



Women and Men in the Funeral Industry

<http://www.funeraldirectorschat.com/2011/women-funeral-industry/>
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Nancy Burban: Hi, I am Nancy Burban, your host for Funeral Director's Chat, a podcast providing funeral professionals with insight to current industry topics, news and trends. Today we will be discussing the differences between men and women and the impact it has on the funeral services industry. I am very pleased to present Kim Stacey. She is a friend of mine. She is also a licensed funeral director in the State of California. And more importantly she is an academically trained anthropologist who studied death rituals around the globe.

Seven years ago Kim took her knowledge out of the college classroom and became a freelance writer.

She focused her energy specifically on funeral service which is her passion. Kim has written website copy for over 1000 funeral homes in the United States and Canada. She has written trade journal articles for American Funeral Director, American Cemetery, and Mortuary Management.

And she has recently in the year 2009 started the Association of Women Funeral Directors. And then shortly thereafter widened the scope of the membership in 2010 which necessitated the changing of the name of the organization to the AAFP, The Association of Women Funeral Professionals.

And today we are here with Kim to explore the impact of gender stereotypes in the funeral home. And the ways that we can counter the often deep seated biases which limit our potential. Welcome Kim.

Kim Stacey: Oh, thank you Nancy. It's wonderful to be here.

Nancy: So Kim, what have you learned in your experience about gender biases in the funeral home setting?

Kim: Well, it's an interesting question because just recently I've encountered a number of young women who came to me extremely distressed with the fact that they had graduated from Mortuary College, completed their apprenticeships, and were finding it difficult to get a job in funeral homes in their area, because honestly the administrators didn't want women in the funeral home. And they felt that they had been, I don't want to say lied to or deceived, but under advised by their academic instructors as to the difficulties of getting and holding a job as a woman in funeral service.

Now Nancy, you and I both know because we are of the right age group, that gender bias has existed for a very long time, my whole lifetime, my mother's lifetime.

And it's devastating. The effects are absolutely devastating. My mother drank herself to death because she never achieved what she set out to do because of gender bias. And it's unfortunate that it continues to limit what people of either gender can do. It compartmentalizes our potential.

And my goal is to widen our perspective on the value of acceptance. Basically, in fact today when I was at a strength training class, one of the jokes that was bantered around was a sexually based joke about women and told by a man. And there you are in a co-ed situation and he thought it was perfectly to OK to utter that joke.

And yet, and we all chuckled, we are all good natured about it. But the differences between men and women are indeed programmed biologically and we can't really get away with changing our biology but we can change the way we think about the opposite gender.

When you think about it, what's the difference between men and women, Nancy? Not just physicality, but the cultural overlay. What are those differences? Basically in our culture, women are trained to be more nurturing. We tend to be more communicative. We talk a lot.

I remember how many boyfriends have I had who said 'boy, women talk a lot.' We look for solutions that please everybody. That's one of the major differences I've seen within the workplace. We seek team based solutions. Men on the other hand, are not as communicative. They are more isolated, and they are more task oriented.

So if you couple those two things, you get one really good team, as long as you value the contributions of both halves of the team. That's where I think funeral homes and workplaces in general undermine their own productivity, because they discount the value of one half of the team.

Nancy: Let me ask you a quick question. You will have often heard this expression. Women need to take care, while men take charge. Now how does that play out in the funeral home setting?

Kim: I think quite often women are relegated to positions of caretaking. In fact one of my apprentices commented that her administrator really wants her to just pick up the used Kleenex in the chapel and do the vacuuming and tend to the physical surroundings, greet the families when they come in and then exit stage right, so that he can take over and appear to be in control.

So there is a good example of the men taking charge and the women taking care. Women can do both. And men can do both. But in the funeral home setting the dichotomy is very strong.

Nancy: And it goes back many generations as you probably know. Women actually took care of the dead before the Civil War and then when the industry became monetized, it was a business for men primarily. And men ran the business with their wives and their daughters helping them.

Kim: That's right, that's right, and completely uprooted death care, taking it out of the home and into the workplace which relegated women to the back room or to the support positions. I've read a wonderful book recently written by the wife of a funeral director at the turn of the century in Indiana. And it's self published and the family got enough copies to share with one another.

But she spoke a lot about going to other people's homes and she was the one caring in the embalming table and all the supplies, while her husband did the embalming. And she was relegated to this.

My mother used to call it a fetch and [inaudible 07:58] position where you just brought things in and then let the man in the room take center stage.

And she had a lot of wonderful stories in this book about mishaps in bringing the embalming materials into the homes of the families who had experienced loss.

It's a wonderful little book I'd like to get republished on a wider basis but yes it has been going on for generations now. And it's time for it to stop because it's debilitating to everyone concerned, and demoralizing.

Nancy: Yes it is. Now if we focus more narrowly on the funeral home setting, as you said there are three common dilemmas currently experienced by women in funeral service. And is supported by many comments from your AWFE members. Can you elaborate on that?

Kim: Well, I'd love to and it's too true. I have spoken with women all across the country and these are the three things that keep coming up. Women are perceived to never quite get it right. There is always something amiss with their performance. Those who act as they are expected to act as women are considered too soft, too touchy feely, too emotive, too emotional.

And those who are harder, they go against the gender role, are considered too tough. The second theme is that women face higher performance standards than their male counterparts.

And there again that ties into the first point that they never quite achieve those higher standards. They are never quite right because the standards are set higher than their male counterparts.

Often they have to do double the amount of work to get half the attention and notice. And of course it's well known that women are paid less than men in most workplace settings. And it's not untrue in the funeral home. And then the third theme is that women who assume leadership are seen as competent, yes, but not very well liked.

If they were liked, they are usually more stereotypically female, taking care of those behind the scenes roles, printing the memorial folders, tending to the paperwork, picking up the used Kleenex, tidying the funeral home.

Those women are seen as more personable, and fun to work with than the women who try and step up to the leadership plate. They are considered competent and yet not personable.

Nancy: Let's be frank Kim. The insidious effects of gender based stereotyping are not just limited to women, are they?

Kim: Oh, for heaven sake no. No. Sorry! [?] It's a two way street. Unfortunately, men are crippled by the perceptions we have of their behavior as well. And it's unfortunate that our culture, and it is a culturally defined entity. Every culture has different expectations of the genders. In some cultures, it's the men who do more crying than the women, the men who are

softer in our terms than the women. That's not true here. Men are supposed to be strong and forever confident.

Especially in funeral service today where you've got big issues of earning a living and price points with your competitors and nobody's walking through the front door, men get scared too.

I've spoken with a lot of men who are funeral home owners who are struggling with tending to the grieving families and balancing the accounts. Between the two, they're uncomfortable with where they sit, but they're not supposed to show it. Women are more allowed to show it and yet considered less competent.

So neither one of us are benefiting from our gender stereotypes. I'd really love to see everybody making a conscious effort, a mindful effort to let go of those before you open your mouth, before you think that thought, stop and ask is it a gender-based statement, like the gentleman today in my strength training class who told that joke.

If he had thought before he spoke, he might not have said that. But he wanted to be witty and wise and charming, and all he did was be somewhat offensive and mindless.

I'd really like to see a conscious effort on the part of everyone in the funeral home setting to release old ways of thinking. Adopt the attitude of androgyny or what I like to call ambigender. You remember the old Barbie and Ken dolls, Nancy?

Nancy: Oh, of course.

Kim: They had the vague gender attributes, but they were the same. Basically, that's what I'm looking for where all of us can just release gender. Toss it out on its ear and focus on skill sets and unique potential. Everybody who's listening to this and everybody in the world today has potential, but we as societies place limits on potential, and gender bias is one of those limitations. If we could learn to release those through mindful thought, mindful speech and action, we'd all be better off.

Nancy: You're absolutely right. In fact, I did a survey on Facebook last week in one of the funeral groups that I'm involved in, and I asked, "What is the one aspect of funeral service that you cringe at, that you don't want to handle, and you'd rather somebody else handle this for you?" Invariably, I won't cite their names but most of the male funeral directors said they cannot bury children. If there is somebody that comes in in a horrific accident, they don't want to show any emotion on their face, and it's very difficult for them to deal with the client families.

My response was you should show emotion. You should have the same basic responses that women have. You shouldn't have to hide them.

Kim: I agree with you wholeheartedly, but you know that flies in the face of cultural expectations, and those are ingrained from the moment we're born. I won't go into the details of a story except to say that when my firstborn son was seen by his father, he was thrilled at the size of his equipment to use an odd phrase. That focus on the maleness of that brand new baby was critical to my husband's happiness, and that's not so true when girl babies are born.

But, bottom line, the moment we're seen and wrapped in a pink or a boy blanket, we're put in a box, and we carry that with us until the day we stop breathing. Fighting against it is just that. It's a fight.

Funeral directors, the men especially, releasing their emotions is hard for them. I think that's why alcoholism rates are so high in the field.

I spoke with a gentleman yesterday who is just despondent, and he comments, "I want to go home and just drink myself into a stupor," because of the high demand placed on him by the client families, in excess of what he feels they're paying him for.

It's challenging. Being a human being is challenging enough, but doing this work adds a level of closeness and emotional vulnerability that is hard to deal with on a daily basis.

Nancy: Right. As an anthropologist, I'm sure you'll agree with Helen Fisher and the studies that Jane Goodall did with the chimps in the wild, as you just said about your own son, where they look at newborn chimps or other newborn animals and the males are looked at for strength training - - Can they swing from trees? can they source food? - where the women are given a little bit of a break there.

Kim: That's right. It's odd, isn't it, that it goes all the way back to that primate level, and different cultures have taken it in different directions, but always you can bet that every culture has boxes for people. But basically those boxes suboptimize all of us, and we need to let go of them. It's not just a philosophical touchy-feely, let's all change and accept one another. You can really do this through quantifiable means.

I think the most valuable one is to institute if your firm doesn't already have performance evaluation processes in place, you need to set them in place, and you need to have them be rigorous and completely transparent as it relates to gender. Focus on the skill sets of the individual, not the gender of the individual.

Then it all comes down to education, providing your staff with the educational opportunities on gender and gender-related issues, and I'm not just talking sexual harassment here. That does occur in any workplace where there are men and women, but that's the bottom of the pile.

For me, it's the latent influences of stereotyping that affect the quality of life in the workplace and the quality of the client family experience.

Nancy: There are many good tools out there. There are many great trainers. Robin Heppel does a great training. Bill Bates with his life appreciation training does a great training, and they travel around the country, and they do try to resolve these issues within the funeral workplace. They bring men and women together, and they basically share what their roles are, what their expectations are. How can we work as a team to better serve the client family?

How can we celebrate this life? Because at the end of the day, it's not about I cannot lift the body and you can, and I can put makeup on better than you can.

It's about serving the client family and celebrating a life which has just passed. We need to keep that in the forefront of our mind always when serving client families. It's not about us. It's about them, and it's about providing great service. You agree?

Kim: Well said. Beautifully said. It all comes down to that, the client family experience, because that's what leads of course to repeat calls and referrals if you really want to get down to the bottom line. But we all know that the bottom line isn't essential. What's really important is what you do to help that client family in the moment.

Nancy: Very well-spoken. How does the AWWFP hope to combat gender bias in the workplace? I know you have some really great theories on these. Could you share them with us?

Kim: I would love to. Basically, it's all about education and wearing the other person's shoe for a while if you can. When you live inside a box, the box gets really small after a while, and education opens that up, and you lead a better life. Learning is the key to happiness in my mind's eye.

Just recently I started taking a fencing class, for example, because it takes me out of my normal box and puts me someplace new. Opens the mind to new experiences, education.

One of the best quotes I've ever heard about men and women had to do with... Remember those wonderful old black and white movies with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers? Oh my god, I could spend hours in front of the TV watching those as a teenager, and I remember Faith Whittlesey.

Nancy: I remember sitting in front of the TV also and watching the old Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire movies, and Faith Whittlesey once said it best. I think you know this quote. Go ahead.

Kim: I do! "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did but backwards and in high heels." Women are very capable, Nancy. You and I both know that, very valuable participants in the funeral home, and, yes, they can dance backwards.

Nancy: And what do these women bring to the energy of a funeral home?

Kim: If you want to go to the Chinese, the yin and yang, they bring an energy that many client families really appreciate. That softer, more subtle energy, competent, detail-oriented. I hear it all the time from client families, how thrilled they were when they went into a funeral home and they could sit down with a woman and talk about their loved one and plan a service that honored them.

Women's energies are different, yes. They're not better, they're not worse. They're just different, and they complement male energies. And recognizing that, that's what it's all about, recognizing it and honoring it.

Nancy: And people resonate differently. Many of your prospects will come to your firm simply because you have a feminine presence.

Kim: I agree, I really do. And not just in the support staff, but in the front, in the client arrangement rooms, pre-need counselors. Some of the most successful women I know are pre-need counselors and grief support people. Those are the women that make a difference in the

funeral home. The license directors, I've spoken with a lot of licensed embalmers, who - even though the family never sees them - they've contributed to the quality of experience through the expression of their basic characteristics of detail and compassion.

Nancy: Absolutely, and Kim, just to reiterate what we were speaking about earlier, you look at the world a little bit differently. You look at it as an anthropologist, and your lens is right now focused on the funeral home setting. But that's not to say that there aren't absolutely wonderful caring, giving funeral directors who are male. And some of them are... Beacham McDougald. Dennis Digger McGee. Marty Flagg. Wally Hobbs. I can go on and on.

And of course Robin Heppell, Bill Bates, their companies that go into funeral homes and train them to use, as you said, the yin and the yang, and to work together to make it a memorable experience.

It's so important. Because they teach you things in mortuary school, but what they don't teach you is, how do women handle embalming? How do men handle caretaking? When the roles need to be switched, how do we do that exactly, and what kind of skill set do we need to put on a different hat and serve a different need?

Kim: That's right. Boy, very well said. I was thinking back to all the gentlemen you mentioned, and the literally hundreds of men funeral service professionals I've spoken with as a website copywriter. Wonderful people. I'm not bashing them. My feminist days of the 70s are long gone. There is no sharp line drawn in the sand for me.

There's only an appreciation for the qualities of both genders for the individuals of funeral service. The work that they do, I don't care whether you're male or female, it's important work. Society needs you.

They undervalue the work you're doing, and that to me is one of the biggest problems we're facing, is that most of the people in our society don't value the work you do until they need you. And that's a hard place to be, day after day.

And then, on the other side of the coin, I'm thinking about the women I've spoken to. Sharon Mace of Special Touch Funeral Service in Dublin, California.

She's an older woman. She's 58, we're in the same ballpark, and she is a one-woman firm, and she's doing things her way, and making a difference in her community. Joan Billman of Fleming Billman in Ohio, she's a phenomenally powerful woman in her state associations.

They're just so unique. Every one of us brings something special to this field.

Nancy: And let's not forget Nancy Lohman in Florida, who as history tells us, married a funeral director who wanted to get out of the business, and instead of doing that, he increased the business. I believe her and her husband have about 30 funeral homes and crematories, is that correct?

Kim: That's correct. She's phenomenal. I got to work with her on a website project, and she's just awe-inspiring, no doubt about it.

Nancy: And Kim, that brings us back to you. The reason you founded this association was, let's face it, women are underserved in the funeral profession, and you made it your life mission at this point in your life to try and help them, to mentor them, to provide education, to provide advice. We're going to take a couple questions from the audience, but tell us a little bit about why you founded this association.

Kim: Basically, I started this organization because I saw that women were struggling in the funeral home setting. Having spoken with a number of women in funeral homes as part of the website copywriting process, interviewing them for their biographies online, that sort of thing, I heard a lot of frustration and a lot of anxiety about what the future would hold.

Yes, indeed, there are more women in mortuary college, but I'd like to know the statistics for attrition. I think there are a lot of graduates of programs, but that doesn't necessarily translate to more women in the workplace.

So I saw that certainly with the background I have in life coaching - I've worked with a lot of life coaches - I've learned that giving someone support doesn't necessarily mean telling them what to do. It just means providing them with the resources that they could use, and the self-confidence to choose to use them.

So, it's a social experiment. I'm finding that the Association is growing every day. There's more and more interest in it, so I feel we're on the right track. We're now setting up regional and state representatives, so we can get more of a grass roots energy going, as opposed to Internet only.

So a lot of things are changing for us as an organization, but I feel there's a need, a strong need here. I get a lot of thank yous from women for starting the organization, and they feel stronger just knowing they're part of a support network of other women.

Nancy: That's great, and I heard a lot of really positive comments at the ICCFA about you and about your organization, and especially the mentoring program.

Kim: Well, that's one of my favorite things to do, is the mentoring of both young and middle-aged women coming into the profession. It's fascinating how many women come back to their original desires in their late 40s and early 50s. They've raised their families, they've now decided this is the time, I'm going back to mortuary college.

And then they find themselves in a classroom full of very young people, and they feel a little overwhelmed by that. So providing mentoring to the older student is just as rewarding as the 18-year-old who's coming into the mortuary college classroom and facing some major academic hurdles. I'm also really thrilled with our Mastermind Groups.

Nancy: Tell us about that.

Kim: Well, you know, we all get together. Women with five years or more experience in the field are our predominant members, but we're not holding tight to that rule. A Mastermind Group is designed to support you in achieving goals. It's not a support group in the sense of emotional support, but provides you with brainstorming. I liken it to the Vulcan mind meld from the Star Trek days. We all put our mind together and focus on one goal for each member, how they can

achieve it. It's six weeks of intense weekly phone conversations and accountability calls with your accountability partner, so that at the end of the six weeks you've achieved one or more of the goals you set out.

Nancy: Great. That sounds really inspiring. Now, let's get back to, you help women find jobs, and scholarships, and the like. And I have two Funeral Director Chat members who sent me questions that they would like me to ask you. And as of Sunday, the beginning of April, the job market, it looks like we're getting more jobs back. But actually, over 90 percent of those jobs are going to men, and only 10 percent are going to women.

And as I understand it from speaking to a few women before this podcast, that's pretty much the same statistics that they're seeing in the funeral service industry. So I have two questions from two different women from different parts of the country, and I'd like to get your mindset on this.

Kim: OK.

Nancy: OK? The first is from Rebecca Casper. She works at Crespo & Jirrels Funeral and Cremation Services in Texas. She studied mortuary science at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, and she currently lives in Highlands, Texas. And this is what she'd like to know. She says, "Kim, I would like to know what types of scholarships are out there to get back into college. I started going to Commonwealth Institute in Houston, Texas, and because of circumstances I had to withdraw. I already had to get two student loans, and have done FASFA.

Now at this point, I don't have the money to get back to finish my college degree, and I only have three terms left. The biggest reason is I have three kids, and I need all the financial help I can get. Any suggestions, Kim?"

Kim: Oh, you know, she's in a tough position, no doubt about it. And basically, student loans are a hole you just don't want to dig any deeper. I would advise two things. Going online is a great source for potential applications for scholarships. There's a variety of scholarships, and I would go for the low-end scholarship and get as many of them as you could; rather than the more expansive \$10,000 scholarships, go for five \$2,000 ones. But basically, I would go online.

The AAFP just posted their first scholarship. It's only for \$500, but it's a great start. I put it out there in honor of my mother, and I think it ties in with this topic perfectly.

I mentioned earlier in the broadcast that she passed away due to incipient alcoholism because of acute frustration for never living up to her own personal potential. And in honor of Rosemary Stacey, I've started the Rosemary Stacey Memorial Scholarship. And I'm so proud to have done that for her.

Nancy: That's wonderful. The second question comes from Patricia McGrane Johnson. I happen to know Patricia, and she's a wonderful lady. She lives on Long Island in West Babylon, New York, and she did her internship at Frederick J. Chapey and Sons Funeral Home. She studied mortuary science and also has an educational degree from Nassau Community College, which is on Long Island. She interned from June 2007 to 2008. There was not a position available at the funeral home that she interned at, and she has yet to find work.

One of the perceived problems is that she has a hearing disability. And she feels that just by seeing the hearing aid or knowing that she has the hearing disability, that she is at a liability when she competes against younger people and other people who have no such problems.

What would you suggest that Patricia do in the meantime, because she has such a passion for funeral service, and she really needs to get back in there.

Kim: Well basically, at this point I can imagine she's fairly demoralized. That's a long time to be without a position in the field that you love. And it's a common theme I hear from many of the women I speak to every week. They can't find a job. They're ready to throw in the towel and become a security guard. Basically, picking yourself up, getting yourself out into the funeral home community, visiting every funeral home in your area within a reasonable commuting distance, getting to know the funeral home owners, letting them get to know you, and after that fact, you present yourself as a potential freelance funeral director.

This is a model that's working really well for many of our members. They are on call when a funeral home has an employee who's taking a vacation, they can fill in on a temporary basis, whether it be a 24-hour period or a two-week period.

The freelance funeral director is a big commodity these days. Because funeral directors need rest and recreation. And especially these firms owned by one or maybe two partners. They're overworked. And they get burned out.

So providing them with freelance services is a great way to get your foot in the door. And then when a position opens, you can choose to accept it or not.

And certainly my third option here in California, the model of outsourcing your work allows people to start a funeral service, not your typical funeral home, but a funeral service in a smaller locale, and you can own your own firm and do things your own way.

This is the model that Sharon Mace uses for A Special Touch Funeral Service in Dublin. I wrote a column on her for Mortuary Management this month, and she's got a phenomenally successful small business. And she's the woman in charge.

And that allows her to do something different than working for a male employer, which she has done. And she chose to do things differently.

So that may be an option for Rhode Island and New York; I'm not sure.

Nancy: Now you said she outsources, so that she would be ...

Kim: That's right. She outsources everything. Her crematory is in San Leandro; her embalmer is in San Jose. She operates her business out of a tech center in Dublin. It's a little tiny firm, probably the size of your living room. Sharon's firm is, I would say, about the size of my office. It's very small, very homey. You can see pictures of her facility online at her website, aspecialtouchfuneralservice.com, if you're interested in looking. But it's small. It has not got a visitation room. It has not got a prep room.

She outsources her cremations and her embalming. It's all done off-site, and it's working.

Nancy: And how does she attract clients?

Kim: She's got a very strong networking and educational program going on. She does a lot of senior fairs. She also is part of Rotary. She does a lot of things with the Rotary. It's all word of mouth primarily. She's got a high rate of client satisfaction.

Nancy: That's great. That's really wonderful. OK, Kim, how about wrapping this up with just a few sentences on what your goals are going forward in 2011 with the AAFP, and then also give us some information on how women, or men, listening to this broadcast can get in touch with you.

Kim: My goals for 2011, bottom line, to grow our membership. One of the ways I'm doing that is by getting in touch with women in every single state who would like to be a regional or state coordinator, so we can have more local live events where women can come together to learn from one another and just support one another. One of the other goals I have has to do with the website that was recently redesigned. I'm doing my utmost to cultivate a strong library of content which would be valuable to funeral directors of both genders, to educate and inform, to open lines of communication through the blog, our Facebook page.

We have well over 500 fans on our Facebook page, which doesn't sound like much, but I'm still very proud of it because we've got a really good dialogue going between the blog and the Facebook.

We also have a LinkedIn group. So between the three we're getting funeral professionals of both genders talking in settings that are potentially rewarding.

Nancy: Kim, what is the website? Because it's not AAFP, could you tell us what the website is?

Kim: I certainly can. It's wfpconnect.com. I came up with an acronym that might work: WendyFrancinePaulaConnect.com, WomenFuneralProfessionalsConnect.com.

Nancy: Great. And what is your motto?

Kim: Strengthening the presence of women in funeral service. I'm very pleased with that that just gives me the chills every time I say it. If I can achieve one small measure of my intended goal, I'll be thrilled.

Nancy: You're providing a very valuable resource, and we encourage everyone, men and women, at any level of their career in funeral service to go to Kim's website and also to her Facebook page and become one of her fans. I know that we crossover. We have a lot of people on Funeral Directors Chat who are also fans of Kim, and I'd like to encourage more people to visit her Facebook and her website and read some of the content because it's really good.

It's very informative, and it's very cutting edge, especially the articles she writes for "Mortuary Management" and "American Funeral Director". Very well done, she's a great writer.

Kim: Thank you so much. I have to comment just briefly. The March issue of "American Funeral Director" has an article by me about me called "Diary of a Funeral Service Dilettante",

and every time I say that, I get a little titillated. That sounds interesting, but it also sounds a little bit discouraging. I am not a dilettante in the traditional sense of the word.

The article in essence is about licensing standards, so don't be dismayed by the title. Go in for the meat. The title has very little to do with the content. Yes, my picture is on the article but, bottom line, licensing standards nationwide is the focus of the article.

Nancy: And it's a very good article as well, and it provides some very valuable information.

Kim: Thank you.

Nancy: Thank you so much, Kim, for joining me today and for encouraging women every single day of your life, encouraging and mentoring women in the funeral service profession. You provide such a valuable resource for all of us, men, women, and, from an anthropology point of view, you've really put a good focus on why the differences are there without assigning blame. So I thank you for that.

Kim: Oh, my pleasure. I've enjoyed every minute of it.

Nancy: Terrific! Contact Kim if you need any information for [music] any reason. Thank you.

Kim: Thank you, Nancy.

Announcement: Ordering cremation urns for your funeral home is easy with unitedpriority.com. Email your client an urn description from our website or receive tier pricing when ordering more than one item. Help your clients find the right urn with unitedpriority.com. [music ends]

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