

## Landmark Mausoleum Book Gets New Life

**CHICO, CALIFORNIA** – In the new book, *Going Out in Style: The Architecture of Eternity*, photo journalist Douglas Keister focuses on America's grand mausoleums.

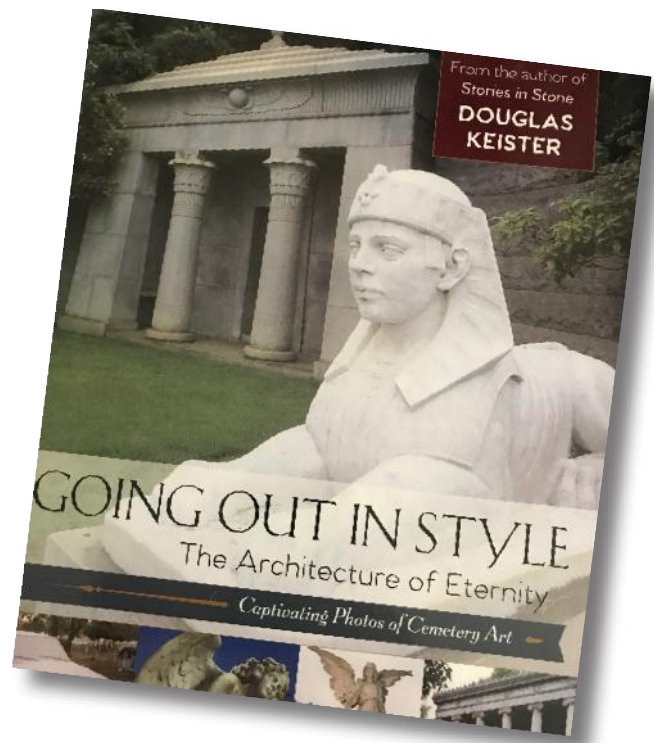
How Keister first thought of doing such a book is indeed an interesting story. "In the mid-1990s, I was photographing a book on bungalow homes for Penguin Books, when, having a few minutes to spare before my next appointment, I decided to steer my car through the gates of a cemetery near the address of the home I was about to photograph," he said.

That turn into Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, California, literally changed his outlook on life and death, as well as pointed his career as a professional photographer and writer in a new direction.

"My companion in the car was writer and architectural historian Paul Duchscherer, with whom I was collaborating on the bungalow book," recalled Keister. "As we threaded our way through the cemetery, Paul pointed out the various architectural styles of the mausoleums and I found myself wondering whether anyone had ever done a book on mausoleums. It was a light bulb moment. Soon after, armed with the effervescent title *Going Out in Style: The Architecture of Eternity*, I contacted my editor at Penguin and proposed the idea of celebrating these incredible funerary monuments in a lush coffee table book."

Keister's editor loved the idea, but the publishing overlords thought it too esoteric. However, in the time it took for his idea to be tossed into the circular file, he was hooked on mausoleums and, with a heavy dose of head-in-the-clouds optimism, he set out to find a suitable publisher that would see the artistic and social value of his vision.

"It took a couple of years, but thanks to teaming up with Xavier Cronin, then an associate editor at *American Cemetery* magazine – which provided a boost of funerary industry integrity to my proposal – I finally secured a willing publisher," he said.



"Xavier agreed to write an introduction, while I photographed the mausoleums and penned the captions and chapter introductions."

Added Keister: "What a amazing adventure *Going Out in Style* was and continues to be." At first, some cemeteries graciously opened their arms (and mausoleums) to him, while others were a bit standoffish. Eventually, all saw the value of showcasing their magnificent mausoleums.

"Indeed, since the publication of *Going Out in Style* in 1997, cemeterians have started to see their cemeteries in a new light," he said. "Historic tours have blossomed. Cemeteries have hosted concerts, lectures, bird watching and horticultural tours, even weddings and movies. The public has begun to see cemeteries as places for the living, too."

Thanks to *Going Out in Style*, Keister has traveled the world lecturing about and photographing cemeteries and mausoleums. In the process, he said, "I have produced five more books on cemeteries and featured cemeteries in three of my novels," he said.

“When I give lectures on cemeteries, I point out that mausoleums are America’s most unspoiled resource of historic architecture. Indeed, one could spend days wandering around a large city and not see the number of architecture styles one could see in an hour in a cemetery.”

However, like the permanent residents of our cemeteries, books also have a lifespan. By the mid-2000s, *Going Out in Style* had gone out of print. The price

of the few remaining new copies of *Going Out in Style* skyrocketed.

“To my utter amazement, a few months ago, I was contacted by Echo Point Books, which was wondering if I would like to see *Going Out in Style* reissued and updated,” Keister said. “It was an offer I couldn’t refuse.” Now this landmark book is once again available and Keister says he couldn’t be happier.

**MBJ**

## Law Firm Investigates Claims by Matthews Shareholders

**NEW YORK CITY** – In a press release issued this week, Pomerantz LLP, a law firm that specializes in corporate, securities and antitrust class litigation, said it is investigating claims on behalf of investors of Matthews International Corporation that Matthews and certain of its officers and/or directors may have engaged in securities fraud or other unlawful business practices.

On November 11, 2017, Spruce Point Capital Management published a report asserting that following a “forensic financial review” of Matthews, Spruce Point had identified, among other issues, “operational problems, declining financial performance, [and] accounting and financial control weakness” at the company.

Specifically, the Spruce Point report stated, in part, that Matthews had concealed the fact that two large acquisitions “have failed miserably to deliver”; had “taken classic measures to obscure its problems, such as realigning segment reporting and promoting highly ‘adjusted’ figures”; and had “serious financial control issues and governance concerns.”

With this news, Matthews’ share price fell sharply during intraday trading January 11.

In characterizing the news of the investigation by Pomerantz and the Spruce Point Capital Manage-

ment report, David Nixon of Nixon Consulting said, “Wall Street is fickle. They love revenue growth but ignore the underlying issues.”

He said that when any deathcare company shows sudden revenue growth, Wall Street jumps all over it and that company becomes the darling of Wall Street. “I can recall about 10 years ago when SCI bought Alderwoods Group – I got a number of calls because SCI’s stock price went from \$10 to \$15 – a 50% increase.

“The question is sustainability,” Nixon added. “The problem is that Wall Street has not learned from the past. From what the [Spruce Point report] describes, the smoke and mirrors of constant acquisitions distorts a company’s financials to the point that even learned experts cannot discern fact from fiction.”

It’s no surprise that casket numbers are dropping and have been for more than a decade, to which Nixon replied, “Placing your financial future in one market is rarely a good idea. I have even tried to counsel funeral home owners to diversify their holdings beyond just their funeral business.”

A spokesperson for Matthews International Corporation said the company had no comment on the report.

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