

Jim Erb

Jim Erb has spent most of his life dealing with people who are experiencing one of life's great traumas – the loss of a loved one. But rather than diminish or depress him, Erb feels privileged to carry out his duties as a funeral director and partner at the Erb & Good Family Funeral Home.



“I see it as a bit of a calling or ministry . . .” he said once. “We can make a significant difference for them, in how they move on after the two or three days we spend with them, in helping them to deal with grief in a more positive way.”

Erb, who has been a partner in the business for more than thirty years, was deeply affected by the funeral of his grandfather who died when Erb was eleven years old. Erb's family was living in Wellesley and the memorial in their home inspired Erb to pursue his career.

After attending public school in Wellesley and high school in Elmira, Erb graduated from the Canadian School of Embalming in Toronto in 1968. He joined the Edward R. Good Funeral Home in 1968 and slowly worked his way up to partner and co-owner. Both Erb and Paul Good (now retired) are proud to lead their family-run funeral home during a time when many in the industry are run by large corporations based in the United States.

“In a family business, the key issue is to learn how to work together during the day and still be able to love each other in the evening,” Erb said once.

Aside from his business interests, Erb is known for his commitment to serving Waterloo as a city councillor from 1980 until 1988. Erb is remembered as getting the most votes of any Waterloo candidate in three consecutive municipal elections. Erb has also given generously of his time and money. He was actively involved in the Big Brothers Association for many years and is currently a strong supporter of the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo, and RAISE Home Support for the Elderly. Erb and his wife are active members of the Erb Street Mennonite Church. He has served on the board of directors of Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation and was a founding member of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery.

Most recently, Erb has been making headlines as a spokesperson for the community group called Citizens for Better Government. The group is trying to promote discussion in the community around dissolving the eight municipalities of Waterloo Region to form a new form of local governance. “We want this to be a civilized public discussion with community members and try to keep the politicians out of it so that the people's voices are heard,” said Erb.

He is managing this community involvement while staying on top of an evolving funeral industry and conducting an average of 650 funerals a year. The Erb & Good Family Funeral Home has made many changes over the years including hiring grief counselors,

conducting bereavement group therapy, and opening a library and reception room for grieving family members.

Jim Erb has said that ninety percent of his business is “human interaction” and it’s a career that touches him deeply even after all these years. “I don’t have any embarrassment in saying I occasionally have a tear in my eye,” he said. “If I didn’t, there would be something wrong.”

Photo courtesy of the Erb & Good Family Funeral Home.