

Love and Memories

Last Forever!

New Beginnings Foundation, an Outreach Program of Ruffner-Wakelin Funeral Homes, began in 1991. This led to our annual Christmas Memorial Service, now held in both locations, and weekly bereavement groups at each funeral home.

We offer our families true personalization with our themed *Celebrant* services.

What is a Celebrant?

A *Celebrant* is a person who is trained and certified to meet the needs of families during their time of loss. They serve by providing a funeral service that is personalized to reflect the personality and life-style of the deceased.

The Noecker Family Funeral Homes are active members of *International Cemetery, Crematory and Funeral Association (ICCFA)*, Cremation Association of North America (*CANA*) *National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA)* and the *Arizona Funeral and Cemetery Association*.

NFDA, has honored our funeral homes with the Eagle Pursuit of Excellence award, the highest honor paid to a funeral home in the association.

The Noecker Family Funeral Homes are proud to introduce the *Internet Tribute Package on our website* which consists of the family obituary and a guest book. If a family provides 25 to 40 photos, a personalized video tribute may be viewed on-line and the family will receive a DVD version to view at home.

We strive to make all life celebrations personal and meaningful.



Let our staff of licensed professionals assist you in creating a memorable tribute to your loved one. With Celebrants, Themes, Pictures and Personal Items, we will continue the traditions handed down to us over Five Generations.

Heritage is what we're about and it's what a funeral tribute is about.

The Ruffner-Wakelin Funeral Homes have been serving Yavapai County for over 115 years, and is the oldest Funeral Home in Arizona.

What sets us apart?

- *We own and operate our own Crematory so your loved ones never leave our care.
- *Licensed Staff and Crematory operators
- *Affordability
- *Dignified and Compassionate



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*Locally Family Owned
& Operated Funeral
Homes and Crematory
Since "1903"*



Ruffner-Wakelin

*Ruffner-Wakelin Funeral Home & Crematory
Prescott
Ruffner-Wakelin Bradshaw Chapel &
Crematory*

*A brief History of our
Heritage.*

*On a snowy night,
January 3, 1903*



When the Territory of Arizona attained statehood in 1912, the Ruffner Funeral Home had been serving the people of central Arizona for nine years.

George C. Ruffner, the revered pioneer sheriff of Yavapai County, acquired the establishment in a rather unorthodox manner. On the night of January 3, 1903, George Ruffner chose to spend the snowy evening playing faro at the Palace Saloon. (Gambling was legal in territorial times.) Among the participants in the game was the local undertaker, Mr. Nevins, who frequently rented various types of livery from the Ruffner Stable for use in his business.

Near the end of the evening, they were the only two left in the game. When required to bet, Nevins had little money left on the table. He did, however, owe the Ruffner Livery Stable a sizable past-due account for services.

Nevins suggested a “double or nothing” bet. If Nevins had the winning hand, Ruffner agreed to mark the bill paid in full. If Ruffner proved the winner, the undertaking parlor would be owned by George Ruffner.

The name of today’s establishment gives ample evidence of the outcome. Ruffner obtained a mortician’s license from the Territory of Arizona.

George’s younger brother, Lester Lee, after attending the Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, took formal possession of the firm on New Year’s Eve 1906.

For the next forty years, Lester Ruffner devoted his life to the business, moving to the present location in 1927 when he purchased the Edmund W. Wells home built in 1878.

The building, excellently maintained over the years, is a classic example of Victorian Italianate influence. The style predates High Victorian Gothic, which later became so popular. Judge Wells, a respected citizen of early Prescott, was a former Yavapai County Attorney, Assistant U.S. Attorney for Arizona, Attorney General of the Territory, Candidate for Governor, and in 1910, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

Judge Wells supervised construction of his home and obtained the lumber from the Thumb Butte sawmill of Virgil and Wyatt Earp, later of Tombstone fame. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the Historic House Association of America.

Lester Lee’s son, Lester “Budge” Ward Ruffner, after completing his education, joined the firm in 1940 and, with the exception of four years of service in the United States Air Force, remained active in the family business until 1978. He became a well known writer and teacher of the American West.

Budge died on May 14, 1996, while speaking to a group of Rotarians in Litchfield Park, Arizona, about his beloved Arizona.

Ruffner Wakelin Funeral Home is the oldest funeral establishment in Arizona and the oldest continuous business in the city of Prescott.

In 1978 The Ruffner Funeral Home was purchased by Fred Wakelin.

Fred and his family recognized the beauty of Prescott and the desirability of raising their family here. In 1997 the Bradshaw Chapel and Crematory were added to address the needs of Families in Prescott Valley. Fred continued this Heritage until his passing in 2012.

In 2016 The Funeral Homes and Crematory were purchased by Todd and Melinda Noecker. Todd, a Fourth Generation Funeral Director from Gillette, Wyoming was very excited to move his family to the Prescott area.

Todd is the Past President of the Wyoming Funeral Directors Association and Past Secretary of the Nevada Funeral Directors Association. In 1992 he obtained his Certified Funeral Service Practitioners status. A certification given to those who continue to educate themselves on the needs of today’s Families, together with his wife Melinda they have over 52 years serving in the Funeral Profession.

Kimball Arnold facilitates our New Beginnings bereavement group every Tuesday at 3:00pm in the old Ruffner Carriage House behind the Funeral Home

The mission of the Noecker Family is to serve our communities in the manner in which we would want our own families served. We are charged with the responsibility of presenting to our client families their options and choices, thereby enabling them to make informed decisions. For what is done this week can not be redone next week and will impact the family the rest of their lives.