



BENZIE
SANGMA
Intelligencer

Still
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The heart stops.
The last breath expels.
Death takes over.
Grieving loved ones begin to say their final goodbyes.

An undertaker comes into the picture to guide the family through an elaborate series of customs and rituals of a funeral service for the deceased.

Since buying the funeral home — once located at 27 Campbell St. — John R.

Bush, was the man most area people looked to during their time of need.



JOHN
R. BUSH

Known to most as Jack, his sister Rhea Dolan recalled the history of her brother's involvement in the funeral business.

Prior to Bush, she said, the downtown funeral home was called the Belleville Burial Company. It was owned by Joseph Imlah and his partner, Matthew Armstrong.

"I remember Imlah and Armstrong very well," said Dolan. "Imlah was very meticulous about everything. You wouldn't see a hair out of place. Armstrong was not quite as tall and although he was as particular about his clothes, he did not carry it as well as Imlah did."

When Armstrong pulled out of the business to go and start his own funeral business in Oshawa, Imlah ran the funeral home by himself for a few more years.

In 1944, Bush, who had gained experience in the funeral business while working for Imlah and Armstrong, bought the business and changed the name to John R. Bush Funeral Home.

Why he wanted to be in the funeral business, Dolan does not know but remembered that he always wanted to be a funeral director when he was growing

up. Reflecting on the changing traditions and practices of funeral services, she said:

"I remember in the earlier days when my brother started his business, he used to do the embalming at the family home of the dead. The funeral service used to be held right in the living room after that."

Other times, people preferred church services, she added.

"Gradually, the idea of having a funeral service at the funeral home chapel began to pick up and today, although the church services remain, most like to have their services done at a funeral home," said Dolan.

Immediately after the service, whether at home or at church, the practice was to