

Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services
Traverse City, MI

Best of the Best 2014

The Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, located in Perry Hannah's retirement home, celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2013 in an impressive, educational way! This magnificent, city landmark as well as many other "gifts" of land and buildings were documented in a first ever book written exclusively about Perry Hannah, Traverse City's founding father. The book was entitled Perry Hannah's Gifts, Then and Now and was co-authored by Peg Jonkhoff and Fred Hoisington.

This book epitomizes a carefully developed and executed educational program. It had a **positive impact on those served** (or to be served) as they were able to learn so much more about their family's choice of funeral home. They were able to experience, first hand the comforting beauty and peacefulness of this home as they coped with the loss of their loved one. Now, this new book shares how Mr. Hannah used the very rooms their family and friends were greeted and comforted in today.

This idea is very unique on a national level since this program based on Perry Hannah's book is not just about our funeral home, but joining forces with many others in our community too.

Book supporters ranged from financial sponsors including WTCM Radio, Fifth Third Bank and the Minervini Group to inkind, discounted service or gratis collaborators such as the publisher (Tom Gorsline with Bay Breeze Media) to the talented Now photographer, Don Rutt.

Dan, Peg, Chris and Brian, Lindsey, Chris and Harvey Rogers, Tom and Teaghan Gorsline even participated in the National Cherry Festival's Grand Royale parade in July 2013 to help promote the funeral home's 120th anniversary and this new book. Please see page 36 and the enclosed 120th anniversary shirt provided free of charge to all History Center parade walkers.

The quality of implementation of this program can be measured in two primary ways. It

features both the 200 page, 9x12, coffee table, hard cover book and also a consequent high demand for educational programs for such organizations as Rotary (please see page 37), Kiwanis, High Twelve, Retired Teachers Association, Optimist and Old Mission Historical Society. The book's co-authors had a whirlwind book launch weekend of events and book signings on December 13, 2013 with many programs planned in 2014 as well. Most recently, we have received requests for this item as an ideal silent auction item to benefit such organizations as Parkinsons, Senior Expos and local historical societies. Peg gave a copy of Michigan's Governor, Rick Snyder (a history book enthusiast) at a recent Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce event with a photo highlight on page 37. Peg and Fred also presented a book program (that included pre-100th anniversary Chamber highlights too) for the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce's Past Presidents and Chairs with resulting press on page 38.

Perry's philanthropic spirit lives on through this project as all proceeds will help benefit a bronze statue of him in Hannah Park on Sixth Street. The generosity of so many will help make this educational gift of public art possible for current and future generations to enjoy.

The key to success of this book has been an enthusiastic collaboration with so many to educate. The new book was on the local, hard cover, non-fiction best seller list for 6 weeks when launched in December 2013. For more information about this book, please like Perry Hannah on Facebook or visit www.perryhannah.com. Please see page 39 for the statue's current status.

The overall benefit to those served has been immeasurable. So many wish to tour the home and now they can through the pages of this book. One hundred pages are dedicated to a room-by-room tour of just how Mr. Hannah used the home compared to today. The home's most intimate details are revealed, fascinating stories passed down over the decades documented and amazing roof top to basement level photos featured in beautiful, full color! Today, the families

served at this funeral home create lasting, healing memories within the walls of this sacred place. The building offers an ambience like none other that impressively impacts all of one's senses - sight, smell, sound, touch and taste. Regardless of the number of times one visits the same Hannah House, all experiences are as different as the life that is being remembered.

The overall benefit to our funeral home has been significant. Traverse City's "home" for the bereaved of our community has been the Hannah House since 1937 as shared in the book's Hannah Mansion History of Use section. Today, this unique funeral home provides a peaceful, historic setting yet state-of-the-art technology and services. TV monitors are placed strategically throughout the building so all present can hear and see the funeral or memorial service.

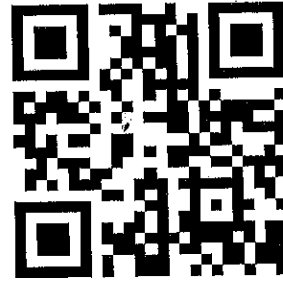
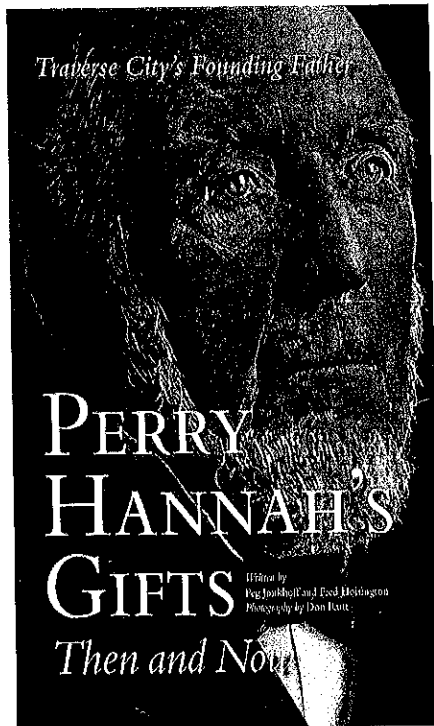
Our community has been so appreciative of this unique book. So many people have thanked the co-authors for documenting the story of Perry Hannah. Words describing the book such as "masterpiece" and "enlightening" are shared on Perry Hannah's Facebook page along with photos that did not make the book, current events and book progress updates.

The Jonkhoff family and staff are proud to care for this historic home as they daily strive to provide excellence in funeral service. The entire "work family" played a role in the book's creation since they all worked around the photographers needs and contributed in their own unique ways to help make it happen by December 13, 2013. They all received a copy of this book as a Christmas gift this past year so they too can learn more about the place they call their work home. Local publications continue to recognize this new book like Bay LIFE North (please see page 62) and the Grand Traverse Scene (please see page 44) as enclosed. Even a very unique press occurred on the front page of our local newspaper on June 5, 2013 as enclosed on page 40.

This idea could be replicated or modified by another funeral home IF they secure a "dream

team” and the determined vision to make it happen. There are many beautiful historic homes serving as funeral home’s today. I encourage other owners to document the story of their funeral home’s original owner and share the priceless value of their historic home now reused for contemporary purposes and passed on through the generations in so many cases.

This article was written with thanks to MFDA for it’s inclusion in the Spring 2014 issue of the MFDA Journal (please see page 28 of the enclosed publication), but also to be considered for NFDA’s Pursuit of Excellence 2014, Best of the Best award.



www.perryhannah.com

Learn about how Traverse City was founded and the man behind it all.

See and share rare historical photos from private collections and see how they transformed into what they are today.