

Multi-Generational Funeral Directors in Our Community

Funeral customs are as old as civilization itself. Each culture and religion has developed its own set of rituals that serve both the living and the dead. Today's fast-paced and increasingly diverse society presents new challenges to the men and women who choose the profession of funeral director. These men and women are dedicated to service, they are respectful of cultural differences and recognize society's changing views of death.

Change is not always in conflict with tradition. The sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and even great-great grandsons of their founders now manage many of the funeral homes, which first served the cemetery. The key to their success is an unrelenting commitment to service.

F. Ruggiero and Sons, now in the Bronx and Yonkers, was established in 1875 at 66 Court Street in Brooklyn.

Although the funeral home was founded to service the needs of the growing numbers of Italian immigrants in the five boroughs, the funeral home has changed with the times.

"We assist families from all religions and cultures," explained Richard Ruggiero. When asked what resources he used to ensure the funeral home addressed the needs of these new clients, he shook his head. "We asked them. We talk to people about their traditions and customs. When we serviced our first Muslim family, I sat with the family's imam. People are gracious and receptive when you ask."

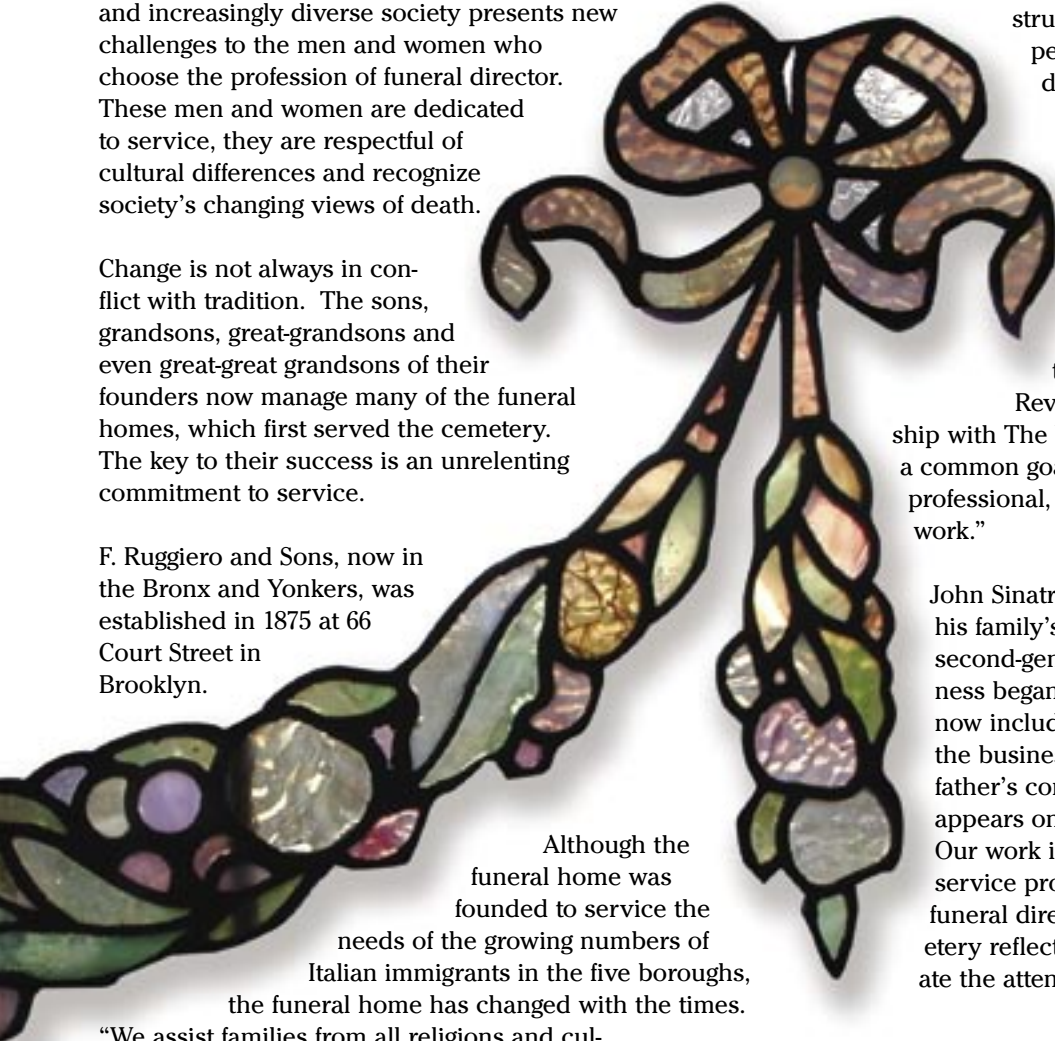
Frank Parisi, Sr., the senior director at Romano Funeral Home, agrees. Like Ruggiero and Sons, Romano Funeral Home was started to meet the needs of Italian immigrants to the Bronx. In an ancient edition of *The Bronx and Its People*, the founder Nicola Romano was described as enjoying "the respect and confidence of his associates and neighbors and maintains a commendable

social standing." For Nicola Romano, customer service included helping new immigrants meet the challenges of their new life in America.

Granby's Funeral Home was established in 1959 in the Bronx and has been at its current location for more than twenty years. Samuel Granby was a young serviceman when he was confronted with a life-changing event - he was struck by lightning. That experience propelled him to a life of service as a funeral director. Samuel Granby's calling became a family affair when his children, Lamont and Ayris, entered the family business after completing their college educations. In 1998, Lamont Granby was granted a Masters Degree in Divinity from Drew University. "I was called to ministry," Reverend Granby said. "I believe I am well equipped to minister to my families in a compassionate way."

Reverend Granby also discussed his relationship with The Woodlawn Cemetery, "We are engaged in a common goal. At Woodlawn, the workers are very professional, look professional and take pride in their work."

John Sinatra of Sinatra Funeral Home described his family's humble beginnings in the Yonkers. A second-generation funeral director, his family's business began with a one-room chapel in Yonkers and now includes four funeral homes. He, too, believes the business thrived and expanded, because of his father's commitment to service. "When your name appears on the marquis, you must take extra care. Our work is never over." Sinatra also complimented service provided by The Woodlawn Cemetery to the funeral directors, "A good level of service at the cemetery reflects well on the funeral home. We appreciate the attention to detail provided by Woodlawn."



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