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Association for Death Education and Counseling®
The Thanatology Association®

Connects

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President's Message

Hello everyone,

What a wonderful and rejuvenating week we had in Atlanta.

The world moves fast, and our own private worlds, too, sometimes feel like they're going forward at ever increasing velocity. This feeling seems to intensify with age; yesterday a client commented that she feels like she's "over the hill and picking up speed." We know the importance of stopping for breath, but we don't always remember to do it. And that makes the time we have together all the more important. Coming together to talk about our work, to learn from each other, share stories and end the day with long congenial dinners, reminds us that we are part of a web of people who care about the things that we care about. We come away stronger, individually and collectively.



For those of you who were not with us in Atlanta, I hope that you'll take advantage of the webinar recordings that will be available soon on the website. And if you're curious about what went on (at least, officially) take a look at the conference program. You'll see some familiar names, and some new ones, with a range of substantive and innovative topics.

We always have strong keynotes, and this year was no exception. We were moved by the exquisitely attuned work of Rocky Robbins, challenged by Darcy Harris's vision of non-death loss, and engaged right up to the end of the conference by the incomparable storyteller Harold Ivan Smith. Many thanks to the tireless work of the conference committee headed by Fay Green and to our Executive Director Isaiah Allen and MHQ staff for flawless and good humored on-the-ground support.

As I said in my closing comments on Saturday, I am honored to serve as President of ADEC in the coming year and grateful for your confidence in me. My commitment to all of you, and to our Association, is strong, and out of that commitment has come a desire to bring our ADEC into the light: to make more people aware of who we are, what we do, and why they should join us. I believe that the “education” part of Death Education and Counseling can extend beyond the boundaries of our organization. In conjunction with the goal of greater visibility for ADEC, I want to ensure that members are aware of, and able to access, their membership benefits, and I have some specific ideas about the extension of these benefits. These communication and membership development goals are in addition to important ongoing work by the Credentialing Council, the Diversity Committee, the Student and New Professionals Committee, and the Task Force that has been charged with developing the next iteration of the Handbook of Thanatology.

Have I peeked your interest in participating in our work in the coming year? I hope so! There are plenty of opportunities for you to engage in the work of our Association. And I can tell you from personal experience that involvement with our work – and more precisely, with the people who do the work – is the surest path to building relationships that will stimulate your mind and nourish your soul for many years to come.*

So don't be a stranger! Get in touch (and don't be surprised if we get in touch with you).

Talk to you soon.

Phyllis Kosminsky, PhD, LCSW, FT

**to get more information about volunteering for a committee email adec@adec.org*

Student Profile

So that the ADEC community can get to know its students, Connects will continue to feature stories on ADEC students as well as scholarship recipients.

Brianne L. Overton, FT, LPC, NCC

Brianne L. Overton, FT, LPC, NCC, is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri – St. Louis in the Department of Counseling and Family Therapy, where she educates master- and doctoral-level students on grief-specific issues in counseling. Brianne is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Missouri and Illinois and works with individuals, couples, and families. She specializes in anticipatory loss, grief and bereavement, life transitions, and working with underserved populations. As an active member of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, currently serving as the CT representative on the Credentialing Council, Brianne began as a student member in 2010. She served in leadership positions in both the Students and New Professionals of ADEC and the Students Initiative Committee. Brianne is the Founder of BLU – Bereavement, Life, & U – which offers comprehensive death education services and community outreach and support to grieving families affected by change and loss. She is the Clinical Director for Michigan and Georgia Girls Programs of Experience Camps and volunteers throughout the summers.



Do you have a mentor/role model who has significantly affected your career path in Thanatology? Tell us why you chose this career path. ADEC has provided me with many professional and personal connections along my journey. I contribute my growth and development in the field of Thanatology to the people who have come before me, offering guidance, support, and opportunities. Dr. Tashel Bordere, my mentor, has had a very positive influence along my career path. I remember sitting in on her presentation at my first ADEC conference and thinking to myself, "Yes, I have found my space with people who get it!" She has been so supportive and encourages me to continue pursuing and attaining my goals. Alesia Alexander, another mentor, has provided me with wisdom and support over the years. As an African American female it has been crucial to my development to not only have women, but women of color paving the way for me.

I didn't choose Thanatology, Thanatology chose me. I know I've heard this phrase before, but it resonates deep within me. I always knew I would be in the helping field, but I would have never imagined doing the work that I do today. Thanatology allows me the flexibility to work in many settings providing support to diverse populations. I love what I do and am fortunate to do the work that I love. The more we educate ourselves the more knowledge and education we can pass on to the next generation of Thanatologists.

What advice would you offer a more junior professional in the field on growing their career or keeping their work fresh? Continue to do what you love and love what you do. Show compassion not only for the individuals and families you support, but also for yourself. While the work we do is rewarding beyond measure, it will definitely take its toll on you if you are not taking care of yourself. Allow yourself to disconnect – seriously, completely disconnect – to replenish your soul. I remember being taught that some opportunities are once in a lifetime. What I've learned is that opportunities will

come; pick and choose the ones that are best for you. Trust that there will be other opportunities. Surround yourself with people who have similar interests as you and can offer support to you along the way.

What do you think the future holds for your work and that of others like you? How will that impact what you do? The future will be what we make it. There are so many of us doing great work in this world, whether our contribution to the field is research, education, support, training, or counseling, we each are responsible for furthering the field in our respective areas of Thanatology. As a counselor educator working with students, I find that more and more students are exploring work in the field of Thanatology. It is so important to have discussions about death, dying, loss, and grief to help students feel better prepared when working with clients. I also provide many outreach opportunities for my students, because let's be honest...counseling doesn't always happen in the confines of four walls. It's important for students and counselors-in-training to experience counseling in the community.

ADEC 2020 Conference

April 28-May 2, 2020

Hyatt Regency Columbus

Columbus, OH

Pre-Conference Institute: April 28-29



Save the date for the 2020 Conference in Columbus, Ohio!

Featured Keynote Speakers:

Brook Griese - Jan Aldridge - Dale Larson

[Conference Website](#)

What's New: New Books from ADEC Members

By The Rev Paul A. Metzler, D.Min

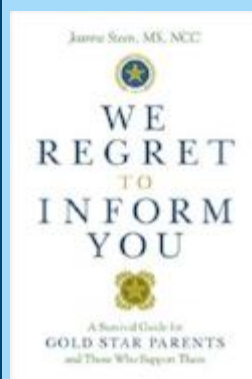
What's New offers a brief review of educational materials written or produced by ADEC members. Each review is run once and is intended to showcase the contributions of our membership to the death, dying, and bereavement field. Send a review copy (not just an announcement) of recent material (2016 to present) to:

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Doka, Kenneth J. and Amy S. Tucci, editors.
Aging America: Coping with Loss, Dying, and Grief in Later Life. Washington, D.C.: Hospice Foundation of America, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-893349-23-0. Softcover, 204 pages.

Doka and co-editor Tucci continue their strong partnership in editing the annual Hospice Foundation of America's *Living with Grief* (LWD) program companion book. This book bolsters the LWD continuing professional education event now offered in DVD format. The focus this year on an aging America facing end-of-life issues is timely, and the wide range of contributors to this work offer substantive and creative chapters to support mental and healthcare professionals. Organized in three parts (I: *Death in Later Life: Facing the Baby Boom*; II: *Dying in Later Life*; III: *Grief in Later Life*) the seventeen chapters provide insightful understanding and tools to



Steen, Joanne. *We Regret to Inform You: A Survival Guide for Gold Star Parents*. Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-942094-96-8. Softcover, 217 pages.

Steen has written an important book for Gold Star parents, their relatives, and friends. But it is also an important resource for Thanatologists and other helping professionals about the rending reality of a military death. The Gold Star label first emerged at the end of WW I to honor parents, spouses, and others with the presentation of a gold star flag or lapel pin by the US government to acknowledge their ultimate sacrifice. The book's six parts (I: *Life and Death in the Military*; II: *A Life Changing Loss*; III: *Survival*; IV: *Coping*; V: *Building Personal Resilience*; VI: *What You Need to Know as a Relative, Friend, or Professional Service Provider*) include sixteen chapters that address

intervene usefully. This book will aid healthcare professionals, counselors, clergy, educators, and many others to respond to the growing populations of aging Americans needing end-of-life care.

in simple language the complex, multi-dimensional grief that follows a service member's death. Both a military widow and a clinician, Steen's substantive biography demonstrates that this book is grounded on current research on grief and bereavement. It is a singular contribution to the support and understanding of Gold Star parents and the wider circle of family and friends.



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 June 2019 issue of Connects please submit your ideas/content by **Wednesday, May 27, 2019.**

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