

FUNNY FILMS FOR SERIOUS SUBJECTS

Presented by Gail Rubin, The Doyenne of Death®

Laughing in the Face of Death: Funny Films for Funeral Planning

This upbeat talk illustrates funeral planning issues with clips from comedy films and television programs. Just as talking about sex won't make you pregnant, talking about funerals won't make you dead – and your family will benefit from the conversation. Films include *Get Low*, *The Six Wives of Henry Lefay*, *Death at a Funeral* (U.S. version), *Undertaking Betty*, *The Big Lebowski* and *Elizabethtown*.

Ashes to Ashes, Dust in Your Face: Cremation, Comedy and Creativity

Cremation is the fastest growing disposition method in the U.S. Watching funny and serious film clips, you'll learn about what you need to know **before** there's a death in the family, including choices to make and disposition options. Films include *Elizabethtown*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Due Date*, *The Bucket List*, and *The Descendants*. Come to laugh and learn!

“Doctor, How Long Do I Have?”

Having a serious healthcare conversation with your doctor takes effort to ensure clear communications. Learn how to ask questions and be involved in treatment decisions by watching dramatic and comedy films depicting doctor-patient conversations. Films include *Patch Adams*, *The End*, *Wit*, *The Shootist* and *The Descendants*.

The Funeral Director on Film

Watching scenes from comedies and dramas focused on funeral directors throughout history, learn important consumer tips for funeral planning. With humorous insights, presenter Gail Rubin traces the evolution of the funeral industry through Hollywood portrayals of “the last man to let you down.” Films include *The Shootist*, *The Loved One*, *About Schmidt*, *Get Low*, *Bernie* and the TV series, *Six Feet Under*.

Everybody Dies: Lessons from *Six Feet Under*

From 2001 to 2005, the HBO cable television series *Six Feet Under* took viewers behind the scenes at Fisher & Sons Funeral Home. This upbeat talk uses clips from this award-winning series to illuminate funeral planning issues for those who don't plan to die. Topics include funeral consumer issues, cremation, traditional and green burial, other developments in the funeral industry, and aspects of contemporary grief and mourning.

Buying the Farm: TV Series *Six Feet Under* Funeral Arrangements

From 2001 to 2005, the HBO cable television series *Six Feet Under* took viewers behind the scenes at Fisher & Sons Funeral Home. This upbeat talk uses clips from this award-winning series focused on funeral arrangement conferences to illuminate important consumer issues and why it's a good idea to plan ahead.

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The Viking Funeral on Film

The way the movies portray it, Vikings dispatched their honored dead by laying the body on a boat and setting the vessel on fire with flaming arrows. While some folks think a Viking funeral would be a cool way to send off a loved one, this idealized grand gesture is historically inaccurate. We'll trace the history of this notion through different films and set the record straight. Films include *Beau Geste*, *The Vikings*, *Eulogy*, *The Living Wake* and *Carpet Kingdom*.

Hollywood's Visions, Trips and Crowded Rooms

Dr. David Kessler's book *Visions, Trips and Crowded Rooms* shares the personal stories of medical and hospice professionals who witness death. Some of the dying see remarkable visions, some speak of going on a trip, and others see people who they knew in this lifetime crowding the room. Hollywood films provide a concrete way of looking at this phenomenon when someone dies. This talk opens the door to discussing mortality issues.

Jewish Funeral Traditions on Film

Jewish traditions regarding death and dying, the funeral, the treatment of the body, burial, mourning, and annual remembrances are very different from Christian practices. This talk illuminates the differences and similarities of these funeral traditions – highly beneficial for interfaith families. Scenes from two comedic films from Mexico, *My Mexican Shiva* and *Nora's Will*, illustrate Jewish funeral, burial and mourning traditions.

A Funny, Fractured History of Funerals on Film

This fast-paced collection of short comedy film clips traces the history of undertaking starting at the dawn of humankind (*History of the World Part 1*) and medieval times (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). Grave robbing (*Young Frankenstein*), casket sales (*The Loved One*), and cremation (*The Big Lebowski*) are among the issues examined.



Gail Rubin, The Doyenne of Death[®], is author of the award-winning book *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die* and The Family Plot Blog. Host of **A Good Goodbye** television series and weekly Internet radio program, she's also a Certified Celebrant and a popular speaker who uses humor and films to get the funeral planning conversation started. Rubin is a member of the Association for Death Education and Counseling and the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association. Vice President of the

Jewish-Christian Dialogue of New Mexico, she also serves on the cemetery committee for Congregation Albert and volunteers with the *Chevra Kaddisha*, which ritually prepares bodies for Jewish burial.

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