

## Obituary

### Todd W. Van Beck



**Van Beck, Todd Wesley** (May 23, 2023). The death care profession lost an icon in funeral service on May 23<sup>rd</sup> with the passing of Todd Van Beck. Beloved father of Thomas. Son of the late Tony and Norma (nee Fecan). Brother of Scott (Sarah) Van Beck; uncle of Wesley, Helen, Sam and Neil Van Beck. Todd was a person who had a half-century love affair with both funeral and cemetery service. He willingly admitted that he was no “expert!” and also quickly admitted that there was nothing about this work and life that he did not enjoy, and in which he did not have intense interest. Todd had said: *“I have never done a day’s work in my life; it has all been fun and interesting.”*

Todd was uniquely gifted and took great pride in providing reverent care for the dead and compassionate care for the living. Todd earned his Professional Diploma in Mortuary Science in 1973 from the New England Institute of Funeral Service Arts and Sciences (MA), his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Psychology from Mount Mercy University (IA), and his Master of Arts in Religion from Athenaeum of Ohio (Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary). In 2005, he was awarded the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters Degree from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, (Houston, TX). Todd held several certifications and licensures, including the Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP), Certified Funeral Executive (CFE) and licensure in several states.

Prior to his employment as Program Director at Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science (CCMS), Todd served as Faculty/Director of Continuing Education at John A. Gupton College (TN); General Manager of Forest Hill Funeral Homes & Memorial Parks (TN); Director of Family Funeral Care and Public Relations at A.S. Turner & Sons Funeral Home (GA); President and CEO of the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service (TX); Director of Education for the Loewen Group, Inc. (OH), and Director of Education for Trust 100. His academic career began at CCMS in 1982.

Todd was an active writer and prominent international speaker in the profession. He authored 8 books and over 400 articles on death care topics. An avid historian and academician, Mr. Van Beck grew up in Southwestern Iowa and declared at the young age of 5 that he would become a funeral director one day. Todd operated funeral homes, cemeteries and mortuary colleges

during his career. Todd selflessly served the death care profession in many arenas across the nation and internationally, which satisfied his desire to see the world. An Abraham Lincoln scholar, he was an expert in the deaths of United States presidents and authored a presentation about each of the funerals of the deceased American presidents. He was thrilled and humbled to return to CCMS and his cherished Queen City where he planned to continue his mission until retirement. Todd served on the boards of the Cincinnati Fire Museum, the William Howard Taft National Birthplace Site, and the Funeral Service Foundation of the National Funeral Director Association.

Visitation will occur on Saturday, May 27 from 12:00 Noon to 2:00p at the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. A Masonic Service will begin at 2:00p followed by a celebration of life service.

There will be a visitation on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, from Noon to 2:00 PM at the Hancock Methodist Church, Hancock, Iowa followed by a service at 2:00 PM. Burial will follow at Oak Hill Cemetery, Hancock, Iowa. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Todd Van Beck Memorial Scholarship Fund at CCMS. Arrangements are being made by the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in conjunction with Vorhis and Ryan Funeral Homes. Interment in Iowa will occur on Tuesday, May 30, 2023.