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## Forest Lawn Announces the appointment of Lopez and Terrill as Senior Vice Presidents

GLENDAL, CA—Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries has announced the promotion of long time Forest Lawn team member **Valerie Lopez** to senior vice president of human resources. **Jennifer Terrill** has been promoted to senior vice president and CIO.

“Over the years, Valerie has distinguished herself as an extraordinary leader at our organization,” said **Darin Drabing**, Forest Lawn’s CEO and president. “We are excited to welcome her to the executive team where her expertise and insight will help guide Forest Lawn into the future.”

Valerie has had an over-20-year career at Forest Lawn, starting in 1998 as an employee relations representative in human resources. She subsequently was promoted to human resources manager in May 2002, and then to vice president of human resources in September 2006. Known for building and nurturing a dedicated, caring team of human resources professionals, Valerie is responsible for recruiting, training, employee relations, benefits, worker’s compensation, and compliance.

“Jennifer is a remarkable leader and has made a tremendous impact on the organization during her time at Forest Lawn,” said Drabing. “Her knowledge of information technologies is invaluable, and she’ll be a wonderful addition to the executive team.”

Since February 2019, Jennifer has served as the vice president and CIO, leading the information technology strategies for software development, infrastructure, cybersecurity, business process improvement and project management. Her proven leadership has created a re-



Valerie Lopez



Jennifer Terrill

sourceful, imaginative, and responsive team of IT professionals, providing the secure and effective tools necessary to build relationships and communicate with our clients and within Forest Lawn.

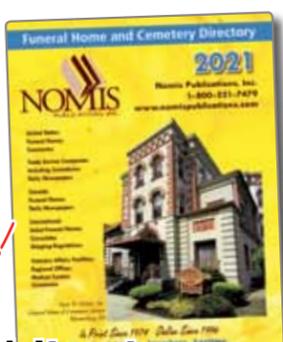
Jennifer has strategically aligned Forest Lawn’s technology with business operations and digital transformation across multiple business solutions including human resources, compliance, automation and mobile solutions, while continuously improving Forest Lawn’s cybersecurity program.

Throughout her career, she has successfully led teams responsible for enterprise application/ERP and infrastructure, product management, cybersecurity, customer care, implementations, and software development. She has focused on building teams and empowering business users to utilize innovation to drive business results and high customer satisfaction.

Since its founding in 1906, Forest Lawn has committed itself to providing outstanding service and beautiful, scenic environments for family outings, remembering loved ones, and commemorating holidays. With six locations throughout Southern California, the memorial parks serve all faiths and cultures and offer a wide range of celebrations and special events set amidst picturesque properties and a world-renowned collection of art and architecture.

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## Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

### Understanding Instagram Reels

In August 2020, Instagram launched a function called Reels. It didn’t take long for this TikTok copycat to become the darling of Instagram influencers and marketers, but almost a year later, there are as many questions about Reels as there are answers.

Funeral service providers might wonder whether this channel makes sense for them. After all, just because Louis Vuitton is getting an average 7 million views per Reel and 67% of NBA teams are engaging with fans via this format doesn’t mean it’s a fit for promoting deathcare services.

#### What Are Instagram Reels?

They’re video clips up to 30 seconds long. They show up on your profile’s Reel grid, and you can choose to have them show up in your regular profile grid for added exposure. Instagram heavily promotes quality Reels on its Explore page, which makes it possible to connect with thousands of people who don’t already follow you on the platform.

#### Benefits (and Downsides) of Reels

The benefits of Reels are Instagram-specific. This content doesn’t show up on the web or add to your SEO performance. But if you’re working on increasing your Instagram presence or targeting an audience that’s likely to be on the social platform, Reels can help you do that.

On average, new Reels get hundreds to thousands of views within minutes of being published due to how they’re prioritized on Instagram’s Explore page. This is where people go to search for content on the platform and see posts from people they aren’t yet following.

The downside is that Instagram hasn’t yet put insights on Reels. While you can see how many times your Reel has been viewed, liked, or commented on, you don’t know if that engagement is driving more fruitful activity such as profile views or clicks on your bio links (which are signs people are getting closer to conversion).

There’s also a tendency to get caught up in the excitement of Reels and forget about your core marketing goals. Seeing your post get thousands of views within a day can be intoxicating, and Instagram spurs this on by sending you helpful notifications like “Your Reel has 500 views!” and “Your Reel has 1,000 views!”

#### Should You Make Reels?

The truth is that people are already making this content. If you search tags such as #funeral, #funeralservices, #memorialservice, or #cremation in Instagram’s Explore feature, you’ll see Reels.

Some of these are from consumers, but a variety of deathcare pros are engaging via this format. For example, Instagram user @balefirereview calls herself a “death doula” and personal coach. Her Reels cover topics such as wills, communicating with others about final arrangements, and songs you might choose for memorial services.

Frigid Fluid Company (@frigidfluid), a business that makes embalming products, features embalmers and funeral directors on its Reels. And Hollis Funeral Home (@hollisfuneralhome) a family-owned funeral home in Syracuse, NY, covers topics such as green burial, funeral makeup, and local cemeteries in Reels.

Do you need to join in? If you’re trying to compete on Instagram, the answer seems to be yes.

#### Tips for Funeral-Themed Reels

Reels have a bit of a learning curve, and they take practice to make well. The advice from most top Instagram marketers is to jump in and start trying things, knowing you’ll get better as you go. But here are a few tips to get you started:

##### Don’t copy videos from other platforms with watermarks.

Instagram has specifically said it will not prioritize content with TikTok or other watermarks. If you’re making videos for other platforms and want to reuse them, take time to strip off watermarks.

##### Use in-app Instagram editing tools.

You can add music, text, and filters to your Reels right in the Instagram app. Instagram has said that using these features helps increase the chance that your Reels will perform well or be prioritized in Explore.

##### Shorter is better.

While you can make Reels as long as 30 seconds, Reels under 15 seconds get more views and engagement. If you want to convey more complex ideas, consider breaking them up into multiple Reels.

##### Create original content.

Scroll through Reels yourself for a few minutes and you’ll see people literally copying content from each other. As a brand on the social platform, you should not be doing that. You can jump on a fun trend, but spin it to be relevant to your niche.

##### Include some hashtags.

This helps Instagram know what your Reel is about so it can appear appropriately in search and Explore. You can add up to 30 hashtags on every Instagram post, so test out different hashtags to see what works for you.

##### Stick around to connect with commenters.

Promote engagement by responding to some of your commenters. The more engagement your Reels and other types of posts get, the more likely your future posts are to show up in explore.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of *Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes*. For more information, visit [www.FuneralHomeProfits.com](http://www.FuneralHomeProfits.com).

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