

INNOVATIVE SERVICE

During 2009 – 2010, Sharer-Stirling-Skivolocke Funeral Home continues to provide an informational program of history and of funeral service to many, many people in the greater Alliance and Stark County area.

When Dan Skivolocke purchased the funeral home in 1986, he soon realized that the funeral home was soon approaching an important milestone. In just five short years, (in 1991), the funeral home would recognize its 150th year of continuous service.

With that in mind, he began remodeling plans of the funeral home and began a unique advertising program in our local paper, The Alliance Review. This advertising program began in 1991 as a weekly article about the history of the city of Alliance, titled "We Were There". Since the funeral home was founded in 1841 and the City of Alliance was not established until 1850, Dan felt the title of the articles to be uniquely fitting.

The weekly articles featured interesting facts about the city and its beginnings along with articles about the city's pioneer families. Integrated in the series, Dan included many articles about the history of the funeral home. Dan ran the series for a period of one year, during the anniversary year. When he stopped the series, numerous phone calls were received at the funeral home to continue the series. Dan had a tremendous amount of information left over to continue, but didn't feel he should continue it, as it would take away from the anniversary of the funeral home, as not to become so ordinary.

After a lot of pressure from the community, Dan continued the series, but only for 6 months. Even after that time period, the community continued to request that the series continue. Since Dan wanted that series to be a special advertising program for the funeral home's milestone of 150 years, he did not continue with the series.

Within a year, Dan came up with the idea of creating a slide program of the history of Alliance. Dan had been a member of the Alliance Historical Society for quite some time, and he was able to access many photos from the Historical Society. With the help from the Curator of the Historical Society, Dan put together a program and began to contact area service clubs, churches and organizations which may be looking for programs.

Knowing that the funeral home was older than the city of Alliance, Dan very strategically inserted several photos of the funeral home within the program. By doing so, Dan was able to not only insure that current city families became aware of our city's beginnings, but he was making them aware of the funeral home's history as well as how the funeral customs of the American family were of the day.

Ever since 1992, Dan has been continuously presenting this program to countless people. In the fall of 2009, Dan converted his program to a PowerPoint presentation and has been able to greatly improve the quality and the effects of the program.

This community service has been so greatly received and appreciated, it still surprises Dan how people are eager to learn about our city and our funeral homes past.