

# EAST DURHAM NEWS & BUSINESS

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## East Durham Business magazine feature: Hat-trick of awards for Delanoy as it turns three

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# It's three years since John Delanoy and Julie Stout launched their partnership, Delanoy Funeral Services. Driven by a desire to make a difference to the way funerals are conducted, the duo have not only won praise from families across the region for their compassion and sensitivity, they have also won three prestigious awards. Here John and Julie reflect on their journey and what the future holds for them...

Funerals are upsetting and heartbreaking but they're also the final opportunity for us to say our goodbyes to our loved ones. It's also one last chance to respect the wishes of our friends and family and give them the send-off they wanted and deserved. That might seem like a given, however historically that's not always been the case. Step in John Delanoy and Julie Stout.

The duo launched their partnership, Delanoy Funeral Services, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in August 2020, after being introduced by a mutual friend who thought they would work well together. Three years down the line John and Julie have won a raft of awards and conducted hundreds of funerals around the region.

So, what is it that sets them apart from other funeral companies? Well, as Julie says, everything they do is about making things easier for the family on the day, adding touches that make each funeral completely unique to the individual. "We want every funeral we conduct to be about that person, and of course their loved ones. For example, we have conducted so many funerals where the individual's dog has accompanied them on their final journey, by their side in death just as they were in life. Making this happen is so important – John and I are dog owners and dog lovers and being able to involve a dog that literally was man's best friend means so much to us."

In addition, Julie has created hundreds of tribute videos showcasing people's lives, which are unique to that person, different to anything we have seen before. Their passion and commitment to families across the area was backed up when they won a prestigious enterprise award for Best Family Run Funeral Company in County Durham. The company then went one better to win the UK's Best Family Run Funeral Company and secure a spot on the Global 100 companies worldwide list.

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John said: "It's our job to give people the send-off they would want but we do pride ourselves on going the extra mile to make what is an emotional process that bit more bearable. We were absolutely shocked and over the moon to win the award it means so much to us to be recognised for the work we have done." The UK's Best Family Run Funeral Company Award was given by EMG Publishing and appears in the Global 100 magazine. The recognition has come from all the media coverage, awards and public awareness as well as reviews Delanoy Funeral Services has had since John and Julie opened up in Peterlee three years ago and announcing their partnership.

Although John and Julie are from very different backgrounds, John being the fifth generation of Delanoy's to work for his family funeral business and Julie running her own successful company, Just Out Marketing, they felt there was potential to go into partnership together. After several meetings to discuss their ideas, the pair decided that together they could revolutionise the way funerals were conducted, making a real difference to the experience families have as they prepare to lay their loved ones to rest. They included many different ways of saying goodbye which were unique and personalised to themselves, thanks in part to Julie's background. Many included video tributes amongst many other things with the individual touch being a big part of everything, making it more a celebration of a person's life.

John, who has worked in the funeral business since the age of 16, said: "The past three years have been a real whirlwind but in a good way. Since launching the partnership with Julie, our way of conducting funerals has changed significantly for the better and we know from the feedback we've had from families that our touches will stay with them forever. Going into business with Julie has been a real breath of fresh air. My family's business was fully established in the Easington area, however I felt it needed a new injection and ideas, especially given the challenges that Covid-19 was presenting. So, meeting Julie came at the perfect time.

"Since launching in 2020, we've not looked back, we have now recruited three new funeral operatives so we're able to offer families an even better service as they prepare to say goodbye to their loved ones." John and Julie are now looking to the future and have just upgraded their fleet for the second time to enhance their offering to the public, providing an even better service. Julie added: "We're now into year four of our partnership and we remain as committed and passionate as we were when we first started, if not more. We both love what we do – of course it's an emotional and at times very demanding job, but we wouldn't change it and love the fact that we are making a difference to families across the area, making a heartbreaking time that little bit more bearable for them."