

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE



Conference 2018—June 21-24, Rochester, New York



Join us in Rochester, New York, **June 21-24, 2018!**
Our conference features:

- Two days of programming
- Appetizer welcome reception
- Breakfast and lunch Friday and Saturday
- Field trip to Mount Hope Cemetery, the first municipal cemetery in the US and the resting place of Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony, and others.

Fun! Also, funerals.

Keynote Speaker



Stephen Brobeck, Executive Director, Consumer Federation of America

Consumer Federation of America and Funeral Consumers Alliance: a powerful partnership

Consumer Federation of America is an association of hundreds small and large issue-focused non-profits. The collective power of so many voices--from auto safety, from consumer financial products, from funeral rights advocacy groups--adds up to a powerful presence before lawmakers and the media. CFA's help with FCA's online pricing surveys and policy petitions to the FTC has been critical to their success.

Brobeck will give an overview of the consumer advocacy field at the national level. He will discuss how partnerships with like-minded organizations increase the voice and reach of all of us, from the smallest volunteer groups to larger consumer associations.

Stephen Brobeck has served as executive director of the Consumer Federation of America since 1980. Brobeck has published research on social change, including the first annotated bibliography of the consumer movement, *The Modern Consumer Movement: References and Resources*, and has edited two encyclopedias of the consumer movement, *Encyclopedia of the Consumer Movement* and *Watchdogs and Whistleblowers: A Reference Guide to Consumer Activism*.

Workshops and Presentations

Home funerals: it's not just about saving money

Alyce Adams, home funeral enthusiast, Lynn Barnett, home funeral guide, Lauren Sample, community educator



As FCA members, we tend to focus on practical ways to control the bottom line we have to pay a funeral home. But what if by involving a funeral home at all, we're giving up something that might be even more valuable than money? Across cultures and throughout the course of human history, after-death care has been a family and community endeavor, not a commercial one. In this workshop we'll explore some of the perceived barriers to caring for our own dead, and the profound and unexpected benefits home funerals can provide for those left behind. Whether you already know you want a home funeral, or can't quite imagine participating in one, this workshop will help you explore what you need to make it a realistic option for you or a loved one and reclaim something as old as humankind.

The following three presentations will be given by Karen Smith, vice-president of FCA, is the system ethicist for the Henry Ford Hospital system in Detroit, MI.



Three continuing education units are available for social workers who attend both 'You're the surrogate,' and 'Death with dignity'.

A brief history of dying

A look at how modern medicine has changed how we die and how we deal with the dying.

You're the surrogate: now what? (CEUs available)

This talk will give you the practical advice that is most often neglected to allow you to both help others understand their role as a patient advocate and to allow you to better understand your role if you are the surrogate.

Death with Dignity: an ethical evaluation of aid-in-dying laws (CEUs available)

This is an advanced talk on how California has given us an example of the potential for many unexpected pitfalls when enacting new legislation and how it might be evaluated through an ethical lens.

Dying in America—cultural insights from refugee and immigrant populations

A panel discussion about the various ways that cultures handle death and burials and how to be supportive of these traditions. Rochester has several immigrant and refugee populations and representatives from some of them will be present to share their beliefs and how they have been challenged by the typical American ways. There will be time for questions and brainstorming of innovative ways of dealing with grieving families from various cultures.

Jennifer McDermott will moderate the panel. She is Department Director for Aging & Adult Services at the Catholic Family Center, and a board member of the FCA of Greater Rochester

Talk of the town: the enlivening impact of 'death cafes'

Mary Ellen Markant, death educator

Group discussion can inspire candid dialogues about previously cloaked matters of mortality. Explore the origin and development of the 'death cafe' movement that's spreading throughout the world, along with new initiatives that have evolved because of it. Get the inside story about subjects on people's minds and the nature of interactions, along with tips for launching a death cafe in your own community.



Storytelling for Fun and Profit

Ruth Bennett, executive director, FCA of Arizona

Stories are how we make relationships. Stories are how we make sense of the world we live in, and the people we share it with. And stories are the most powerful way to tell the public who your organization is, and how you work to help real people. When people are engaged, and moved, by your story, that's when they become donors and partners. Join Ruth Bennett for a rousing talk on finding your story, and stories to tell, about the people you work with, and work for. You really need to see her in action standing up to give a pitch for a righteous cause. Come eager, leave inspired!



Holly Shreve Gilbert, journalism professor, Oakland University, and secretary of FCA, will offer two workshops:

Writing a journalistic obituary: for the dead and pre-dead

—A life well-lived should be a life well-narrated. Learn to compose an entertaining, informative and objective obituary for someone you know; even yourself. Oakland University journalism professor and FCA board member Holly Shreve-Gilbert will show you how to create a first draft for the last word on a life that mattered. Published obituaries are one of the most-often utilized archival materials for historians, genealogists, scholars and the general public. Make sure the one you craft (or star in) tells an authentic story.

Social media basics—Social media is a must today for organizations that want to stay relevant and connected to the public they try to persuade. There are so many platforms; Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and more. Bring your laptop for a hands-on demonstration of how to use these online tools, including easy ways to link up with other FCA and allied groups to share news items and posts.

Blended funerals: doing it yourself with some professional help

Terry Skovronek, home funeral educator, National Home Funeral Alliance

Many families might appreciate the benefits of a home funeral, or a wake at home, but they may not want or be equipped to carry out every task. Bringing in help from a funeral home to do part of the work can be a way for such households to have the best of both worlds. As Terry describes it, these blended funerals are “where the rubber meets the road for a lot of families. Not everyone is prepared to do it all themselves, and that shouldn’t mean home funerals are ‘off-limits’ to households that could use some professional help.”

Making funerals meaningful again

Philip Olson, assistant professor, Virginia Tech, FCA board member

What if we saw funerals and end-of-life rituals as something that could bring us emotional benefits as individuals and communities, instead of as an obstacle to be overcome? In America today, the funeral is more often seen as a commercial obligation---a business transaction---to get through and past, rather than as an experience that we create for ourselves and our families.



Melissa Unfred, licensed funeral director, blogger at themodernmortician.com, with Kermit the Dog.



Being a modern mortician

Melissa Unfred is an unconventional funeral director licensed in Texas. Where mainstream funeral homes still offer state rooms and casket sales floors, Unfred prefers to work with families who are returning to traditional practices such as home-vigils and wakes. Mortuary school, however, remains stuck in the past with its emphasis on embalming, viewing, and the “quality” features of caskets. Join Unfred to learn what young funeral directors-to-be are taught, and how the mortuary curriculum could be overhauled to meet 21st century needs.

Q and A with FCA—FCA board members and staff

An open discussion with board members and FCA staff. This is the time to bring your questions and share your own activist work. If you have questions about FCA work, the organization, policy goals, or suggestions, this is your time and space. At on-site registration we will ask those with questions or comments to write them briefly on cards so our panelists can take them one by one.

Welcome to Rochester

The City

Rochester is a mid-size city located in upstate New York along Lake Ontario. The birthplace of world famous companies like Kodak, Xerox and Bausch and Lomb, it is also the home of major universities, hospitals, museums and other cultural institutions.

Getting Here

- Car:** Linked by the interstate highway system, Rochester can be reached in six hours or less from many cities in northeastern US and southern Canada.
- Train:** The city is located on the main Amtrak line, with multiple arrivals per day.
- Bus:** Greyhound and Trailways both offer reasonable prices and frequent service.
- Plane:** Rochester’s airport is served by a number of airlines, including Allegiant, American, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest and United.

Mount Hope Cemetery

Field trip Saturday afternoon

History

One of the most remarkable Victorian cemeteries in America, Mt. Hope spans 196 acres of hills and valleys shaped by retreating glaciers long ago. In 1838 the picturesque landscape was transformed into America's first municipal cemetery, and now contains thousands of marble, bronze, zinc and granite monuments shaded by ancient trees.

Besides its vast array of funerary sculpture and mausoleums, the cemetery features two Gothic Revival style chapels, a certified green burial section, a scattering garden and a newly renovated crematory. Famous "residents" include Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, as well as other well-known reformers, inventors, statesmen, and industrialists.



Death, the end of life, and the law—Continuing Education Units for social workers

This block of programming on Saturday afternoon is open to all registered attendees without additional payment. If you're attending these sessions only and specifically for CEUs, see the registration form for payment details. Three CEUs are available.

1pm to 4:15pm

-Death with Dignity, 1pm to 2:30 pm; Karen Smith, PhD

This is an advanced talk on how California has given us an example of the potential for many unexpected pitfalls when enacting new legislation and how it might be evaluated through an ethical lens.

-Break, 2:30 to 2:45

-You're the surrogate: so now what? 2:45pm to 4:15pm; Karen Smith, PhD

This talk will give you the practical advice that is most often neglected to allow you to both help others understand their role as a patient advocate and to allow you to better understand your role if you are the surrogate.

Programming Note

Please be aware that some programming and field trip options overlap on Saturday. We work hard to schedule events so attendees can participate in their favorite workshops. We cannot guarantee you a slot in a particular workshop, though most of you won't have any trouble. If the schedule does change, you'll be able to choose a different workshop.

Schedule of Events

-All events will take place in the hotel, specific rooms will be assigned at the conference and signs will be posted.

-The shaded block of events gives Continuing Education Units to professionals who pay to attend. These events are **also open to other registered attendees (without CEUs) for no additional charge.**

Thursday, June 21

12:00 pm - 5:00 pm **FCA Board Meeting**
(outgoing & incoming boards)
(*guests welcome*)

12:00 pm – 5:00 pm **Registration**

6:00 pm **Reception**—join us for appetizers and cash bar.

Friday, June 22

8:45 am – 9:00 am **Housekeeping**

7:00 am – 8:30 am **Breakfast**

9:00 am – 12:00 pm **Registration**

9:00 am - 10:20 a.m **State of the FCA**, exec. dir. Josh Slocum

10:20 am – 10:40 am **Break**

10:50 am – 12:15 pm **Workshops**

- a. *Death Cafes*—Mary Ellen Markant
- b. *Social media basics (bring your laptop)*—Holly Shreve Gilbert
- c. *Overcoming barriers to family-directed funerals*—Lynn Barnett
- d. *Dying in America: the immigrant perspective*—panel discussion

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm **Lunch**

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm **KEYNOTE** A powerful partnership: Funeral Consumers Alliance and the Consumer Federation of America—Stephen Brobeck

2:15 pm – 2:35 pm **Break**

2:35 pm -4:00 pm **Workshops**

- a. *Storytelling for fun and profit*—Ruth Bennett
- b. *Blended funerals*—Terry Skovronek
- c. *A brief history of dying*—Karen Smith

~End of Friday Programming~

Dinner is on your own at the hotel or out on the town. Restaurants and nightlife are minutes away on the bus line that passes the hotel. A movie or other activity may be announced later.

Saturday, June 23

7:00 am – 8:30 am **Breakfast**

8:45 am – 9:00 am **Housekeeping**

9:00 am – 12:00 p.m. **Registration**

9:00 am – 10:20 am **Plenary**—Q and A with FCA board and staff

10:20 am – 10:35 am **Break**

10:35 am - 12:00 pm **Workshops**

- a. *Writing a journalistic obituary*—Holly Shreve Gilbert
- b. *Panel discussion on home funerals in New York state, and changing NYS law to give control back to families*

CEU WORKSHOPS

-Death with Dignity, 1pm to 2:30 pm; Karen Smith, PhD

-Break, 2:30 to 2:45

You're the surrogate: so now what? 2:45pm to 4:15pm;
Karen Smith, PhD

(*panelists to be announced*)

c. *Making funerals meaningful again*—Philip Olson

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **Lunch**

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm **Workshops**

- a. *Being a modern mortician*—Melissa Unfred
- b. *Storytelling for fun and profit (repeat)*—Ruth Bennett

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. **Field trip to Mount Hope Cemetery** conducted by Rick Schaeffer. The cemetery is very close and there will be a sign-up sheet for carpooling at the conference.

6 pm **Appetizers and cash bar**

7 pm **Closing banquet** (optional)

Sunday, June 24

9:00 am – 5:00 pm **FCA Board meeting**
(*guests welcome*)

Hotel and Reservations

We will be at the Rochester Riverside hotel, downtown. Rooms are \$119 a night plus tax so book early as the room block is limited. Rooms are single or double, and they may be shared. Book your rooms directly with the hotel. Be sure to tell them to book you within the FCA 2018 Conference block.

Rochester Riverside Hotel, 120 East Main Street Rochester NY 14604. (585) 546-6400.

Shuttle

The Rochester Riverside offers a complimentary shuttle.

Having fun in Rochester

The hotel is on the bus line, and about 10 minutes from restaurants and night life. See funerals.org/conference, then click on our “Rochester 2018” brochure for information on local attractions.

Meals

Your conference registration includes the incoming appetizer reception on Thursday, June 21, plus breakfast and lunch on Friday and Saturday. Single-day registration includes meals for the day you attend. Meals are served buffet style and there will be vegetarian and vegan options. **If you have special dietary needs or restrictions, be sure to tell us on your registration form.** Dinner Friday evening is on your own and the Saturday closing banquet is optional.

When

Thursday, June 21, 2018 (most people arrive this day in preparation for the conference beginning the next morning)

- FCA National board meeting; open to visitors, 9 am to 12 pm
- Cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres reception starting 6 pm

Friday, June 22, 2018—programming from 9 am to 4:00 pm

Saturday, June 23, 2018—programming from 9 am to 5 pm, cash bar and appetizers at 6, closing banquet at 7

Registration

Volunteers will be available to check you in within the lobby from 12 pm. to 5 pm Thursday, and from 9 am to noon both Friday and Saturday. This is where you'll receive your updated program materials, name badge, etc.

Cost

Full conference registration—\$275

One-day registration-\$137

Saturday Closing Banquet-\$50

CEU workshops (only additional if you're not registered to attend the conference)-\$95

Scholarships

We can't say it enough—our conferences are so much fun and they're *so good for your local FCA affiliate*. We want you there! If money is an issue, check out our scholarship opportunities. We can award up to half off conference registration, with priority given to FCA affiliate leaders and volunteers who have not attended recent conferences. Email nastassia@funerals.org to apply.

2018 REGISTRATION FORM

Or, register online at funerals.org/conference

Please complete your registration by June 8, 2018

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

My FCA Affiliate (or if none, leave blank): _____

Emergency Contact name and number: _____

Workshops (please choose up to four)

Friday Morning

___ Death Cafes: overcoming death denial through enlivening talk (Mary Ellen Markant)

___ Social media basics (Holly Shreve Gilbert)

___ Overcoming the barriers to family-directed funerals (Lynn Barnett)

___ Dying in America---the immigrant experience of funerals in the US (panel discussion)

Friday Afternoon

___ Storytelling for fun and profit! (Ruth Bennett)

___ A brief history of dying (Karen Smith)

___ Blended funerals (Terry Skovronek)

Saturday Morning

___ Writing a journalistic obituary: For the dead and the pre-dead (Holly Shreve Gilbert)

___ Panel discussion on New York law, home funerals

___ Making funerals meaningful again (Phil Olson)

Saturday Afternoon

___ Death with dignity (Karen Smith)

___ You're the surrogate: so now what? (CEU available; Karen Smith)

___ Being a Modern Mortician (Melissa Unfred)

___ Field trip to Mt Hope Cemetery

I AM REGISTERING FOR:

___ Whole conference (includes breakfast and lunch Friday and Saturday)
\$275

___ Single-day registration fee (please circle FRIDAY or SATURDAY; incs. breakfast and lunch)
\$137

___ CEU portion only
\$95 (for those requiring CEUs but not otherwise registered for the conference)

___ Saturday closing banquet (optional, spouses/guests welcome)
\$50

TOTAL: _____

Dietary and accessibility needs

If you have special needs for your diet, or for accessibility to our events, let us know so we can make it happen!

Payment
<input type="checkbox"/> I've enclosed a check
-or-
My Visa/Mastercard # is _____ - _____ - _____ - _____
Expiration Date: _____ 3-digit code on rear of card _____

**PLEASE MAIL TO:
FCA CONFERENCE
33 PATCHEN ROAD
SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT
05403**

Thank You! You will receive a confirmation letter in the mail.
Call us at 802-865-8300 or email fca@funerals.org