



# eNews

A monthly news update for the Wilbert® Licensee Network

January 2024

## upcoming events

### January 25, 2024

*WilbertEDU 2024 Program Year Begins!*  
Online

### April 10-13, 2024

*ICCFA*  
Tampa, FL

### April 14-17, 2024

*WMA Midterm Meeting*  
Greenville, SC

## what's news

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## Any Personnel Changes for the Directory or eNews Subscription?

Kindly report any changes in your Licensee information to Susan Barry at [sbarry@wilbert.com](mailto:sbarry@wilbert.com) or call Susan at 708-865-1600 at your first opportunity when changes occur. Thank you!



## We'd Like to Hear from YOU!

What have you found that works in your experience? Anything poignant or tastefully funny that you would like to share? Old photos of Wilbert products or employees from days gone by that would be interesting? Please email your stories to Ken Moore at [kmoore@wilbert.com](mailto:kmoore@wilbert.com). If you're not comfortable writing, don't worry – he will be happy to help.



We encourage you to circulate this issue of eNews to others in your organization.

## St. Francis Xavier Cemetery Columbarium Project

Phase 2 of the installation of the 96-niche columbarium project was completed successfully by partners of Wilbert's Norwalk team on Wednesday, December 20th. The cemetery added finishing touches, including planting vases and benches that parishioners donated adding a personal touch to the cemetery. The columbaria will offer families a much-needed option for above-ground inurnment of their loved ones' cremated remains.



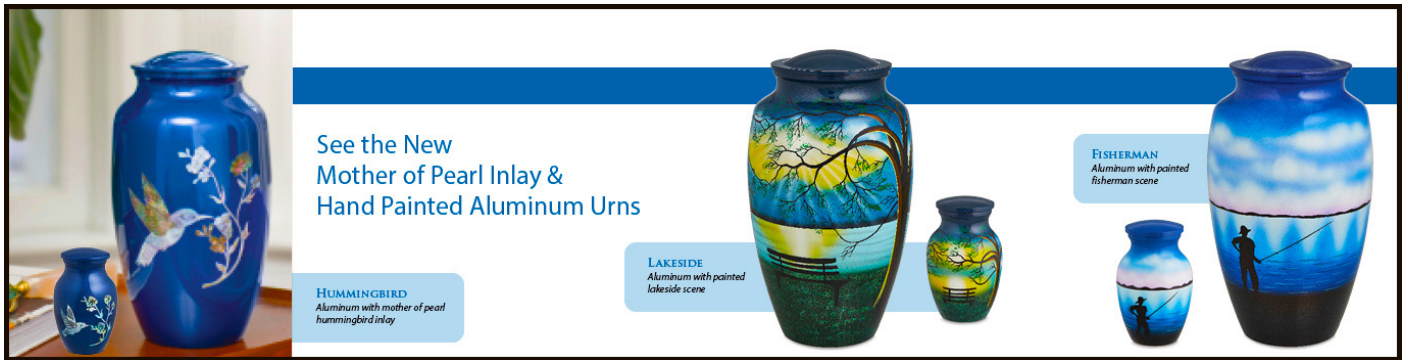
## New Aluminum Urn

The Wilbert line of cremation products includes high-eye appeal and economically priced aluminum urns. These are always a crowd pleaser with strong interest at trade shows.

Featured are richly colored Mother of Pearl Inlay urns including the Blue Rose, Purple Butterfly, Green Leaf, and Purple Rose.

New to the line is the beautiful Hummingbird with a Mother of Pearl hummingbird design in a rich blue color. Also new are the hand-painted Fisherman and Lakeside urns depicting pastoral scenes.

Be sure to make a point to show these urns to your customers. They will see great value.



## Concrete Bucket with Side Discharge

**13-1/2 Cubic Feet**

**Holds .5 yds of concrete**

**Product # K262**

**\$1971.60**



## New Vatican Proclamation on Cremated Remains Opens Options for Catholic Families

On Tuesday, December 12, the Vatican announced important changes to its instructions regarding the handling of human cremated remains. The update allows “a minimal part of the ashes” to be retained by family members and loved ones rather than requiring the entirety of a person’s cremated remains to be buried or entombed in a sacred place.



It also approves the commingling of cremated remains of two or more individuals. With about 21% of the North American population identifying as Catholics, these allowances could have a huge impact on the families you serve.

Here’s what’s changed

The December 12 proclamation, which was issued by the Vatican’s revered Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith department, contained its responses to two questions asked by an Italian archbishop. Specifically, Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, Archbishop of Bologna wanted to know if 1) “ashes” could be commingled, and 2) “a family be allowed to keep a portion of their family member’s ashes in a place that is significant for the history of the deceased.”

Both questions were answered in the affirmative — but with conditions. First, cremated remains can be commingled as long as a “sacred place can be set aside” for permanent preservation and each person is properly identified “so as not to lose the memory of their names.”

As for keeping a portion of cremated remains, some of the old rules still apply. For example, families must seek permission from an “ecclesiastical authority” like a bishop (priests and deacons are considered his “assistants” or “helpers”). Also, the “minimal part of the ashes” should be preserved “in an appropriate way” in a “place of significance,” with no “pantheistic, naturalistic, or nihilistic” misunderstandings. Lastly, the remainder of the cremated remains must be permanently memorialized in a sacred place.

Opportunities for deathcare

Although this proclamation may at first seem to be a simple addendum to the Vatican’s groundbreaking 1963 approval of cremation, it’s a pretty big deal for Catholic cremation families — and for the deathcare professionals who serve them.

Permanent memorialization of cremated remains is a priority, so opportunities will always exist for niche and plot sales as well as urns and urn vaults. Now that Catholics may reserve a portion of cremated remains to keep in a place of significance to the deceased, though, additional urns or traditional containers for cremated remains are an option that should be presented.

It’s also important to note that not all Catholic families will be familiar with this new provision. Having easy access to the official Vatican document (bookmark it online [here](#); the final decisions are in bold type at the bottom of the page) could be helpful. And of course, knowing that they can trust you as a knowledgeable expert on ALL things deathcare, including their faith’s latest allowances and beliefs — is always a bonus.

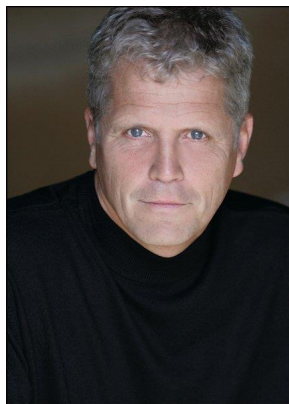
## WilbertEDU® Upcoming Sessions

On January 25, WilbertEDU kicks off the 2024 program year with a special, two-hour webinar with returning presenter Dr. Jzyk Ennis: **"Formaldehyde, the Funeral Rule, and the Future of the Workforce."**

Dr. Ennis will update participants on the status of EPA's evaluation and a summary of the results of the recent NFDA formaldehyde study and how that review may affect OSHA's outlook on permissible exposure limits. Management practices that may help lower an embalmer's exposure to formaldehyde in the embalming room will also be discussed.

A review of the FTC's Funeral Rule and how the landscape of required pricing disclosures may be changing will also be discussed, along with perspectives and updates on the changing workforce, challenges in finding quality help, and how the funeral profession will have to adapt to fill the future employment needs of funeral service.

This webinar is approved by the APFSP for two continuing education credits in mortuary science. Participants must be on the webinar for a minimum of 110 minutes to be eligible for credit. To register for this webinar, visit [www.wilbert.com/wilbertedu](http://www.wilbert.com/wilbertedu)



On February 2, first-time presenter, author, and speaker Kevin O'Connor will present **"A Century of Caring: Navigating Family Dynamics, Grief, and Marketing in the Death Care Industry."** Kevin explores various aspects of the death care industry, drawing lessons from funeral directors and death care professionals who established their businesses several decades ago, highlighting the value of learning from those who operated before the internet and modern communication tools.

Kevin delves into the intersection of family life and the death care profession, posing questions about expectations regarding this blend. Further discussion focuses on how marriage and partner relationships can enrich the work of death care professionals and impact their interactions with clients and the evolution of marketing in the death care profession, acknowledging the influence of pre-internet strategies and prompting reflection on community engagement. Lastly, the essential role of a funeral director's relationship with grief, addressing how professionals manage the grief of clients, cope with their own emotions and stress, and handle situations involving the death of a

family member, is discussed. Overall, the webinar explores both historical perspectives and contemporary challenges within the death care industry, offering insights for current practitioners.

Kevin O'Connor is the author of *Two Floors Above Grief: A Memoir of Two Families in the Unique Place We Called Home*, published in November 2022. He is the son of William O'Connor and nephew of Lawrence O'Connor, brothers who owned the O'Connor Funeral Home in Elgin, Illinois, from 1930 to 1984. He and his two brothers lived with his parents in a third-floor apartment above the first-floor funeral home. His uncle, aunt, and three daughters lived in the second-floor apartment.

In the book, he conveys his experiences growing up as a child from birth (1950) through his early 20s in the residences above the funeral home.

On February 22, first-time presenter Sharon Gee-Mascarello, CFSP, presents **"Cranial Care of the Postmortem Brain Donor."** Sharon is primary author/editor of the latest edition of the renowned text, *Embalming: History, Theory, and Practice, Sixth Edition* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2022). She enters her 38th year as a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the State of Michigan.

Gee-Mascarello retired in the position of clinical faculty in the Mortuary Science Program at Wayne State University, Detroit, after 24 years as the Instructor of Embalming. At the onset of distance education, she created two instructional videos, "Introduction to Embalming" and "Introduction to Embalming Instruments".



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Wayne State University named her Educator of the Year. The 100 Black Women of Funeral Service honored Geemascarello as Mortuary Educator of the Year.

Sharon is a member of the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice, British Institute of Embalmers, International Grief Institute, Michigan Funeral Directors Association, National Funeral Directors Association, and Ohio Embalmers Association. She is a frequent presenter on topics that reinforce the relevance of caring for, honoring, and viewing our dead.

Sharon is a proud registered Organ Donor. She encourages Funeral Professionals and Organ Procurement Organizations to work together when families have requested donation. She is quick to highlight the critical role embalmers and funeral directors play in honoring this lifesaving and life-enhancing gift. Gift of Life Michigan recognized Sharon with the first-ever Champion Funeral Professional of the Year Award.

In this webinar, Sharon will introduce the audience to brain donation and the Lieber Institute Brain Depository (LIBD). The webinar will examine the importance of brain donation and how the outcomes of studies enhance the care of the living and the role of the funeral director and embalmer in caring for donors and their families. Sharon will discuss the different types of studies conducted by the LIBD, including Developmental Neuropsychiatric Disorders (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, autism, depression, anxiety disorder, and PTSD) and Neurodegenerative Disorders (Alzheimer's Disease). She will explore the role of the funeral professional and funeral home in helping families navigate the brain donation process and postmortem care for the brain donor. Finally, Sharon will share the embalming care sequence for brain donations, which begins with a moment of silence and concludes with custodial care and monitoring.

## WilbertEDU® Recap

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On November 30, Danielle R. Wilk, Port Mortuary Branch Chief at Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, presented "**Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations**" to the delight of over 700 WilbertEDU attendees. The live broadcast and walk-through of the operations center at Dover was a unique opportunity for attendees to get a behind-the-scenes look at Mortuary Operations at Dover Air Force Base, including triage, embalming, overflow, dress and restoration, and departures.

Danielle began her presentation at the atrium, where a memorial wall lists all US conflicts. From the atrium, Danielle walked through the facility to the embalming suite while describing to the audience about how deceased service members are processed through Dover:

Not all deceased service members go through Dover for mortuary care; some are cared for by contract funeral homes across the country. Most service members sent to Dover are at the direction of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner for autopsy and investigation. Service members arrive at Dover on a "believed to be" status; identities are confirmed using DNA and dental records. The average age for a deceased service member arriving at Dover is 25. Once identity is scientifically verified, the family is notified. Not all service members are processed through Dover. Some families choose to have a local funeral home care for their loved ones. In those cases, Dover arranges transportation of the service member.

Next, Danielle took attendees into the embalming suite, which has ten embalming stations, nine used for embalming and one used for viscera. At Dover, each embalmer has their own embalming station with two or three embalming machines because most remains are autopsied. After embalming is complete, measurements are taken and provided to the Branch of Service responsible for preparing the uniform according to the service members' awards and decorations. In unison, a liaison coordinates with the family to receive their loved one.

Moving on, Danielle proceeded to the dress and restoration suite, where service members are prepared for viewing. Mannequins were used to demonstrate the four levels of viewability recommended by the Department of Defense (DOD).

Level 4 Viewable Remains typically have little or no trauma. View ID is when the remains are prepared for identification. These remains may not be pristine but can be restored with cosmetics or other restorative techniques.

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Level 3 Head Wrap is utilized when the service member has sustained facial or head injuries that prevent "life-like" viewing. The remainder of the body is in dress uniform, which allows the family to have an open casket.

Level 2 Full Body Wrap is used when remains have been severely decomposed or sustained other significant trauma such that they cannot be viewed in a "life-like" condition. The remains are thoroughly embalmed, and as the name implies, the body is completely wrapped in accordance with DOD standards. This process can take two to four hours to complete. Once completed, the wrapped body is placed in the casket, and the dress uniform with awards and decorations is placed on top of the remains, which allows the family to have an open casket for non-viewable remains.

Level 1 Subsequent Portions applies when there an incident where the remains are not intact and subsequent portions are collected from the incident site before the site is closed. When that happens, subsequent portions are processed through Dover in the manner described earlier and, in the standards, set by the DOD. Subsequent portions are treated with respect and in the same dignified manner as other remains processed through Dover.

Next, Danielle demonstrated the head wrap using a mannequin and taking the audience step-by-step through the process while describing in detail the standards set by the DOD.

In the final five minutes of her presentation, Danielle shared the combination of embalming products used for embalming remains of service members. She then took questions from the audience, of which there were many. In the follow-up survey, the attendee expressed their desire to have Danielle back on the WilbertEDU stage. We are working with Danielle to see if we can make that happen in 2024!



*Danielle Wilk introduces the audience to Dress & Restoration where she will begin her demonstration on the four levels of viewability using mannequins.*

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On December 14, Wendy Wiener and Lauren Pettine returned to the WilbertEDU stage to provide an update on changes to laws across the country after the fall of Roe in 2022. **"Handling Fetal Remains in the Wake of the Dobbs Decisions, Part II"** is a follow-up to their March 16, 2023, WilbertEDU presentation.

### Defining Fetal Remains

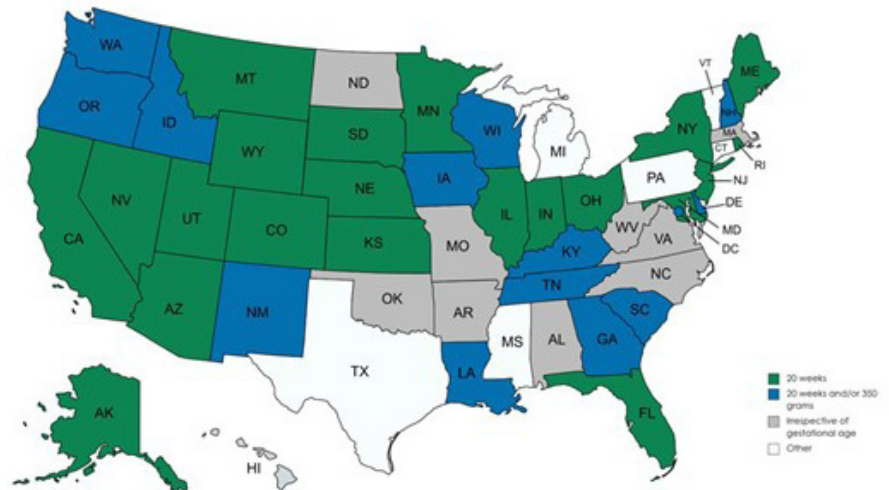
The laws governing the disposition of fetal remains are determined by each state which begins with a definition of gestational milestones between fetal remains and stillbirth/human remains. Four categories define fetal remains by state and vary across the country: 1) 20 weeks; 2) 20 week and/or 350 grams; 3) irrespective of gestational age, and 4) other.

### Miscarriage v. Abortion

What produced the fetal remains – abortion or miscarriage - is a determining factor in how fetal remains are handled by death care professionals. States are not unified in how they treat fetal remains under these two methods. In more than half the states, the disposition of fetal remains is the same regardless of how those remains are produced. The remaining states provide different forms of disposition depending on how the fetal remains were produced.

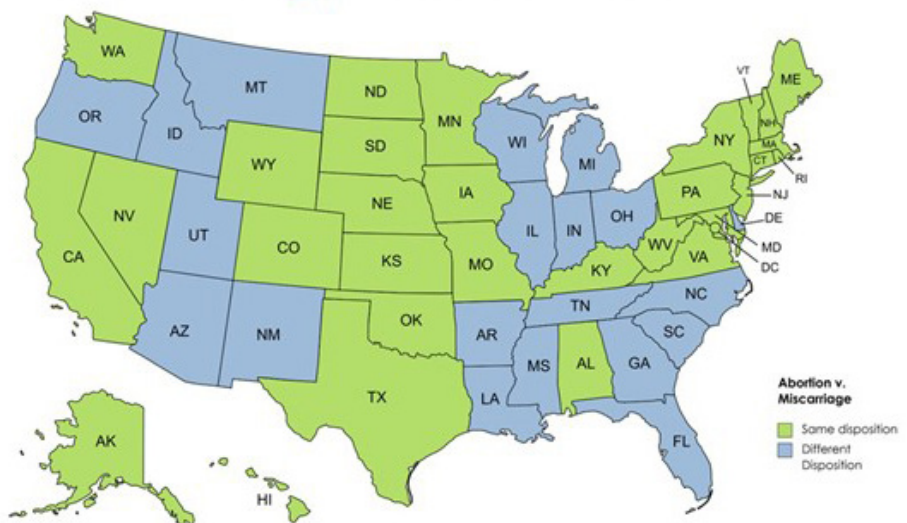
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## Fetal Remains Defined Age / Size / Irrespective / Other



Map 1 Effective 12-14-23

## Disposition of Fetal Remains: Miscarriage vs. Abortion



Map 2 Effective 12-14-23



State laws mandate the disposition of fetal remains and vary widely across the US as shown here.

State law also governs who can authorize the disposition of fetal remains. This also varies widely across the US as indicated in the map below.

**Guidance for Death Care Providers**

To determine how fetal remains are handled in your state, death care providers must know 1) laws defining fetal remains based on gestational age, 2) laws defining final disposition of fetal remains, and 3) laws pertaining to the authorizing agent.

**Legislative Update**

A proposed federal statute (SB 1102, Dignity for Aborted Children Act) would require final disposition of all fetal remains from abortion. This law has been filed before, however, there was not enough legislative consensus to move it forward. It is unlikely to pass but worth keeping an eye on.

On November 7, voters in Ohio amended the state constitution to include a constitutional right to abortion securing the right to abortion for anyone who wants to exercise that right. This is likely to impact disposition of fetal remains laws in Ohio.

Arizona has a mandate that the state adopt rules regarding the treatment of fetal remains resulting from an abortion but to date, Arizona has not begun the process of promulgating rules dictating the disposition of fetal remains.

USSC – Indiana

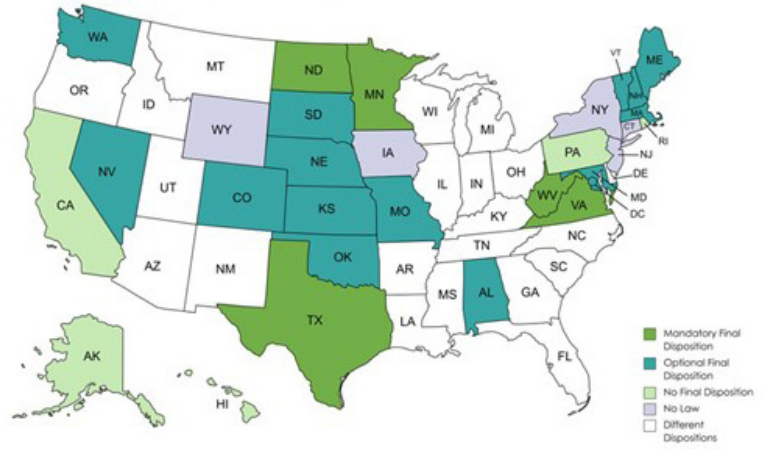
Box v. Planned Parenthood and Jane Doe v. AG of Indiana challenged Indiana law regarding mandatory final disposition of fetal remains. The Supreme Court denied the request to hear, upholding the Indiana law.

Fifth Circuit – Texas

Texas is appealing an injunction of Texas law requiring final disposition of fetal remains from abortions providers in Whole Women’s Health v. Phillips.

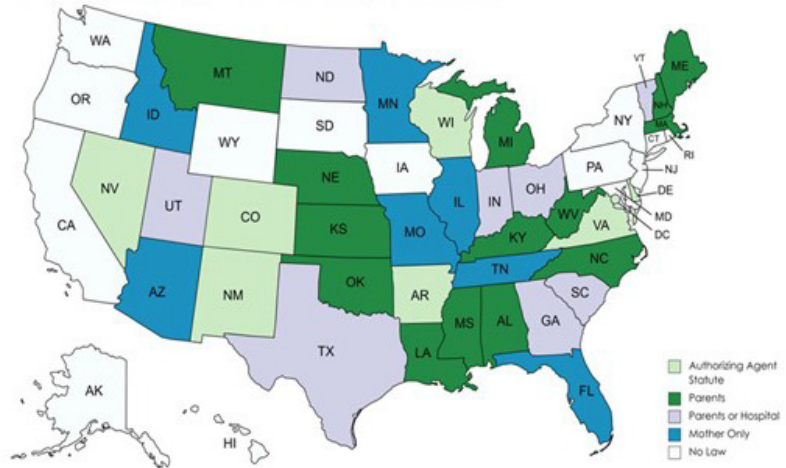
These are just a few of the cases making their way through the courts and we should expect many more of these types of cases in the future.

**Disposition of Fetal Remains: Mandatory / Optional / No**



Map 3 Effective 12-14-23

**Disposition of Fetal Remains: Who Can Authorize?**



Map 4 Effective 12-14-23

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Next, Lauren shared that authorizing agent, cremation and required forms are some areas where death care providers handling fetal remains have the most concerns, questions, or confusion. She then discussed four case studies and their outcomes.

In summary, death care providers handling fetal remains are advised to:

1. Know your state laws!
2. Contact the appropriate authorizing agent before taking custody of fetal remains.
3. Complete authorization forms prior to taking fetal remains into your care.
4. Complete the final disposition pursuant to executed authorization.

And finally, a word of caution to death care providers handling fetal remains:

If you take possession of fetal remains prior to arrangements with the appropriate authorizing agent, you may not be able to dispose of the fetal remains without a court order.

## **WilbertEDU Webinar Recordings Available to Licensees**

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Webinar recordings are available to the Wilbert Licensee Network. This is a great opportunity to meet with customers and share videos either in person or remotely. [WilbertEDU Educational Series](#)

## Commemorating First Responder Correctional Officer III Jovian Motley



Huntsville, TX – Correctional Officer III Jovian Motley died while helping restrain a combative inmate at the J. Dale Wainwright Unit. He was 27 years old.

He pursued a career with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, where he became a Correctional Officer. He was passionate about what he did and loved mentoring the young men who were in the prison system.

He had served with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Correctional Institutions Division for over one year.

He is survived by his mother and father, sister, grandparents, extended family members, and close friends.

Services were entrusted to the care of Boyd Funeral Home, Houston, TX.

Wilbert Vaults of Houston, Houston, TX, was honored to provide the family a Stainless Steel Triune® burial vault with a Treasured Tribute and a graveside service.



## Commemorating First Responder Police Officer Kaylen Jacobs

Earl, AR Police Officer Kaylen Jacobs was found in his patrol car not breathing with no pulse. Officer Jacobs passed away Wednesday, November 22, 2023. He was 34 years old.



Deputies forced entry into the vehicle and pulled the officer out of the patrol car where they quickly jumped into action starting CPR. CEMS units arrived on the scene and assumed patient care. Immediate lifesaving actions were initiated by on-scene responders and were performed tirelessly throughout his care. The officer was transported to Baptist Memorial Hospital-Crittenden in extremely critical condition. Despite receiving an incredible team effort to save his life, resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful, eventually terminated, and the officer passed.

It appears that the officer may have suffered a major medical emergency just before his vehicle left the roadway.

He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by three sisters, aunts, uncles, extended family members, and many friends.

Services were entrusted to the care of Wilson Funeral Homes, Osceola, AR.

Memphis Burial Vault Co., Memphis, TN, was honored to provide the family with a Stainless Steel Triune® burial vault with a Treasured Tribute image and a graveside service.



## Commemorating First Responder State Trooper Robert M. Burney

Oneida, NY – Trooper Robert M. Burney, 57, affectionately known as Bob, passed away on Saturday, December 9, 2023, surrounded by his loving family.



Trooper Burney passed away from cancer stemming from his assignment at the World Trade Center site following the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Following the events of that day, Trooper Burney was assigned to New York City to aid in search and recovery efforts. He loved being a Trooper and was active in many extra assignments with NYSP including Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, Hurricane Sandy in NYC, the New York State Fair, and numerous other details.

He was predeceased by his father.

Robert is survived by his mother, brothers, sister, and longtime companion, Denise Kraeger.

Services were entrusted to the care of Friedel, Williams & Edmunds Funeral and Cremation Services, New Hartford, NY.

The Fort Miller Service Corp. Greenwich, NY, was honored to provide the family a Stainless Steel Triune® burial vault and a graveside service.

