

History

HISTORY OF CANNON MORTUARY

Cannon Mortuary is a family owned funeral home and has been in operation since 1981. Brett Cannon, their son, has for the past 6 years worked as a licensed funeral director at the mortuary.

Don and Jackie Cannon opened the doors of Cannon Mortuary November of 1981 after years of planning, sacrifice, and hard work. Owning his own business and living in Butlerville was always his dream. This was "home". Don is the son of Lester and Margaret Staker Cannon. He spent his childhood on Grandfather Henry Staker's 40 acre farm at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon, later moving to Steffenson Heights, and finally Southland Park where Don's mother, Margaret Cannon at 91 years of age, still lives on Dolphin Way.

After attending the University of Utah, Don accepted a call to serve in the New England States Mission under President Paul Dunn. It was there his interest in the mortuary business was kindled due to several influences, his companion's father was a mortician and so was a missionary contact, a man Don admired for his faith and integrity. Home from his mission, Don was lined up with a blind date by his aunties, Freda Ross and Melba Cram, who both lived in his Butler Ward. The date was with Jackie Ericson whose mother, Wanda, was a sister to Freda and Melba. Jackie had grown up in nearby Holladay, attended the University of Utah for a year then switched to LDS Business College. The match was made and Don and Jackie were married June 11, 1974 in the Salt Lake Temple. The young couple headed for San Francisco to mortuary school where Don also worked as an apprentice and Jackie as a nanny for the Guittard Chocolate family. Two years later, Don graduated and they returned to Utah and home on Dolphin Way.

To build capital and support his family, Don worked for Wheeler Machinery for 5 years, as a plumber's assistant briefly, and as a technician in his brother's dental lab for 8 years. Anticipating the dream of owning his own business, Don said, "I had my eye on this location for five years. This was home." The location was the Meyer-Lawn home at 2460 East 7600 South owned by Jean and Irvin Taylor. Jean, who was a cousin to Don's mother Margaret Staker, grew up in the 'little white house next door to the east'. Jean's father, Asa Bowthorpe, owned acres of orchards west of 7600 South. When Jean married her first husband, Albert Myers, she acquired the property next door to the west.

The Meyer-Lawn home was built by Jean's husband Albert, the young Dutchman who had unusual ideas for creating a luxurious home. Built in 1948 and advertised as 'The home that is different', it featured an indoor swimming pool in the center of the main floor and ceramic tiled walls and ceilings in many rooms. Albert arranged to have a public tour of his home charging 50 cents a head. (This was actually the first 'Home Show' in the Salt Lake valley.) Jean and Albert had two children, Elizabeth and John. Albert died in 1953 of injuries suffered in a boating accident. Later Jean married Irvin Taylor, postmaster in Holladay, and continued to live in "The Home that is Different". The Cannon's purchased the 32 year-old run down house from the Taylor's in June of 1980 and began their experience in home renovation 'on a shoestring and doing the majority of the improvements' by themselves. Don and

Jackie opened the doors of Cannon Mortuary to the public in November of 1981.

The mortuary was supplemented by income from the Catholic Church (St. Thomas More Parish). Don relates, "In September of 1981, Jackie and I were painting the chapel and a man appeared standing in the doorway and said 'This will do just fine.' It was Father Maurice Moran and they needed a place to hold their meetings while they built St. Thomas More. The Catholic Parish met at the mortuary for Saturday and Sunday mass till June of 1984. The charismatic Father Moran died unexpectedly in January 1985. His services were held at the Cannon Mortuary. Bishop William K. Weigand was heard to say, "Ah, Father Moran. He knew he would never be canonized so he came to Cannon Mortuary to be canonized."

Don and Jackie Cannon have raised four children in their home at the side of the mortuary: Quinn, married to Stacie Bevan, is in school at the University of Idaho; Stephanie, married to Eric Rhodes has two children; Brett married to Necia Emery, is a licensed funeral director and works with his father; and Chelsea will graduate this fall in sonography. The Cannons have preserved a beautiful property, raised a family, maintained good relationships in the community, and built a solid respectable business that has survived economic and political downturns. We are proud of Cannon Mortuary in Cottonwood Heights.

(oral history taken from Don and Jackie Cannon by Patricia Menlove, CH Historical Committee)