

## **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*, *Departures*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Due Date*, *The Bucket List*, *Meet the Parents*, *The Descendants* and *The Vikings*. Come to laugh and learn!

### **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*.

### **“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*.

### **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, traditional and green burial, 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. (continued over)

### **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.

### **The Funeral Director on Film**

This film presentation shows scenes from comedies and dramas focused on funeral directors throughout history, from the Old West to today. With humorous insights, presenter Gail Rubin talks about the funeral industry through Hollywood portrayals of "the last man to let you down." Films include *The Shootist*, *The Loved One*, *About Schmidt*, *Happy Funeral*, *Get Low*, *The Living Wake* and the TV series, *Six Feet Under*.

### **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.



Gail Rubin, The Doyenne of Death™, is author of *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die* and *The Family Plot Blog* (<http://TheFamilyPlot.wordpress.com>). A Certified Celebrant and an event planner experienced in funerals, she's also 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 NM Jewish-Christian

Dialogue, 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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