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DEATH IS SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN INTO

NAME: Jaron Chasca • **AGE:** 26 • **JOB:** Funeral director and embalmer

Ever since Jaron Chasca was 11, he's worked in a funeral home. Chasca has worked in his family's funeral business for four years and is now director of Pet Heaven Crematorium and Funeral Chapel in Calgary.

How did you get involved in funeral directing?

I'm a second-generation funeral director and embalmer. It's something I chose to do — I don't know if I've always wanted to do it, but I've always been around it. I've been working in a funeral home since I was 11 years old. I assisted on embalming bodies as early as 14.

Is it a difficult profession to get into?

There are two ways people get involved. One, they've experienced a death and were unhappy with the services, or they liked the services and want to do it. The other way is like my sister and I — we were born into it. Getting into the industry, unless you know people, can be quite difficult.

How do you get involved if you weren't born into it?

Someone who has no ties or connections in the industry would have to get involved in a funeral home and start working part-time as what we call a "funeral attendant." Eventually, the owner/manager, as older people retire, will approach those people and ask them if they're interested in doing an apprenticeship.

Generally speaking, do funeral directors share similar character traits?

I'd say that's probably true. You've got to have some kind of compassion and caring way about you. My family have always been strong leaders in ethics. You're dealing with the most vulnerable thing in the world — a dead animal or a dead human. They've got no way to defend themselves, protect themselves, so that's where ethics comes in. — **TONYA ZELINSKY/DOSE CALGARY**

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