



Cremation Association of North America

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CANA Hosted Innovators In Seattle For 103rd Convention

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CANA HOSTED INNOVATORS IN SEATTLE FOR 103RD CONVENTION

WHEELING, IL—Inspired by the enthusiasm of its members, the Cremation Association of North America decided to host the 103rd Annual Cremation Innovation Convention in-person this August 11-13, 2021 in Seattle, Washington. As valuable as the virtual connections of the last year have been, the sound of more than 200 people talking, laughing, and enjoying each other was a wonderful return.

CANA's Conventions are known for attracting a small group of people for fun, food and drink, learning, and networking centered around cremation. Staff made special effort to balance the need for safety with the need to connect, choosing to bring quality over quantity. With just 45 exhibits and "just right" attendance numbers, CANA welcomed innovative thinkers, engaging presenters, generous sponsors, and cremation leaders that were ready to come together.

"We all had our ways to manage the risk. All CANA and venue staff, including myself, wore masks consistently. Some others wore masks, most didn't. Some of us had yellow caution labels on our name badges, but most had green labels inviting hugs and handshakes," explained Barbara Kemmis, CANA Executive Director. "Eighteen months after the 2020 Cremation Symposium, words cannot express how wonderful it felt to reconnect with the 240 people who joined us."

Others agreed. When asked what the highlight of the event was, people replied that gathering together was it.

"It was great finally being able to be around our colleagues again in person!" said one survey respondent, echoing the feedback of others reveling in time together. "I really enjoyed how much people were willing to share information about their experiences. It was an amazing learning opportunity for me."

Since CANA Conventions keep presentations, exhibits, food and drink in one room, no one missed out on the fun of reconnecting. Companies exhibit looking for leads and sales – which were made – but often to connect with customers and develop a relationship. CANA's Exhibitors considered this a "productive convention... time well spent." Plus, CANA welcomed 12 new exhibitors who could take advantage of the intimate space to connect with decision-makers both on the floor and on the stage with added programming devoted to highlighting supplier products, services, and recent innovations.

As always, the education presentations drew crowds with excellent content on all things cremation. Robbie Pape inspired leaders to *Own It!* in the keynote, followed by Leili McMurrough's insights on the modern workforce, closing with roundtables with innovators to share and listen on challenges and solutions from the field. The second day was packed with solutions for permanent memorialization from Robert Hunsaker and Dr. Lynn Gibson, groundbreaking research by Homesteaders Life and CANA delivered by Barbara Kemmis, and a panel discussing local trends with Char Carpenter Barrett discussing home funerals, Katrina Spade on natural organic reduction, and Sandra Walker on alkaline hydrolysis and making these ideas work in the funeral home and cemetery facilitated by Glenda Stansbury. Each presentation brought new energy to the room and engaged attendees with new ideas.

CANA knows not everyone is ready to reconnect in-person. The decision to travel involves more than judging whether time away from family or business is feasible—there are other risks and benefits to calculate while considering the shifting restrictions to protect everyone's safety. But, like every funeral, cremation, and cemetery business throughout this pandemic, CANA was proud to host an event for those who could join us.

Now, association leadership turns its attention to the 2022 Cremation Symposium at The LINQ Hotel + Experience on the Las Vegas Strip. This Symposium will break the mold of previous events and be reimaged for cremation innovators looking for the latest ideas and trends. Save the date to join us for a new experience coming February 9-11, 2022. Or, keep on the lookout for details about CANA's 104th Cremation Innovation Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in August 2022! Find more information at goCANA.org/education

ABOUT CANA

Founded in 1913, the Cremation Association of North America (CANA) is an international organization of over 3,300 members, composed of funeral homes, cemeteries, crematories, industry suppliers, and consultants.

CANA members believe that cremation is preparation for memorialization.

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