

Green Burial Council

2020 Annual Report



GBC's finest accomplishment of 2020, its inaugural conference, drew many positive accolades:

"It was organized and moderated with thoughtfulness and simplicity from the first plenary on. Aside from enjoying how well it was put together and presented, I am overwhelmed with information, which was my goal in registering."

"I really loved the variety offered and appreciated the diversity of topics. There was something for everyone."

"The virtual set-up allowed me to take part in this conference. I wouldn't have been able to attend otherwise. I liked the à la carte options!"

As we look back over our first fifteen years, it is indeed worth celebrating how far we have come and look forward to how far we can go. Visionary Joe Sehee founded the Green Burial Council fifteen years ago in the spring of 2005, together with a host of experts from the fields of sustainable landscape design, restoration ecology, conservation management, law, and consumer affairs. Together they developed the first set of environmental standards for green cemeteries and the funeral professionals and product manufacturers that support them. Currently the GBC is the only independent environmental certification organization in the United States setting verifiable standards for green burial in North America.

GBC has grown to two distinct nonprofit entities: the first, Green Burial Council, Incorporated, is a 501c6 certification and provider support organization; and the second, Green Burial Council International, is a 501c3 educational and outreach organization. Both work together to further the movement toward more sustainable death-care options, support those who are actively engaged in green burial activities, and to raise awareness and serve families seeking a natural ending.

2020 was a landmark year for the Green Burial Council, with robust programmatic activity that generated surplus revenue which is being used to build critical capacity. For the first time in many years, we are hiring for a leadership position to strengthen our programs and deepen our impact in the community. We got to where we are today because of our providers, volunteers, sponsors, donors, educators, advocates, activists, and subscribers. GBC is very grateful to our providers who choose to follow and uphold certification requirements and standards; volunteers for contributing their time, skills, and expertise; sponsors and donors for their generous financial support; educators, advocates, and activists who spread the word; and for our subscribers' interest. A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you for your efforts, time, and financial contributions in support of GBC and its mission to inspire and advocate for environmentally sustainable, natural death care through education and certification.

Conference Highlights

A slate of experts shared their knowledge, not only as presenters but also while attending sessions as participants. Attendees eagerly soaked in best practices and detailed plans, and many came to learn about green burial so they could advocate for it in their own communities. Representatives of long-established funeral homes and cemeteries came to learn more about GBC certification, how they could better embrace best practices, and how to increase their green options as public demand grows in their local markets.



- 2 weeks' duration
- 22 presenters
- 4 speaker sessions
- 2 speaker panels
- 8 workshops
- 264 total participants
- 79-person average attendance per session
- 85% of participants attended more than one session
- 1,100 total Zoom joins overall
- 18 scholarships awarded to mortuary school students
- 4.5 out of 5 stars given to the conference (in a survey of 71)
- \$30,000 income

GBC Accomplishments and Activities 2020

- GBC Conference 2020 was presented in the fall as a virtual online event
- GBC Leadership Award was given to Mark Harris for his book *Grave Matters*
- Peer-to-Peer Forums presented six education-rich webinars to over 500 attendees
- GBC website averaged about 8,500 visits and over 20,000 page-views per month
- GBC-certified provider maps were added to the website for locating cemeteries, funeral homes, and product providers in North America
- Certificates of Proficiency in Green Funeral Service were awarded to seven mortuary school students
- Newsletter was sent to an average of 4,500 subscribers monthly
- Social media activity grew considerably on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter
- YouTube channel was created
- Facebook group Green Burial Council Peer Forum was created for green burial practitioners and advocates to connect as an online community
- Participation was promoted for the FTC Funeral Rule review process
- Consumer survey was completed for green burial interest in North America
- Major media outlets, publications, and trade magazines featured GBC
- Document creation, editing, and sharing was set up for the first time on shared drives for the boards of directors
- GBC legacy files and records have been securely archived all in one place



Green Burial Council Conference 2020

GBC was very lucky to have Lee Webster, recent president and vice-chair of education of the Green Burial Council International, at the helm for its inaugural conference fall 2020. She was highly instrumental in designing, organizing, and producing the conference and all of its working parts. We are grateful to Webster for her unending spirit of dedication and giving which allowed GBC to present a plethora of rich and diversified selections to more than 260 attendees in the fall of 2020.

We are also singularly grateful to the RiverStyx Foundation, the conference's leading sponsor, a small family foundation that provides assistance to organizations that challenge fear-based paradigms and promote new perspectives of compassion and health. Their generous grant allowed us to create and offer this conference.

An enormous thank you also to all of the industry sponsors and vendors who helped make the conference a stellar success. Because of your generous support, GBC was able to present two weeks of panel discussions, speaker presentations, and informational workshops. The crowd was indeed a testament to the need for, and enthusiasm about, reaching eco-friendly consumers and families across the United States and Canada with natural burial end-of-life options. We could not have done it without you. Your support allows the GBC to forge ahead with our mission of inspiring and advocating for environmentally sustainable, natural death care through education and certification.

Major Conference Sponsor



Keynote Speaker Sponsors

The
Inspired
Funeral

The Inspired Funeral



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PRESERVE

Heartwood Preserve



W A K E

Wake

Plenary Speakers Sponsors



Green Burial Project



CONSERVATION
BURIAL ALLIANCE

The Conservation Burial Alliance

Panels Sponsors



National Home Funeral Alliance



Mourning Dove Studio

Workshops Sponsors



Fertig Funeral Home



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GoodEnding, Inc.



Green Burial Massachusetts



River View Cemetery

School of
American
Thanatology

School of American Thanatology



Side Effects Publishing



*White Eagle
Memorial Preserve*

White Eagle Memorial Preserve Cemetery

Volunteers

We thank the following individuals and groups, plus many more volunteers behind the scenes not mentioned here, who contributed enormous amounts of their time, expertise, and knowledge to conduct the day-to-day operations of the GBC and its outreach events. Their strong dedication and commitment to service enable GBC to operate and govern the organization, certify providers, and educate the public, thereby upholding the unique foundation and mission of the GBC.

Board Directors

GBC's all-volunteer working boards share a strong commitment to service along with their passion for the environment and natural burial, and dedicate their skills, knowledge, and expertise to govern GBC.

Board Members 501c6

Baxley Andresen

Kate Berdan

Steve Berkoff

Ed Bixby

Darren Crouch

Shawn LaValleur-Adame

Doug Renfield-Miller

Board Members 501c3

Jane A. Black

Sabrina Dorfman

Elizabeth Dunnebacke

Susan Greer

Caitlyn Hauke

Darrell Hill

Jeff Hodes

Adriane Jach

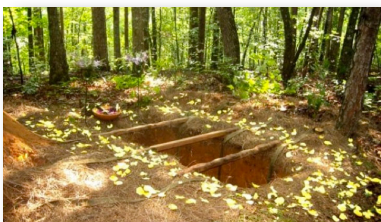
Hannah Palko

2020 Former Board Members 501c3

Roxanne Walsh

Lee Webster

Anne Weston



Compliance Specialists

GBC's compliance specialists generously volunteer their time and expertise, while providing unbiased reviews of applications that ensure adherence to our certification standards in all categories. Each specialist brings to the process their unique background, layered experience, and education, qualifying them to conduct detailed certification reviews for cemeteries, funeral homes, and product providers.

Sam Bar *Products*

Aleta Cardinal *Funeral homes*

Candace Currie *Cemeteries*

Shawn LaValleur-Adame

Funeral homes

Sam Perry *Funeral homes*

Individuals and Groups

These individual volunteers provided ongoing support crucial for GBC's day-to-day operations, while others stepped up to contribute their time to support GBC events, or helped promote a particular effort.

Lee Webster, former president and vice-chair of education, designed and produced GBC's inaugural conference, including writing the marketing materials. She also maintained the GBC website that she created and wrote content for, while shepherding its vast repository of information for funeral service professionals and the public. Webster

continually updated the website to include current topics, and added relevant and timely resources for the broader community. In addition, Webster also wrote GBC's internal documents.

Anne Weston, former secretary of the education board, provided GBC publications editorial support.

Ariel Leath provided marketing strategy support.

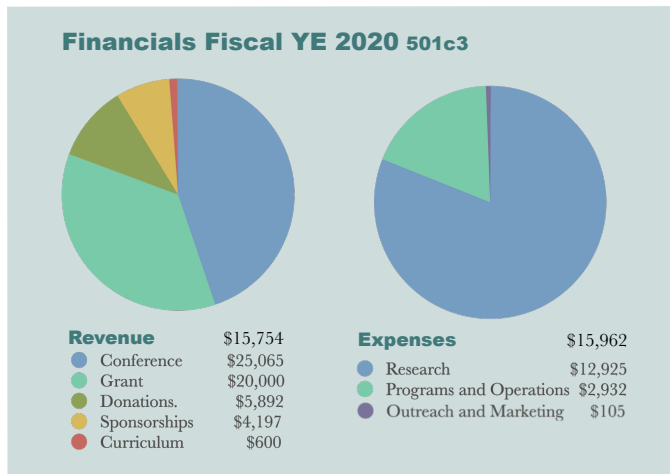
The Minnesota Death

Collaborative provided support for the GBC 2020 Conference.

Josh Slocum, executive director of the Funeral Consumers Alliance, helped GBC promote affirmative action for the FTC Funeral Rule review process.

The 2020 Peer-to-Peer Forums were able to present education-rich topics because the following guest speakers, technical support providers, and organizers generously contributed their knowledge and expertise: **Kim Adams, Joshua Atkinson, Sam Bar, Cassie Barrett, Steve Berkoff, Ed Bixby, Jane A. Black, Kimberley Campbell, Candace Currie, Emily Ford, Susan Greer, Pat Healy, Darrell Hill, Shawn LaValleur-Adame, Tanya Marsh, Mark Richardson, Gail Rubin, Merilynne Rush, Cody Sanders, Joe Smolenski III, Anne Weston, and Lee Webster.**

GreenBurial Council International 501c3 Education and Outreach

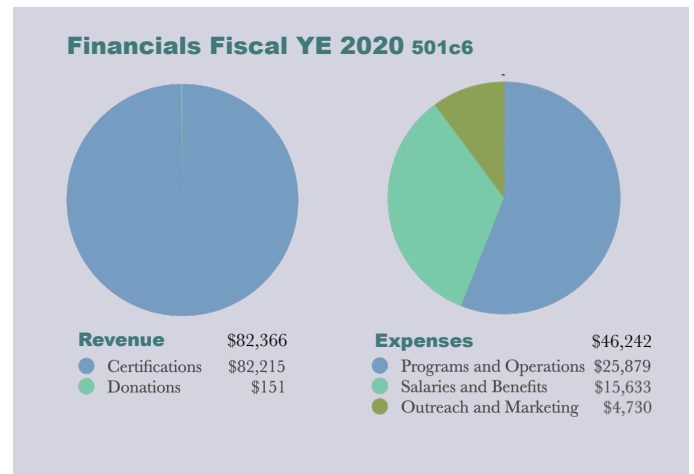


Thank You to Our Donors FYE 2020

These contributors made individual donations to the GBC 501c3 to support our mission. Many thanks to all who gave.

Foundation Sponsor	Neidra L. Clark
\$20,000	Elizabeth Flannery
RiverStyx Foundation	Brian Hall
Individuals	Suzy Hall-Whitney
\$2,000	Sandra Hamp-Lane-Mortensen
Bodhi Be	Darrell Hill
\$500	Tracey Hill
Lee Webster and	Gary Holmquist
William Crangle	Elaine Kallos
\$100 – \$300	Lorraine Kelly
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Melissa Castaneda	Josef Walker
	John Wheatley
	Harold Wood

Green Burial Council, Inc. 501c6 Cerification and Provider Support



Providers Certified by GBC 501c6

as of December 31, 2020

Natural cemeteries	24
Hybrid cemeteries	42
Conservation cemeteries	7
Funeral Homes	185
Product Providers	12
Total active members	270



Photos: Ascension Garden, Greenfield Natural Preserve, Newfield, New York; Henrietta, New York; Heartwood Preserve, Trinity, Florida; Memorial Ecosystems—Ramsey Creek Preserve, Westminster, South Carolina; Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery, Gainesville, Florida (Melissa Hill); and The Preserve at All Saints Cemetery, Waterford, Michigan (Mike Scott). **Design:** Adriane Jach, Adriane Jach Design © 2021 Green Burial Council International



greenburialcouncil.org

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