

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio
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FCACO News

Serving the Central Ohio Community since 1953

From the President's Desk by Rita Haider

My Journey to Body Donation: A Final Act of Giving

For much of my life, I believed my final resting place would be in the cemetery where my grandfather was the sexton. As a child, I spent countless hours in that Appalachian graveyard, watching as graves were dug by hand with remarkable precision. I loved riding the tractor through the cemetery and even playing inside freshly dug graves. Our family had a plot there, and I assumed that's where I would be buried.

That changed when my sister's husband passed away unexpectedly. She asked to use one of our family's burial sites, and without hesitation, I said yes. At that time, I thought I would simply be cremated—until my daughter, a climate scientist, explained the environmental impact of cremation. Wanting a more sustainable option, I began exploring natural and green burial sites in Ohio, thinking I had found my answer.

I also looked into other alternatives: **human composting, mushroom burial suits, water cremation, tree burial, reef burial, and more.** Each had its merits, but none felt quite right. Then, my background in healthcare led me to reconsider. During my education as a registered nurse and nurse practitioner, I benefited immensely from cadaver studies. I realized that donating my body to science could be my last opportunity to give back.

I researched Ohio's Whole Body Anatomical Gift Programs, considering factors like **whether organ donation was allowed, weight restrictions, and mileage limitations.** Most programs require pre-registration, so this isn't a decision to be made at the last minute.

I am happy to say I have finalized my decision. My body will be donated to **Ohio University's program**, which allows organ donation and provides transportation from anywhere in the state.

For those considering body donation, a list of participating programs in Ohio can be found here: [Lifeline of Ohio List of Whole Body Donation Programs](https://lifelineofohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/List-WBD.pdf)
(<https://lifelineofohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/List-WBD.pdf>)
Rita can be reached at: ritashaider@funeralsohio.org

**FCACO Annual Meeting will be
Saturday, May 31, 2025, Noon-3 PM
First UU Church
93 W. Weisheimer Rd Columbus OH 43214
Please Register (614) 263-4632 by May 23**

Spring 2025

Annual Meeting 2025 Lunch Box Choice.

Reservations are due on **May 23rd.**

Turkey Club on wheat, Reuben on rye, or Cream Cheese bagel. All include cole slaw, fruit cup, cookie, and a choice of fizzy water. Suggested donation for lunch is \$10. Please call FCACO with your name and choice at 614-263-4632.

The local website: www.funeralsohio.org:

1. Survivors Checklist
2. Ohio Disposition Form (designates a person to arrange the disposition of your remains)
3. What To Do When Death Occurs
4. A Letter to My Family (lists the location of key documents and legal authorizations)
5. Summary of area General Price Lists (GPL)

The national website: www.funerals.org

(Go to: *Resources*, then to *FAQ pamphlets*)

Here are just a few of them:

1. Green Burial
2. Should You Prepay Your Funeral?
3. Death Away From Home
4. Embalming Explained
5. Cremation Explained

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Nathaniel Overmire, Franklin County Coroner, will be the guest speaker at our Annual Meeting. He will cover the essential responsibilities of the Coroner's Office, including:

- The qualifications and process to become a coroner
- Whether families can request or refuse an autopsy
- The elected/appointed nature of the position and whether it is full-time
- Circumstances under which the Coroner's Office becomes involved and standard procedures
- Explanation of "manner of death" in official reports
- Family requirements for body identification and viewing
- Autopsy processes and who decides when one is necessary

Slate of Officers for 2025-26

The following nominations for new Directors were submitted by the Nominating Committee:

Mae Fechner
Cyndi Dorwart
Mandie Maxwell
Nikki Smith
Ellen Rapkin
Lisa Rine
Susan O'Donnell

Resources for Your Planning Folder

Body Donation

In Ohio, you can donate your body to medical programs at **Ohio State University (614) 292-4832, Cleveland Clinic, NEOMED, Case Western Reserve, University of Toledo, Wright State University (937) 775-3066, University of Cincinnati, and Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine.** Each program has specific requirements—contact them directly to learn more.

Organ Donation

LOOP (Lifeline of Ohio Organ Procurement) (877) 223-6667

<https://lifelineofohio.org/>

Advanced Directives forms: Franklin County Probate Court:

<https://probate.franklincountyohio.gov/>

Funeral Consumers Alliance: <https://funerals.org>

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central Ohio

www.funeralsohio.org

For FCACO members who choose to use our contracted providers that offer us discounted services:

Columbus Area: Cook & Son-Pallay (614) 444-7861

Dayton/Springfield area: Conroy Funeral Home: (937) 324 4973

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<https://www.facebook.com/funeralconsumersallianceofcentralohio>

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Thank you to our Wonderful Donors! You make it possible for us to serve you and the public.

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Anne R. & Thomas J. Weeks

Ohma Willette

David L. & Karen J. Williams



Understanding Funeral Costs by Jack Holdford

Judgment can become clouded during times of grief, affecting decision-making. Documenting your funeral wishes in advance can protect your family from overspending. This preplanning (choosing services in advance), not to be confused with a prepaid plan (purchasing services in advance), can be incorporated into your estate plan. Listed below are some of the services and options you should consider.

Basic Services—Funeral homes charge a fee that covers paperwork, staff, death certificates, etc. This fee typically ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,500 and is not optional but will be listed on the funeral home's price sheet. It's often included in direct cremation or burial packages.

Traditional Burial—Typical expenses for burial include: 1) A casket (\$2,000-\$10,000 or more), 2) Cemetery space (\$1,000-\$2,000), 3) Required vault or liner (by cemetery) (\$1,000-\$2,000), 4) Headstone (\$1,000-\$3,000).

Cremation—Usually costs less than burial: 1) Basic cremation with a simple container: \$1,500-\$3,000, 2) Direct cremation (no service and using your combustible container): under \$1,000.

Other potential costs may include: 1) Preparation for viewing (\$500-\$700), 2) Visitation (\$500-\$1,000), 3) Body transfer (\$300-\$500), 4) Flowers (\$200-\$400).

In order to avoid hidden fees, here are things you should know: 1) You can request a price list—funeral homes must provide this by law, 2) Embalming isn't required except for public viewing, 3) You can purchase caskets and urns from outside vendors, 4) Simple (unfinished wood) boxes are available for cremation.

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End

By Atul Gawande (Review by Joan Matyskella)

Please join us for a book club discussion in June. The book, *Being Mortal*, is by Atul Gawande, the son of immigrant parents from India, a surgeon who grew up in Athens, Ohio. Released in 2014, the book was praised for its masterful exploration of aging, care at the end of life, and the medical profession's need to deal with the wishes people might have beyond mere survival. Our discussion will take place on Google Meet on Saturday, June 28, at 2 p.m. If you would like to participate, contact Joan at joanmaty@funeralsohio.org.

“I Am Kinless” by Cathy Elkins

Social media, newspapers, television, and radio have reported a rapid increase in the 80+ population and the shortage of caregivers for them. Families in this century and the last have had fewer children. And these children often move far-away for jobs and education. According to a study published in 2017 in *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B.*, "An estimated 6.6 percent of American adults aged 55 and older “have no living spouse or biological children.” In response to this data, the *New York Times* reported in late 2022 (“Who Will Care for ‘Kinless Seniors?’”) that there were “close to a million older Americans without a spouse or partner, children or siblings in 2019, including about 370,000 women over 75.”

Indeed, who will care for the old folks left behind as they live longer and becoming frailer?

I receive calls about this on our FCACO phone. One such caller reported moving from place to place to care for parents, aunts, uncles, and siblings in their final hours. "There is no one left for me," she lamented as she faced her end of life. She introduced me to the phrase "I am kin-less."

When I suggested involvement in church, senior centers, or community organizations to build relationships, she was hearing none of it. In addition, many community helpers may be losing funds we have counted on to assume this burden. The shortfall in funding will only increase as this cohort increases.

What is our societal responsibility?