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MUNSELLE-RHODES AROUND FOR 75 YEARS - 1912

Munselle-Rhodes Funeral Home has been around for many years.

The establishment just completed 75 years.

The name Munselle has been kept over the years because of its good reputation, although John Henry and Thelma Maxwell sold the business to Don and Arminta Rhodes in 1963, according to Greg Rhodes. Thelma is the daughter of W.S. Munselle, the original owner of the funeral home.

Since 1985 Greg Rhodes and Corky York have been running things after buying the business from Don and Arminta.

York joined the staff in March 1972 after attending Blue Mountain Community College, the California College of Mortuary Science in Los Angeles, and completing some apprenticeships.

"It (mortuary work) is not something I ever thought I'd be doing. But the more I have done it, the more I like it and the more I learn," York said.

Rhodes echoed his partner's sentiments even though he knew for some time that this was the career he wanted to get into.

"There really is a lot to learn and the learning process never stops," Rhodes said.

He did an apprenticeship in southern Oregon and later graduated from the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science. He felt it would be good experience to do the apprenticeship somewhere other than his father's business.

"It's good to draw off of other experiences," Rhodes said.

Since he has lived in Milton-Freewater for most of his life, Rhodes feels that this is an advantage for his business.

"It is easier for people to talk to someone who has been here all of his life," he said.

A funeral director requires complete dedication, and one or the other is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Rhodes remembers as a child many times getting all ready for a family vacation, "and then the phone would ring," he said. Many outings were postponed or put on hold.

Rhodes said that an advantage he and York have over his parents is that they aren't as confined since there are two of them - one to cover if the other is going to be out.

Being exposed to death on a daily basis is not easy for either of them, especially since in a small town, one or the other is bound to know or have heard of the deceased.

And sometimes, especially when it is a child or a friend, Rhodes or York will get "caught up in the moment and the other will have to take over," York said.

We'd be less than human if that didn't happen," he said.

But there are rewards in the funeral business.

Rhodes said that although they aren't counselors, they will gladly lend an ear and talk about the deceased person or aid with claim forms.

Rhodes and York are both proud of the work they have been able to provide since purchasing the business from his parents. They expect to continue the long-standing tradition of quality work the business has acquired over the years.

"Our goal is to maintain the good reputation that the Munselle's, the Maxwell's and my parents, the Rhodes, have built over the years," Rhodes said.

"The most important thing for us is to get the job done right. We're dealing with something that is very important to people and it has to be done right," he added.

"We are constantly working under deadline pressures and it has to be done on time," York said.

Both men are looking forward to many more years of business in Milton-Freewater.