



MCC Mortuary Science Program Helps Graduates Continue Family Businesses

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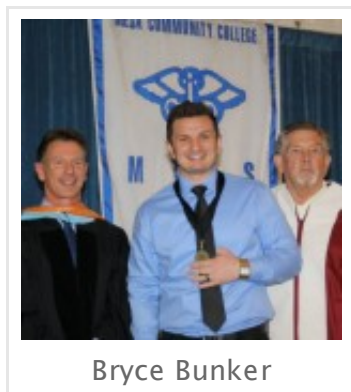
May 12, 2014

MESA, Ariz. — Of the 37 Mesa Community College (MCC) students graduating with Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees in Mortuary Science this semester, three will be taking over local family businesses. Graduates Bill Lowman (Phoenix), of Lowman's Arizona Funeral Home, Taylor Adair (Tucson), of Adair Funeral Home, and Bryce Bunker (Mesa), of Bunker Family Funeral Home, all say it's an honor to be carrying on a family tradition and that MCC helped them obtain the necessary credentials.

Local family-owned funeral homes have undergone many dramatic changes in the last decade. In response to economic conditions and changing preferences in the industry, a handful of large conglomerates have stepped in and purchased many smaller funeral homes that may not have family members who want to continue the business. While large corporations offer certain advantages to funeral home operators, some funeral operators prefer to keep the business in the family, if possible.

On a national basis there are generally more jobs available than there are licensed funeral directors to fill them. "The growing number of people prearranging their end-of-life services is increasing the need for individuals with expertise in the broad spectrum mortuary science covers," reports Donna Backhaus, Coordinator of MCC's Mortuary Science Program Operations. "Students must have aptitudes in a wide variety of areas: the sciences, including micro-biology, pathology, chemistry, anatomy, embalming and restorative art; business, social sciences, psychology, and of grief and law

and ethics.” The AAS degree from MCC is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Completion of the program prepares the student to sit for the National Board examination and begin state internship requirements.



Bryce Bunker

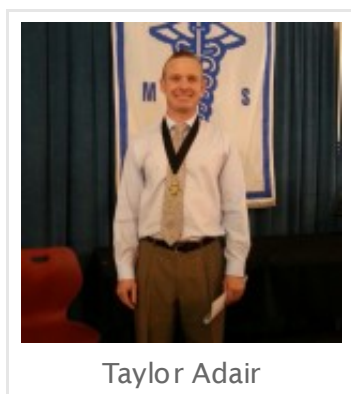
Bunker, 28, is the youngest of six kids and the only one to go into the family business. He originally pursued another line of work, but returned when his father told him he didn't want to sell his business to the conglomerates. For him, the most valuable part of MCC's program was building relationships with others in the industry and having exposure to different techniques. He feels honored when he helps a family decide how best to celebrate the life of a loved one. "If there's anything I'd like to accomplish, it's to let people know that it's ok to celebrate in a different way sometimes, whether extremely formal, or a more casual celebration," he said. "It's ok to celebrate an individual's life in a unique

and individual way and to strip some of the stereotypes away... we want our business to reflect more of a message of hope and light and that we will help you celebrate and heal."



Bill Lowman

For Lowman, 43, it was his father's illness that spurred a career change. After working in the electronics industry for several years, he quit his job and went to fill in for his father in the family funeral home. "It was just amazing, the fulfillment I got out of helping families," Lowman said. "I decided to go to school and get my funeral director license so I can eventually run the family funeral home." Lowman said the most valuable thing he learned was how different people cope with death and how, by body language and voice tone, he could present himself in an appropriate manner to assist the family.



Taylor Adair

"They know things from personal experience and that information keeps you focused," said Adair, 32, who initially went into resort management in California, but returned to the family business to work with his sister and father. He likes having the ability to help people during a hard time and try to make their experience a positive one. Adair noticed that the industry could improve by incorporating more technology and said, "I would like to be part of changing that."

All of the graduates say they decided to attend MCC's Mortuary Science Program based on others' recommendations and the fact that it's the only accredited program in Arizona and one of few in the surrounding states.

MCC proudly recognizes the seven-year accreditation earned by its Mortuary Science Program this spring, along with a rarely earned 'no stipulation' notation.

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About Mesa Community College

Mesa Community College provides outstanding transfer and career and technical programs, workforce development, and life-long learning opportunities to residents of the East Valley area of Phoenix, Arizona. MCC excels in teaching, learning and empowering its more than 40,000 students who attend annually to succeed in a local and global community. Mesa Community College is one of ten colleges that comprise the Maricopa County Community College District. For additional information please visit <http://www.mesacc.edu>.

About Mesa Community College's Mortuary Science Program

The MCC Mortuary Science Program is a member of the National Association of Colleges of Mortuary Science and offers an Associate in Applied Science degree in Mortuary Science. The degree includes studies in public health, business management, natural sciences, legal, ethical and regulatory concerns, and clinical requirements associated with the mortuary field. The curriculum combines coursework in mortuary science with a general education component. The AAS degree from MCC is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Completion of the program prepares the student to sit for the National Board examination and begin state internship requirements. For more information on the program, visit: <http://www.mesacc.edu/programs/mortuary-science>.

American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE)

The American Board of Funeral Service Education serves as the national academic accreditation agency for college and university programs in Funeral Service and Mortuary Science Education. ABFSE is the sole accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation in this field. Additional information is available online at: <http://www.abfse.org/index.html>.

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