

STEVEN McCONNELL

In my lifetime I have attended many funerals and have witnessed death on an immediate basis. I have also seen many funerals on television all seeming to have the same boring type of service. Occasionally, you have family members that grieve in a manner that makes it interesting, but otherwise it is the traditional cookie cutter service.

In my funeral home I want to introduce destination funerals. Similar to destination weddings, people would be able to have their last religious rites at the location or place that they loved. I think the destination funeral concept will revolutionize funerals as we know it. We already know that people are willing to spend money on anything they deem valuable so taking that and capitalizing on a service that is not currently being rendered to my knowledge is a great competitive advantage.

I have been passionate about the ministry of funerals since I was a little boy, enough so to make me chase the funeral coach to see where it was going and reading the obituaries in several major news publications daily just to see who died. In all of the funerals that I have attended all are typical services. People view death in a sad way, but I think it should be a celebration of the deceased. That means if the deceased led a lively life, the services should be just as elaborate or extravagant as the life the person lived. When I think about funerals I think it directly correlates to weddings. These two events are the only events that people seem to spend a large amount of money on and I think both should show who you are as a person.

I believe that if the deceased was in love with the ocean, we can have an oceanfront service where all of the attendees would dress in attire that is beach appropriate and an island band can play. Say for instance they were an avid golfer, we can set up the services on the green and all would be welcome to say a nice word about their love one right on their favorite hole or par. I can see mountainside funerals or lakefront services. Anywhere that was feasible I want to be able to offer to my client's family.

This idea was birthed when I saw the final services for President Ronald Reagan. It is the moment that is emblazed in my memory. I can remember Former First Lady Nancy Reagan, standing in front of President Reagan's casket sitting high upon a hill in Simi Valley, California, at the Ronald Reagan Library. The services were held at sunset and the site was simply breath taking. It took me to a place of peace and clarity in death. I think that others could achieve a similar sense of peace knowing that your love one is being remembered and immortalized at the place that they loved. So, I hope that in my funeral home I am able to offer destination services that will leave lasting memories with every family.

