

May 2025



Six Scholarship Recipients Unite in Denver

Selected Independent Funeral Homes held its annual Leadership Conference in Denver, CO last month, and the Trust is proud to celebrate the six scholarship recipients in attendance, representing three classes of the Leadership Academy. Congratulations to Jill Lazar and Ping Wu for presenting their capstone presentations and graduating from the Academy!

Jill Lazar presented her capstone entitled “The Art of the Ask,” about preneed referrals. She shared methods to build preneed referral sources, strategies she uses when meeting with families and in the community, and tips for honing your personal pitch.

In her capstone, “Bridging the Gap on Deathcare Knowledge,” Ping Wu shared a behind-the-scenes peek into a YouTube channel she is developing to help educate the public about deathcare.

Interested in embarking on your own leadership journey with the Selected Leadership Academy? Watch the [Trust website](#) this fall to submit a scholarship application for the 2026-2028 class.





Get to Know the Trust's New and Improved Workforce Development Tools

We recently sat down with Tim Bridgers, Managing Director of Preneed at Global Atlantic Financial Group, to discuss the Trust's newly enhanced suite of [Workforce Development tools](#), which now are more widely available thanks to Global Atlantic's support of this program.

The Trust's Workforce Development program is comprised of a suite of four tools designed to help funeral service professionals connect, grow, and build rewarding careers. What inspired Global Atlantic to support this comprehensive program?

"Global Atlantic and our issuing company Forethought Life Insurance certainly have a robust history in the funeral profession, and we are passionate to not only serve our customers well but to invest in the future of funeral service. We believe this program meets a significant need for the profession and supporting it reinforces our long-term commitment to building the talent pipeline."

From your perspective, what are some of the biggest challenges facing independent funeral home owners today?

"At Global Atlantic, we understand the significance of funeral service and the lasting impact it has on families during end-of-life experiences. Having caring professional and committed funeral professionals is the foundation. With better education, more visibility on the career opportunities and support in that career transition, we believe this workforce development program will make a lasting impact."

Why should employers take advantage of these tools?

"Funeral home owners and hiring managers should take advantage of the workforce development resources to streamline recruiting needs. These give you the ability to interact with qualified candidates while maintaining a focus on the day-to-day responsibilities of running the business."

Why should job seekers take advantage of these tools?

"Funeral job seekers should use these resources to gain a perspective on all the unique funeral service career opportunities through a reputable organization like the Selected Educational Trust. The funeral profession offers gratifying career opportunities in many geographies across the globe. Understanding the opportunities for aspiring funeral professionals is key to finding the right fit for their career."

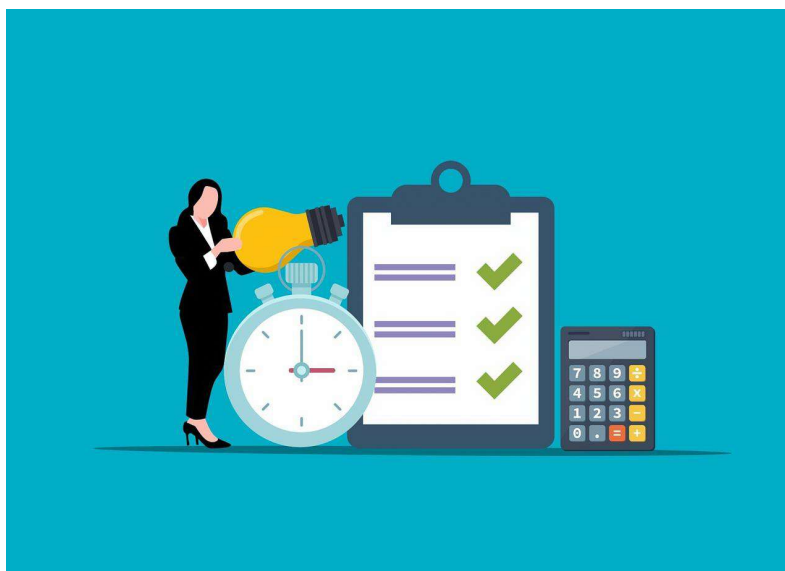
How does this align with Global Atlantic's broader mission?

"Trust requires an environment that is honest, fair and transparent. Global Atlantic is committed to maintaining a trusting relationship with our partners and customers through integrity, teamwork and diversity. Underpinning these tenets is

intellectual curiosity and always seeking creative solutions to serve our customers, grow our business and support continued improvement for the funeral profession.”

Get started today! Getting started is simple. If you're an employer seeking top talent, it's easy to post a job listing, browse candidate listings, or register to participate in an upcoming job fair. If you're a student or job seeker, you can search for job listings based on region, create your anonymous candidate profile for employers to find and connect with you, or peruse a growing archive of resources to help educate and guide you along the path of funeral service.

Access the Workforce Development Tools



The Trust is Awarding \$9,500 in Scholarships in June—Have You Applied Yet?

If you or someone you know is in mortuary science school, the Trust has opportunities to help ease the burdens of tuition.

[Second Career Scholarships](#) are the perfect way to support the development and growth of the apprentices and funeral assistants on your team. Three \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded this cycle, the [Michael R. St. Pierre Memorial Scholarship](#) and two scholarships sponsored by [Gunderson Funeral and Cremation Care](#).

The [Mark and Nancy Justen Memorial Scholarship](#) will grant one \$5,000 award to a student enrolled in a mortuary science school located in the Midwest.

Applications are now being accepted for these scholarships, to be awarded this June. But don't wait, applications must be received by Saturday, May 31.





Recognizing Leaders in Funeral Service: Last Change to Nominate

This year marks the fifth year of celebrating excellence in funeral service through the [Ambassador of the Year Awards Program](#). We have honored eight individuals for their outstanding contributions to the mission and vision of the Selected Educational Trust, personal contributions to independent funeral service, and commitment to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all who work within the profession.

And this year, we will add two more names to this impressive list during a ceremony held at Selected's Annual Meeting. Do you know who should be honored next? [Nominate yourself or a colleague](#) for this prestigious honor by May 31, 2025.

The Trust thanks [Physicians Mutual](#), sponsor of the Ambassador of the Year Awards Program since its inception in 2021.



Want to Make a Bigger Impact with Your Charitable Giving?

Introducing the Trust's Guide to Smart Giving, a series of articles designed to help you make informed donation decisions. The first article in the series, written by Chad Davidson, Good Fellow CFO, breaks down how donations to 501(c)(3) nonprofits really work—what qualifies, how they support the cause, and how they might even reduce your taxes. Whether you're a seasoned donor or are preparing to make your first gift, understanding these details can help you give more confidently and effectively. Learn how your generosity fuels meaningful change and benefits your bottom line. [Read the full article](#) to learn more.



Bringing Meaning to the Arrangement Room: A Course for Exceptional Funeral Service

Making funeral arrangements can feel overwhelming—for both families and funeral directors. The Institute for Exceptional Funeral Service invites you to gain the skills and confidence to guide families with compassion and clarity. [Funeral Arrangements: Make them Meaningful](#) is an online course designed to help you simplify the arrangement process, listen actively, communicate effectively, and handle conflict with care. Learn how to create a service that truly honors each life and meets the unique needs of every family. Strengthen your professional impact—register today and take the next step in providing exceptional, meaningful service to those you serve.

This course is just one of many exclusive courses offered by [the Institute for Exceptional Funeral Service, powered by NGL](#). For a limited time only, enter code 'NGLInstitute' at checkout for a 50% discount off the full price (a savings of almost \$100). Clients of NGL, members of Selected Independent Funeral Homes, and students enrolled in mortuary science education programs are eligible for additional savings. Email institute@selectedtrust.org to learn more.

Register Now

Thank You to Our Donors

April 1 - 30, 2025

Alhiser-Comer Mortuary, Megan Comer, Escondido, CA (*In Memory of Stuart Comer*)
 Answering Service for Directors (ASD), Kevin Czachor, Media, PA
 The Foresight Companies, Chris Cruger, Phoenix, AZ
 Gunderson Funeral Home, Rachel Gunderson, Madison, WI
 Lensing Funeral & Cremation Service, Michael Lensing, Iowa City, IA
 O'Connor Mortuary, Joseph G. Fitzgerald, Laguna Hills, CA
 Robert Nunnaley, Pines Funerals, Carthage, NC
 Selected Group 1 Fund (*In Memory of Francis Joseph Murphy*)

*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](#).*

Make a Gift

[Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [About Us](#) | [Giving](#)

Be sure to add our email address to your address book or safe senders list so our emails get to your inbox.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

[Selected Educational Trust](#)

One Overlook Point, Suite 530, Lincolnshire, IL 60069