

**FUNERAL HOME
SUCCESS STORY**



In 1950, Chester Hansen finished his service with the Navy and took an aptitude test. His results listed Funeral Director among his top matches upon completing that test. Shortly thereafter, he and his wife, Jan Hansen, joined the funeral business in Phoenix, Arizona. Just like that, the beginning of a legacy began. Today, Hansen Mortuaries is in the hands of the second generation. It is owned by Brad Hansen and Trish Hansen-Kerr and runs smoothly thanks to the hard work of an amazing team.

The Hansen family has expanded their father's business from the original location, Hansen Mortuary Chapel, in North Phoenix on 7th Street to three locations, including the Hansen Desert Hills Mortuary and Cemetery in Scottsdale and their own crematory.

The most important decision for people after a death isn't burial vs cremation, it is rather to fully understand how their choices impact the emotional, relational and spiritual well-being of those who have cared for, loved and shared life with their loved one.

The Hansen Family mission is to take the mystery out of what to do when a loved one dies and focus instead on how to maximize the benefits from each stage of the process so families can grieve, grow, heal and continue to love.

"Our funeral homes are very comfortable," mentions Brad Hansen. "They have a lot of light. We wanted to make sure each of our locations had a lot of windows and felt open and warm."

Since first opening their doors in 1950, The Hansen Family has continued to go above and beyond for the families they serve. The Hansen's treat each family that walks through the doors as if they are an extension of their own family and strive to form lasting relationships.

"Our parents established a legacy when they got into this business and the reason for our success today is all thanks to them. We do everything we can to continue treating families the way they taught us and to follow in



their footsteps. The legacy is hard to describe, but at the base of it all is the golden rule and treating people as you would like to be treated," explains Brad.

Chet and Jan Hansen had a vision when they first started their business. They wanted to be known for treating their families with the upmost respect and kindness and today the second (and third) generation Hansens are doing their parents proud as they continue to run the business the same way.

"Once a death has occurred and you treat that family as if they were your own, you can't help but feel like they are forever a part of your family. And when we built our team, we looked for individuals that felt that same way and believed in the same concept and vision that we did. That alone is probably the biggest factor in our success. When people come in, older people that still remember our parents, they always thank us for carrying on our parents traditions," he continues.

Chet and Jan were known for how much they gave. They gave their time, money, and they gave everything they had to the families and community they served. Chet lived by the saying, "the more you give, the more you get," and he didn't mean that in a monetary sense.

"My father's legacy inspired us to continue to put our families first and give everything we have. We are a family of givers. Each location is very active in the community and that's a huge part of who we are, where we came from, and where we are going," says Trish Hansen-Kerr.

Following the recipe for success their parents crafted over the years, Brad and Trish have continued to lead Hansen Mortuaries on a bright path. However, as times have changed and trends have evolved, the Hansen recipe has been tweaked throughout the years. One of the small changes that has left a big impact is the addition of Lily the Goldendoodle to the Hansen family and business.

"People love her. We had no idea the impact she would make on the families we serve," begins Trish.

Lily's reputation in the funeral home was somewhat serendipitous. Several years ago, Trish decided to bring Lily to work, not realizing the impact she would have.

"Brad wasn't too keen on the idea at first. This was six or seven years ago before it was the norm to have a comfort or therapy dog in funeral homes, but after talking about it we decided to give it a go. Now Lily warms hearts everyday - even Brad's," laughs Trish.

With Lily on the frontlines to greet guests, the funeral home is instantly warm and inviting. Lily's presence adds a special something to the Hansen experience that proves the Arizona family knows how to change with the times and set trends. Once families meet her, they always ask if she will attend the visitation or service - she's quickly become one of the most popular team members.

In addition to adding a comfort dog to their team, the Hansen brand added a boutique style cemetery to their business as well.

"After our dad retired, we took on the project of adding the cemetery. He urged us against adding it to the business, but of course we didn't listen. We knew it made sense for us and we are so glad it's something we took the time to add. I think today if he could see what it has become, he would be so proud. It's beautiful and doing very well for us. The boutique style is very unusual and unique, and it's something that really makes us stand out," says Trish.

For Brad and Trish, a big part of the Hansen philosophy includes surrounding themselves with the best people they possibly can and one of their favorite relationships is with Johnson Consulting.

"We recognize that we don't know it all and that we can't do it all ourselves. Like with anything else, if you have good support when it comes to your accountants, your lawyers, your advisors, etc - you will be successful. Johnson Consulting is headquartered right here with us in Scottsdale, Arizona so we fit together naturally from the start. We started out with their surveys and now we use many of their services. They think the same way that we do, so the relationship could not be any more natural - they are a great company and such a perfect fit for us. It has been a very fruitful partnership and they do a great job at keeping us focused and on track. They make sure that we are taking care of our families but also our business as well," explains Brad.

Some people may find that giving everything they have each day to be exhausting, but for the Hansen crew, it is what fuels them.

"My faith helps me to keep residual emotions from following me home from work. I don't look at what I do as dealing with death every day, I see it as helping people every day. I never look at something from a negative angle, I always try to put a positive spin on everything. I go home at the end of the day knowing I gave the best I could to the families I serve and gave them all I had, so I feel rewarded and lucky to be a part of this business. It is a joy to give and a joy to help people, so if you don't have that - this business isn't right for you," expresses Trish.

Growing up in the funeral industry has made this career and everything it entails second nature for Brad and Trish. "This business is a lifestyle. We grew up with it and

it's nearly impossible for us to separate our home and work lives because they have all been blended together. Our work is our family. You can't help but take some of it home with you at times, that's just the nature of the industry. But taking time off relieves the weight that can build up on your shoulders. And that's one thing we always stress to our employees. We urge them to take their days off and make it clear that we don't want to see them working during vacation or breaks. Down time is a huge part of maintaining balance in life - so we take it seriously here. I love to travel when I am not working, and that rejuvenates me and helps me deal with the stress that comes with working in this business. As you get older, you get better at dealing with maintaining the balance," adds Brad.

Hansen Mortuaries knows how to take care of their employees. Team members of course have standard days they can take off when needed, but unlike other businesses they are required to take a minimum of five consecutive days off in a row during the year for vacation. The rule for time off is even clearly outlined in the Hansen handbook, stating that all employees must honor the five-days-off-in-a-row rule.

"We know this business is tough and we know it is very easy to get burned out and that is why we require vacations and consecutive time off," explains Trish.

Paying close attention to employees and keeping their best interest in mind is a big factor in the overall success of the Hansen name and the reason they have such low turnover with staff.

"Yes, Trish and I are the leaders, but there is no way we would be successful without the support of our advisors and staff. We know what we are looking for when we hire someone, we look for those with the same mindset that we have and those who will make us better," says Brad.

They must be doing something right because the Arizona funeral home has had employees with them for 20+ years.

"My Admin and Cemetery Guru, Crystal has been with us 23 years. We have an Embalmer and Funeral Director, Rachel who has been with us for 25 years. We just had a retirement party for a member of our staff who has been a part of our team for 23 years as well. We don't have a lot of turnover and we are so blessed in that aspect. Families get to know our staff over the years and come in asking for them by name, which is good for the business but also great for the families too," adds Trish.

It's not shocking that Hansen Mortuaries has been successful throughout the years. The strong foundation built by Chet and Jan many years ago based upon giving back, the golden rule, family values, and a passion for helping the community paved the way for the next generations' hard work to strengthen the Hansen name. Backed by passionate people who care deeply for the families they serve as well as their staff, the Hansen legacy will continue for years to come.

"We are so lucky to be able to do what we do and are beyond grateful that our parents built this legacy for us to honor and continue to grow," says Brad.