

August 2023



## Get to Know 2023 Ambassador of the Year Dean Lambert

Each year, the Trust honors two individuals for their outstanding contributions to the mission and vision of the Selected Educational Trust through the [Ambassador of the Year Awards Program](#), sponsored by [Physicians Mutual](#). We recently sat down with Dean Lambert, named the 2023 Ambassador of the Year - Industry Partner Leader, for a conversation about inspiration, service to others, and lifelong learning.

### **Tell us about your professional history.**

"I began my professional career as a radio personality in Lincoln, Nebraska. When we aren't on the air, I voiced and produced commercials for advertisers. I soon began to re-write the commercials, discovering my love for brand storytelling. During the last six years of my broadcasting career, I added Creative Services Director to my responsibilities. In 1990 I co-founded a marketing agency and a year later we received a call from a funeral home referred to us by a client. Within 3 months of working with the funeral home, I discovered a passion fo

the funeral profession that continues to this day.

“In 1996, I met David Thomas, the VP-Sales of Homesteaders. After two years of consulting work, I joined the company full-time as Director of Marketing. Advancing to Senior VP-Marketing & Communications, I retired from Homesteaders after 25 years. I feel blessed to have been part of a leadership team that grew the organization from a niche market entrant, into the most often-used preneed provider in America.

“In early 2023, I joined the Life Insurers Council as its Executive Director. The LIC is a networking association whose members seek to improve performance through shared excellence. This provides me with an opportunity to continue helping small- to medium-sized life insurance companies meet the needs of consumers seeking to plan and be best prepared for end-of-life needs.

### **Who has inspired you along the way?**

“In general, I am inspired by funeral professionals because they provide something everyone will need, and by their very nature are compelled to serving others in the very worst of times. The commitment it takes to become a funeral professional and to make it a career is not an easy path. Some of the people in my life that have influenced me are:

- Steve O'Brien and Leroy Butherus, who introduced me to the profession and many of my first clients.
- I am so grateful to David and Margaret Thomas for bringing me into the Homesteaders family.  
I would not be able to look back on a 25-year career of professional and personal growth without Graham Cook's support, encouragement and being a living example of servant-leadership.
- Dan Lodermeier, VP-Field Sales of Homesteaders Life Company has been a model leader and friend throughout my career. He has supported me through good times and bad.
- Steve Shaffer has been a mentor to me and guided me for the past ten years and was instrumental in guiding me towards my new role with the LIC.
- Bob Horn and Jim Price have influenced so many in funeral service, and I am so grateful to be included among the many they have helped in their careers.
- I am eternally grateful that the late Bill Bischoff provided me with guidance early in my career, and I was honored to work with him on one of the most impactful innovations in preneed.
- Judy Ralston-Hansen hired me at Homesteaders and helped me grow as a leader. She saved me from career self-destructions on a regular, periodic basis.
- I have John Wild to thank for recommending me to serve on the Selected Educational Trust Board of Trustees. More important, he edified the importance of funeral directors in our society as he helped my family through a most difficult loss.
- The Iles family: Mark, Lori, Mike and Kim helped me so much in my early years working with funeral professionals.
- Finally, and most important, my wife Jill Lambert and my children, McKenzie, Annie and our late son Adam, who first supported me starting a business that caused me to be largely absent for ten years and encouraged the move to Iowa to work with Homesteaders. This “fork in the road” provided me with the ability to work with and influence thousands of funeral and allied professionals and to help hundreds of

thousands of families understand the value of funeral professionals and the work they do 24-7-365.”

**You served on the Trust’s Board of Trustees and participated in many Selected events. Any thoughts about what it means to be connected to Selected?**

“My biggest takeaway from being involved with Selected and the Trust is the genuine altruism of the members of this organization. This invitation-only group of funeral homes and allied vendors is the best-of-the-best in so many ways, but the giving aspect is outstanding. It shows in your Study Groups, your meetings and events, your communications, and the palpable comradery I felt and observed whenever I was around Selected members. Each letter I opened from a scholarship recipient was rewarding to me, and I am so grateful to have been provided the opportunity to make a difference in a future funeral professional’s life.”

**The mission of the Selected Education Trust is to support lifelong learning that furthers the profession. How do you believe that you exemplify that commitment to lifelong learning?**

“Besides my contributions as a Trustee with an eye on betterment of the Trust’s programs and scholarships, my wife and I have contributed time and resources towards other educational funds and programs. Success in our professions is dependent on continuous learning from, as well as educating others. This is the approach I took in helping funeral professionals with consumer outreach; it was all about information and education, not telling and selling Learning provides experiences beyond what one seeks to know, if your focus is on giving as much as you wish to get.”

**What are some of the things you are proud of personally?**

“I am proud of my daughters, who have grown into strong women who seek out challenges and take them on fearlessly. I am proud that I leveraged opportunities to offer my “time and treasure” to the profession that has given so much to me and my family; and I am grateful to know it has made a difference. I will always take pride in my association with the Selected Educational Trust.”

**Do you support any organizations in your community?**

“I am a member of Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Des Moines and serve as the International Vice President for Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity. I actively mentor young professionals and advise a few small business owners on business strategy. I am a member of the Patriot Guard Riders-Iowa Chapter, an organization that provides motorcycle escorts and protection against disruptions for Veterans’ and First Responders’ funerals.”

**Tell us about your family and what you do after hours and for fun.**

“My wife, Jill, is a Senior Account Executive for Homesteaders Life Company. Both of our grown daughters live on the East coast. Jill and I live in central Iowa and enjoy camping, traveling and dining out. I still put lots of miles on my motorcycle.”

**Be an Ambassador Envoy!** Make a gift to the Trust in honor of this year's Award recipients and be recognized as an Ambassador Envoy to show your support.

Dean will be presented with this award during the Selected Educational Trust Reception, to be held on Tuesday, October 10 at the JW Marriott Chicago in conjunction with Selected’s Annual Meeting.

**Make a Gift in Dean's Honor**





*Where Education Meets Excellence*

## **Hoy and Markell to Join the Institute Instructor Roster this Fall**

The Fall Session of the Institute for Exceptional Funeral Service starts Tuesday, September 5 and features two very exciting new courses. Sharpen your team's skills with flexible, self-paced courses for professionals at every level of their learning journey. Work independently online to complete lessons and interact with instructors, wherever and whenever fits your schedule, all while earning up to 8.0 hours of continuing education credit.

**Funeral Arrangements: Make them Meaningful:** Discover the essential skills for making funeral arrangements with families. Learn what to expect, effective ways to ensure you understand what the family wants, and how to create a valuable experience for everyone. *New course taught by Dr. Marc Markell.*

**Conflict Resolution with Families:** Learn to identify the factors that may create polarization and division in bereaved families; and models to help families work together for funeral planning. *New course taught by Dr. Bill Hoy.*

**Being a Successful Professional:** Learn the keys to presenting yourself as a professional and reliable member of your funeral home team, regardless of your title. *Part of the Service Excellence certificate series.*

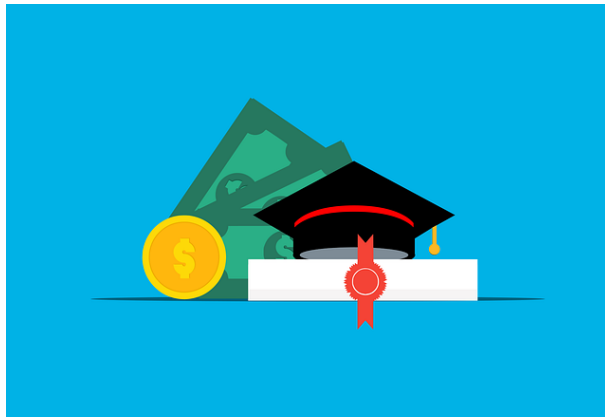
**Making Best Impressions:** Learn to present yourself and communicate to ensure successful interactions with your colleagues and client families. *Part of the Service Excellence certificate series.*

**Mastering the Inquiry Phone Call:** Convert any inquiry phone call into a successful interaction for every client family.

**Financing Fundamentals: Business Growth & Acquisitions:** Whether you want to improve your business finances or grow your business through acquisition, learn the essential steps to position your business for success.

Space is limited, [register yourself and your team](#) before the Friday, September 1 registration deadline. Group rates available. Selected members are eligible for a \$100 discount per course; email [institute@selectedtrust.org](mailto:institute@selectedtrust.org) to request your coupon code. What else does the Institute offer? [Learn more here.](#)

**Register Now**



## Trust to Award Two Scholarships to Mortuary Science Students in Georgia

The Selected Educational Trust is pleased to announce the Ralph S. Turner Memorial Scholarship Program, funded with a gift from A.S. Turner and Sons, Decatur, GA. This scholarship program will grant two \$1,500 awards to students graduating from mortuary science school in the state of Georgia this year. Applications are now being accepted for these scholarships, to be awarded this October.

"Funeral service is a calling, a rewarding one where we walk with a family every step of the way as they honor their loved one," said Cy Hume of A.S. Turner and Sons. "But it also requires deep commitment and hard work. Mr. Turner knew this well and exemplified it every day. Which is why we have chosen to establish this scholarship in his honor—to help lift up those new to funeral service that have demonstrated their willingness to serve in duty of this honorable profession."

The deadline to [apply for these scholarships](#) is September 15.

### Congratulations to the Spring 2023 Second-Career Scholarship Recipients



Jessica Decker



Katelynn Schooley



Lillian Schenck  
Michael R. St. Pierre Memorial  
Scholarship Recipient



Kassandra DiNardo  
Mark L. Justen Memorial  
Scholarship Recipient



Lifelong Learning Starts Now

## Congratulations to our Second-Career Scholarship Recipients!

The recipients of the 2023 Spring cycle of the Second-Career Scholarship Program, sponsored by Gunderson Funeral Home, have been announced and we are so excited to recognize these deserving individuals. The winners are Jessica Decker, attending the State

University of New York (SUNY), Canton, NY, and Katelynn Schooley, attending the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science (PIMS), Pittsburgh, PA.

In addition, the Mark L. Justen Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Kassandra DiNardo and the Michael R. St. Pierre Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Lillian Schenck, both attending Worsham College of Funeral Service, Wheeling, IL.

This signature scholarship program was created to meet the educational needs of the increasing number of second-career professionals entering independent funeral service seeking positions as funeral directors, embalmers and future leaders.

"We often hear personal stories of students that have felt drawn to this profession for much of their lives, and are finally able to take the steps to make it a reality," said Stefanie Favia, Senior Director of Development with the Trust. "The Trust created this scholarship program specifically for these individuals, making sacrifices and taking risks toward a better future for themselves and the profession."

Recipient Lillian Schenck shared this sentiment when she said, "The mortuary science profession calls to me. I came to realize that my ability to help others through their time of crisis while providing a sense of peace, relief, and care has always been a strength of mine. I value resilience and acceptance, and I always incorporate those values in my sensitive approach to those who are grieving. I have long wanted to incorporate these strengths into my career. In 2019, I realized the educational pursuit of this profession was the obvious direction to take in my life." [Watch the recipients' thank you videos here.](#)

Second-Career Scholarships are awarded by the Selected Educational Trust to individuals who have chosen funeral service later in their career journey and currently are attending mortuary school. Since this program was launched in 2010, the Trust has awarded more than \$90,000 in tuition scholarships to students pursuing mortuary sciences as a second career. Applications open soon for the [Fall 2023 Scholarship Cycle](#) and will be due by October 31.



### **Silent Auction is Right Around the Corner**

Tickets to a Red Sox game, David Yurman diamond earrings, and a one-week stay at a vacation home in Cape Coral, Florida. What do these things have in common? You could bid to win any of these and many more during the Trust's Silent Auction this fall.

Join in on the fun and donate your spectacular gift today. Donor names are featured in all

promotions for this event being held during Selected's Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL, October 10-13. What we're looking for:

- Electronics (Smart Watch, iPad, Headphones)
- Fine Jewelry, Handbags, accessories
- Tickets to Sporting Events
- Professional Services
- Gift Certificates for Fine Dining Experiences
- Family-fun Experiences (Disney, River Boat Rides, Outdoor Fun)

Donating an item couldn't be simpler! Just submit an [Item Contribution Form](#) and email a photo of your item to [Deb McReynolds](#).

Stay tuned later this summer to learn more about the auction items and how to participate in the auction virtually!



## Make Your Giving Count

Supporting the Trust is an investment in the future of independent funeral service and lifelong learning. Contributions are tax-deductible.

[Make a Gift](#)

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## Thank You to Our Donors

*July 1-31, 2023*

Baue Family Charitable Fund, Lisa Baue, Saint Charles, MO  
Hinsey-Brown Funeral Service, Inc., Kevin D. Brown, New Castle, IN (*In honor of Amy Hunt*)  
Kelco, Alicia Carr, Big Lake, MN  
Keohane Funeral Home, John E. Keohane, Quincy, MA (*In honor of 2023 Ambassador of the Year Award Recipients*)  
Selected Group 4 Fund (*In memory of Bruce Olson*)  
Webb's Funeral Service, Inc., William McReynolds, Minneapolis, MN

wasburn-mckeavy Funeral Chapels, Inc., William McKeavy, Minneapolis, MN

*Make your gift in memory or in celebration of a loved one, family member, colleague or friend  
For more information on ways to give, contact [Stefanie](#).*

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