

*RUSSELL'S: CONTINUING QUALITY SERVICE  
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For over sixty years, Russell's Funeral Home has operated in Winston-Salem- providing the highest quality of service to myriad families trusting them with the care of their loved ones.

The Family-Owned business started in 1939 by Carl H. Russell, Sr. and his wife. He wanted to go to dental or medical school but could not afford it. While he and his wife were living in Washington, DC, they read about a funeral home going out of business in Falls Church, VA, and decided to buy it. Not only was Carl committed to high quality funeral services but committed to the community politically, socially and spiritually. He was an Alderman for 16 years and he worked for housing, education and quality medical care for African-Americans in the community.

He proudly speaks about his parents and the things they taught him. "The seeds planted by our parents have become fruitful and have multiplied. They helped many in the community and never did it for recognition-they did it from the heart." He adds that they did many things for the less fortunate and he and his siblings continue to do the same.

The initial location for Russell's was on East 7th Street. The facility has been at the current location (Carl Russell Avenue) since 1964. Cedric says they have held onto traditions but also have made sacrifices to modernize the facility and purchase a modern fleet of vehicles. "When you care and are truly sincere to families you have to give them the best. We want to provide families with the best so we put back into the business," he adds.

In May 2002, eight new vehicles were purchased. "We were doing fine with the fleet we had but we wanted to provide the public with the best," Cedric states. The best were selected- president styled limousines, top-of-the-line hearses and two flower cars that he describes as "unique in appearance- adding a nice touch."

Despite the continued ringing of the phone, Cedric continues to take the time to talk about the family business, offering an apology each time for the interruption. "I'm sorry but this is the busiest time of the year for us. Two weeks before Thanksgiving up until the second or third week in January, it is busy. I don't know why." According to the North Carolina Vital Statistics Institute for Research and Social Science, UNC-Chapel Hill, Mortality Statistics, in 2001, there were 78,844 deaths. The month of January had the highest number of deaths with 6,811; March was second with 6,428; October (6,289); December had the fourth highest number of deaths with 6,268. The lowest number of deaths occurred in September (5,585). Russell's staff is comprised of eight licensed representatives and one

apprentice who will soon be licensed. Out of the nine, five are family members. Russell's offers complete and personal service- from immediate burial to direct cremation.

According to Cedric, preparation of the body is one of the most important things. "You wanna have some peace of mind and establish closure. Families don't want their deceased loved ones to look unrecognizable." He goes on to say we "feel blessed to have a staff that is established."

In addition, he feels that it is how you treat families that is also a vital part of great service. Being polite and courteous especially in their time of need. Qualities, which go a long way. When all of these qualities are woven together, it leads to a connection of families choosing to stick with a particular funeral home, which many families in the area seem to do. If a family is satisfied with the service they have received then they come back- true with any type of business. The customer's trust is built slowly over time.

Christmas is upon us. It is a joyous time but a sad time for some because many lose family and friends during this time or have lost loved ones. Holidays bring up memories of missed loved ones because these are times when families get together. We miss them and hopefully when we are gathered together we can give thanks for the time we were able to be with them. Hopefully their funeral service was an event that was as special and personal as any other celebration. Hopefully the service was carried out in a way that was fitting of the life that was lived.

For Cedric everyday is Christmas and Thanksgiving. "People ask me all the time what I want for Christmas." His response. "If we can just get away from the commercialism. We spend all our money for one day and spend the next 12 months trying to dig out of debt. All I want is peace on earth and goodwill toward men."



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