

“The Embrace of Dying”

Resident featured in documentary

GRAND BLANC — Jillian Rutherford of Grand Blanc, student of Wayne State University’s Mortuary Science College, played a key role for local director/producer Keith Famie’s (Novi) documentary series “The Embrace of Dying – How we deal with end of life.”

They say we fear what we don’t understand, and perhaps nowhere is that more true than the dying process. Confusion, curiosity, and questions abound: how has the course of history changed our attitudes toward death, from the Greatest Generation to the Baby Boomers? What’s it like to be a funeral director? How does our attitude toward dying from a long-term illness differ from that of a sudden accident? How do we embrace death? Can we embrace it? Where do we go? Do we go anywhere?

Eleven-time Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker, director/producer Keith Famie will premiere his third and final installment in The Embrace of Aging Series, “The Embrace of Dying: How we deal with the end of life”. The eight- part series will air Mondays at 7:30 p.m. on WTVS Detroit Public Television beginning Feb. 8.



Grand Blanc Resident Jillian Rutherford, at left is featured in the movie. More photos are available at: www.facebook.com/embraceofdying/photos/pcb.466509140175904/466508920175926/?type=3&theater

Erik Smith, former WXYZ **Detroit** anchor, will host the eight part series. He has shown great enthusiasm for the project, and eagerly agreed to bring his years of experience as an engaging news anchor.

His charm, insight and good humor make him the ideal host for a topic that, according to the man himself, “we don’t want to think about, we don’t want to talk about, and we don’t want to happen to us or our loved ones. To me, those are the best reasons in the world to shine a light on the other thing in life we can’t avoid - next to the I.R.S.!”

The series premiere dives into the history of hospice with executive emeritus of Hospice of Michigan Dorothy Deremo in [London, England](#). Other topics include the history of funeral directors in America, the right to die movement, Gift of Life [Michigan](#) organ donorship, the significance of the American military funeral, afterlife experiences, and the nature of grief itself.

Also featured is a day with Rabbi Jennifer Kaluzny of the Jewish Hospice and Chaplaincy Network with one of her patients, the Ebeid Hospice Center in [Ohio](#), and what it is like to be a female Mortuary Science student at the Wayne State Mortuary Science College.

Additionally, the series steps back into [Michigan](#) history to look at the impact Jack Kevorkian had on end of life issues, and explore what to think about in order to “plan a good death”. Some of Michigan’s most prominent funeral directors speak graciously about their lives, and taking care of families in their most difficult moments.

The film also tours some of the most iconic cemeteries in the world – as well as the historical cemetery Mt. Elliott, right here in [Detroit](#). “We are certain through our featured professionals and personal stories of individuals and families facing end of life issues, we will create a dialogue about death and dying, for both young and old,” said Famie.

“We are proud to have the Michigan Funeral Directors Association as our title-presenting broadcast sponsor, and

we would like to thank Promedica Health System, Co-Executive Producers Tom Rau and Russel Ebeid, Phyllis Sandler, and all our supporters. The series debuts on Detroit Public Television this month, and Jillian’s episode airs on February 22. A clip to provide perspective can be found online at: (A Day in the Life of Jillian): www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBvla4Q09qE. — *Compiled by Paula K. Schmidt*