

Flanner & Buchanan Funeral Centers

Founded: 1881

Original Location:

172 North Illinois Street, Indianapolis (1881–94)

Subsequent Headquarters Locations:

320 North Illinois Street (1894-926)

25 West Fall Creek Parkway (1926-994)

2950 N. High School Road (1994-2005)

635 East Market Street (2005-)

Current List of Locations (2006), showing dates when they were opened or acquired:

INDIANAPOLIS

Broad Ripple, 1305 E. Broad Ripple Avenue – 1954

Decatur Township – 5463 Kentucky Avenue - 1995

Lawrence – 5215 N. Shadeland Avenue - 1974

Market Street – 635 E. Market Street - 2005

Morris Street – 1604 W. Morris Street - 1968

Speedway – 2950 N. High School Road – 1968 (new building 1994)

Legacy Funeral Alternatives at Memorial Park – 9350 E. Washington Street - 2001

Washington Park North Funeral Center – 2706 Kessler Blvd., West Drive - 1995

Washington Park East Funeral Center – 10722 E. Washington Street - 1989

HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton Memorial Park Funeral Center – 4180 Westfield Road - 2003

Oaklawn Memorial Gardens Funeral Center – 9700 Allisonville Road - 2003

Carmel – 325 E. Carmel Drive - 1983

ZIONSVILLE

Zionsville – 105 W. Pine Street - 1955

Early History of Flanner & Buchanan – 19th Century

Frank W. Flanner was born in the Quaker village of Mount Pleasant, Ohio, in 1854. He was the son of a schoolteacher and farmer and grandson of a Quaker clergyman. His family moved to Indianapolis in 1863. From 1875 to 1880 Flanner learned the undertaking trade at David Kregelo & Son.

In 1881, he borrowed five hundred dollars from his mother Orpha (who drew on a Civil War pension fund left by her deceased husband, Henry B. Flanner) and, with John Hommown, a hack driver, established his own undertaking firm at 172 North Illinois Street. A dead heron found on the mortuary's roof at the close of its first day provided the firm with a logo; the image of a heron appeared on its early business cards.

At the time, Flanner resided with his mother and his sister at 230 E. Vermont, while Hommown lived at 125 N. Mississippi (now Capitol Avenue).

In the 1880s, Flanner became the first licensed embalmer in Indiana.

In 1883, the firm purchased a horse-drawn ambulance and provided the city's ambulance service for twelve years.

Gradually, the mortuary totally became a family business. In the 1880s, Peter Wright, a local businessman, bought a one-third interest in the firm, but he soon retired and sold his interest to Flanner.

In 1884, Charles J. Buchanan married Flanner's sister Anna. Three years later, Buchanan purchased Hommown's interest, and the mortuary became Flanner & Buchanan.

Charles J. Buchanan was born on the Buchanan family farm near Cumberland in Marion County in 1856. (His grandfather, David Buchanan, moved to Indiana in 1823 from Virginia.) He taught school for fourteen years, eventually becoming township principal for Center Township. He also completed a course of study at Clark's School of Embalming in Cincinnati.

In 1894, the firm moved into the former Kingan home on 320 North Illinois Street.

20th Century

In 1904, Flanner's nephew, Frank Bates Flanner, originally from Minnesota, joined the firm.

The same year, the first crematory in Indiana was built by Flanner & Buchanan at 320 N. Illinois Street.

Both the Flanner and Buchanan families were active in social and civic affairs. In 1886, Frank W. Flanner married Mary Hockett. Mary was a poet and playwright and

occasionally gave public dramatic readings. Their daughter Janet Flanner was a long-time Paris correspondent of *The New Yorker*. In 1898, Flanner donated a cottage for the use of African-American children; the institution grew into the major social service center for African Americans in the city and was renamed Flanner House in 1912.

Charles J. Buchanan was elected to the state legislature as a Republican sympathetic to progressive causes for three terms beginning in 1919. (His interests outside the firm have been reflected by others in the family, providing involvement and direction both from those who became licensed funeral directors and by others who had other careers, including Paul H. Buchanan, Jr., who served as chief judge of the Indiana Court of Appeals for nearly 25 years, as well as his son Bruce, who spent years in the photography and advertising business, following a career as a journalist, prior to joining the firm. Also, Donald Keller, married to Charlene Buchanan, sister of Paul, Jr., worked in the newspaper business before joining Flanner & Buchanan. During his tenure at the firm he developed a Washington theme at both Washington Park North and East cemeteries. He was also active in the Washington Park Cemetery Association and Floral Park Cemetery Association, before the latter merged with WPCA about three years ago.)

The firm later opened the city's first columbarium (containing vaults for the deposit of burial urns) and was the first mortuary to convert to limousines and motorized hearses. In 1912, Flanner & Buchanan constructed a new, four-story building at its location on North Illinois Street. The same year, upon Flanner's death, Buchanan became president.

In 1926, Flanner & Buchanan moved to a new location at 25 West Fall Creek Parkway, which was equipped with a study for clergy, chapels, private family rooms, an elevator, air conditioning, crypts for delayed burials, and a crematory. The firm, known for its business acumen, constructed the nationally recognized Fall Creek location, to accommodate the rapid expansion of Indianapolis to the north. Acquiring or building mortuaries in or near the growing population centers of Marion and surrounding counties has been a hallmark of the firm.

Charles Buchanan died in 1938, but the mortuary remained in the control of his family. In 1946 Charles' son, Paul H. Buchanan, became president; he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Donald B. Keller, in 1966.

In 1950, Floral Park Cemetery built the first garden crypt community mausoleum in Indianapolis. Also during the 1950s, the mortuary began to expand, eventually opening branches throughout the city and immediate vicinity and acquiring smaller firms, such as the Philippi Mortuary in Zionsville and Farley Funeral Homes of Indianapolis. In 1978, Keller, who owned a controlling share of the firm, considered selling it to a Texas-based company, Service Corp. International, which operated funeral homes and cemeteries across the nation; instead, Paul Jr., who was committed to keeping the business in the family and who owned three percent of the stock, bought all of the remaining shares and kept it as a family-owned business.

Buchanan Group was formed in 1987 to sell pre-need funerals using insurance as a financing vehicle. Today, Buchanan Group provides management, consulting, marketing, and sales services for numerous funeral homes and cemeteries.

The Catholic Cemeteries Association is managed by Buchanan Group on behalf of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. CCA includes the following cemeteries:

Indianapolis

- Calvary Cemetery, 435 W. Troy Avenue
- Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 Haverstick Road
- St. Joseph, South Meridian Street
- Holy Cross, Troy Avenue

Terre Haute

- Calvary

The first mortuary-and-cemetery combination in Indianapolis was formed when Washington Park East Cemetery opened a mortuary on its grounds in 1989. Today, Washington Park East is believed to serve more families than any other cemetery in the state, with a Community Life Center that provides a beautiful setting for family celebrations (see below).

The 100-acre Hamilton Memorial Park Cemetery & Funeral Center was the first new cemetery in Hamilton County, Indiana, in recent memory. Opened in 1997, this cemetery features indoor crypts, a chapel, and funeral-services facilities.

A Family Center at Washington Park North Cemetery & Funeral Center gives families a one-stop location for funeral, burial, and after-service receptions. The Family Center is also used for civic meetings, art showings, seminars, family celebrations, and other events. The Funeral Home and Family Center opened in 1995.

With an eye towards keeping the firm's client cemeteries relevant well into the future, Flanner & Buchanan was among the first in the country to install family history computer kiosks. Family Legacies™, a computer program developed by Buchanan Group, offers permanent storage and viewing of family histories.

Also developed in the 20th century was the Washington Park Cemetery Association (WPCA). In 1919, Charles Buchanan started Floral Park Cemetery, the forerunner to the WPCA. The nonprofit association has now grown into the following seven locations. Representatives from Flanner & Buchanan are among the members of the board.

WPCA locations with funeral centers:

- Legacy Funeral Alternatives at Memorial Park, 9350 E. Washington Street
- Washington Park East Funeral Center, 10722 E. Washington Street
- Washington Park North Funeral Center, 2706 Kessler Boulevard, West Drive

- Oaklawn Memorial Gardens Funeral Center, 9700 Allisonville Road
- Hamilton Memorial Park Funeral Center

WPCA locations not yet equipped with funeral centers:

- Floral Park Cemetery, 3659 Cossell Road (funeral center planned for 2007)
- West Ridge Park Cemetery, 9295 W. 21st Street

Flanner & Buchanan, through innovative programs and multi-purpose buildings, has evolved from being a set of mortuary locations to a series of funeral centers, distinguishing itself from its competitors in the wide variety of options available both for traditional funerals and cremations. This progressive outlook and forethought continues to be a key reason for the longevity and the growth of the company.

21st Century

In June 2001, the country's first Community Life Center opened at Washington Park East Cemetery. This 20,000-square-foot center serves as a venue for large-scale funeral, community, and civic events. It features a 60-foot tall memorial tower and a garden for funerals and weddings. The Center has a large retail area where gifts celebrating all types of interpersonal relationships are available. Weddings fill the center every weekend, scheduled months in advance. The Community Life Center has become the center for civic events of all kinds.

In the fall of 2005, the newest corporate headquarters, opened at 635 East Market Street. It became the 13th location of Flanner & Buchanan Funeral Centers. It contains the Cremation Center of Indiana that is designed to serve both human and pet cremations, a community room, and wireless-access capabilities, offering the latest technologies for families and those pre-planning their own or others' arrangements,

In 2006, Flanner & Buchanan celebrates the 125th anniversary of the founding of the firm. It is one of the oldest family-owned businesses of any kind in Indiana. Current owners are Paul H. Buchanan, Jr., the grandson of Charles Buchanan, and his two sons, Brian Buchanan, President of Flanner & Buchanan, and Bruce Buchanan, Vice President of Flanner & Buchanan and President of Buchanan Group.

More information on the firm is available at www.flanner-buchanan.com.