

# Business Connection

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## Business Spotlight

### Graham-Hitch Mortuary

*"Serving Our Community with Quality, Dignity and Value"*

Graham-Hitch Mortuary in Pleasanton has provided "a dignified and considerate service to Amador Valley since 1891." Compassionate, thoughtful, and helpful, Graham-Hitch Mortuary has been providing funeral services to trusting families in the Tri-Valley and the East Bay for over 127 years.

First owned and operated by A.F. Schweer and Mr. Geo W. Detjens, the mortuary that we know and respect today was housed in several locations within Pleasanton – the first on the corner of Railroad Avenue and Division Street. The mortuary was also, at one time, located on Main Street.

Mr. Charles Graham, who had married the daughter of Mr. Detjens, assumed the business just before 1905. The "business" was then named Graham Mortuary, and Mr. Graham became one of the first licensed morticians in California. He learned the trade by taking classes in Oakland to obtain the California Embalmers License #15 in 1906.

Mr. Ralph Hitch, originally hailing from Nebraska, came to California in 1938. He convinced his lady love, Bonita Butler, to move to Stockton, where he had settled, and they married in 1939. With a mortician's license from Nebraska only, Ralph attended San Francisco College of Mortuary Science

to be licensed in California.

Ralph, upon hearing that the Graham Mortuary was for sale in Pleasanton, vied with others for the coveted ownership. Ralph Hitch was chosen as the new owner of the mortuary. Wanting Pleasanton residents to think that Charles Graham had merely assumed a partner, Mr. Hitch named his new business, Graham & Hitch Mortuary. Mr. Graham was involved on a limited basis.

Ralph and his wife became very involved in the community. Ralph joined the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce and was active in the Lion's Club and at St. Augustine's Church.

In 1954, Mr. Hitch constructed a more contemporary mortuary on St. John Street. He sold the business to the owners of the Jess C. Spencer Mortuary, in Castro Valley, in 1972. Randy Friesen joined the firm as President in 1990, and retired in 2005. The building on St. John Street cared



Deanna Moser, a licensed funeral director since 2005, has extensive experience in advanced funeral planning. A former flight attendant with American Airlines, she serves as the Director of Advanced Planning for Graham-Hitch Mortuary.



Wesley "Wes" Fisher, President of Graham-Hitch Mortuaries located in Pleasanton and Danville, is a licensed funeral director with over 35 years' experience. He is a licensed crematory manager with extensive experience in crematory operations.

for Pleasanton's funeral needs until 1992, when the current location for Graham-Hitch Mortuary, at 4167 First Street, was

constructed and remains today. Along the way, the name changed to Graham-Hitch, exchanging the ampersand for a hyphen.

Wes Fisher, current on-site Owner and President, along with his considerate care providers offer burial, cremation, and varied amenities, including grief support to families upon the death of a loved one. Today, Graham-Hitch is a lovely building located near the heart of downtown Pleasanton.

