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Arizona Board Revokes License

Unanimous Decision Finds Crematory Operator Acted Unprofessionally and Not Within Prevailing Standards of Practice

Bisbee, Ariz. – After a sometimes intense and emotional hearing, the Arizona Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers revoked the cremationist license of the owner of a St. David, Ariz., crematory who had been dumping partially cremated human bones into open pits at his cemetery for more than five years.

In a unanimous decision, the board found that Paul Parker, who owns and operates the San Pedro Funeral Home and Cremation Services in St. David, acted unprofessionally and not within the prevailing standards of practice in conducting a cremation and the handling of remains by cremating more than one body at a time, commingling the cremated remains after the cremation process and disposing of the remains in an unsecure location.

Parker admitted to the board he had been dumping the partially cremated remains of cadavers in pits dug in an open field at the Memory Gardens Cemetery, which he also owns, and is located about 50 miles from his funeral home/crematory operation. The remains were donated for medical research and reportedly delivered to Parker's crematory from a research firm in Tucson.

According to Rudy Thomas, executive director of the board, under the terms of the consent agreement approved by the board, Parker faces:

- Permanent revocation of his cremationist license;
- The suspension of the crematory's license for 60 days followed by a two-year probation.
- A $1,000 civil penalty per violation. (Parker has 60 days to pay these fines, which would be waived if he creates posted rules on crematory operations.)
- Payment of administrative fees, which includes the cost of the investigation that Thomas estimated to be about $1,000.

In addition, Parker is responsible for the clean up of his crematory property. He has 15 days to sign the consent agreement. If he fails to do so he would be brought back before the board and could face additional charges.

"During the two-year probation period, the crematory has to provide the board with a quarterly report on all of the cremations that take place at the facility," Thomas said. "All cremations must be signed by the responsible funeral director (Parker will continue to hold his Arizona funeral director/embalmers license) and a cremationist, which is his wife. If they fail to comply with the laws and procedures, the board could go after Parker's funeral director's license, his wife's cremationist license and the crematory license. The crematory is on a very short leash."

Thomas also said that during the suspension period, representatives of the board will visit the crematory to see if Parker has complied with the terms of the consent agreement. "If he doesn't we will proceed to the next point," Thomas said.

Following the 60-day suspension of the crematory's license, Parker's wife could continue to operate the facility.

Last month a visitor to the 12-acre Memory Gardens Cemetery happened upon two open pits that contained human bones and cremated remains and called police. Although a police department spokesman said that no laws have been broken, the Arizona Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers conducted its own investigation. "We have no jurisdiction over what goes in a cemetery, that falls under the Department of Real Estate," said Thomas. "So we looked to see if he has violated any of the prevailing practices that we have for crematory operators."

Investigators from the board last month paid a surprise visit to Parker's crematory in St. David and found the facility to be in disarray. Thomas mentioned that behind the crematory were stacks of air trays positioned against a neighbor's fence. Thomas said garbage cans included human bone fragments and the property was also littered with empty body bags.

"We were looking at records to see if he has violated any of the prevailing practices that we have for crematory operators," Thomas said. "There were a lot of issues that we looked at."

A Proper Disposition

Since the discovery, under the supervision of the state board, volunteers went into the cemetery to unearth the bones, bone fragments and cremated remains to be fully processed and then scattered in a garden that Parker is installing at the Memory Gardens Cemetery. Funeral home and crematory operators volunteered to help in the clean up. Parker assisted as well.

The volunteers unearthed bones, fragments and other remains which were placed in buckets and transferred into the caskets. The full caskets were brought over to Alex Espinosa Bisbee Funeral Home, which is nearby the cemetery (but not affiliated with it), and will shelter the caskets until ready to be scattered properly.

Thomas noted that the board has established a committee with the appropriate professionals to develop rules on how donor organizations deal with the cremation of body parts in the state for future legislation.

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California Master Trust Asks Courts to Intervene In Dispute With Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

Sacramento – The Funeral Directors Service Corporation [FDSC] last week filed an action against the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, to prevent the Bureau from carrying out its threat to take "the appropriate action against those licensees who are in violation of the law or regulations including those licensees that received unauthorized participation distributions from the California Master Trust."

Earlier this year, the Bureau reported that an audit of the California Master Trust found "several major operational deficiencies and irregularities." After both sides attempted to work out a settlement, the Bureau charged that FDSC did not deliver a corrective plan of action on how they would address the alleged deficiencies and irregularities and would seek to take corrective action directly against individual funeral home licensees who participated in the trust.

In a complaint filed in California Superior Court, Sacramento, an attorney for FDSC, a wholly-owned, for-profit subsidiary of the California Funeral Directors Association and administrator of the CMT, said the Bureau has exceeded its jurisdiction and FDSC would be seeking a permanent injunction ordering the Bureau from "enforcing corrective actions" as a result of an audit.

The complaint maintains that FDSC acted properly and within the Code of Regulation and alleges that the Bureau's findings and interpretations of the audit are erroneous and further claims the Bureau has exceeded its jurisdiction by directing FDSC and Comerica [the trustee of record] to implement corrective actions.

"My hope is that we get resolution and determine whether the audit findings are accurate and enforceable," said Mark

Kuhn, president of FDSC. "We believe that they are not and that is why we have drawn a line in the sand and gone to court and have the court decide. Whatever the court decides we will abide by. We believe we are right and we think the Bureau is incorrect in their audit findings and their interpretations of the law.

Since the Bureau announced it would look at the licensed funeral directors to make good on any unauthorized distribution of trust funds, Kuhn acknowledge that several licensees have pulled out of the trust. In September, according to Essential Planning Group, Beaverton, Ore., which runs the day-to-day operations for FDSC, the overall value of the CMT was put at $64 million. More than 300, or approximately one-third, of the licensed funeral establishments in California, pay into it. An estimated 27,000 contracts were still active within the trust at the time.

"There has been a few people who have succumbed to the threat of the bureau and have pulled out," Kuhn said. "However, most of the funeral homes are standing firm as a coalition and have continued to believe in what we're doing."

Some background (taken from the July 15 and Sept. 16 editions of the *Memorial Business Journal*): The audit, which was spurred by an undisclosed consumer complaint, covered the period from Jan. 1, 2000, through Aug. 31, 2009. According to the Bureau, FDSC acted as a de facto trustee in violation of state's Funeral Directors and Embalmers law, which requires that a trustee be a banking institution or a trust company legally authorized by the state. The Bureau charged that under the law, FDSC does not qualify as a trustee, but allegedly acted in a manner that only a trustee would to manage and control the trust. Comerica Bank is the trustee of record.

Bureau officials said that the audit found that $9.3 million was misspent. Among other findings reported by the Bureau are:

- Consumer funds paid into the trust have been misused and misallocated. Funds were used for non-trust costs, such as lobbying fees, conventions and other unrelated activities ($2 million). Reasonable fees for administering the trust can be paid out of each year's trust income. In at least two years, administrative fees were paid when there was no income, and therefore, those fees should not have been paid.
- In 2001 and 2002, the trust incurred losses and, therefore, should not have paid administration costs. However, to overcome those losses and pay annual fees for trust administration to Comerica ($4.8 million), FDSC mischaracterized the purchase of nearly $10 million dollars of its own liabilities as income.
- In 2007 the FDSC Board of Directors implemented a policy to pay less than a trust accounts' principal when the market value of the trust account was less than its book value.
- At least $1.6 million that should have been paid to consumers or their estates, or escheated to the state, was not.

During the period of the audit, the Bureau determined that The Mechanics Bank [which resigned as the CMT trustee on Oct. 16, 2001] and Comerica paid FDSC an estimated $16,286,764 in trust administration fees. Of the funds received, FDSC paid contractees performing administration services for the trust an audited $8,448,013. In addition, the Bureau verified that FDSC incurred an audited $114,693 in trust administration costs for travel per diem and the cost to hold FDSC board meetings. The remaining $7,724,058 was for nontrust administration costs in violation of Business and Professions Code Section 7735, according to the audit.

However, on July 1 the Bureau responded with a letter to all funeral homes participating in the CMT, which said, "Comerica Bank and FDSC raised a variety of legal arguments in their response to the audit findings. The Bureau considered these arguments but found them without merit. The Bureau expects all of its corrective actions to be implemented." The Bureau issued a deadline of Aug. 11 that was extended until Sept. 13.

"They basically dismissed our 250-page response, we had case law, everything in there to explain why we did what we did," Kuhn said. The letter also pointed out several differences of opinion and interpretations of the regulations, he added.

At the time, FDSC put together a coalition of the participating funeral homes in order to submit a joint response for a corrective plan of action on how to correct violations found in the audit. However, the Bureau also found this plan unsatisfactory since it did not detail how FDSC would address the "deficiencies and irregularities" found in the audit. At that point, the Bureau announced that it would take "the appropriate action" against the individual funeral homes.

In a Sept. 15 statement, Russ Heimerich, a spokesman for the Bureau, said, "[The FDSC] response did not address what we required of the establishments so we are going to take the appropriate action against those licensees who are in violation of the law or regulations including those licensees that received unauthorized participation distributions from the California Master Trust. We are going to determine action for each establishment on a case-by-case basis, and that action could range from warning letters to revocation of their licenses."

Further, Heimerich explained that under California law the individual funeral homes are responsible for making sure that any money they receive in trust is administered correctly. He also noted that the Bureau had been working with the state attorney general's office to explore other actions that it can take against other parties in this matter including the FDSC and Comerica Bank.

Kuhn adamantly dispute the audit findings. In an April 29, 2010, response to the Bureau, lawyers for FDSC and Comerica Bank, wrote, "Several complicated issues seem to be very apparent from the findings of the audit, and should be resolved by a cooperative effort between the Bureau and the CMT. This is not simply a matter of compliance with laws and regulations — this situation involves addressing some structural problems unique to a Master Trust. Ultimately, the needs of the consumers with regard to preneed trusts should be examined and addressed."

Neither Grace Bergen, a Sacramento, Calif.-based lawyer who represents FDSC, nor Heimerich would elaborate on the latest complaint.

In assessing the situation, T. Scott Gilligan, NFDA general counsel, said that FDSC filing a complaint was not unexpected. "Since FDSC has been unable to work anything out with the California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, it has little recourse but to file suit and request a court to resolve the matter," Gilligan said. "FDSC and the California Master Trust are being squeezed by the Bureau's action of threatening to go after individual funeral homes that participate in the CMT. With funeral homes pulling out of the CMT, FDSC can only protect the CMT by filing suit and asking a court to stop the actions of the Bureau and resolve this matter."

Gilligan added that normally courts are reluctant to intervene in an enforcement action by an administrative agency until after the agency has taken its final action. "Legally, courts justify this reluctance to intervene under the 'ripeness' doctrine," he said. "Until the administrative procedure has run its course and a final order is issued, the action is not ripe for review. Therefore, in many circumstances, a court would hold off taking jurisdiction of any administrative action until it has run its course."

However, Gilligan pointed out that if the regulated party can show that there is a threat of irreparable harm and that the agency has clearly abused its discretion, a court may intervene to halt an unlawful agency action and stop any irreparable injury to the regulated party. "Its a difficult standard of proof for the regulated party to meet and FDSC will have an uphill battle in convincing the California courts to step in and stop the Bureau from undertaking any further actions until the court resolves the issue," Gilligan said.

If the bureau would like to sit down and talk, we are open to do that," Kuhn said. "If not, I am hoping that the court sees our way and we continue to operate and continue to offer to offer preneed trust in California."

"They are going after the licensee because that is who is within their jurisdiction," Kuhn said, noting that the trust itself falls outside of the Bureau's jurisdiction.

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Agenda Shaping Up for Congressional Lame Duck Session

Washington, D.C. – As widely expected, the Republicans picked up 60 seats in the House to gain control, 239-196, and picked up six Senate seats to reduce the Democratic majority to 53-47. As of press time, eight house races and one Senate race have yet to be determined.

Congress convened for a lame duck session (when the current Congress reconvenes after an election to address key issues before adjourning finally by the end of the year) this week with potentially a fairly full agenda. "Must-pass" legislation (expirations, ongoing funding, etc.) will be given top priority, and the rest of the agenda will be determined based on what could pass the Senate.

With Thanksgiving next week, Congress will recess on Nov. 22 and will likely return on Nov. 29, before adjourning wither on Dec. 10 or Dec. 17.

Given the time constraints before Christmas (which gives Congress just under five weeks for votes) and the hours required to move through procedural hurdles in the Senate, it could be likely that the Senate only will be able to address a

continuing resolution to keep the government funded (until early 2011), a compromise on extending pieces of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that expire at year's end, and possibly a 'delay' of the Medicare doctor's reimbursement (for up to 13 months).

Appropriations (Omnibus/CR)

The largest issue is continued funding for federal government operations. Congress passed a continuing resolution through Dec. 3, and will need to pass additional short- or long-term continuing resolutions or an omnibus appropriations bill for the 2011 fiscal year.

It appears that a continuing resolution through the first quarter of 2011 may be likely. The Senate Republicans also may begin forcing votes on targeted spending cuts, focusing on reducing program-level discretionary spending. These votes also may target defunding or not funding aspects of the healthcare law. These targeted efforts are likely to continue in the 112th Congress.

Expiring Tax Cuts

Many tax cuts from 2001 and 2003 expire at the end of the year, and Congress must decide which cuts to extend and which cuts would expire, in addition to addressing the alternative minimum tax, estate tax, capital gains tax and a host of other tax issues. The White House appears open to considering a full extension of all the soon-to-expire 2001 and 2003 tax cuts during the lame duck session. Congressional Republicans want to see all the tax cuts extended and the White House and Democrats want to ensure that at least the middle-income (under $250k) cuts are extended. Republicans and some Democrats have discussed a one- or two-year extension of all the tax cuts as a favored option. Additional conversation since the elections has Democrats discussing a middle class cutoff line of $500,000 or $1 million. The middle class cuts could be extended permanently, while anything over the threshold would only be extended short-term (one or two years).

The alternative minimum tax and estate tax may not be addressed, forcing reform or retroactive extension in the 112th Congress. All of these tax cut decisions will impact funeral directors as individual taxpayers and especially those who are Subchapter S corporations or have a family-owned funeral home.

Healthcare Law

While much of the de-funding efforts will occur in the 112th Congress, Republicans will target certain aspects of the healthcare law, such as the 1099 requirement, for repeal during the lame duck.

Republicans prefer to fix the reimbursement issue with a long-term solution, but that won't be feasible until next Congress, given the complexity of the sustainable growth rate and the cost. However, a delay in the cuts could be in play during the lame duck.

Other Issues

Talk remains about addressing domestic policy initiatives as well, such as immigration reform (DREAM Act), child nutrition and food safety legislation, Chinese currency manipulation, START treaty, Defense Authorization, public safety collective bargaining, energy legislation, among others. However, there is not much legislative time left in the year, and Republicans appear willing to force procedural votes on anything that comes to the floor. Therefore, the odds favor a truncated policy agenda during the lame duck, although it will take considerable time to debate legislation, overcome procedural votes, and pass bills.

— John Fitch, NFDA senior vice president of advocacy

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New Unclaimed Veterans' Cremated Remains Law Takes Effect; Brings Together 400 New York Funeral Directors

Albany, N.Y. – The New York State Funeral Directors Association (NYSFDA) briefed more than 400 funeral directors from throughout the state Nov. 4 regarding the details of a new law that allows for the interment of veterans' unclaimed cremains. The law, which went into effect last week on Veterans' Day provides the flexibility and liability protections necessary for funeral directors and veterans' organizations alike to carry out this noble endeavor.

NYSFDA worked in partnership with the NYS Veteran Recovery Program / Patriot Guard Riders to successfully shepherd the bill through the State Legislature and into law.

Bill Schaaf (front), assistant state coordinator – Patriot Guard Riders/Veteran Recovery Program.

The training was conducted via teleconference by Randy L. McCullough, NYSFDA deputy executive director, and Bill Schaaf, assistant state coordinator – Patriot Guard Riders/Veteran Recovery Program.

"Leaders of the NYS Veteran Recovery Program / Patriot Guard Riders approached us in early 2010 to express their strong desire to work with the Association to craft legislation to allow funeral directors to work with them to help locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans," said Bonnie L. McCullough, executive director of NYSFDA. "The new law is the culmination of our collaborative efforts, and will serve as a model throughout the nation for similar groups in other states to work in tandem."

Schaaf stated, "These 'forgotten' veterans have served our country and, as such, deserve to be buried with honor and respect like all others. We are continually working with funeral homes to determine if any of the unclaimed cremated remains in their possession may be those of a veteran. We are very pleased about this new law, because it will more smoothly allow these veterans to be laid to rest in their rightful place, with the military honors and recognition they have earned."

Much Needed Framework

This law establishes a much needed framework to allow funeral directors to determine whether cremated remains in their possession are those of a veteran, and, at their option, may enlist the assistance of veterans' service organizations (VSOs) like the Patriot Guard Riders to provide ceremonial honors as part of the process of interment. This new framework contains two very critical elements: it permits funeral directors to share the information necessary with certain individuals/organizations for the sole purpose of determining whether any unclaimed cremated remains are those of a U.S. veteran, and liability protection is provided to funeral directors and veterans' organizations for engaging in this cause.

"To varying degrees, funeral directors find that they are left in possession of cremated remains which go unclaimed by any relative or loved one, even after a funeral home routinely makes numerous efforts to contact the surviving family member/close friend of the deceased. This unfortunate practice has no doubt increased due to such factors as an increasingly mobile society, as well as an increase in the consumer choice of cremation as an option for final disposition," said McCullough.

Other prominent veterans' organizations including, but not limited to, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion and the Vietnam Veterans of America (WA) would also be empowered to assist in these efforts. Funeral directors have long worked with veterans' families to ensure that those who have served this nation with distinction and honor are treated with the utmost respect and dignity in the funeral and burial process.

The legislation (A.10754-A/S.7562-B) was sponsored by NYS Assemblyman and Assembly Veterans' Committee Chairman Bill Magnarelli (D-Syracuse) and NYS Senator Kevin Parker (D-Brooklyn). NYSFDA also received the support of the Vietnam Veterans of America – New York State Council in proposing this new law.

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The Notebook

Alan Creedy has been elected chair of the **Funeral Service Foundation** for 2010-11. During a career spanning more than 30 years in funeral service, Creedy has combined his formal training as a certified public accountant with hands on experience to become one of the most widely recognized figures in the industry. Having begun with the turnaround of OGR Service Corporation, he has served as the president of a small regional funeral home consolidator and president of Trust 100, one of the oldest and largest preneed marketers. Today, while continuing as resident of Trust 100, his primary focus is as an independent strategist specializing in the deathcare profession. Creedy is a frequent convention speaker and author for all the major trade journals. Also elected were: chair-elect – Shaun Myers, Myers Mortuary in Ogden, Utah, and secretary/treasurer – Jerry Reichert, Aurora Casket Company, Aurora, Ind. Scott Anthony, Anthony Funeral Chapels, Webster, N.Y,. rounds out the executive committee as immediate past chair.

FINE Mortuary College, Norwood, Mass., has announced its Dean's List for the fall 2010 term. Louis Hebbelinck II, Kathryn Olander and Madison Sullivan earned Honors as full time students. Christen Bergeson, Lee Ann Laorenza, Kelly Mahoney-Miller, Karalyn Rodrigues and Juliann Zinsner all earned High Honors as part-time students. Part-time students who made Honors are: Stacey Alves, Cory Dell'Aquila, Katelyn Estes, James Farrell, Robert Fisher, Jeffrey Gigliello, Courtney Grid, Kyle Kokosa, Diane Leitao, Tara McCarron, Chris Northrop, Grainne O'Leary, Heather Reiter, Andrew Stern, Joseph Stevens, Yesenia Torres and Kimberly Wallace.

Beyond Indigo, Hanover, Minn., has announced a new Online Reputation Management Program designed to help funeral home clients build arsenals of positive online reviews. This includes providing education about asking for and attracting positive reviews, monitoring the reviews as part of the client's search engine optimization (SEO) campaign, monitoring reviews in top online directories, and proactively responding to any negative reviews. In addition to this new program, Beyond Indigo assists clients with localized search engine optimization and online reputation management by performing keyword analyses, customizing profiles, encouraging/monitoring reviews, creating directory listings, and maximizing the use of all related posts. For more information visit www.beyondfunerals.com/services/online-reputation-management.html.

The **International Order of the Golden Rule** (OGR) is reminding mortuary school students nearing completion of their mortuary science degree that applications for 2011 scholarship awards are due by Jan. 11, 2011. Two scholarships, one for $3,500 and one for $2,000, are awarded based on merit as determined by a review panel of OGR members. Awards will be presented at OGR's 2011 Annual Conference & Supplier Showcase in Atlanta, April 8, 2011. The Awards of Excellence Scholarship Program provides scholarships to students based on strong academic performance, funeral service experience and the strength of their essay. To be eligible, applicants must currently be enrolled in a mortuary science degree program at an accredited mortuary school, be scheduled to graduate during 2011, have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and commit to working for an independently owned funeral home. For questions, call (800) 637-8030, or email Lisa Krabbenhoft at lkrabbenhoft@ogr.org. Download the Awards of Excellence Scholarship Application at www.ogr.org/scholarships.php.

MKJ Marketing has announced its 2011 seminar schedule. On March 7, "Competing with a Discounter or Becoming One" will take place at Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas. On March 21-22, is "Websites & Internet Marketing," followed on March 23-24 by "Upgrading Cremation Sales," both to be held at the Ritz-Carlton Resort, Naples, Fla. On June 25-July 2 MKJ Marketing's Mediterranean Cruise will focus on "Funeral Service Challenges Here and Abroad" For further information, call 888-655-1566

The **Washington Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association** elected new board members and officers at its annual convention held in Stevenson, Wash. Officers elected include: president – Gregory Simard, Associated Catholic Cemeteries, Seattle (third year as president); vice president – Kirk Duffy, Hawthorne Memorial Park and Funeral Home, Mount Vernon. George Nemeth Jr., Lake View Cemetery Association, Seattle, was appointed secretary-treasurer. For the third straight year Dennis Boser, Jr., Floral Hills Memorial Park and Purdy & Walters Funeral Home, Lynnwood, will serve as past president. Current directors include Nemeth, David Ittner, Fairmount Memorial Association, Spokane; David Riggs, Mountain View Memorial Park and Funeral Home, Tacoma.; Seattle; Pat Hollick, Sunset Memorial Gardens, Richland; Scott Sheehan, Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park and Funeral Home, Seattle; Mike Turner, Einan's Funeral Home, Richland; and Jim Fischer, Options by Batesville, Burlington. This year's convention and costume-party theme was "MonsterVision" in honor of keynote speaker Joe Bob Briggs, the host of television's *MonsterVision* film series.

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From the Editor's Desk…

The Ripple Effect...Again

Should you throw a pebble into a still lake, after the initial kerplunk the ripples extend outward to the far reaches of the body of water. Such is life. For better or for worse, every kerplunk creates this ripple effect.

The lake I am referring to is really a cemetery in Arizona which has been the center of rather disturbing news. It is just over a month ago since a visitor to the Memory Gardens Cemetery in Bisbee, Ariz., happened upon two open pits of partially cremated remains. The bones were from cadavers whose remains were donated for medical research and then sent to the crematory for final disposition from a research firm in Tucson. It turns out, this was not a matter for the police but it was a job for the state's regulators.

The Arizona Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers fast-tracked the investigation into how and why those two pits of cremated remains were left open and exposed to the general public as well as into the operation of the crematory itself. The cremationist license for Paul Parker was revoked. The license for his crematory was suspended for 60 days and the facility will be on probation for two years. On top of the licensure issue, Parker will also have to pay a number of fines.

While not quite going to the level of the Tri-State Crematory in Noble, Ga., there was some surreal aspects to this action. The two pits of remains at the cemetery are one issue, then investigators pay a surprise visit to the crematory (which is 50 miles away from the cemetery) and they find at least 100 air trays stacked up along the fence at the funeral home/crematory. Body bags are reportedly littering the grounds. Partially cremated remains are left in garbage cans.

Since he threw this pebble, Parker himself is feeling the ripples. It would not be an overstatement of the situation to think that his business is virtually finished. It is doubtful that anyone who knows anything about the case will choose to use his facilities. But worse is the ripples we will all feel. Not under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board is the court of public perception.

And like in Noble, the question was asked, "Why?" And like Ray Brent Marsh eight-and-a-half years ago, Paul Parker's answer made no sense. "In hindsight, I shouldn't have done it," he told members of the board. You think?

On KGUN9 news in Arizona, board members Jim Ahearne said it best, "After all, these are people we're talking about, not disarticulated parts. They're people. I think that's what he has to get through his head."

At times like this, it seems like the next thing that happens is that there is an investigation and perhaps new laws to make sure this kind of activity doesn't happen again. Ahearne said, "You don't need legislation or new laws to fix the things that were done here. You need a conscience."

That ripple I mentioned earlier coming from the cemetery... are you feeling it yet?

Edward J. Defort
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