President's Message

It’s that time of year... the gavel has been passed, and your new president, Dr. Peggy Whiting, has been installed!

As my last letter to our membership, I would like to first and foremost, thank everyone on the Board. An extra kudos to Peggy for the amazing job she did as Vice-President, and to cheer her on as she continues to work toward our goals and fulfillment of ADEC’s mission.

With Dr. Jennifer Matthews by her side as Vice-President, ADEC is in the very best of caring hands.

This past year was amazing, and exhausting, and humbling.

Someone asked me what it felt like to retire from the role of President, and I think a picture truly is worth a thousand words... it feels like this:

Despite the challenges of 2020, ADEC was incredibly successful! When faced with the difficult decision of how to handle our annual conference, the Conference Planning Committee, Chaired by Fay Green, and all the staff at MHQ pulled off the herculean task of moving us to entirely virtual. And it was a RAVING SUCCESS! We were able to renegotiate the existing Houston hotel contract for 2024, and the registrations far exceeded our hopes. We also had an unprecedented amount of sponsorship, with Andy McNeil helping us to
raise $37,650! $13,450 of that was from the Light the Way campaign initiated by Bill Hoy and William Worden. Our students and new professionals were engaged, and we offer a special thanks to Rachel M. and the SANP team for their diligent efforts on the T-shirt sales. 39 were sold and $671.32 made – which goes directly back to our Students and New Professionals fund. Our total conference registration goal was 471, and we had around 510 registrants. Our preconference courses and workshops also had stellar attendance. Thank you to each and every one of you who helped make this happen!

But 2020 was not just about our conference. We also held our first Annual Wolfe Report to update our membership on our mid-year progress coupled with our first Virtual half-day workshop: Life, Death, and Healing During Difficult Times led by our Professional Development Committee Chair, Melanie Wright. With several topics, and amazing panelists, we had 79 registrations, and raised just over $10,000!

Continuing with what else happened in 2020, ADEC’s Board of Directors and various committees worked specifically toward public outreach with our new series ADEC in Conversation: COVID-19. Moderated by Jill Harrington, ADEC offered 16 presentations between April and May of 2020, with more than 40 experts sharing on topics ranging from best practices in teletherapy to mindfulness.

We also offered an ADEC in Conversation on Racial Injustice, with discussion around the unique lived experiences of African Americans which both directly and indirectly affects their experience of loss and grief. A special thank you to Jennifer Matthews and Tashel Bordere, for sharing both their personal lived experiences, and professional insights for how we can better serve and support our students, colleagues, friends, neighbors, patients, and clients.

All ADEC in Conversation sessions were recorded; you can watch them by clicking on the buttons below.

To support our membership, we offered two Virtual Services of Remembrance this past year...one to hold space for honoring those lost who would have been recognized at the 2020 conference, and one this past month, in conjunction with our 2021 Virtual Conference. It was a lovely tribute, and a special thank you to Galen Goben and those who made it possible. Additionally, we also had two virtual Membership Orientations, led by Brenda Atkinson and Michelle Ramirez and the membership committee – Thank you! Under our amazing Professional Development Committee of Melanie Wright, Jane Milman, and Andy Ho, 2020 also saw new growth in our webinar series, and 2021 will hold an amazing offering. We also have a new Social Media Initiative – Including SANP volunteers! The Board of Directors drafted and adopted a new Communications Policy, and a Research advertisement and recruitment policy. Both of these policies will help ensure that our communications and advertising to our membership exemplifies best ethical practices.

The Treasurer’s Report (Worth Kilcrease) and the Update on Credentialing (Jolene Formaini) offer additional updates on the incredible work done this past year by our Finance Committee, and Credentialing Committee, respectively.

As we peek out from under the hurdle that was 2020, and look ahead to the rest of 2021, I am excited to share that under your new leadership, we will continue our
growth, with a renewed emphasis on sponsorship, and focused strategic priorities. One thing that will help support our growth is very intentional leadership to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge. To that end, the Board proposed, and membership vote approved (99% in favor of) a Bylaws Amendment to add the Immediate Past President (IPP) as a non-voting advisory member of the Board.

The re-installation of the IPP will allow the IPP to support the sitting President and VP, yet by changing the previous role of IPP to one of non-voting, it ensures that each year’s Board is able to act efficiently and with full respect to that cohort of elected Board Members.

Part of the commitment to continuity of leadership was that we adopted a new approach which will span across each year, where we target specific growth goals (long-term, mid-term, and short-term), and work backwards. Under this practice, we have already made significant strides (okay, maybe not p<.05, but still!) toward maintaining an 85% Membership Retention and an enrollment target of 1525 members (1432 as of March 30, 2021!) and identifying and promoting two key messages about ADEC and what we collectively offer to the field of thanatology.

Your current president, Dr. Peggy Whiting, will be leading the charge on these ongoing efforts, and I am excited to see ADEC’s achievements in 2021. Thank you to everyone who worked on ADEC’s behalf in 2020 and have already committed support to 2021!

Rebecca S. Morse, PhD
Immediate Past President
Association for Death Education and Counseling

Conference

The 42nd annual ADEC Conference held virtually April 6-10, 2021 was a huge success with 506 conference attendees. Member types included 72 students, 47 new professionals, nine new members, 193 individual membership, 36 institutional members, three life members, and 97 senior members.
In addition, there were 25 who attended professional development courses and 31 attended specialty workshops. 24 countries and 44 of the States in the United States were represented in the conference attendees.

Sessions with the highest attendance were the opening panel, “Global Perspectives on Loss, Grief, and Bereavement in the Year of the Pandemic and Beyond,” and two plenary sessions with keynote speakers, Thomas Geldmacher Musiol and Daniela Musiol, and Randy Fritz. The ADEC awards recognition and the closing session were also rated among the most popular conference events. The ADEC Service of Remembrance was rated the most popular video of the conference.

Conference Planning Committee members Bill Hoy, Jill Harington, Elissa Berman, Galen Goben, Amy Chow, and Becky Lomaka, and management headquarters staff dedicated many hours toward making this a successful conference. Several ADEC members served as moderators for pre conference activities, concurrent, and networking sessions. The conference would not have been a success without the 109 speakers and ADEC members who served on sub committees of the Conference Planning Committee.

Sponsors for the virtual conference made a significant contribution to the success of the conference: the Center for Complicated Grief sponsored the Saturday plenary session; the Funeral Service Foundation sponsored the ADEC Service of Remembrance, and Marian University sponsored the Whova Event and Conference App. Other sponsors included Purdue University, Baylor University, Compassion and Choices – Care and Choices at the End of Life, Alex Cares, and Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). ADEC members who donated to the “Lighting the Way Campaign” contributed significantly to the financial success of the conference.

This article was written by Fay H. Green, ADEC Conference Planning Committee Chair.

Member Profile

Connects is featuring stories on selected individuals so that the ADEC community can get to know its members.

Jeanette Potts, MS, CT
Education and Development Manager and Donor Family Advocate
American Tissue Services Foundation

Jeanette M. Potts is employed at American Tissue Services Foundation in Kimberly, Wisconsin as an Education and Development Manager and Donor Family Advocate. In May 2012, Jeanette earned a Master of Science degree in Leadership with a concentration in Grief and Bereavement. She also holds a bachelor’s degree in management and communications.

Jeannette’s background includes over 40 years of healthcare management, with the
She is an active member of ADEC and achieved the professional certification and designation of Certified in Thanatology. Jeannette was elected to serve on the ADEC Board in 2019 and has proudly served these past two years as a Board member and as the Board liaison to the Professional Development Committee.

Jeanette is also a Board member and Vice Chair for Prevent Suicide Fox Cities (PSFC) in Appleton, Wisconsin and Board member and Secretary (2007-2009/2020-2021) of Donate Life Wisconsin. She served as a past Board member and Secretary for the Joshua J. Richards Charitable Foundation.

Outside of her work with donation, Jeanette is an adjunct instructor for Marian University. She is also the editor of the online resources for The Last Dance, Encountering Death & Dying textbook, where she was given the title “subject matter expert” to the text in 2016 by the authors.

Today, Jeanette continues her education and training with a focus on increasing services to donor families and providing support services for those grieving the loss of a loved one. She is the mother to two adult boys and proud grandmother to four grandchildren. She has two dogs and two cats and lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.

**Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path.**

There are three people who have significantly impacted my career path in Thanatology. The first is Dr. Janet McCord, my academic advisor through Marian University. She introduced me to ADEC and has given me much wisdom in death and dying. The second is my current boss and mentor, Lori Shineline, who has taught me compassion and understanding in being with grieving families. The third person who has impacted my career path and probably does not even know it is Dr. William Hoy. After having taken every class Bill taught for Marian University, I became passionate about walking with others and just being present with both the dying and the grieving.

I chose my career path because I lost my nephew to suicide. I wasn’t able to help my sister with this loss 20 years ago, but with the help of the three people I mentioned above, education from both Marian University and ADEC and many others who have shared wisdom with me over the past 11 years, I found that I have a passion for helping people work through their grief.
What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh?

Keep learning and growing. Get connected to others in your field and read widely on your subjects by the people who know and understand this business, our very own legends of ADEC.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?

Grief, death, and dying is something that will never go away. Walking with people and helping them to do the work of grief is my passion. I don’t want anyone to suffer through their grief alone, especially those who have lost someone to suicide. The day my nephew died, my sister stopped living her life and only existed day to day. It’s been 20 years and I never want anyone else to get “stuck” like that again.

I will continue my work with grieving families and be present with them as much or as little as they need me.

Describe how the role of being an ADEC member has been beneficial to you in your professional and or personal life.

I am proud to be part of ADEC. It is my professional home and I have met many people who have had great tools and techniques to share with others. Every year after attending the ADEC conference I can come back home and apply something new to my work. As an example, two years ago, I was not a believer in meditation but after listening and participating in several break out sessions, I was able to break through my own biases and seek additional training which has allowed me to lead several successful meditation sessions with my survivor’s grief group.

Student Profile

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, Connects is featuring stories on individuals who are ADEC scholarship recipients.

Emma Hunter
Student
King’s University College

My name is Emma Hunter, and I was one of the 2020 ADEC Annual Conference Student Scholarship recipients. Years ago, I was very fortunate to be accepted into King’s University College at Western University, where I pursued my undergraduate degree in Thanatology. I will be graduating with my Bachelor of Arts, Honors Specialization in Thanatology, a Minor in Sociology, and a Certificate in Loss, Grief, and Bereavement Studies. As a young professional, receiving this scholarship was incredible and provided me with the opportunity to explore Thanatology with other professionals, researchers, educators, and counsellors.
Moving forward, I look forward to witnessing the continued development of the Thanatology field as I continue to further my education in counselling and psychotherapy while working and volunteering within my community.

Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in Thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path.

My ambition and goal in life has been to help people while they were suffering and to pursue a career in the helping profession. Some of the most painful, but universally lived experiences in life involve grief and loss. I consider it an exceptional privilege to be in this vital field, to offer compassion and support to people who are grieving.

The Thanatology program at King’s University College provided me with the opportunity to pursue grief counselling and grief support. Throughout my education, Dr. Carrie Arnold has been an incredible role model and mentor; she has greatly impacted and supported my career path in Thanatology by always encouraging personal and intellectual growth. I could not be more grateful for her constant support and guidance.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh?

Moving forward in the growing field of Thanatology, given current global circumstances, it is important to continue to recognize the need of the professionals. Ensuring that professional self care is a priority and being actively aware of professional burnout.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do?

With the events of the COVID 19 pandemic loss, trauma, and uncertainty have become a part of our daily lives. While the future remains uncertain, I think our work will provide support and compassion for members of the local and global communities during this time of great struggle.

ADEC Committees: Students and New Professionals Committee

To keep members abreast of what is happening within the ADEC committees, Connects is featuring articles discussing their latest activities.

Jillian Blueford, Ph.D.
University of Denver

Even during unprecedented times, the Student and New Professional (SANP) Committee has had a successful year! This committee, which has grown to 10 members, including our Board Liaison, Dr. Jennifer Matthews, set out to continue with long-standing events but with a new twist that has made ADEC more accessible. In this year alone, we have been able to accomplish great things.

With the conference wrapped up, Committee leadership has officially transitioned. Greta Jankauskaite and Dr.
Oindrila Dutta (Jhilik) will be assuming the roles of Co-Chairs of the SANP Committee. We can’t wait to see what this Committee does next year!

- **T-shirts** – Even though we were not able to meet in-person for this year’s ADEC Conference, we were able to still hold our annual t shirt contest! We sold 39 t shirts and made $671.32 in revenue! All proceeds will go toward the Student Conference Scholarships. Much thanks to Rachel Mackey, T shirt Sales Sub-committee, for making this happen this year.

- **Donations & Raffles** – The Committee’s silent auction and raffles is an event many look forward to at the ADEC Conference. To keep up with the spirit of this event, the committee held a raffle open to any ADEC member during the conference. Instead of raffling tangible items, we invited ADEC conference attendees and members to donate directly to the student conference scholarship. In this past year, $8353.50 was donated toward student conference scholarships. Thank you ADEC members!

Also new this year, members had the chance to win one on one time with an ADEC leader by entering our raffle! Over 20+ ADEC members have either volunteered to spend individualized time with the raffle winners or offered professional development opportunities. Special thanks to Nancy Thacker and Nathalie Roze Fischer, Silent Auction and Raffles Sub-Committee, for putting so much work into this event!

- **SANP Mixer** -- Over 30 people attended the Committee's annual mixer during the ADEC Conference. It was so impactful to hear from several ADEC members reflect on their thanatology journeys and their hopes in ADEC’s student and new professional members.

**Students and New Professionals Committee Donation Drive**

**Support ADEC students and new professionals with a donation!** All proceeds from the donation drive will support student and new professional scholarships that benefit SANP.
members as they begin their careers in the death, dying and bereavement field.

You can submit your donation to the Student Scholarship Fund: ADEC Student Scholarship Donation Portal.
*You do not have to be an ADEC member to donate.

**Questions?** Contact SANP committee members:

- Nancy Thacker
- Nathalie Roze Fischer

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**What's New: New Books from ADEC Members**

"What's New" celebrates our members' considerable contribution to the Thanatological literature by offering a brief review of books and other educational materials written or produced by ADEC members. Each review is run once to provide an opportunity for our membership across the world to be aware of resources in the dying, death and bereavement field. It is mostly focused on books but has also included other items such as video and even a grief board-game.

**Living, Dying, Death, and Bereavement (Volume One): Conversations with Thanatologists**
David E. Balk

Balk has created a remarkable resource for present and future studies and students in dying, death, and bereavement by interviewing 37 leading Thanatologists. Volume One includes the interview transcripts for 20 of these leaders who participated in a 13 question structured interview process during the first four months of 2016. Balk does not claim these individuals represent a comprehensive selection of all leading Thanatologists, but they are at least a significant number of those who have contributed to the field over the past 75 years. Sadly, several major contributors died before this project was conceived, so their reflections on Thanatology and personal stories are not recoverable except through exacting biographical research. But this volume and the next will provide inspiration, documentation, and perspective about the many paths that have led to the creation of scholars, teachers, administrators, and clinicians who have a deep passion and commitment to Thanatology.

*Newcastle upon Tyne, UK*  
*Cambridge Scholars: 2020*  
*ISBN: 978-1-5275-5958-5*  
*Hardcover, 543 pages.*
Beyond Here There Be Dragons: Navigating the Uncharted Waters of Grief
Thomas J. Dennis

Dennis has written an engaging book for griever that focuses beyond the crisis of initial grief to the longer process of discovering meaning and hope into the future. Using the symbol of dragons as fearful imaginary creatures but also important symbols of power and generativity, he extends the metaphor across the lifelong process of navigating the waves of grief. In Part Two, he offers three short stories to further engage the playful and serious capacity of griever to befriend their own imagined dragons and use their power to become resilient in the face of loss. This book's unconventional approach may connect with griever who otherwise would turn away from death and grieve education materials.

Galena, IL
Green River LCC, 2020
ISBN: 9978-1-7360182-0-0
Softcover, 97 pages

Living with Grief Since COVID 19
Co-edited by Kenneth J. Doka and Amy S. Tucci

Doka and Tucci have co edited the annual Hospice Foundation of America's Living with Grief book focused this year, by shear necessity, on the COVID 19 pandemic and its myriad consequences of loss and grieve. Many contributors to the 14 chapters are ADEC members (including myself) who know how saturated with COVID grief our professional and personal lives have been. Eight chapters bring scholarly perspectives to crucial topics such as “When Grief Goes Viral: Psychological Impacts of the COVID 19 Pandemic,” “The Impact of COVID 19 on Black America,” and “Death and Dying in America’s Nursing Homes: The Impact of COVID 19.” Six chapters express the personal “Voices” of a wide variety of professionals from their in the field settings. This book will sharpen clinical insights as well as enable perseverance by offering strategies for coping with the over extension most
professional caregivers have and will continue to experience because of the pandemic.

Washington, D.C.
Hospice Foundation of America, 2021
Softcover, 146 pages

**Sympathy and Condolences: What to Say and Write to Convey Your Support After a Loss**
Alan D. Wolfelt

Wolfelt offers a practical brief guide to enable friends and family to offer empathic attention and support to those grieving a death or non death loss. Part of his expansive Words of Hope and Healing series, this booklet models the kind of caring human response one might, in an earlier era, have learned from a parent or a kind hearted relative. Wolfelt offers sections that help readers distinguish between sympathy and empathy; how to communicate at deeper levels; and guidelines about what to say or not say in various contacts such as in person visits, on the phone, via video chats, email, text, and so on. Many find the restrictions the COVID pandemic has necessitated upon funeral attendance or other in person sympathy visits very difficult. Though not addressed directly, this booklet offers many options for other expressions of condoleence during the continued pandemic crisis.

Ft. Collins, CO
Companion Press, 2021
ISBN: 978-1-61722-305-1
Softcover, 49 pages

Want to have your publication included in Connects?
Have your publisher send a copy (not just an announcement) of recent material (2019 - present) to:

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Email: paul.metzler2010@gmail.com
Members' Corner

ADEC Members’ Corner is a regular column in ADEC Connects that highlights one or more members’ activity as an ADEC professional. Members’ Corner is open for contributions from all ADEC members; to be included, please send your article to Amanda Brace or Beverly Rollins.

Several ADEC members, including Maria Georgopoulos, Paul Metzler, and Paul Rosenblatt, wrote chapters for the Hospice Foundation of America’s recent publication, Living with Grief Since COVID 19. J. William Worden wrote the Foreword.

Alan Wolfelt will be presenting a keynote address at a Funeral Expo Convention in Madrid, Spain on June 8, 2021. His presentation is titled “The Why of Meaningful Funerals: Exploring A New Model Being Used in North America.”

It’s Time to Update Your ADEC Profile!

To ensure that your ADEC profile is up to date, please login to the ADEC website at www.aedc.org/Login.aspx. Once you are logged in, if you are not redirected automatically, simply click on the “My Profile” button in the top navigation panel.

Make sure to review your professional and personal information and edit with the “Edit” link in the headers. Additional contact details as well as your education and experiences will be a helpful resource for your colleagues when searching the Membership Directory.

Your username is: @@username@@

For more information about your membership, please go to the bottom of this email.
ADEC’s Certification/Recertification Process Moves to a Seamless On-Line System!

This new web based system ensures that all things “Credential” can be found in one place on ADEC’s website. This change also makes the application process more user friendly. Click the green button below to access all things new including information and forms.

Renew Your Membership

In the midst of unprecedented circumstances, ADEC has striven to remain strong and relevant for you, the ADEC membership community. There are not promises that the challenges we’re currently facing will relent anytime soon, but if anyone knows a thing or two about resilience, its ADEC members.

In the midst of the current uncertainty ADEC invites you to look ahead and support your professional home by renewing your membership for 2021.

Members’ benefits have recently been enhanced in that Members now get two free webinars per year and that includes CEUs at no additional cost. In addition, paid access to webinars has been streamlined; attendees will now pay one fee for total access (i.e., live/recorded access for three years, $45 for members/$70 for non-members).

ADEC strives to serve you. And needs you to keep ADEC strong. Please renew your membership today!

ADEC offers substantial membership benefits including:

- Online subscriptions to three professional journals – Omega: The Journal of Death and Dying; Death Studies; and Grief Matters, the journal of the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
• Members-only newsletter **ADEC Connects**
• The Thanatology NewsBrief
• Discounts to the annual conference
• Professional certification
• Professional recognition
• Connection with other ADEC members
• Professional development
• Networking
• Volunteer opportunities
• Tuition discounts
• Two free webinar recordings per year

**Contact Connects**

Connects is interested in your thoughts and work. Please reach out to us with content submissions, suggestions or ideas.

For consideration in the April 2021 issue of Connects please submit your ideas/content by Friday, May 28, 2021.

**Contact Us**
Editor – Amanda Brace Ed,S, LSC, PCC-S
Assistant Editor – Beverly Rollins BSW, MGA, MA

**Your ADEC Information**

**Your Account Information:**

• Your name: @@first_name@@ @@last_name@@
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If you need assistance accessing your ADEC account or resetting your password, please contact the ADEC office at adec@adec.org or 612-337-1808.

**ADEC Quick Links**