

Urbanski's Bedford Funeral Chapel – there to help you create a special tribute to your loved one

By Jackie Giroux
Reporter

The **Bedford Funeral Chapel**, located at 8300 Lewis Ave. in Temperance, is operated by third and fourth generation, father and son funeral directors Bill and Eric Urbanski. The funeral home has been serving the area since 1969, however it has a history that dates back to 1922 in Toledo.

The desire to help people and to make a difference, especially during a time when that person may be going through one of the most difficult times in their life, has been a characteristic in the Urbanski family as four generations have operated a funeral business that spans more than 90 years.

Born in 1896, Stanley Urbanski was the first of his generation to be born in the United States. He served in WWI and after his service was completed he returned to Toledo where he had grown up.

His experiences while serving in the war and the loss of friends who died during the war, led Stanley to realize the importance of a funeral. The first step toward establishing his own funeral business began with Stanley attending the Cincinnati College of Embalming.

In 1922 he founded the Urbanski Funeral Home, which was located on LaGrange St. in Toledo. Accurately predicting

a trend of growth as people moved from Toledo out to the Bedford area, Stanley had purchased property where the **Bedford Funeral Chapel** was built. "This property used to be a cornfield. It was part of the Brunner farm," Bill said. The house on the property is one that was built in 1880 and was remodeled as a residence for our family," Bill added.

Ground was broken in 1968 for the then 8,000 square foot Bedford Funeral Chapel. Three generations of funeral directors were involved in the establishment of the **Bedford Funeral Chapel** – Stanley, William A. and William G. (Bill) Urbanski.

After Bill's graduation from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Service in March 1969, he was named resident manager of the **Bedford Funeral Chapel**, which opened in October of that year.

The **Bedford Funeral Chapel** has continued to grow and evolve over the years. "We have a 12,000 square foot facility with lots of parking," Bill said. "We keep changing with the times with what the families tell us to change," Eric said. "We've remodeled multiple times with a large expansion project in 2004," he added. According to Bill and Eric, it is the largest funeral home in the area. "We try to respond to people's needs.

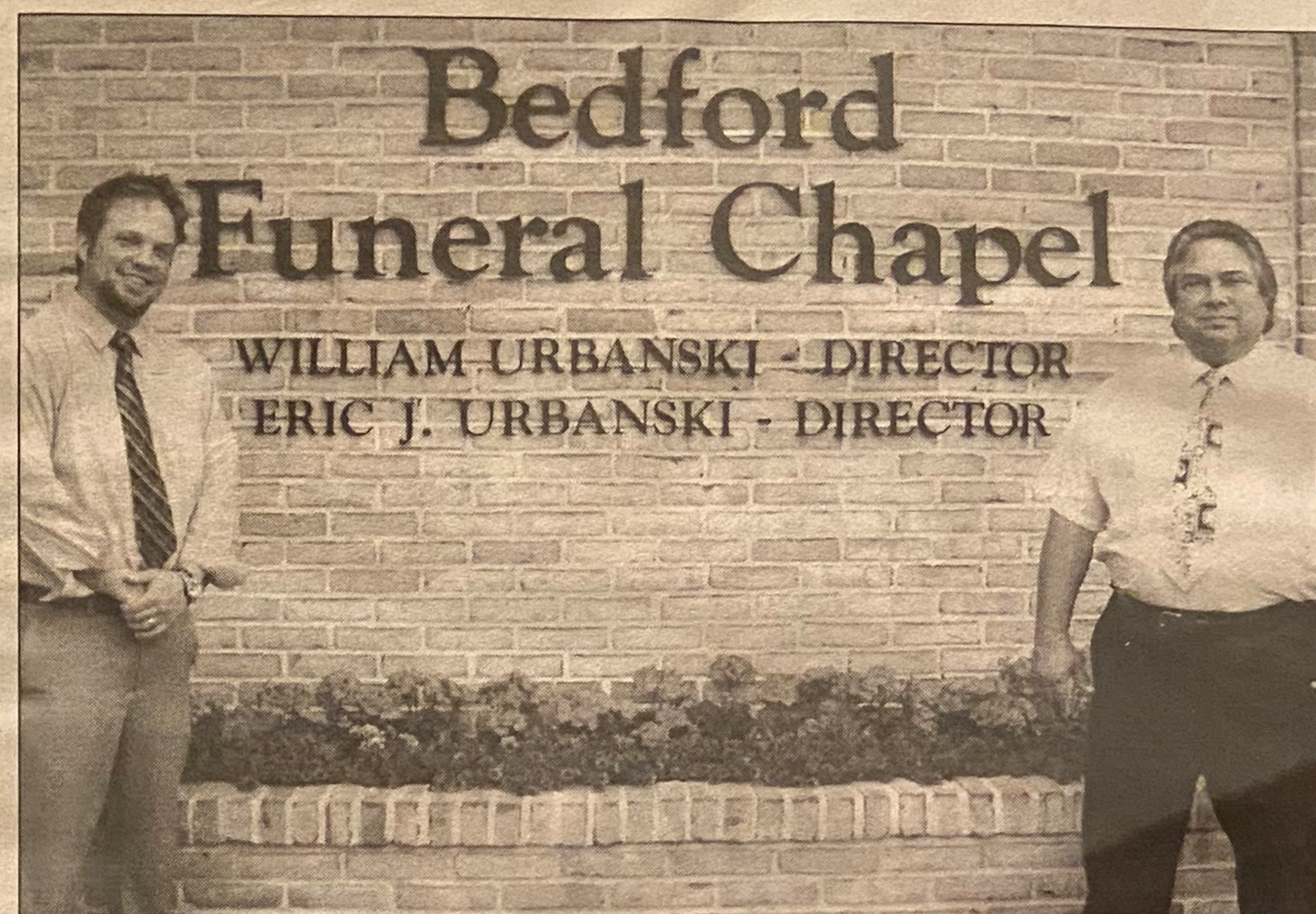
The **Bedford Funeral Chapel** is a modern, up-to-date building that's easily accessible to all. "We have two lounge rooms. If there's more than one family here for a funeral, each family has their own lounge room," Eric said. The room is equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, kitchen, tables, chairs and a TV.

Providing services for both traditional funerals and cremations, the **Bedford Funeral Chapel** features rooms for visitation and funerals that are tailored to accommodate families of all sizes. "We have small, middle size and huge rooms for large families," Eric said.

They have a casket selection room for families that choose burial and a separate cremation option room that provides a place to select products designed for cremation in a comfortable atmosphere.

The **Bedford Funeral Chapel** serves people of all faiths as well as those who are not a member of a church. "It's a diverse neighborhood and our business reflects that," said Bill. "A lot of families from the Toledo area come here as well," he added.

Always sensitive to the needs of the family that comes to them to arrange the funeral of a loved one, Eric said, "We try extra hard to make people feel at home while here and



Eric Urbanski (l) and Bill Urbanski (r) strive to personalize each funeral at Bedford Funeral Chapel and to make it a celebration of the life the person lived. They are third and fourth generation, father and son funeral directors. Bedford Funeral Chapel has been a part of the Bedford community since 1969.

make a difficult time as easy as possible. We try to keep a homey atmosphere, not overly formal. We treat families like our own family, not just a number."

"Eric has brought with him a perspective. We're more technically advanced than prior to his addition to the staff," Bill said. "There's a lot of technical things that can be used to enhance a funeral without adding to the expense."

"We try here to celebrate the life they've lived and not focus so much on that they're gone," Eric said. "We have families say we do a good job personalizing a funeral – that it reflected the person, not just a 'cookie cutter' funeral."

With the less than favorable economic conditions over the past six or seven years, Bill said, "We've been very sensitive to people's challenges to the economy. We've created packages to better fit their means – to provide the quality their loved ones deserve without hurting themselves financially."

"We work very hard at being cost efficient and to have prices that are competitive. We can offer a better price structure than some because we've been in the business so long," he added.

Both Urbanski families live in residences on the property, so someone is always available. Bill's wife April and Eric's wife Melissa are both a part of the business, taking care of all of the paperwork and office work. Additionally, Melissa laminates memorials and makes the memorial photo DVD's.

"Both work at the decorating and adding the feminine touches and taking care of the flowers outside," Eric added.

The Urbanski's belong to the Michigan Funeral Directors Association and the Northwest Ohio Funeral Directors Association where Bill was past president. They are also BBA members and Bill served as president in the past.

They are state licensed in Michigan and Ohio and were required to take a state and national board exam. "A Bachelor's Degree of Mortuary Science is required. It's a lot of science, psychology and business," Eric said.

After he became the director at **Bedford Funeral Chapel**, Bill discovered another need in the community and a way to aid others in a different way. "When I moved to Bedford I found we needed more emergency medical services in Bedford and I was encouraged by the fire department to move forward with that."

For a time the property was also the site of an ambulance company. "We used to have an ambulance company here. We started in 1969 and started one

of the first advanced life support systems in Michigan. That was in 1978," Bill said.

Bill is serving as Fire Commissioner for Bedford Township. Vice Chairman of EMS for Monroe County and Chairman of Operations Committee for Monroe County EMS.

In his spare time he enjoys activities where he can be outside appreciating nature such as fishing, riding his mountain bike and walking in the woods.

Eric graduated from St. Mary's Catholic Central and attended UT and Owens Community College in order to gain the credits needed to attend Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science.

Like Bill, Eric began working in the funeral business as a boy. "I've been working here since I was a kid cutting grass, washing cars, painting, washing walls and carpets," he said. He became a funeral director at **Bedford Funeral Chapel** in 2009.

In his spare time, Eric is kept busy with his sons, ages five and three. He coaches sports for preschool, kindergarten and first graders at Regina Coeli and also the Bedford YMCA. He also plays softball in a church league, goes hunting and fishing and has an interest in American sports cars.

More information about **Urbanski's Bedford Funeral Chapel** can be found at www.bedfordfuneralchapel.com or by calling (734) 847-3841.

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