

# Funeral home *Oct 16, 1996* sold to big chain

Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home, a family-owned business in Bend since 1911, has been sold to the third-largest funeral home chain in the country.

Paul Reynolds, owner of the firm with his wife, Ann, sold the venture to Stewart Enterprises. The sale was completed Monday. The purchase price was not disclosed.

Based in New Orleans, Stewart owns 288 funeral homes and 119 cemeteries in 21 states.

The Reynolds will stay on for the next three years providing services to families. But the management end of the business will be turned over to Bill Bliss, who has been with the company for about five years.

"It's kind of like giving up the baby," said Reynolds, who has worked at the business for 42 years. "But the timing of the situation is right, and we're staying in funeral services doing the thing I enjoy doing — taking care of families."

Large national chains have been buying up small, family-run funeral homes throughout the country in recent years. Reynolds, 61, said he had been approached by the three biggest chains in the country, but he said he chose Stewart because the firm was personal and caring.

Niswonger-Reynolds was started by Reynolds grandfather in 1911. Ten years later the business took on a partner. But Reynolds bought out the partner in 1960 and has run the business with his wife ever since.