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## Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts Collection

1959-2020  
10 boxes (2.09 linear feet)  
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Read collection overview

### Background on Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts

Funerals in the U.S. are an expensive business, and grieving families will often accept what is called “traditional” rather than try to fight for services tailored to their budgets and beliefs. The first memorial societies were founded to combat the often predatory practices of the funeral industry after embalming prices skyrocketed in the 1930s, but the movement didn’t fully catch on until 1958 when investigative journalist Jessica Mitford brought the issue to greater public attention. Her article “Saint Peter Don’t Call On Me,” television appearances, and subsequent book “The American Way of Death” broke taboos surrounding the discussion of burial and sparked the founding of watchdog and consumer advocacy organizations across the country. The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Mass (FCAWM), initially known as the Springfield Memorial Society, was founded in 1959, incorporated in March 1962, and by 1963 had federated with other similar organizations to create the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies (CAFMS). When Canadian groups separated from CAFMS, the federation name changed to Funeral and Memorial Societies of America (FAMSA), and later (2000) the Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA).

For 60 years the FCAWM has conducted biennial surveys of funeral home prices in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties, maintained a newsletter, educated the public about funeral planning, and lobbied for greater industry transparency.

### Scope of collection

The bulk of the FCAWM records contain organizational records such as correspondence, minutes and agendas for public and private meetings, and financial records.

There is also a selection of informational pamphlets and leaflets generated by the FCAWM, other FCAs, and the funeral industry. Additionally, there are several pages from a set of scrapbooks maintained by former members between 1964 and 1978 which contain newspaper and magazine clippings on death, dying, and the funeral industry at large. The collection was acquired from Sandra Ward in 2021, a board member and former president of the FCAWM, and includes material collected both by herself and previous presidents.

## Series descriptions

### [Series 1. Administrative Records](#)

Consists of internal communication and documents from the FCAWM dated from 1959 to 2014. Included are materials pertaining to public annual meetings and meetings of the board of trustees such as agendas, minutes and notes; financial records including treasurer's reports, tax documents, and the FCAWM's application for tax-exemption; documents detailing the organization's bylaws, aims, and processes; and materials for the production of price surveys and quarterly newsletters.

### [Series 2. Publicity](#)

Contains printed materials from the FCAWM as well as other regional FCA chapters and general funeral industry organizations. Included are newsletters, price surveys of funeral homes in the region, brochures, educational booklets, and catalogs.

### [Series 3. Clippings and Subject Files](#)

This series is comprised of portions of newspapers as well as clippings and printouts of individual articles relating to death, dying, and the funeral industry. The bulk of this series comes from a scrapbook of such articles maintained by the FCAWM from January 1964 to October 1978.

## Inventory

### Series 1. Administrative Records

1959-2014

1023, 501(c)3 application drafts, acceptance

2005-2010

Box 1: 1.

501(c)3 application guide, correspondence

2009 Nov-2010 Jun

Box 1: 2.

800 number, notes, correspondence, report, phone logs

2004 Feb-2006 May

Box 1: 3.

Advocacy ideas, correspondence, articles

2010-2012

Box 1: 4.

Annual meetings: schedules, minutes, news clippings

1959-1969

Box 1: 5.

Annual meetings: programs, news clippings

1979-1979

Box 1: 6.

Annual meetings: treasurers reports

1980-1988

Box 1: 7.

Annual meetings: announcements, agendas, notes, press release, cassettes

1990-1999

Box 1: 8.

Annual meeting: packet, notes, treasurer's report

2000

Box 1: 9.

Annual meeting: promotion, guest speaker Lisa Carlson, minutes

2001

Box 1: 10.

Annual meeting: minutes, bylaws revision, location materials, attendance

2003 Nov

Box 1: 11.

Annual meeting: minutes, attendance, correspondence, program

2004 Nov-2004 Oct

Box 1: 12.

Annual meeting: minutes, treasurer's report, agenda, directions

2005 Oct

Box 1: 13.

Annual meeting: agenda, attendance, minutes

2006 Nov

Box 1: 14.

Annual meeting: agenda, minutes, treasurer's report

2008 Oct

Box 1: 15.

Annual reports: correspondence, copies

1962-1998

Box 1: 16.

Articles of incorporation, correspondence, notes

2010

Box 1: 17.

Bank account, correspondence, notes

2003 Apr-2004 Nov, 2007

Box 1: 18.

Barbara Meltzer memorials

2004 Apr

Box 1: 19.

Boundaries, correspondence

2000 Aug 31-2004 Feb 21

Box 1: 20.

Bylaws, proposed revisions, correspondence, passed at annual meeting

2003 Nov

Box 1: 21.

Complaints to FCA, local and national, correspondence

2005 Feb-2005 May

Box 1: 22.

Correspondence: Coan, Carol

2003-2009

Box 2: 1.

Correspondence: Fatherly, John, book reviews

2005-2007

Box 2: 2.

Correspondence: funeral homes

1977-2008

Box 2: 3.

Correspondence: general

2003  
Box 2: 4.  
Correspondence: general  
2005-2008  
Box 2: 5.  
Correspondence: Lepper, Mabel; Lepper, Arthur  
1959-1984  
Box 2: 6.  
Correspondence; Lewonchuk, Cecelia  
2003-2009  
Box 2: 7.  
Correspondence: progress reports  
2003 May-2004 Apr  
Box 2: 8.  
Duties of officers and trustees  
1998  
Box 2: 9.  
Employer identification number: notes, application  
2003 Apr  
Box 2: 10.  
FCAEM: meeting notes, brochure  
2003  
Box 2: 11.  
Funeral rule violation, FOIA, article  
1996 Feb-1996 Nov  
Box 2: 12.  
Good standing, correspondence  
2004 Nov-2005 Feb  
Box 2: 13.  
History, past trustees, correspondence  
1995,1998,2003,2008  
Box 2: 14.  
Incorporation copy, correspondence  
1962,2003  
Box 2: 15.  
Incorporation copy, bylaws, amendment  
1962,1994  
Box 2: 16.  
IRS: tax exemption revoked, correspondence  
2013 Mar  
Box 2: 17.  
IRS documents: general, correspondence  
2014  
Box 2: 18.  
IRS questions, instructions  
2012-2014  
Box 2: 19.  
Logbook: members list, donations  
1995-2001  
Box 2: 20.  
Log: orders, contributions  
2003 Mar-2004 Aug  
Box 2: 21.  
Mailing list  
2004 Nov 24  
Box 2: 22.  
Members list  
1999-2001  
Box 3: 1.  
Members list, new members  
2003-2004  
Box 3: 2.  
Members lists  
2003 Nov-2004 Mar  
Box 3: 3.  
Membership transfer letters  
2004 Apr 6-2004 Oct 21  
Box 3: 4.  
Members list  
2010 Nov 20  
Box 3: 5.  
Memorial: Lepper, Mabel  
1999 Oct 18  
Box 3: 6.  
Order form, survey, responses  
2003 Jun  
Box 3: 7.  
Post office box: notes, coupons  
2003 Apr  
Box 3: 8.  
Publicity guide, correspondence, town crier contact  
2003  
Box 3: 9.  
Press release info and samples, press contacts  
2001-2004  
Box 3: 10.  
Price survey, correspondence  
2004  
Box 3: 11.  
Price survey samples  
1998,2004  
Box 3: 12.  
Procedures, duties of officers and trustees  
2004  
Box 3: 13.  
Recruitment, notes, surveys, correspondence  
2003  
Box 3: 14.  
Steering committee minutes, correspondence, attendance  
2003 Sep-2003 Oct  
Box 3: 15.  
Steering committee notes, correspondence  
2003 Jun-2003 Aug

Box 3: 16.  
Tax exemption: instructions, application  
2009-2013  
Box 3: 17.  
Thank you letters: examples, correspondence  
2009-2011  
Box 3: 18.  
Treasurer's reports, notes, correspondence, prep, copies  
1999-2008  
Box 3: 19.  
Trustee meetings: minutes, notes, correspondence, schedule, bylaws  
2004  
Box 4: 1.  
Trustee meetings: correspondence, minutes, history, price survey  
2005  
Box 4: 2.  
Trustee meetings: correspondence, minutes, agendas, flier, treasurer's reports  
2006  
Box 4: 3.  
Trustee meetings: correspondence, agendas, minutes, notes, flier, newsletter  
2007  
Box 4: 4.  
Trustee meetings: correspondence, minutes, agendas  
2008  
Box 4: 5.  
Trustee meetings: minutes, correspondence, agendas  
2009  
Box 4: 6.  
Trustee meetings: agendas, minutes, correspondence, flier  
2010  
Box 4: 7.  
Series 2. Publicity  
1964-2020  
AARP product reports  
1992  
Box 5: 1.  
Biennial Conference  
2006 Jun  
Box 5: 2.  
Booklet: cancer connections, correspondence  
2004 Oct  
Box 5: 3.  
Booklets: choosing your path, planning, consumer guides  
1995-2005  
Box 5: 4.  
Booklets: funeral costs, children's questions about death, right to die, planning, living will  
1966-2003  
Box 5: 5.  
Booklets, handout: hospice  
1991-1993  
Box 5: 6.  
Brochures, order forms  
2003-2018  
Box 5: 7.  
Brochure: skin donation  
2003  
Box 5: 8.  
Brochures: Spanish  
2012-2013,2019  
Box 5: 9.  
Carol Coan talk  
2004 Nov 29  
Box 5: 10.  
Choices, voices, newsletter  
1997-2001  
Box 5: 11.  
Cremation bill hearings  
1984 Oct-1990 Oct  
Box 5: 12.  
Cremation: pricelists, brochures, certificate of scattering  
2003 Jun, 2004 Mar  
Box 5: 13.  
Examples of talks  
1965-2020  
Box 5: 14.  
FAMSA newsletters  
1994-1999  
Box 5: 15.  
FCA correspondence to affiliates  
1996-2004  
Box 5: 16.  
FCA brochures, correspondence, CD  
2015-2017  
Box 6: 1.  
FCA brochure: caring for your own dead  
1996 Aug  
Box 6: 2.  
FCA: GPL training examples  
2004  
Box 6: 3.  
FCA national board election, correspondence to affiliates, voting information  
2003-2004  
Box 6: 4.  
FCA national bylaws  
1978-2001  
Box 6: 5.  
FCA newsletters  
2000-2004  
Box 6: 6.  
FCA newsletters  
2005-2010  
Box 6: 7.  
FCAEM: new member packet

2000-2001  
Box 6: 8.  
FCAWM: membership packet 1/2  
2000  
Box 6: 9.  
FCAWM: membership packet 2/2  
2000  
Box 6: 10.  
FCAWM newsletters, notes, prototype, correspondence  
2003  
Box 6: 11.  
FCAWM newsletters, correspondence, notes  
2004  
Box 6: 12.  
FCAWM newsletters, correspondence, brochure  
2005-2006  
Box 6: 13.  
FCAWM newsletter, appeal for donations  
2007  
Box 6: 14.  
FCAWM newsletters  
2008  
Box 6: 15.  
FWACM newsletters, drafts, appeal for volunteers  
2009  
Box 6: 16.  
FCAWM newsletter, correspondence, costs  
2010  
Box 6: 17.  
FCAWM newsletters  
2010-2011  
Box 6: 18.  
FCAWM newsletters  
2012-2014  
Box 6: 19.  
FCAWM newsletters  
2015-2020  
Box 6: 20.  
Fliers: general  
2006,2008,2018  
Box 6: 21.  
Frontline  
2003 May-2005 Aug  
Box 7: 1.  
FTC funeral rule, brochure  
1996 Dec, 2009 Nov  
Box 7: 2.  
FTC: grading a GPL, complying with a funeral rule  
2014-2015  
Box 7: 3.  
Fundraising letters  
2014-2015  
Box 7: 4.  
Funeral ethics organization, newsletters, caring for the dead in MA, booklet  
2005-2006,2011,2019  
Box 7: 5.  
How much will my funeral cost? checklist  
1995  
Box 7: 6.  
Insurance forum  
1996 Jun  
Box 7: 7.  
Mass dept. of public health: burial permits  
2004 Jul 7  
Box 7: 8.  
Membership applications  
1966,2003  
Box 7: 9.  
Mortuary management  
2002 Mar  
Box 7: 10.  
National cremation news  
2004 May 21  
Box 7: 11.  
Newsletters from other FCAs, memorial societies  
2000-2005  
Box 7: 12.  
Order form: five wishes pamphlet  
2005  
Box 7: 13.  
Press release, media guides  
2002 Apr-2006 Nov  
Box 7: 14.  
Price surveys  
1994-1999  
Box 7: 15.  
Price Survey, f.h. materials, 1/2, press release  
2002  
Box 7: 16.  
Price survey, f.h. materials, 2/2, disk  
2002  
Box 7: 17.  
Price surey, notes, funeral home list, GPLs  
2006  
Box 8: 1.  
Price survey, GPLs  
2008  
Box 8: 2.  
Price survey: GPL request, draft, price list, media guide  
2010  
Box 8: 3.  
Price survey: draft, list  
2012

Box 8: 4.  
Price survey: GPL request, price list  
2014  
Box 8: 5.  
Price survey: correspondence, non respondents, methods, price list, articles  
2016  
Box 8: 6.  
Price survey: correspondence, methods, list, re-design  
2018  
Box 8: 7.  
Product catalogs: caskets, urns, correspondence  
2005  
Box 8: 8.  
Service catalog: Czelusniak funeral home  
2005  
Box 8: 9.  
Service catalog: the arbors  
2005  
Box 8: 10.  
Springfield memorial society: mailers, announcements, reports  
1964-2001  
Box 8: 11.  
Springfield memorial society: funeral planning materials  
1991 Oct  
Box 8: 12.  
Website: printouts, proposal, notes, floppy disk  
2003  
Box 8: 13.  
[Website capture](#)  
2021 Aug 6  
Website: correspondence, stats, guide  
2004-2016  
Box 8: 14.  
Series 3. Clippings and Subject Files  
1966-2020  
Article: alliance pushes funeral education  
2002 Jul 8-Jul 10  
Box 9: 1.  
Articles, clippings  
1998-2000  
Box 9: 2.  
Articles, clippings  
2003 Feb-2004 Nov  
Box 9: 3.  
Articles, clippings, press release  
2006 Oct-2020 Oct  
Box 9: 4.  
Clippings, brochures from G. Foster  
1966-2000  
Box 9: 5.  
Comics  
2005  
Box 9: 6.  
Czelusniak f.h. closure  
2011 May  
Box 9: 7.  
Lepper: letter to the editor, response  
1997 Jan 15  
Box 9: 8.  
Newspaper clippings, contacts  
2010  
Box 9: 9.  
Newspapers: Sunday republican, the recorder  
1995-1997  
Box 9: 10.  
News scrapbook 1/9  
1964 Jan-1965 Aug  
Box 9: 11.  
News scrapbook 2/9  
1965 Aug-1967 Sep  
Box 9: 12.  
News scrapbook 3/9  
1967 Oct-1970 Dec  
Box 9: 13.  
News scrapbook 4/9  
1973 Sep-1974 Mar  
Box 10: 1.  
News scrapbook 5/9  
1974 Apr-1974 Oct  
Box 10: 2.  
News scrapbook 6/9  
1974 Oct-1975 Sep  
Box 10: 3.  
News scrapbook 7/9  
1975 Oct-1977 Apr  
Box 10: 4.  
News scrapbook 8/9  
1977 Apr-1977 Dec  
Box 10: 5.  
News scrapbook 9/9  
1977 Dec-1978 Oct  
Box 10: 6.  
Profile:Carlson, Lisa  
1988 Feb 29,1999 Nov  
Box 10: 7.  
Ryder f.h. closure, lawsuits  
2014 May-2016  
Box 10: 8.

## **Administrative information**

### **Access**

The collection is open for research.

## Provenance

Gift of Sandra Ward, 2022.

## Processing Information

Processed by Charles Landrigan, March 2023.

## Language:

English

## Copyright and Use ([More information](#) )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

- Burial insurance--Massachusetts
- Consumer Protection--Massachusetts
- Death care industry--Massachusetts
- Funeral Homes--Berkshire County (Mass.)
- Funeral Homes--Franklin County (Mass.)
- Funeral Homes--Hampden County (Mass.)
- Funeral Homes--Hampshire County (Mass.)
- Funeral consultants--Massachusetts
- Funeral service--Massachusetts
- Funeral supplies industry--Massachusetts
- Undertakers and undertaking--Massachusetts
- Wake services--Massachusetts

### Contributors

- Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts [main entry]
- Ward, Sandra Nichols, 1943-

### Genres and formats

- Agendas (administrative records)
- Articles of incorporation
- Audiocassettes
- Booklets
- Brochures
- Bylaws
- CD-ROMs
- Correspondence
- Fliers
- Instructional materials
- Leaflets (printed works)
- Legal correspondence
- Mailing lists
- Membership applications
- Membership lists
- Minutes (administrative records)
- Newsletters
- Newspaper clippings
- Posters
- Price lists
- Procedures (documents)
- Subscription lists
- Surveys (documents)
- Tax records



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