



A book everyone should have

► **There are 11 chapters:**

- Immediate Action (dealing with the details such as the death certificate)

- Making the Arrangements (disposition and services)
- The Expression of Loss (dealing with grief; the different kinds of losses, including natural causes, homicide, suicide and miscarriage)
- The Experience and Emotions of Parting (more on grief depending on the relationship to the deceased)
- Support Techniques and Grief Resolution (working toward a "new normal")
- When Death Becomes a Media Event (not just for celebrities—any violent crime death may mean dealing with the press and public)
- When Death Occurs Away from Home (including military deaths)
- Practical Matters of the Death (wills, trusts, probate, insurance)
- Death After a Terminal Illness (facing death, hospice, prepaying for a funeral)
- When Pets Die (including pet funerals and memorials)
- Moving On
- Plus an appendix on condolence letters

► **Frank B. Stewart Jr.'s foreword** talks about his theology of life and death and ends with a brief description and explanation of the importance of the "three separate physical acts necessary in death care":

- **The funeral service**, whether a ceremony, ritual or service. "If the funeral is omitted, people will seek you out in the future to express their sympathy and condolences, socially or at business encounters, just when you are returning to some normalcy."
- **The cemetery component**. "Most people only feel the presence of the spirit when visiting the resting place of the physical temple that held the spirit."
- **The monumental or memorial component**. "People yearn to be remembered as having been significant."

“**W**hat To Do When a Loved One Dies” could change the image of death care nationally, according to Frank B. Stewart Jr., chairman emeritus of Stewart Enterprises.

“It is going to be a great resource for our salespeople and marketing people to use to educate the public about the nature of our business and what we do to help people at the worst time in their lives,” Stewart said. “It could change our profession’s image nationally by educating people on what death care is all about.”

Stewart liked Shaw’s book so much he wrote the foreword. “I learned about the book by accident. She mentioned the book on a national talk show, and the announcer, who happens to be a good friend of mine, said, ‘You’ve got to meet Frank Stewart.’ She flew to New Orleans and we met. After we talked, she asked me to write the foreword to the book.

“What I ended up writing was a condensed version of a thesis I wrote 44 years ago about my philosophy of life and death.”

Shaw bought back the rights to the book, originally published in the ‘90s, revised and updated it and published the second edition this year.

This new edition includes not only the foreword from Stewart but also positive reviews from an impressive array of people, including “On Death and Dying” author Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, ICFA General Counsel Robert M. Fells, bereavement counselors, ministers and bereaved individuals who found her book invaluable.

What is it that makes this book different from all the others that touch on the death care profession? Its comprehensiveness (see description at left).

“Everybody has a medical book at home that they use to look things up when they are diagnosed with something,” Stewart said. “They have an encyclopedia, a dictionary and other resource books. There already are a number of wonderful books on grief and acceptance of mortality, but there’s never been a book as comprehensive and complete as this.

“This book is the encyclopedia of death care. It gives you all the options and alter-



Frank B. Stewart Jr., chairman emeritus of Stewart Enterprises Inc., with Eva Shaw, author of “What To Do When a Loved One Dies” at the ICFA Convention & Exposition in March.

natives. It enables you to open the discussion with every family you serve—or families you want to serve preneed—and be able to put them at ease.”

Stewart suggests that owners of funeral homes and cemeteries might want to buy the book in bulk and promote it to their families.

“At Stewart, every funeral director and sales counselor will have it,” he said, “and we’ll display it on the counters in our funeral homes, at the reception desk and in the coffee rooms. We’re going to offer them at a discount to our clients.”

Promoting the book is a good way to help the families you already serve and to spot potential customers, Stewart said.

“Anybody who orders a copy of this book is saying, ‘I want to know more about this business,’” Stewart said. “What greater identification of a prospect can you ask for? The book is a means to an end as far as getting someone to preplan.

“Recently, I offered the book to a friend who had lost her husband. I told her it contained a lot of information on grief and accepting mortality and getting back to normal after a death. She had not used our facilities, but she liked the book so much, she bought spaces in one of our cemeteries and moved her husband there.”

Shaw’s book covers material everyone should have easy access to, even if they don’t want to read it cover to cover immediately. Stewart facilities will be getting the message across. “We’re putting a ribbon across the book that says, ‘What every family should know,’” Stewart said. □