country Rescue Squad went into service January 1, 1978. They continued non-emergency ambulance service calls until 1992.



She graduated Feb. 27, 1982 from Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science in Pennsylvania with honors as a funeral director and embalmer. She was the only girl in her class and served as class secretary. She did her one-year apprenticeship under the supervision of her father.

Michele graduated in 1978 from Northwestern High School. Michele attended Wayne General and Technical College in Orrville to receive her 60 credit hours of state requirements.

Michele received her emergency medical technician's certification in 1978 and was a volunteer on the Town and Country Rescue Squad retiring after 39 years of service. She also served as a firefighter on the department from 1982 to 1992.

Michele had previously served as a Board of Trustees of Lodi Community Hospital. She was a former leader for Cub Scout Troop 3452, Girl Scout Troop 316 and Boy Scout Troop 452. Michele has been a member of the village's cemetery board since 1984, member of the National Funeral Directors Association, the Ohio Embalmers Association, advisor for Congress 4-H Power Club, West Salem United Methodist Church, Quota of Wayne County, Northwestern Ruritans, James Stevenson American Legion Post 499 Auxiliary and Order of the Eastern Star, Garfield Chapter # 324. Michele married David C. Devore on September 23, 1989. They have two children David James Devore and Victoria Michele Devore.

Michele completed a second remodel in 1996 to the funeral home, where they added a second chapel and restroom on the west side of the funeral home to better accommodate the families they served.



Victoria graduated from Northwestern High School in 2015. She went to the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science and graduated with honors in 2017 where she earned an associate's degree in Funeral Service Arts and Science. She was also the President of her class 154.

Victoria graduated Cum Laude from Point Park University with her Bachelor's of Science Degree in Funeral Service and a minor in Psychology in 2018.



After serving her year of apprenticeship she became licensed in 2019 and officially joined the family legacy. Since becoming licensed she has become a certified celebrant. She is currently a member of the National Funeral Directors Association, the Ohio Funeral Directors Association, Vice-President of the Wayne County Horse Committee, advisor for Congress 4-H Power Club, West Salem United Methodist Church, Quota of Wayne County, Northwestern Ruritans, and James Stevenson American Legion Post 499 Auxiliary.



As time has gone by, the funeral industry has started to change. In 2022 The Matteson's decided to build a new cremation center to serve their families. They have purchased two cremation retorts. One for human cremations and the other one is for pet cremations. Michele and Victoria have a love and compassion for their pet families due to their own relationships with there four legged family members. Due to this improvement your family members will never have to leave their care. Completion of the project is expected to be in September 2023.

In celebration the Matteson's and their staff would like to invite you to tour their new state of the art facility October 7, 2023 during our 70th year anniversary open house from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. If you have any questions, please feel free to call them at (419) 853-4000.

