

SIGNATURE SUNSETS

PUNCTUATED
DISTINCTION
AT THE END OF LIFE



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BOOK

PONDERING LEAVES:
Composing and Conveying
Your Life Story's Epilogue



WEBSITE

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OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

UNUSUAL AND OFTEN ODDBALL "HOLIDAYS" PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR CONTENT, ALONG WITH OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE. HOPEFULLY, THE PROCESS OF READING THESE PIECES WILL HELP INSTILL A COMFORTABLE WILLINGNESS TO BRING MORTALITY MATTERS OUT OF THE CLOSET FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT THEM.

CONSIDER SHARING... BY FORWARDING THIS MATERIAL TO OTHERS IN AN EFFORT TO LIFT THE VEIL OF DEATH AND SPUR PREEMPTIVE CONTEMPLATION ABOUT PREFERENCES FOR MANAGING END-OF-LIFE DETAILS.

Class Reunion Month

Harrigan Parkside
Funeral Home
Gathering Center



65th Lincoln High School
Class Reunion (catered
banquet) held here in 2013

Memory sharing enhanced
by 72 photos from the
historical society that are
on the walls

A high school class
reunion took place...

NOT

at a restaurant,

NOT

in a hotel banquet
room,

NOT

in a community hall,

but **at a**

FUNERAL HOME!

National Piano Month

Madge Ward's hallmark preoccupation had been her devotion to providing musical entertainment and education, not only in Tyler, Texas where she resided, but around the world as well. Besides teaching music in the public schools, she performed at dinner clubs, hotels, resorts, and on cruise ships, as well as for radio shows. During World War II she entertained the troops.

Obviously, she wanted people to remember her for this focused passion, as evidenced by the most impressive and largest one-person memorial construct in Tyler's Rose Hill Cemetery. The idea for a piano-shaped mausoleum must have struck a chord long before her elder era, as she purportedly had saved money for it over the course of thirty-five years. As her life waned, she commissioned a builder to design the structure, which was made from Canadian marble, at her request, and took a year to build.

Situated prominently alongside a road near the cemetery's entrance, the memorial piece stands eight-feet high and thirteen-feet long. Its weight is twenty-five tons, on top of a twelve-ton concrete foundation. The eighty-three-year-old's body was situated in a casket that rests under the piano. In contrast to the conspicuous mausoleum itself, the inscription upon it identifies only the talented woman's name along with her birth and death dates.



Photo Source: weirdus.com

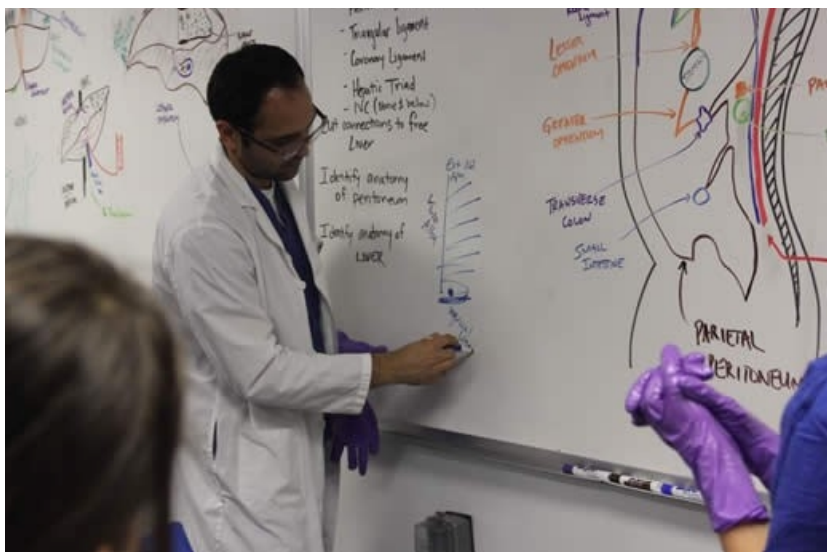
http://www.weirdus.com/states/texas/cemetery_safari/granite_grand_piano/index.php

https://books.google.com/books?id=Z7oiGWzpuDsC&pg=PA22&lpg=PA22&dq=madge+ward+piano+tombstone+in+tyler+tx&source=bl&ots=39bxAFwjla&sig=o8W2WLa2M4ali2_OTvPbP5Ovfe4&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjwrJzFuO7PAhVIMyYKHexYDHEQ6AEIPDAF#v=onepage&q=madge%20ward%20piano%20tombstone%20in%20tyler%20tx&f=false

Cut Out Dissection Month



One wonders if dependence on technology may eventually result in less of a demand for bodily donations at medical schools. With knowledge consistently expanding exponentially, there's a great deal to learn during the four-year curriculum.



Currently, much emphasis is placed on molecular and cellular elements, with increased attention to genetics. Within a time crunch and with so much to absorb, appropriate allotment of time for training through dissection may not be realistic. So reliance on technological substitutes could conceivably become the norm, with minimal or no whole body dissection

opportunities. Instead, individual organ and tissue specimens, models, or computerized three-dimensional renderings on a screen could potentially replace some gross anatomy labs.

Many veteran physicians apparently balk at this notion. Although they appreciate the contribution of technology, they cannot imagine that it could trump the good old dissection process.

This ingrained tradition of medical training is commonly revered as a rite of passage, one that lends itself to illuminating how

each physical being is different in some way. While promoting accuracy in developing surgical skills and sensitizing students to emotional aspects of the profession, the process hones empathic responses. The experience invokes a sense of reverence that isn't felt through the use of computer models and textbook references.



However, the technology bug has infiltrated medical schools, with increased availability of novel learning aids. One of them is the Visible Human Project, the world's first computerized library of human anatomy, created and stored in a computer at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland. For this endeavor, extensive collections of thin cross sections in addition to CT and MRI scans were obtained from a male and a female body. Through the Internet, use of computer programs allows for reconstruction of scans and tissue sections into three-dimensional images that can be rotated, flipped, disassembled, and reassembled on the computer monitor. Currently, they are intended only to supplement dissection learning, so most schools continue to utilize donated bodies. Ideally, a combination of approaches will likely yield optimal comprehension.

Photos Source: Stanford Anatomy Lab

<http://anatomy.stanford.edu/labs/labs-dissection-photos.html>

October 12: Cookbook Launch Day

Families tend to relish recollections of meals prepared by a particular person. Often there are specific dishes that become favorites through many years of shared consumption. Reference is made to the pecan pie that Grandma always makes or the oft-served chicken corn soup that bespeaks Grandpa's Pennsylvania Dutch heritage. Such recipes of renown can readily become associated with an individual's identity.

As a memorial tribute to that person, recipe cards bearing favorite concoctions may be distributed to guests at a memorial event.

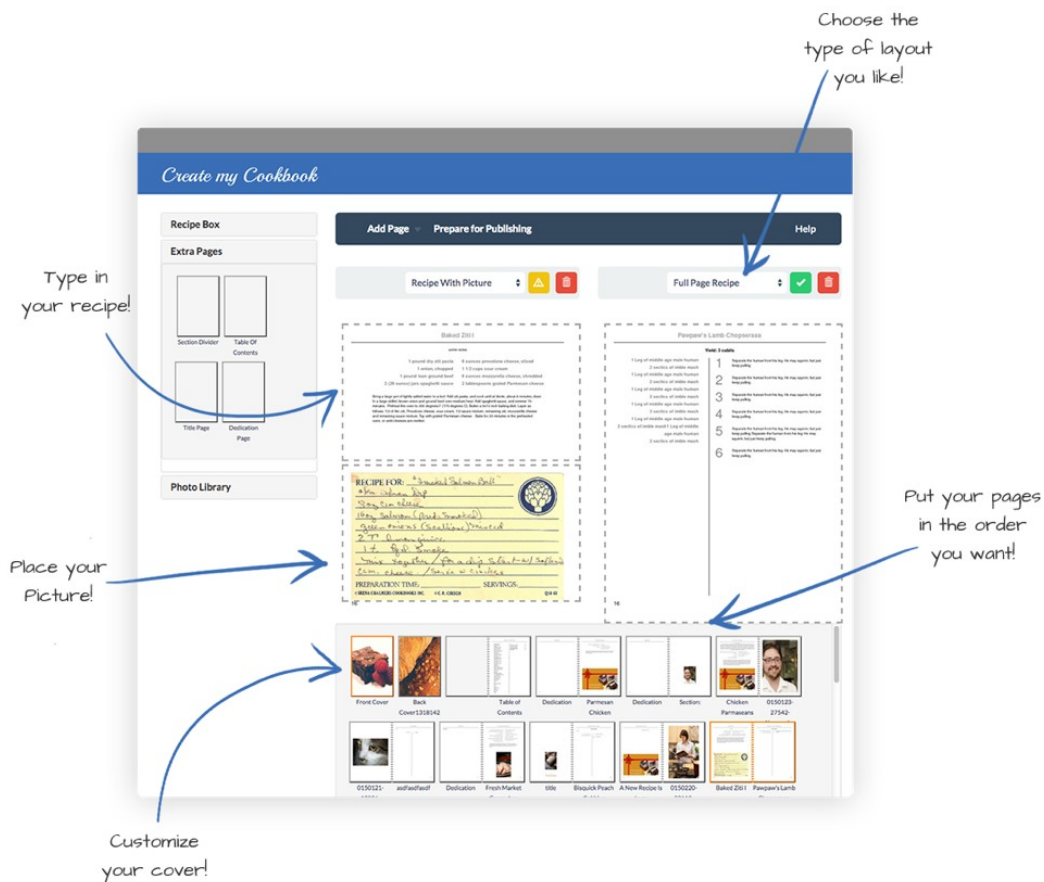
For close family members who have consumed such vestigial fare, a more substantial collection would likely be a treasured keepsake.



While the person is still alive and functional, the gathering and recording of recipes could be a joint family activity to lay the groundwork for easily preparing a professionally printed, custom cookbook or an eBook.



Online templates render the prospect as easy as pie!



Numerous websites offer all kinds of variations and options, including size, layout, binding styles, pages, and photo insertions. The end result is a compilation of venerated recipes, colorfully infused with photos likely to trigger memories of kitchen interactions along with cherished moments around the family table.



Photos Source:
createmycookbook.com

October 14: **World Egg Day**

Sometimes designated as Asia's unhappiest nation, Korea's suicide rate is the highest in the world. In an effort to reverse the trend, South Koreans have implemented measures to offset the stress typified by performance pressure, competitive forces, expectations for success, and other imposed demands.

During the past several years, a number of companies have sold mock funeral experiences for people of all ages. Participants are poised to confront images of their own deaths by writing wills, donning traditional burial garb, and reposing for a few minutes inside coffins that are hammered and nailed shut. Sequestered in a dark basement in one scenario, gravel is then shoveled over them while a funeral dirge is playing in the background. It is done in hopes that such realism will cause people to reorder their priorities, alter perceptions of stressors, realize a greater appreciation of life's value, and grasp a sense of rebirth – symbolized by eating an egg afterwards.



Photo Source: Associate Press – Ahn Young-Joon

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/south-korean-mock-funerals-seek-to-ease-lifes-stresses/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/korean-mock-funerals_us_566eda18e4b0e292150e73d2

October 15: National Cake Decorating Day

In response to an article titled, “Cakes for Wakes,” published on the Good Funeral Guide website based in the United Kingdom, a comment alludes to the significance of funeral cakes. According to “Charles,” the respondent, “The creativity that goes into them is immense. At funerals I attend I see more grievers popping them carefully into their handbags than actually eating them. I think they are keeping them as an enduring reminder of the dead person.” He went on to note, “The value of cake in mitigating complicated grief is attested and of long standing. The custom of giving cake to those who mourn has been traced back to the ancient Sumerians.”

Funeral cakes that made their way from European countries to the United States have largely fallen out of the tradition zone and into the realm of novelty within this country. Having been part of primarily Protestant religious observances, they not only fed mourners, but also provided them with a token of remembrance. Wrapped in black crepe paper or paper printed with designs associated with death, the shortbread cookie-like cakes seasoned with spices and covered in caraway seeds were taken home as keepsakes.

Among the Pennsylvania Dutch, a raisin pie often was served at home after a funeral, having been provided as a gift to the decedent’s family – a German tradition. The Kentucky funeral cake version is on the order of a simple pound cake.

Since those days of yore when such presentations were predictable, more diverse creations have appeared at funerary events. Some cakes appear similar to those served at other milestone events, while others are blatant representations of death that leave nothing to the imagination!

<http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/2012/04/cakes-for-wakes/>

<http://funeralcake.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/10/12/garden/an-old-custom-funeral-cakes.html>



Photo Source: buzzfeed.com



Photo Source: calebwilde.com



Photo Source:
buzzfeed.com



Photo Source: goodfuneralguide.com



Photo Source: pinterest.com Amber Parker





Photo
Source: calebwilde.com



Photos Source: funeralcake.blogspot.com



Ninety-two butterflies
represent
each year lived

Photo Source: pinterest.com

October 21: Count Your Buttons Day

Through media appearances and written publications, Dalton Stevens has garnered a reputation for his button art, which evolved in 1983 as a result of chronic insomnia and a need to stay occupied. Since then, he has festooned a variety of objects with thousands of buttons, including items of clothing, his guitar and piano, a Chevy Chevette and a hearse, a bathtub and sink, a grandfather clock, and an outhouse.



Known as “The Button King,” in 2008 he opened a museum that his children built for him next to his home in Bishopville, South Carolina. One of two coffins that are each completely covered with about 600,000 buttons is on display there. The other is all “buttoned up” and ready for his funeral.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Button_King

Photo Source:

artcarcentral.com, by Harrod Blank



Photo Source: flickriver, Jacob...K

He wants his body transported to the cemetery in his button hearse.



Photo Source: WP NFCC#4 wikipedia.org



Photo Source: odditycentral.com, by Spooky

October 30: Visit A Cemetery Day

School teachers can take students to local cemeteries for literal field trips. Integrated into their curricula, such visits utilize a unique means for learning coupled with a way to broach the topical realm of death and dying.

Years ago, a teacher of seventh- and eighth-graders at the Silver Grove Independent School in Kentucky began an annual tradition of bringing cemeteries alive for her students. Linda Prather's initiative, initially questioned by skeptical students and reticent parents, readily evolved into a relished annual event incorporating extensive instructional applications in multiple subject areas. Capitalizing on the participation of a team of teachers using a multi-disciplinary framework, a comprehensive overview was developed and implemented, to everyone's delight. All kinds of projects and written exercises were designed to strengthen understanding in math, language, history, technology, and art, using cemetery visitation as the springboard for studies over the course of a month.

A cemetery tour was but one small element of a program that employed worksheets with data-gathering questions, yielding material to address in different subject areas. Every teacher would give a subject-specific assignment, such as designing a headstone after learning from the art teacher about the meaning of common symbols. Another assignment was for the students to write their own obituaries – one dated for the current year, one for twenty-five years in the future, and one for fifty years hence.

For the students, these activities became a memorable highlight of their schooling, proffering a study mode that has been widely reputed as an enticing and invaluable endeavor.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/teacher_feature/teacher_feature050.shtml

The PHOTO DEPOT

Images related to an aspect of death management or commemoration, sometimes obtained by way of nationwide travels, illustrate examples of merchandise, facilities, services, or concepts – often featuring novelties to broaden viewers' horizons beyond purviews of standard funerary fare.

October 6: **Mad Hatter Day**

The term “mourning hats” would likely conjure up images of black headgear specifically designed to be worn at funerals... perhaps in the Victorian era. In contemporary culture, though, that which is worn atop mourners' heads is likely a far cry from the pitch-dark millinery of bygone days.



Actually, naked and unembellished noggins are the norm these days. But think about the potential of hats, especially if a particular style reflects that of the decedent. By issuing a request for guests to wear them in symbolic reference to the person who died, an element of personalization is easily established for a funerary event. Whether it's a straw hat adorned with a favorite color, a company

cap, sombrero, or cowboy hat, this simple, singular element can unify guests in a communal spirit of reflective mourning.



~ New York Update ~

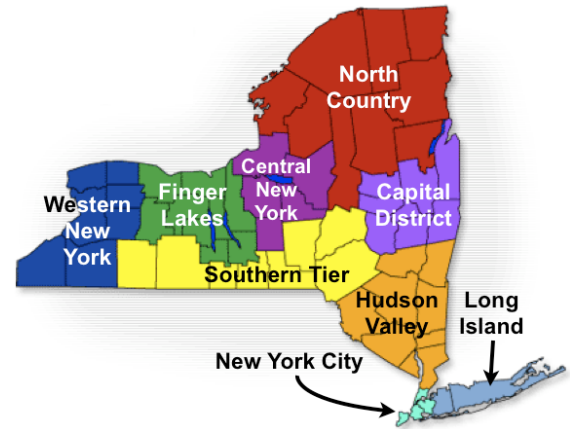


Image Source: EmpireStateNews.net

Pet Burials In Human Cemeteries

Cremated remains of pets have been known to covertly be placed inside the caskets of their owners. Now, though, in New York State it is no longer necessary to engage in a clandestine maneuver to make that happen. As a result of a law passed in September, the cremated substance of any creature regarded as a domestic companion (including a reptile or invertebrate) may be interred along with its owner – even if the animal outlives the human and dies at a later time.

This applies exclusively to the approximately 1,900 not-for-profit cemeteries regulated by the state, any of which must agree to the practice of accepting animal remains. Religious cemeteries are excluded.

Interment of human owners has been permissible in pet cemeteries since legislative approval was granted three years ago. This next step further recognizes the meaningful relationships shared between humans and their creature companions.

Cemeteries that accept animal remains for this purpose will have to provide a list of charges for their services. Income generated by this option must be kept in an endowment fund for perpetual maintenance of the burial grounds.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/07/nyregion/new-york-burial-plots-will-now-allow-four-legged-companions.html?_r=0

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-yorkers-buried-pets-new-law-article-1.2807109>

Greensprings Anniversary

A September celebration took place at the Greensprings Natural Burial Preserve in Newfield, New York to mark the tenth anniversary of its founding. The occasion brought together visionaries who had launched this ecological initiative along with supporters and community folks interested in exploring the green burial option.

A blend of speakers, musical performances, magic, meditative moments, and consumption of light refreshments punctuated the program. Sensory experiences beyond the presentation tent included tours, a bird walk, and plant exploration.

People learned that two hundred and forty bodies have been buried there, with about one thousand more plots having been purchased and reserved for occupancy. Thirty additional acres of land had recently been acquired, thereby enlarging the parcel of one hundred acres. Use of a portion of the new territory for a pet cemetery is under consideration.



Synopsis and Photos:

<http://signaturesunsets.blogspot.com/2016/10/greensprings-anniversary-celebration.html>

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WHICH WAY TO GO?

The ABCs of Bodily Disposition:

Is **Alkaline** hydrolysis all wet?

The **Burial** plot thickens!

What's so hot about **Cremation**?

Thursday, November 17: 6:00-8:00

First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South, Room 110



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planning well in advance
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A pleasant way to design the **WRAP-up**...
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DEATH CAFES: SPONTANEOUS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DEATH

Wednesday, October 26, 2016, 6:00-7:45 p.m.

Legacy at Clover Blossom,
Rochester, NY

Register at:

meetup.com

or

ponderingleaves@gmail.com

For Information about the
International Organization:
deathcafe.com



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Colorful End-of-Life Pre-planning



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CONCEPT



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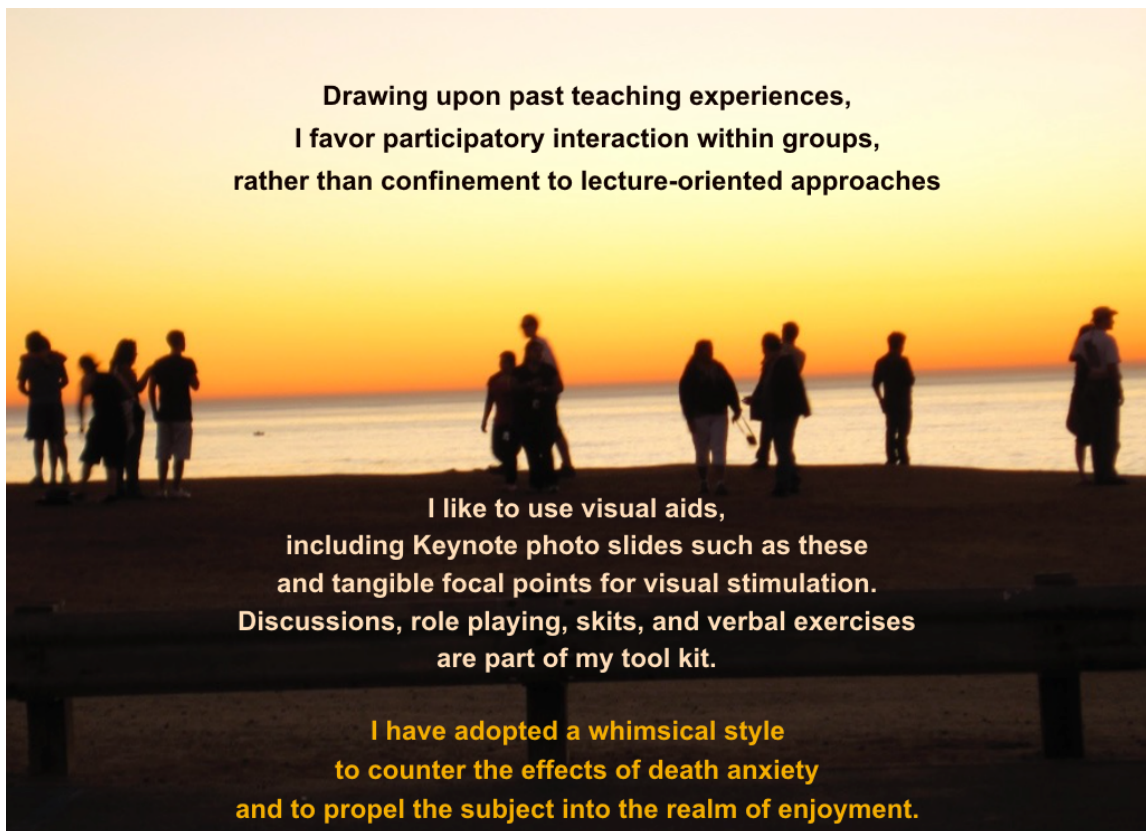


CONTACT

Seminars, Workshops, and Discussion Groups

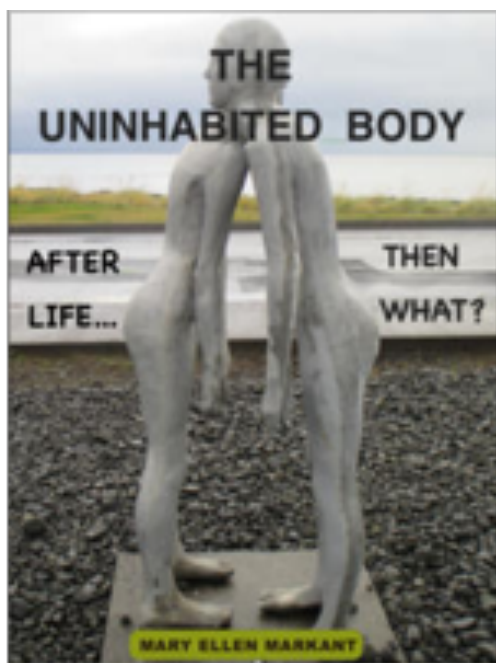
Introductory VIDEO

<https://www.educreations.com/lesson/view/end-of-life-pre-planning-to-die-for/29322450/?ref=app>



To Schedule A Photo Slideshow Presentation

Contact: passages@ponderingleaves.com



Publications

An eBook...

"You can't take it with you," including the most obvious of earthly possessions – one's body. What is to be done with this conspicuous leftover from life?

This resource provides specific information as a basis for making the most basic of funerary decisions: Given the choices, which of several possible means for bodily disposition and maybe even utilization best suits a particular individual?

By choosing a method for management of your body, you will have provided a foundation upon which other funerary decisions can be based.

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<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/the-uninhabited-body/id1100054732?mt=11>

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