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The Conference Holds 113th Annual Meeting

Members of the regulatory community from throughout the United States and Canada gathered for the 113th Annual Meeting of The Conference, March 1-2, 2017, to focus on regulation in the death care profession. The meeting was held at Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

This year, the Annual Meeting highlighted the fundamentals of examination validity, recent regulatory cases, and substantiating licensure credibility.

With a review conducted of the Model Practice Act for Funeral Service (MPA) over the last year, Lisa Moore, Conference Model Practice Act Committee Chairperson, updated attendees on the review process that took place over the past several months, including feedback received through the comment solicitation process. The purpose of the MPA is to serve as a resource for the funeral service regulatory community in seeking to adopt or amend laws governing mortuary arts and funeral services. The delegate assembly unanimously passed a motion accepting the amended Model Practice Act for Funeral Service.

During the first session of the day, Vice President of Global Measurement and Research with Pearson VUE, Dr. Julie Miles, gave an overview of examination validity and its impact on a licensure and certification program. Dr. Miles spoke on the different types of validity, how validity is achieved, and how different security concerns impact validity in a test program, such as The Conference's exam program.

Conference Legal Counsel, Dale Atkinson, provided attendees with an update on recent cases involving numerous regulatory professions nationwide and discussed what regulators and attendees could learn from each case. Among other cases, Mr. Atkinson discussed the recent case of *Kurbastsky v. The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining*

Boards, et al, in which the Court granted a motion to dismiss in favor of The Conference regarding claims filed by the examinee alleging violations of numerous rights related to the invalidation of National Board Exam scores. At the close of the first day of meetings, on motion and pursuant to The Conference By-laws, the delegates convened in

executive session.

The second day of the Annual Meeting highlighted an array of topics. EcoLegacy's Jennifer Muldowney presented on a new form of disposition called eColation. An alternative to traditional burial, Ms. Muldowney introduced eColation as a thermal process using a combination of cold, heat, and pressure to "create an environment that does what nature would do over centuries - in the space of a few hours." This thought-provoking session was presented to emphasize the important role the attendees have in regulating new alternative forms of disposition.

Attendees separated into smaller groups to work together in creating a model internship program. Each group was tasked with different assignments to identify the many components involved in creating a best practice model. Topics such as



2017-2018 Executive Committee
From Left: Secretary/Treasurer Mark Ransford,
Past President Sandy Mahon, President Edward
Muhleisen, Vice President Sandy Sebastian

Annual Meeting Continued

regulations, training reports, vital tasks, and supervisory responsibilities were all discussed.

District meetings were held to close out the morning. During these meetings, current regulatory topics were discussed and attendees were updated on Conference initiatives such as the development of model documents, and the move to transferring exam results electronically. The smaller group setting allowed attendees to focus on issues within their jurisdictions and share best practices. Elections were held for Districts two, three, four, and seven.

Blair Nelsen, a board member of the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, was elected to represent District 2. Charles Perine, Executive Secretary of the Alabama Board of Funeral Service was elected to fill out his predecessor's term representing District 3. Mark Ransford, a board member of the Michigan Board of Examiners in Mortuary Science, was elected to represent District 4. Edward Muhleisen, a board member of the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, was elected to his second term representing District 7.

The annual awards luncheon was held Thursday afternoon. Following the district meeting and AEFBS reports, President Mahon presented National Board Exam Arts Committee Chair, Barbara Kazmierczak, with the President's Distinguished Service Award and recognized her for her ongoing commitment, leadership, and outstanding service to The Conference. "Barbara has given countless hours volunteering to help advance The Conference's goals. She has also been an avid supporter of the organization and



The President's Distinguished Service Award is presented to Barbara Kazmierczak

an outstanding liaison when called upon," said President Mahon. President Mahon also recognized outgoing board members including Past President Dr. Hari P. Close, II, CFSP, and outgoing District 2 Director Lynn Armstrong-Patterson, for the time they served on

the board and their dedication to The Conference. Conference Executive Director Dalene Paull recognized retiring exam committee member Tom Sanderson, for his service and commitment to The Conference. "Tom has given countless hours to this organization, and I have never known a conference without him. He will be greatly missed and we wish him nothing but the best moving forward," said Ms. Paull.

President Mahon presented Edward Muhleisen with the President's gavel as he begins his term as leading the organization. District 5 Director Sandy Sebastian was elected to serve as Vice President, and District 4 Director Mark Ransford was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. The 2017-2018 Board of Directors were officially sworn in to close the awards luncheon.

A new format was introduced called "Conference Express," featuring a rapid format allowing each presenter 20 slides that auto advanced every 15 seconds. For the inaugural round of Conference Express, Lucy Richards of the Montana Board of Funeral Service presented on funeral and cemetery trust responsibilities



Attendees mingle at the 113th Annual Meeting

and audit procedures, Mark Evely of Wayne State University gave a humorous presentation on exam security and student compliance, and Barbara Kemmis with the Cremation Association of North America discussed cremation regulation and certification trends. This challenging concept required the three presenters to be engaging, enlightening and quick on their feet.

Dalene Paull, Sandy Sebastian, and Robert Smith, Executive Director of the American Board of Funeral Service Education led a panel discussion, moderated by Dale Atkinson, on substantiating licensure credibility. The panelists gave an overview of the roles their organizations play in licensing, and engaged in discussion on how each approaches challenging issues, such as an individual having advance examination content and how it affects education, exam validity, and licensure.

Also new to the meeting this year, "The Conference Fishbowl" was the final session of the day. Moderated by Mark Ransford, six topics submitted by attendees were drawn out of a fishbowl to discuss in small round table settings for seven minutes. Once time was called, attendees briefly summarized their table's discussions. Attendees then had 60 seconds to change groups before the next topic was drawn. These fast-paced conversations allowed attendees to share and gain insight from their colleagues.

"That was a fun and innovative way to encourage engagement and end the annual meeting on such a high note," said moderator Mark Ransford. "We hope it leaves attendees excited about the meeting." Following The Conference Fishbowl, Sandy Mahon thanked all those who attended the Annual Meeting and made it a success. Before calling the meeting to a close, Mr. Mahon invited all those in attendance to the 114th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA.

Edward Muhleisen Elected President



Edward Muhleisen

Edward Muhleisen was elected President of Conference at the 113th Annual Meeting.

In addition, Mr. Muhleisen was also elected to his second term as District 7 Director. Previously, he served as Vice President of the organization in 2015 and 2016. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 2014 and represents funeral service regulators from Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

“I look forward to leading this important organization and continuing its great work during my term,” said Muhleisen, after being presented with the president’s gavel from his predecessor, Sandy Mahon.

Mr. Muhleisen graduated from Holy Cross High School, New Orleans, in 1995; received a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Louisiana State University in 2000; and graduated from Dallas Institute of Funeral Service in 2002. While attending Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, he was employed by Restland Funeral Home in Dallas and Thompson’s Harveson & Cole Funeral Home in Fort Worth, TX.

Mr. Muhleisen became licensed as an embalmer / funeral director by the State of Louisiana in 2003 and as a licensed Crematory Retort Operator in 2012. He represents

the fifth generation of the Muhleisen family in funeral service. Muhleisen presently is the manager of his family firms, L.A. Muhleisen & Son Funeral Home in Kenner, LA, Millet-Guidry Funeral Home in LaPlace, LA and Magnolia Crematory in Kenner, LA. He has served on the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors since 2013.



Sandy Mahon presents Edward Muhleisen with the President’s Gavel.

Conference Model Practice Act Amended

The delegate assembly unanimously passed a motion accepting the amended Model Practice Act for Funeral Service (MPA) at the 113th Annual Meeting March 2, 2017. The Conference MPA review committee conducted a thorough review and comment solicitation process of the MPA in 2016 and early 2017. Chairperson, Lisa Moore updated attendees on the process and amendments to the document before delegates voted.

The Conference Model Act serves as a guideline to the legislature, regulatory officials, and members of the profession seeking to adopt or amend the laws governing mortuary arts and funeral services. The purpose of this Model Act is to facilitate the protection of the public by providing legal mechanisms that establish and provide for the enforcement of uniform standards. The provisions and language contained in this Model Act represent currently accepted standards, practices and terms and represents the collective wisdom of the funeral service regulatory community.

The MPA is an always evolving document that will be reviewed periodically to maintain its validity and up-to-date knowledge in compliance with industry changes and trends. Please submit any comments or questions you may have regarding the MPA to Lauren Thomas, Member Services Manager, at services@theconferenceonline.org.



The Model Practice Act for Funeral Service can be viewed on The Conference’s website at:

[www.theconferenceonline.org/
model-practice-act](http://www.theconferenceonline.org/model-practice-act)

Model Practice Act Committee

Lisa Moore - Chairperson - California
Andy Clayton - Indiana
Chad Dresselhaus - Oregon
Charles Perine - Alabama
Lori Hayes - Missouri
Lorin Doyle - Washington
Robert Barnes - Maine

District Directors Elected

Elections were held for Districts 2, 3, 4, and 7 for the Board of Directors of The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards at the 113th Annual Meeting. Blair Nelsen, CFSP, was elected District 2 Director, Charles Perine, CFSP, was elected District 3 Director, Mark Ransford, CFSP, was elected District 4 Director, and Edward Muhleisen was elected District 7 Director.



Blair Nelsen, CFSP

As District 2 Director, Blair Nelsen was elected to represent funeral service regulators from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington D.C. He is serving his third term on the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and is a past president of the Board.

He is a fourth generation funeral director currently serving as Director, Governmental Affairs, Eastern Region of SCI Management. Prior to joining SCI, Mr. Nelsen grew his family business from one to six locations, serving families throughout Virginia. He is a Past President of Preferred Funeral Directors International and was recently elected to his third term as a Director of the International Cemetery, Crematory and Funeral

Association.

Mr. Nelsen holds a Bachelor of Arts in Russian Studies from the University of Virginia, a Masters of Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and an Associate of Funeral Science from John Tyler Community College. He is a former KC-135 Air Force pilot and instructor pilot. Mr. Nelsen and his wife, Darcie, have two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, as well as a black Labrador Retriever, Georgia.

Charles Perine was elected District 3 Director, and represents funeral service regulators from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Mr. Perine has been the Executive Secretary for the Alabama Board of Funeral Service since 2013, previously serving as the Associate Executive Secretary of the board.

Mr. Perine served on the Model Practice Act committees for The Conference and is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the state of Alabama. He received his degree in Business Administration from the University of Mobile and his degree in Funeral Service from Bishop State Community College. He and his wife, Angelita, have two kids, Tylan and Nicholas, and a dog, Bella.



Charles Perine, CFSP

Mark Ransford was elected to his first term as District 4 Director, having previously completed the term left by his predecessor in 2015. As District 4 Director, Mr. Ransford represents funeral services regulators from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario. In addition to being elected District 4 Director, he was also elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Mr. Ransford is a 2002 graduate of the University of Michigan with degrees in Business Administration and Psychology. He received his Mortuary Science degree at Wayne State University where he also received a graduate degree in Forensic Investigation. Mr. Ransford serves on the Michigan Board of Examiners in Mortuary Science and is a past president of Michigan Funeral Directors Association District 7. He and his wife, Lainey, have three sons, Ethan, Cameron and Jackson.



Mark Ransford, CFSP

Edward Muhleisen was elected to his second terms as District 7 Director, representing funeral service regulators from Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Mr. Muhleisen was also elected President (see page 3).

The Conference Awards NBE Scholarships

The Board of Directors selected five candidates to receive the National Board Examination (NBE) scholarship. The scholarship allows recipients to sit for the NBE with the \$500 examination fee waived. The program was open to first-time exam candidates who are eligible for the NBE within one year. The NBE Scholarship recipients for the Spring of 2017 are:

- Brandy Carter, Wayne State University
- Nicole Lutz, University of Minnesota
- Brandon Miller, Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science
- Madison Patch, Carl Sandburg College
- Angel Warr, Carl Sandburg College

Applicants were asked why honesty is important in their educational experience and throughout their career as a funeral service professional. From the nearly 70 scholarship

entries received, The Conference Board of Directors selected the names at random during the Board of Directors Meeting on February 28, 2017. The Board of Directors will select five more scholarship candidates in the Fall of 2017.

Many of the candidate's entries discussed the importance of ethics and honesty in gaining the knowledge needed to become a funeral service professional and to maintain the public trust once they are practicing. A random selection of entries are highlighted below.

- "In my educational experience I have learned that honesty is important not only at school but also in our funeral service career. Academic honesty is important because if you are not honest you cheat yourself out of a good education. A funeral service professional must be honest because they are dealing with bereaved families

Continued on page 5

Board Member Training Held

The Board Member Training session was held prior to the Annual Meeting on February 28th & March 1, 2017. The Conference welcomed attendees from funeral service boards in: Alabama, District of Columbia, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington. The Conference is pleased to add the following names to the Board Member Training completion list:

Donna Amaro
Reynolds Baldwin, Jr.
D'Michelle DuPre
Charles Graves
Charvis Gray
Lynne Helmick
Richard Little
Calvin Meadows
Mia Mimms
Craig Olive
Jill Pugh
Jon Rettig
Lucy Richards
John C. Rudder
Cameron Smock
Corie Tillman Wolf
William Wappner
Asanti Williams

2017 Job Task Analysis

This year The Conference will work to complete our next job task analysis. This important process is undertaken every 5-7 years and is designed to determine the significance of the

various specific tasks funeral directors and embalmers must be proficient in. As part of this process, The Conference will be disseminating a large scale survey to member boards, schools, organizations, and licensed funeral service practitioners throughout the United States. The data collected will be used to ensure that our examinations are valid and relevant to current standards in the profession.

Regulations In Licensing

Every couple years, The Conference compiles, publishes, and distributes a booklet entitled "Regulations in Funeral Service Licensing, Continuing Education and Pre-Need." This publication contains jurisdiction-specific information for all 56 Conference member boards. It has been very useful to regulators and their legislatures as well as a valuable reference tool for funeral service educators, students, professionals and the general public. In the coming months, The 2017 survey has been sent out to all Conference members. Please take a few minutes, or designate someone in your office, to fill out this survey and return to our office, as the content of this publication is only as beneficial as the information provided to us.

The Conference In The News

The Conference now has a designated page to highlight articles

and press releases pertaining to the organization. To learn more about The Conference, as covered in the news, please visit:

theconferenceonline.org/in-the-news/

Funeral Service Regulation Through a Fishbowl

A new session at the Annual Meeting this year was The Conference Fishbowl (see Annual Meeting article). During the session, attendee-submitted topics were discussed in the small group setting. Below are a few of the topics:

- What requirements should crematory operators have? Type of training (manufacturer or association provided), licensure exam, etc.? Should crematory operators be "certified" or "licensed"?
- How does your board address complaints regarding practitioner impairment issues (e.g. substance abuse or physical or mental illness)? Do you monitor these issues?
- Should funeral homes and cemeteries both be regulated under one Board? If so, how would you restructure your Board to accommodate for both industries under one agency?
- If a licensee has his/her score invalidated after practicing for a number of years, how would your board handle it?

Scholarships Continued

and should not add to their grief by being dishonest. It is important to be as transparent as can be because we need to build good trusting relationships with the community we serve."

- "Honesty is perhaps the most integral quality of a funeral director. As one begins their process of licensure, honesty in the academic world is very important. Without honesty, how would one really know where they stand on what they have actually learned about our industry? Cheating never provides any knowledge. Upon receiving licensure, honesty gains an even more important role, as it is of the utmost importance to maintain a rapport of integrity with your community and the best way to do that is through the practice of honesty."
- "Honesty is important so that I can truly learn and understand the industry and so I can better serve future families. By being honest I can gain the trust of families and all of those I serve."
- "In educational experiences honesty is important to ensure that the individual is learning what is important to his or her future. Failure may be hard to swallow, but it is better to try again and truly learn what you need to know than to cheat and never know what is important information for a future career. As a funeral professional, we owe it to our families to do our best and be honest with them in this emotional time. We may not like it, but we all have limitations and it is better to admit to them than to upset an already vulnerable family."



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NBE Quarterly Statistics

January 1, 2017- March 31, 2017

National Board Arts Examination						
	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #
First Time	210	154	73%	56	27%	5
Repeater	111	49	44%	62	56%	6
Total	321	203	63%	118	37%	11

National Board Science Examination						
	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #
First Time	207	166	80%	41	20%	4
Repeater	107	47	44%	60	56%	6
Total	314	213	68%	101	32%	10

For a full listing of year-to-date stats, please visit
www.theconferenceonline.org/resources/nbe-statistics/

Please Take the Customer Satisfaction Survey Online at:
<http://theconferenceonline.org/survey>

Upcoming Jurisdiction Board Meetings

- Alabama - 7/10, 10/2, 1/8/18
- Arizona - 5/16, 6/20, 7/18, 8/15, 9/19, 10/17, 11/21, 12/9
- Delaware - 5/23, 7/25, 9/26, 11/28
- Florida - 5/18, 6/29, 7/13, 8/3, 9/7, 10/5, 11/2, 12/7
- Georgia - 6/13, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- Indiana - 6/1, 8/3, 10/5, 12/7
- Iowa - 6/1, 9/7, 12/7
- Kansas - 7/13, 10/12
- Kentucky - 7/18, 8/1, 9/12, 10/10, 11/7, 12/12
- Louisiana - 6/7-8/9-10, 9/6-7, 10/11-12, 12/6-7
- Maine - 7/11, 9/12, 11/14
- Maryland - 6/14, 7/12, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13
- Massachusetts - 6/13, 7/11, 8/15, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- Michigan - 10/4
- Nevada - 6/6, 9/19, 12/12
- New Hampshire - 6/14, 7/12, 8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13
- New Jersey - 6/6, 7/11, 8/8, 10/31, 12/5
- North Carolina - 6/14-15, 7/12-13, 8/9-10, 9/13-14, 10/11-12, 11/8-9, 12/13-14
- Ohio - 5/24, 6/28, 7/19, 8/23, 9/27, 10/25, 11/15, 12/20
- Oklahoma - 6/8, 7/13, 8/10, 9/14, 10/12, 11/9, 12/14
- Pennsylvania - 5/24, 7/5, 8/16, 9/27, 11/8, 12/10
- Rhode Island - 6/21, 9/20, 12/20
- South Carolina - 6/7-8, 7/25, 8/30-31, 9/14, 10/4-5, 11/2, 12/6-7
- Tennessee - 6/13, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- Texas - 6/20, 9/12, 12/12
- Utah - 5/17, 8/16, 11/15
- Vermont - 7/18, 10/10
- Virginia - 7/18, 10/10
- Washington - 8/1, 11/7
- Wisconsin - 5/23, 8/1, 11/28
- Wyoming - 6/13
- Saskatchewan - 6/29, 9/14, 10/12, 11/9, 12/14

* The Conference welcomes any contributions from member jurisdictions. Please submit items to info@theconferenceonline.org.