
PRINCETON MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

43rd Year

Spring 1999

No. 1

ANNUAL MEETING

***You Can't Afford to Die:
The Changing Deathcare Industry
and What You Can Do to Help***

Our speaker will be Lisa Carlson, Author of *Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love*.

In her capacity as Executive Director of Funeral and Memorial Societies of America (FAMSA)—a nonprofit group that monitors funeral industry practices—Lisa Carlson works to raise the level of funeral consumer education and serves as a resource to the federation of over 100 local societies around the country.

Ms. Carlson has a Master's degree in educational administration and has devoted her life to helping the underdog. Billing herself as an “outrageous older woman,” She uses humor to bring difficult subjects into easy discussion. She has been interviewed extensively on radio and TV, including appearances on the *Donahue Show*, *Good Morning America*, the *Today Show*, and National Public Radio.

Ms. Carlson is often asked to do community workshops on “Understanding the Tricks of the Funeral Trade” and has produced a video of the same title.

As a consumer advocate, she testified at the FTC hearings on the Funeral Rule in Washington, D.C., 1988. Under her leadership, FAMSA is leading the effort to improve consumer protection, with new hearings due in 1999.

The annual meeting will be held Sunday, April 25th, at 2:30 p.m., in the Dodd's auditorium, Woodrow Wilson Building, Princeton University campus. The auditorium is wheelchair accessible from Washington Road.

In Memoriam

Peter Brock Putnam, president and cofounder of the Princeton Memorial Association, died last September 23rd. Peter had suffered from lymphoma for two years.

For those who may not have known Peter, the following is excerpted from his obituary in the *Princeton Packet*:

“Author of a number of books whose subjects ranged from Russian history to the Seeing Eye to autobiography, he was a tireless fund raiser for a variety of nonprofit institutions, including Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, The Continental Association of Memorial Societies, the Princeton University Triangle Club, the Seeing Eye, Princeton University (from which he received his B.A and his Ph.D., the first blind person to receive those degrees from the University), the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Princeton Unitarian Church, the Chapin School, and several others.

“He was president of the board of trustees for Recording for the Blind (now Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic) for more than a decade. Mr. Putnam oversaw the relocation of the organization's national headquarters from New York City to Princeton.

“Last June, a new addition at the New Jersey unit of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic was dedicated in his and his wife Durinda's honor. On September 18, he received The Seeing Eye's highest honor, the Dorothy Harrison Eustis Humanitarian Award.”

Peter and Durinda conceived of the PMA in 1954. While preparing for a presentation on the subject of funerals, Durinda Putnam contacted some of the then only 7 funeral societies that existed around the country. Deciding to form a

Princeton association, they received encouragement from the local ministers with whom they spoke. A group was formed consisting of both ministers and lay people. The PMA was incorporated Sept. 21, 1956, and the first annual meeting, was held Oct. 4 at the First Presbyterian Church. Although it was attended by only four members of the fledgling Princeton Memorial Association and four members of the press, the PMA was launched.

Initially they thought that this was to be a cremation society. From their discussions with local clergy, they realized that this could be far more than a society concerned only with economical funerals. Rather it would be dedicated to planning ahead. Several years before the publication of Jessica Mitford's expose of the funeral industry, the Princeton Memorial Association was disseminating information and helping to prepare informed consumers.

Durinda and Peter together were the backbone and chief driving force for the next 45 years. Both served many terms on the Board of Directors. Each served a number of terms as president. In any capacity, they both kept the Association on track, reminding us of our purpose, being sure that annual meetings were interesting and useful, preparing newsletters, keeping our permanent files, and maintaining the Association's relationships with the cooperating funeral directors.

Peter was motivated by his concern that people plan for their inevitable death, that they know the options available to their families and that their families not be pressured unfairly at a time when they were least able to resist. Meetings that might otherwise have been morbid were tempered by his wry sense of humor and encouraged by his perspective as to what is possible.

Peter will be sorely missed, as friend, leader and inspiration.

A New Way To Look At It

There are two tasks to be completed at a time of death: dispose of the body and commemorate the life of the deceased. When those two activities can be separated consumers have more cost-saving options.

Check Out Our Website

At: www.princetonol.com/groups/pma

While you're at it, check out FAMSA's site at www.funerals.org/famsa to see what our national organization is up to. Learn about other societies. Find loads of consumer information.

You can download these free publications; *Funerals: A Consumer Guide* and *Caskets and Burial Vaults* from the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer line at www.ftc.gov

Casket Sales

As a result of the change in the FTC Funeral Rule (1994), mortuaries are no longer permitted to charge a "handling fee" for caskets obtained elsewhere. In response to this new retail opportunity, there are now a number of ways one can purchase a casket directly from the dealer, avoiding the middle man (the funeral director), and saving a bundle of money. Funeral homes are understandably not enthusiastic about this, as sales of caskets, typically marked up 100-500%, are one of their biggest moneymakers.

Are Your Wishes Obsolete?

FAMSA recommends that societies no longer store Expression of Wishes forms for its members. These belong in the hands of the next-of-kin. They emphasize this hoping that it will create healthy family discussion on the topic. They feel that the forms are most valuable in your possession rather than in our filing cabinet. You are the only one who can fill out your Expression of Wishes form. If it has been a long time since you filled one out, does it still reflect your wishes and those of your family? (The label on this mailing has been coded to indicate the year you filed your Expression of Wishes form with us. If your name is followed by 0000, it means that we do not have your form on file.)

PMA Board of Directors

Henry J. Powsner, M.D. (Vice-President)
Durinda Putnam (Secretary)
H. Louise Schaufler (Treasurer)
Robert J. Levine
Laurie R. Powsner
Harvey Rothberg, M.D.
Karen Woodbridge

Nominated for Board of Directors:

Kathy L. Ales, M.D.
Stephanie Craib
Allen Porter, Esq.
Laurie R. Powsner (Nominated for President)
Rev. Nicholas Van Dyck

Cooperating Funeral Directors

Enclosed with this newsletter is a list of our cooperating funeral directors, with their prices for minimum-service cremations and burials for 1999. Even if you wish to plan more than minimum service arrangements, the list may help you in your selection of a funeral director.

Books and Pamphlets Available At The Annual Meeting

The American Way of Death Revisited

by Jessica Mitford

Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love

by Lisa Carlson

Putting Your House in Order

prepared by Princeton Memorial Association

*Survivors' Manual: Information for families
before, during and after death*

prepared by The Memorial and Funeral Society
of Greater Orlando.

A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial

Ernest Morgan

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand as of December 31, 1998:

Checking account:	\$ 5,120.94
Business Money Market:	11,749.30
Total:	\$16,870.24

Income:

Contributions:	\$3,352.00
Membership donations	1,396.00
Interest	286.62
Total:	\$5,034.62

Expenses:

FAMSA dues	\$ 203.48
FAMSA contributions	1000.00
Printing and copying	974.89
Postage	\$122.00
FAMSA Biennial meeting delegate	\$527.28
Total:	2,827.65

Have You Something To Report?

If we have helped you or failed to help you, let us know. Please share with us your experiences with our cooperating funeral directors.



"Not much in the way of hard assets, I'm afraid, but he did leave some highly desirable organs."

Five Wishes

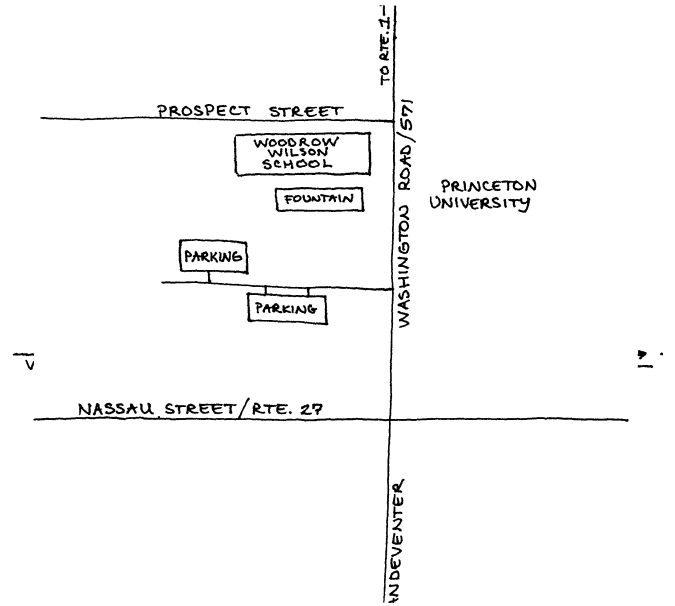
The "Five Wishes" form of Living Will is valid in 33 states and DC. (It does not meet state requirements in Alabama, Alaska, California, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.)

The Five Wishes cover:

1. The Person I Want to Make Health Care Decisions for Me When I Can't Make Them for Myself
2. My Wish for the Kind of Medical Treatment I Want or Don't Want
3. My Wish for How Comfortable I Want to Be
4. My Wish for How I Want People to Treat Me
5. My Wish for What I Want My Loved Ones to Know (includes references to funeral plans and how to be remembered).

The Five Wishes form may be ordered from Aging with Dignity, P.O. Box 1661, Tallahassee, FL 32302. A donation of \$4 is requested.

Directions to Woodrow Wilson School Site of Annual Meeting



On a funeral home casket price list:
 Non-protective Corrugated Cardboard,
 Exterior Color Brown, No Interior. \$135
 -- just a black hole?

PRINCETON MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, 48 Roper Road, ...Princeton, NJ 08540

Please send me: _____ living wills
 _____ expression-of-wishes forms
 _____ copies of *Putting My House in Order* (Suggested donation \$1.50)
 _____ copies of *Survivor's Manual* (Suggested donation \$3.00)
 _____ membership brochures to interest friends

I am pleased to send \$_____ to cover costs and to assist the ongoing work of the Princeton Memorial Association. I enclose a self-addressed envelope.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____
