

The following was presented by Board Member Jud Compton at the Hall of Distinction Induction Ceremony of the Dover Historical Society, on Sunday, April 22, 2018.

## John Herzig

This is truly a unique selection. Most of the previous inducted members of the Dover Hall of Distinction are deceased, but this distinguished member was selected because he embraces the deceased. Kind of sounds like a Lon Chaney horror show!

John Richard Herzig was born in Dover, Ohio in 1952 to Richard and Marilyn Toland Herzig. He and his sister, Peggy, lived in the back of the current funeral home with his parents and grandparents who ran the local funeral parlor.

John graduated from Dover HS in 1970, where he participated in football and track, and played percussion in a garage band called "The Dynamics." Being fascinated with the mortuary details, he enrolled into Ashland University as a Pre-Med student and a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. Following graduation John furthered his education and earned a Master's degree from the Pittsburg Institute of Mortuary Science, and then joined the family business in 1975 as an assistant to his father. In 1990, John was named the President.

In the meantime, John courted a beautiful young lady, Joyce Dallau, which led to their marriage in 1976. Three children soon followed, Trevor, Troy (Kim) and Tricia (Joel). The family has expanded to include nine grandchildren. Tricia followed her father's lead and graduated from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science and joined the funeral home in 2005 and is Vice President as a licensed embalmer and director. Son, Troy, joined the company in 2015 as the grounds caretaker and license crematory operator, thus becoming the fourth generation.

The Toland-Herzig Funeral Home has been a trusted service in the city of Dover since 1929. Gaining his experience from the Boyd Furniture and Funeral Company, John's Grandfather, John W. Toland and his wife, Marguerite, ventured out and established the Toland Funeral Home on the corner of Slingluff and Walnut Street. Six years later, the business was relocated one block up to the Toomey House of Slingluff and Wooster in 1935. Several connections and upgrades have taken place to attain the present look. Soon, a new parking lot will enhance the entrance.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation included John's father, Richard Herzig, who just happened to marry Toland's only daughter, Marilyn. Richard, who served the country during WWII, graduated from the Pittsburg Institute of Mortuary Science in 1949 and joined the family business, which later partnered as the Toland-Herzig Funeral Home. When John came along in 1952, it was natural

for his to become the third generation leader of the crypt. He grew up in the home and participated in many services, such as removals and assisting with ambulance calls, which was a service until 1980.

Expansion continued as a satellite site (Steffe Funeral Home in Strasburg) was acquired in 1976 and the Monarch Center was purchased in 2000 as a facility to host post funeral gatherings and host other community events.

I am sure Grandpa Toland and Mr. Herzig would be very proud to see the magnitude of their accomplishments are continuing at a high capacity through the genuine service and compassion provided to each family client. The company includes 25 dedicated employees to help serve the need. A few of the many recognitions the company has received include; the National Museums of Funeral Homes in Houston, Texas, the Order of Golden Rule for Funeral Home Innovation, The Golden Eagle Award and the premier Hall of Excellence from the National Funeral Directors Association.

### ***Famous Endings Museum***

Many a young man has had an obsession to collect baseball cards, but John's passion led him to accumulating funeral cards and memorabilia as his interested hobby. This led to the beginning of his Famous Endings Museum that continues to grow in popularity. It is the largest privately owned collection of funeral memorabilia in the world. The Funeral Home and Museum has been featured in countless magazines including Ripley's Believe It or Not, Southern Calls, Ohio Magazine, The American Funeral Director's Journal, and even featured in the Funeral Director's Magazine of England. To date, the museum has received over 10,000 guests with visitors from 48 states and 3 countries.

The collection started with an autograph of Joe Lewis, along with a program from his funeral in 1981. Other items soon amassed up to 2,500 pieces which beamed to be displayed. Through Joyce's encouragement and organization, and the talent of George Laurence, the Famous Endings Museum came to life. There are sections to honor political and military heroes, actors and entertainers, astronauts and inventors, athletes and comedians, writers and the lesser known. Everyone has their favorites to reminisce and keep the memories alive. Some of my favorites are Andy Griffith, Vince Lombardi, the Harlem Globetrotters, Wyatt Erp and Doc Holiday. One person's comment from her visit was, "This is the place where the life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living. Perhaps it helps those attending funeral services to realize how everyone lives on in our memories."

John is a wonderful ambassador for the city of Dover. His easy going personality lowers your blood pressure by just being closet to him. John and his wife, Joyce, are genuine outreach supporters of community events such as A Walk to Remember, Union Hospital, Dover Schools,

WJER Radio, St. John's UCC, The Cleveland Cavaliers Fan Club, and the Cleveland Indians Media Day.

In addition, John has invested in his community by serving faithfully as a Union Hospital Trustee for 20 years, Chairman of the Board for Hospice, President of the Strasburg Jaycees, President of the United Way, and a term as the Exalted Ruler of the Dover Elks Organization among many others.

I often ask people after they view the museum, "Did you find your picture?" (Not yet!) Just like a quality cemetery, everyone is dying to get in!

John and Joyce are the owners of the Famous Endings Museum, (they might not desire this statement because they are so humble), but today, their namesake is ENDING FAMOUSLY!