



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Making The South Shore A Better Place

Keohane's Apprentice Program, Passing Down a Tradition of Compassionate Care

How Keohane's apprentice program is preparing future funeral directors one meaningful experience at a time.

At Keohane Funeral & Cremation, mentorship has long been woven into the fabric of the organization. For generations, experienced funeral directors have passed their knowledge and expertise to those entering the profession. Building upon that tradition, Keohane recently launched a formal apprentice program that goes beyond simply teaching the technical skills of funeral service. The program is designed to cultivate compassionate, confident professionals who embrace the community's values and carry the torch for the Keohane standard of exceptional care for families.

Building a Career and a Culture of Care

Every funeral director in Massachusetts completes a two-year apprenticeship, but Keohane has transformed that requirement into a structured journey of professional and personal growth.

The program combines clear milestones with individualized mentorship. During the first year, apprentices focus on learning the fundamentals of funeral service, becoming familiar with daily operations, and gaining confidence in their new role. Year two shifts toward developing the responsibilities they'll assume as licensed funeral directors, including working more directly with families and leading services under supervision.

Still in its infancy, the program itself continues to evolve. As part of the formalization process of bringing apprentices up the ranks, Keohane

Funeral Directors John Congdon and Frank Maggiore helped further develop its structure after participating in leadership training, creating regular check-ins and benchmarks that guide apprentices throughout their experience.

"It's cumulative," Congdon explains. "By the end of the program, they're ready to fly the nest, but with us right by their side."



Olivia Gill, John Congdon, and Pru O'Connor

Where Classroom Training Meets Real-World Service

Funeral service cannot be mastered in the classroom alone. While apprentices complete their academic coursework through mortuary school,

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the most valuable lessons come through hands-on experience. From the very beginning, new apprentices are paired closely with experienced funeral directors who guide them through every aspect of serving families.

For the first 90 days, apprentices work side by side with a dedicated mentor, observing conversations with families, arrangement conferences, funeral services, and countless moments that require both professionalism and compassion. As their confidence grows, so do their responsibilities.

"We're there to guide them," remarked Maggiore. "They watch us serve families, and then gradually they begin serving families themselves with our support every step of the way."

Although Maggiore and Congdon oversee the formal program, mentorship extends throughout the entire organization. Every funeral director at Keohane is encouraged to teach, coach, and lead by example, creating a collaborative learning environment where everyone contributes to an apprentice's success.

Compassion Cannot Be Taught, Only Modeled

Technical knowledge is essential in funeral service, but both mentors agree that communication and compassion are what truly define an outstanding funeral director.

"There are milestones every apprentice has to reach," said Maggiore. "But everything begins and ends with communication."

Learning how to speak with families during the most difficult moments of their lives requires more than memorizing the right words. Apprentices learn by listening, observing, and experiencing real conversations alongside seasoned professionals.

One lesson has stayed with Maggiore since his own apprenticeship.

"One of the first things John Keohane ever said to me was, 'You can do this job and be pretty okay at it, but you really have to be nice to be good at it.'"

That philosophy continues to guide the program today.

According to Maggiore, the people who come into funeral service already have that natural compassion. What they are learning is how to express that kindness, how to communicate effectively, and how to help families in the way they need it most.

From Grief to Guidance

For apprentice Olivia (Liv) Gill, that commitment to mentorship has taken on deep personal meaning. Keohane has long been her family's funeral home

of choice, and Maggiore himself served as the funeral director at her grandfather's service.

Now working alongside the same team that once cared for her family, Gill describes the experience as both meaningful and grounding.

"It feels like things have come full circle," she said. "I'm really fortunate to be learning from and working with the people who took such great care of my family."

As she progresses through the apprenticeship program, Gill is gaining hands-on experience that extends well beyond the classroom. Most recently, she assisted in directing a friend's father's funeral, a responsibility that underscored both the emotional weight and the importance of her training.

"You learn far more here than you ever could in mortuary school alone," she added. "Being in the room with families, witnessing how experienced directors communicate and support them is where the real learning happens every day."

Building Phenomenal Funeral Directors and Trusted Teammates

The apprentice program is about much more than preparing individuals for licensure. It is about preserving a culture built on trust, teamwork, and service. Congdon compares it to the close-knit culture of a firehouse, where experienced professionals support one another while serving the community.

"The goal is to teach the younger generation how to make everyone around them successful," he said. "We're teaching them how to become excellent funeral directors, but we're also teaching them how to be great teammates."

Since its formal launch last year, three apprentices have entered the structured program, while several additional apprentices who joined earlier have benefited from many of its mentorship principles. As funeral service continues to evolve, so will the program itself, adapting to new generations while remaining grounded in the values that have defined the funeral home for generations.

For Keohane, investing in apprentices is not simply about filling future positions. It is about ensuring that every family who walks through the door continues to experience the same compassion, professionalism, and personal care that have long been the hallmarks of the organization.

By passing knowledge from one generation to the next, Keohane is doing more than training funeral directors; it is protecting a tradition of service that will continue to comfort families for years to come.

Community Spotlight:



INTERFAITH
SOCIAL SERVICES



Rick Doane, Executive Director of Interfaith Social Services

For more than 80 years, Interfaith Social Services has been a cornerstone of support for individuals and families across the South Shore, providing critical resources including food assistance, mental health counseling, homelessness prevention services, and more. Through the dedication of staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners, Interfaith continues to meet the evolving needs of neighbors in need.

In this Community Spotlight, we sat down with Rick Doane, Executive Director of Interfaith Social Services, to learn more about the organization's mission, the power of community partnerships, and how collaboration with organizations like Keohane helps make a lasting impact.

Q: For readers who may not be familiar with Interfaith Social Services, can you tell us about your mission and the people you serve?

A: For the past 80 years, Interfaith Social Services has been serving families in need across the South Shore. We were founded with the purpose of helping families and children in need. One of our oldest programs is our Mental Health Counseling Center, where we serve people regardless of whether they have insurance, ensuring everyone has access to mental health and addiction recovery treatment.

Our food pantry grew out of that work in the 1970s, when our therapists began hearing about a growing need for emergency food. At the time, the concept of community food pantries was just beginning to emerge as a way for people in need to access nutritious food. Interfaith was among the first organizations in the United States to establish one.

Then, in the 1990s, our therapists began hearing about the growing need for housing assistance and homelessness prevention. That led to the creation of our HomeSafe homelessness prevention program.

One of the things that helps fund all these programs, and one of the things many people know us for, is our retail thrift shop. The thrift shop serves as a fundraiser, with proceeds helping support all our other programs.

Q: For nearly two decades, Keohane and Interfaith have worked together through sponsorships, volunteerism, and community initiatives. From your perspective, what has made this partnership so meaningful over the years?

A: I think what makes a partnership meaningful is authenticity. And that is what Keohane brings to the table. They do what they do because they genuinely care about the community, and that's evident in every interaction I've had with them. Their approach isn't transactional. They're committed to making a real difference. They truly embody the kind of compassion and community-mindedness we need more businesses to embrace.

Q: Both of our organizations are rooted in caring for people during some of life's most challenging moments. Where do you see our missions intersecting, and why do you think that partnership works so well?

A: At the heart of both Keohane and Interfaith Social Services is the power of community.

When someone turns to Keohane during a time of loss, their community comes together to support them.

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Rick Doane, Executive Director of Interfaith Social Services

Likewise, when someone comes to Interfaith for help, whether they're seeking food or other services, they're seeing their community mobilize to support them.

That community takes many forms, from the donors whose generosity makes our programs possible to the more than 200 volunteers who serve each week, helping distribute food to neighbors in need. It's that true sense of community that both of our organizations embody.

Q: The Plant.Grow.Share. program has become a longtime tradition in our community. Can you tell us a little about how it began, what makes it so special, and the impact it has on the families you serve?

A: One of the things that's neat about the beginnings of the Plant.Grow.Share. program is that it grew out of a community partnership. I was sitting next to Joe Reardon from Keohane at a Lions Club meeting, and we were talking about the needs that existed in the community. Joe said, "I think we could do something to help."

One of the needs we discussed was the demand for fresh produce at food pantries. We serve so many children and seniors, and fresh fruits and vegetables are some of the items they want and need most. At the same time, we both knew plenty of people who had more zucchini than they could

possibly use in July and August.

It felt like a natural opportunity to work together, with the shared goal of raising awareness about the need for fresh produce at local food pantries while creating an easy way for people to donate their extra harvest.

Q: The annual Winter Coat Drive has also become an important community tradition. Approximately how many coats has the drive provided over the years, and what do initiatives like this say about the power of neighbors helping neighbors?

A: It's safe to say that thousands of coats have been distributed through this partnership between Keohane, Dependable Cleaners, and Interfaith Social Services.

The idea behind the program is that not everyone can make a financial donation to a nonprofit, but everyone can contribute something. Community coat drives like this give people the opportunity to feel invested, be part of something meaningful, and know they're making a difference for their neighbors.

The drive also raises awareness. While it provides much-needed coats to individuals and families, it also lets people know about the available services. When someone needs help, they know where to turn. So, the program not only meets a basic need by providing warm winter coats but also helps connect people with additional resources and support in the community.

Q: Interfaith Social Services' food rescue program addresses both food insecurity and food waste. Can you talk about how this program works and why it is so important?

A: Our food rescue program is an important part of our work. About half of the food we distribute through our food pantry comes from local supermarkets, with one of our trucks on the road every day collecting donations.

Each year, we rescue approximately half a million pounds of food, which allows us to be as responsible as possible while also reducing waste. Instead of that food entering the waste stream, we make sure it gets into the hands of people who need it and onto the tables of hungry families.

When we do receive food that is no longer edible, we work with a composting partner to ensure it still serves a purpose by returning those nutrients to the earth.

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Q: Many Keohane team members have enjoyed volunteering alongside Interfaith over the years. How important is hands-on volunteerism to your organization, and what does it mean for community members to roll up their sleeves to help?

A: Volunteers are the heart and soul of Interfaith Social Services. We simply could not operate our food pantry or our thrift shop without the incredible volunteers who generously give their time. As I mentioned before, it really reflects the spirit of community. Neighbors coming together to support neighbors in need.

Volunteering is an opportunity not only for individuals to give back, but also for businesses to get involved. There's a common perception that every nonprofit needs volunteers, but that's not the case. Many nonprofits don't rely on volunteers to operate their programs. Food pantries and organizations like ours are the exception. We truly need as many volunteers as possible.

When businesses like Keohane dedicate time for their employees to volunteer, it demonstrates their commitment to the community. It also sends a powerful message to their employees that they care about making a meaningful impact, not just doing something for the sake of it. We've heard from many businesses that employees who volunteer together feel part of something bigger and, as a result, develop a stronger connection to

their workplace. So, they're not only helping the community, but they're also strengthening their own teams.

Q: This year, Interfaith is recognizing Keohane Funeral & Cremation as your 2026 Community Partner of the Year. What made Keohane stand out for this honor?

A: For us, it really comes down to a commitment to the community. Each year, we select one individual or one business to receive this award, and we're looking for someone who truly sets an example through their dedication, volunteerism, and service. We want to recognize those who stand out and embody what it means to be a true community hero.

Our partnership with Keohane has been going strong for many years, and that longevity speaks volumes. This isn't a one-time effort or a short-term initiative. It's a partnership that has spanned multiple decades, built on a genuine commitment to serving our community.

We believe this recognition is incredibly well deserved, and we're confident this partnership will continue making a meaningful impact for many years to come.

**Read the full article
on our website!**

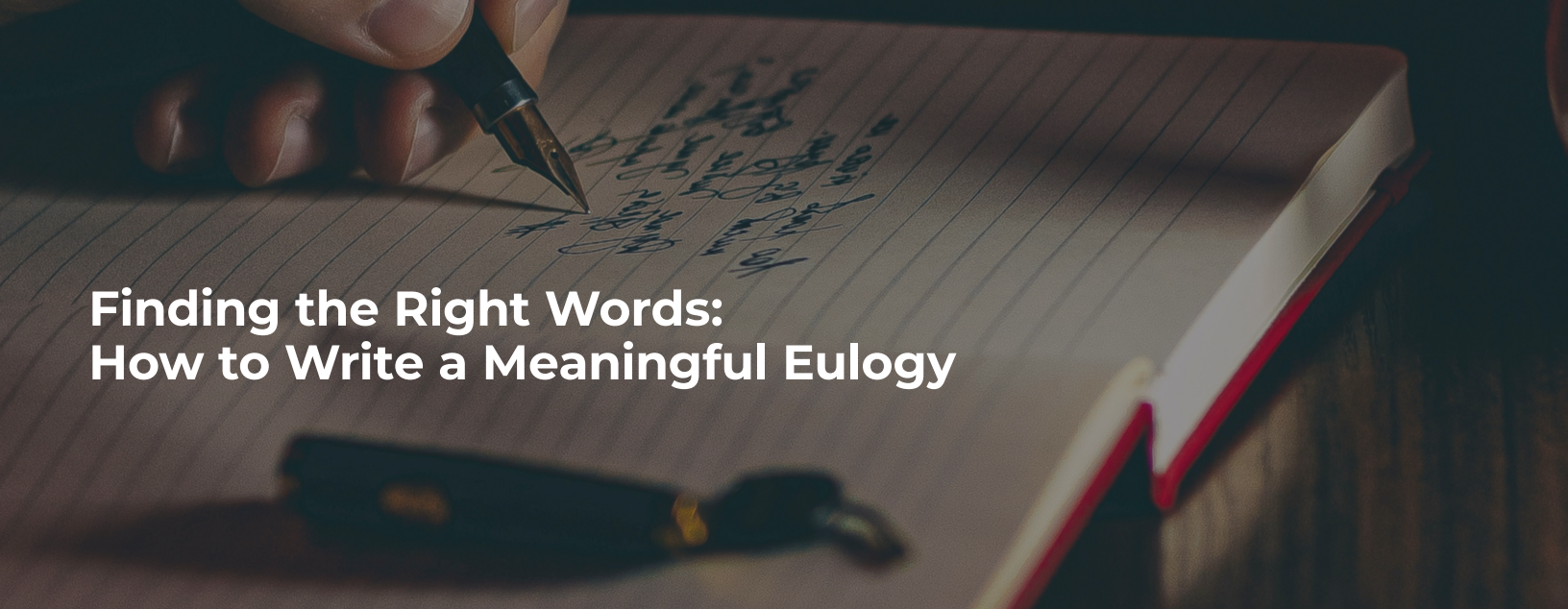


We are honored to share that Keohane Funeral Home has been voted Best of the South Shore in the Funeral & Burial Services category by South Shore Home, Life & Style magazine.

This recognition is especially meaningful because it comes from the people and families in the communities we are privileged to serve. Thank you for placing your trust in us during life's most difficult moments and for allowing us to help honor the stories of those you love.

The BOSS (Best of the South Shore) Awards celebrate the local businesses and professionals who make our region such a special place to live and work. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who took the time to nominate and vote for us.

From our family to yours, thank you for your confidence, your support, and the opportunity to serve the South Shore with compassion, care, and dedication every day.



Finding the Right Words: How to Write a Meaningful Eulogy

Delivering a eulogy is both an honor and a responsibility. It can also feel overwhelming. How do you capture a lifetime of memories, experiences, and love in just a few minutes?

At Keohane, we often remind families that there is no “perfect” eulogy. The most meaningful tributes are not necessarily the most polished; they are the most sincere. If you’ve been asked to speak at a funeral or memorial service, these simple tips can help get you started.

Start with the person, not the performance

It’s natural to feel anxious about delivering a eulogy. But remember, those gathered aren’t expecting a polished performance; they are there to celebrate a life well lived. Rather than worrying about giving the perfect speech, focus on sharing heartfelt memories and honoring your loved one’s life.

Before diving into the writing process, ask yourself:

- What made this person unique?
- What qualities did people admire most about them?
- What moments best capture who they were?
- Share a few meaningful stories

Often, the stories we tell reveal more than a list of accomplishments ever could. Think about the moments that illustrate your loved one’s character. Reflecting on a treasured family tradition, a funny memory, or a simple act of kindness can serve as a powerful tribute.

Include the milestones that mattered

A eulogy does not need to cover every detail of someone’s life, but it can help to highlight meaningful chapters such as family relationships, career accomplishments, community involvement, hobbies and passions, faith or spiritual beliefs, and causes they cared about. These details help paint a fuller picture of the life that was lived.

Speak from the heart

It’s natural to feel emotional while delivering a eulogy. Pausing to gather your thoughts, taking a sip of water, or even shedding a few tears is perfectly acceptable. Consider writing the tribute in the way you naturally speak. Using your own voice often feels more genuine than trying to sound formal or poetic.

Keep it concise

Most eulogies are between five and ten minutes long, which is typically about 500 to 1,000 words. If you’ve written more than that, consider narrowing your focus to the stories and messages that best capture the essence of your loved one.

Ask for help if you need it

You don’t have to go it alone. Family members and friends are usually more than happy to provide stories, memories, and perspectives that can help shape the message. Some people choose to have someone else review what they’ve written, while others decide to share the speaking responsibilities with another loved one.

At Keohane, we are honored to guide families through every aspect of planning a meaningful service. If you have questions about writing a eulogy or creating a personalized tribute for your loved one, our team is here to help.

By sharing memories of a life well lived and speaking honestly from the heart, eulogists have the time-honored opportunity to preserve a loved one’s legacy and capture the enduring impact one person can have on so many lives.



A Life Lived at Full Volume

Paul J. Armstrong, of Hull, MA, an internationally respected businessman, family man and musician with a long history of success in both fields, died on April 20, after a seven-month-long battle with neuroendocrine prostate cancer. He was 70. He was predeceased by his parents, John and Betty Armstrong, who instilled in him the values of hard work, resilience, and dedication to family. In 1961, when Paul was five years old, the family immigrated to East Syracuse, NY, from Nuneaton, England, beginning a new chapter that would shape the course of his life and legacy.

His parents founded Armstrong Mold in 1968 in East Syracuse as a small 'Mom and Pop' shop making molds. Over the next three decades, it grew into a vertically integrated and recognized leader in this industry, producing complex castings and plastic parts serving many areas including military, aerospace, medical, and automotive. Due in large part to Paul's efforts, the company grew exponentially. By the 90's, Armstrong Mold had grown to become a multi-million-dollar company employing over 200 people.

Paul's participation in the family business took a circuitous route due to his passion for rock and roll. A 1973 graduate of East Syracuse-Minoa High School, he then enrolled at Rochester Institute of Technology. After 3 1/2 years and just shy of a degree, he left R.I.T. to work at Gerber Music, a record store in Syracuse. He said it was a decision he never regretted because there he connected with like-minded friends and, in 1977, founded the New Wave/Power Pop band, The Flashcubes. The band succeeded in large part due to Armstrong's energy and charisma onstage and to his tireless drive and business acumen offstage. The quartet toured throughout the Northeast and released several singles but disbanded in 1979. Paul then

founded the trio 1.4.5. and relocated to Boston, MA in 1982.

Throughout his life, Armstrong continued to perform and record, with numerous appearances at music festivals all over the world, including two tours of Japan with the Flashcubes who had reunited in the mid-90's. In 2014, The Flashcubes were inducted into the SAMMY (Syracuse Area Music) Hall of Fame and, in 2019, into the Power Pop Hall of Fame. They were celebrated in 2025 with a tribute album featuring many of their peers and heroes performing their songs, something of which Paul was very proud.

Despite his passion for - and success in - music, the lure to join his family's business beckoned. In 1988, he became a full-time employee while still living in Boston. He was the face of the company as Director of Marketing, traveling all over the country and Europe to attend and exhibit at numerous engineering and design shows. Here Paul would also conduct technical seminars to explain and educate people in the industry about what Armstrong Mold could offer for solutions to their projects. Paul was a true visionary on presenting, educating and branding the Armstrong name. At the time of his passing he was the VP / Director of Sales and Marketing. Paul took great pride in his work and in continuing the legacy of his parents. Armstrong's primary focus was always his family. He is survived by his three children, Christopher, Katharine, and Nicholas from his marriage to Sharon Armstrong, and by his stepson, Gregory Grevelding. He shared his later years with Marjorie Finer, his longtime companion to the end. He was a devoted brother to Peter Armstrong (Denise) and a proud uncle to his nieces and nephews.

Armstrong was always a huge sports fan, supporting his beloved Boston teams. His passion for sports is one of the drivers for him to move to Boston. Paul was a Patriots and Celtics season ticket holder for many years. But, in later life, true to his British roots, he became obsessed with soccer - or English football as it is correctly known - cheering on his favorite team, Aston Villa.

Armstrong raised his family in Sharon, MA, and was a devoted father actively involved in every part of their lives. Whether it was through sports, school events, or everyday moments, he always made family his greatest priority.

Read Paul's full obituary here:



KEOHANE IN THE COMMUNITY

To best serve our communities, we need to actively support them.

We are proud to sponsor these local organizations, among others:



88 Croí Health



**Weymouth
Rotary
Club**



Pre-Planning at Keohane

Pre-planning allows you to make important decisions in a relaxed atmosphere, enabling you to control each aspect of funeral planning long before the actual need. Most importantly, it is a way you can make a very difficult time for your family a little bit easier.

Thinking about one's funeral leaves most people feeling a little uneasy, but more adults are finding that preparing for the inevitable is a wise decision that offers great emotional and financial security. The process includes meeting with one of our funeral directors, discussing your needs and desires, providing background and biographical information, listing your family, selecting merchandise, and discussing payment options. In cases where someone has taken the time to plan ahead with Keohane, the family often mentions how that decision made the funeral process so much easier on them.

We have funeral directors that specialize in working with families interested in pre-planning. The members of our team are always available for questions or assistance. To get started, you can contact us directly or fill out our form.

**SECURE ONLINE
PRE-PLANNING
FORM**

www.keohane.com

