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The Conference Jazzes Up Regulation



Attendees take in a session at the 114th Annual Meeting.

Members of the regulatory community from throughout the United States and Canada gathered for the 114th Annual Meeting of The Conference, February 28 - March 1, 2018, to focus on regulation in the death care profession. The meeting was held at the International House Hotel in New Orleans, LA.

“Jazzing Up Regulation in The Big Easy” was the theme of the meeting that featured speakers from Pearson VUE, state licensing boards, and regulatory legal experts. The event welcomed a diverse group of over 80 attendees from state and provincial governing boards, funeral education programs, and other industry professionals. The goal of the meeting was to offer participants dynamic sessions while also providing forums to discuss challenging issues and share best practices.

The two day event focused on examination constructs and the job/task analysis process, recent regulatory cases, addressing and preventing disciplinary issues, and lessons learned from a look back at events following Hurricane Katrina. After a successful debut at last year’s Annual Meeting, The Conference Fishbowl made an exciting return. The session challenged participants to discuss attendee-submitted topics with a different group every five to seven minutes.

Dr. Kathleen Gialluca, Senior Research Scientist at Pearson VUE, provided a detailed overview of the recent job/task analysis process The Conference completed

over the last 12 months. Dr. Gialluca discussed the survey process, exam specifications, the standard setting process, and notable changes affecting the National Board Exam content outline.

The meeting also included presentations from two regulatory legal experts. Conference Legal Counsel, Dale Atkinson, provided attendees with an update on recent cases involving various regulatory professions nationwide and discussed what regulators and attendees could learn from each scenario. Jennifer Semko, Partner with Baker & McKenzie LLC, gave a lighthearted session that explored noteworthy decisions related to regulatory cases, and highlighted bizarre lawsuits that progressed through the court system.

During a session titled “Scandals, Secrets, & Lies,” three panelists from state licensing boards gave an overview of various disciplinary matters from their home states. The panelists discussed the difficult situations, how their boards addressed the issues, and the changes that have been implemented as a result. Following this presentation, Jennifer Semko hosted “Discipline Power Hour” in which she continued the discipline conversation with the panelists. Ms. Semko shared ways to prevent disciplinary situations, how to plan ahead, and what to watch for as regulators.

Conference President, Edward Muhleisen, presented on the lessons that have been learned in the 13 years following Hurricane Katrina. Mr. Muhleisen, a Louisiana native, witnessed the impact of the natural disaster. He informed the attendees of the events



President Edward Muhleisen speaking at the 114th Annual Meeting.

Here to Serve - More than a Licensing Exam

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others.” These words spoken by Mahatma Gandhi stand as a reminder that when you serve others, you learn about yourself. In 1903, when a group of state licensing board representatives met during the Annual Convention of the National Funeral Directors Association in Denver, they could not foretell what the future held for the organization. Knowing they wanted to better serve their regulatory boards and the public, they organized a formal meeting to discuss mutual issues and gather information.

In 1904, delegates convened for the second meeting of this organization in St. Louis and adopted the name “The Joint Conference of Embalmers’ Examining Boards and State Boards of Health” and formally organized. Participating states were Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Virginia, and Texas.

As membership grew, new ideas and views on how to be of better service were brought to the table. The organization began to consider the question of accrediting schools of mortuary science and education, and in 1928 a system of grading schools was established.

However, The Conference was founded in the idea of service, and service is not static. It is an ever-evolving goal that is never fully achieved. In 1930, there was a suggestion for a National Board Examination to be developed and administered by The Conference. The Conference endorsed a standard examination with a bank of questions from which state could choose from for their exam. This was the beginning stage in the development of what is now the National Board Examination (NBE) - the standard funeral service licensing exam used in determining competency when licensing individuals in the profession.

In the early days, volunteer education consultants were involved in developing the exam. Since the 1990’s, The Conference has utilized the services of test development companies to administer and maintain examinations. Through task analysis surveys, the exam has evolved while maintaining industry standards.

In 1932 The Conference endorsed a nine-month course in mortuary science as the standard, and an exam committee was established to grade the exams and report the results back to the respective state boards. By 1934, 27 states had adopted rules and regulations that applicants for licensure had to be graduates of Conference-approved schools.

In 1946 the National Funeral Directors Association, the Association of Colleges of Mortuary Science, and The Conference established the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education to set the standards for accreditation and to foster improvement in education. An excerpt from the constitution of this committee reads that “the Joint Committee on Mortuary Education was organized for educational purposes in the interest of the public and of the funeral service profession...To cooperate with all groups and agencies having an interest in the advancement of principles and standards of mortuary education.”

In 1958, operating under the same constitution and bylaws and comprised of the same membership, this Joint Committee became the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE). In 1962 in order to eliminate possible conflict of interest issues, The Conference divested from the ABFSE, enabling them to become a separate accrediting organization.



In 1997, the Board of Directors settled on the name “The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc.” to reflect the addition of Ontario, Canada, as a member jurisdiction. With an eye on international relations, cooperation, and the sharing of best practices, Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan, have since become members of The Conference as well.

By the close of its first century, The Conference had succeeded in accomplishing many of the goals of the first group of state regulators, but continued to look at new ways to be of service. Life in America had changed drastically since 1904, and the funeral service profession had changed with it. From the introduction of the “horseless carriage,” through two world wars, the tragedy of 9/11, and countless other transforming events, individuals dedicated to funeral service kept pace with the changing needs of society and the families they were committed to serve. The National Board Examination was almost universally accepted as a requirement for licensure. State regulatory boards as well as more than 50 accredited schools looked to The Conference as a valuable resource for information and support in the name of service to the greater public.

Many more changes drove the organization and the profession forward into the 21st century, such as the hiring of a dedicated administrative staff, the move to a permanent office, and the transition to computer based testing. Now a candidate can take their examination and The Conference will have the results processed and sent to a state licensing board within a couple business days - a process that used to take months.

Licensing boards have felt these changes too. Twenty-three states currently utilize The Conference’s services to administer state level licensing examinations. These examinations include funeral directing and embalming exams, laws, rules and regulations exam, and other specialty exams.

The Conference is known as the provider of funeral service licensing examinations, though it is much more. It is also a premier resource for information and regulatory support. In 1999 The Conference published its first *Regulations in Licensing* book. This book, updated every two years, outlines individual licensing requirements, continuing education requirements, endorsement/reciprocity requirements, business

Board Member Training

The Conference's sixth annual Board Member Training session was held prior to the Annual Meeting on February 27-28th, 2018. The Conference welcomed attendees from funeral service boards in: Alabama, District of Columbia, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, Ohio, Saskatchewan, Virginia, and Washington. The Conference is pleased to add the following names to the Board Member Training completion list:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Lonnelle Aquillard | Christopher Naylor |
| Lance Brooks | Blair Nelsen |
| Annie Bushelon-Holt | M. Jill Short |
| Craig Geary | James Sommer |
| David Ingram | Angela Ward |
| Rodney McFarland | Jeff Weafer |
| John McGuire | |

For information on the 2019 Board Member Training seminar, please visit the website:

www.theconferenceonline.org/upcomingevents/board-member-training



Join us for the 115th Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, at The Dana on Mission Bay. We are in the process of compiling an exciting agenda filled with new sessions and attendee favorites.

The Dana on Mission Bay offers a tropical setting for both business and leisure travelers. Centrally located, only six miles from the San Diego Airport, The Dana offers the perfect setting for attendees to discuss funeral service regulation and network with colleagues.

- \$169/Night
- Waived Resort Fee
- Six Miles from Airport
- Complimentary Internet
- Watersport & Bike Rental
- Mission Beach, SeaWorld, & the San Diego Zoo
- Shopping & Restaurants

Annual Meeting Continued

leading up to the storm, factors that contributed to the fallout, and the impact on the funeral service profession. Mr. Muhleisen shared how the profession responded, and the importance of licensure mobility when facing the aftermath of disasters such as Katrina.

Elections were held for districts one, six, and eight, for The Conference Board of Directors. Robert Barnes, member of the Maine State Board of Funeral Service, was elected to represent District 1. Douglas "Mack" Smith, Executive Secretary of the Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts, was elected to represent District 6, and Cameron Smock, member of the Washington State Funeral and Cemetery Board, was elected to represent District 8.



Back Row, Left: Cameron Smock, Robert Barnes, Blair Nelsen, Bart Burton, Charles Perine. Front Row, Left: Edward Muhleisen, Mack Smith, Mark Ransford, Sandy Sebastian.

Executive Committee elections were also held for the Board of Directors. District 6 Director Mack Smith was elected to serve as Secretary/Treasurer, District 4 Director Mark

Ransford was elected to serve as Vice President, and District 5 Director Sandy Sebastian was elected President. "This organization does important work and is a valuable resource for funeral service boards and agencies. I am honored to be a part of this organization and to continue its great work during my term," said Sebastian.

The Conference Annual Meetings provides a valuable opportunity for those interested in furthering funeral service regulation to come together to exchange information, problem-solving strategies, and goals for the future of profession. The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held February 27 - 28, 2019, in San Diego, CA. For more information on the Annual Meeting visit www.theconferenceonline.org.

NEW Practice NBE & SBE

New practice examinations are now available for the NBE and the SBE. Candidates now have the option to take two forms for both the Arts and Sciences examinations, if they choose.

The exam is designed to provide candidates with a computer based testing experience. A timed, single-use exam, each exam form includes 75 multiple-choice questions.

Candidates receive their examination score and a general feedback report for content areas in which items are answered incorrectly at the conclusion of the exam.

A Look Through the Fishbowl

After a successful debut last year, the popular meeting session, Conference Fishbowl, made a return this year to close out the 114th Annual Meeting. A favorite among attendees, participants discuss funeral service regulation topics in small group settings. Groups have five minutes to discuss the topic before presenting their consensus. Participants then have one minute to find a new group before the next topic is drawn.

“This is such a fun way to end a meeting and to get everyone involved,” said moderator Mark Ransford. “We had a good range of topics that fostered some really good discussion.”

A few of the topics that were discussed during the 114th Annual Meeting Conference Fishbowl include:

- What are your thoughts regarding a combined board of both funeral homes and cemeteries. Should the composition of the board have equal representation from both funeral homes and cemeteries?
- Do you believe the FTC - Funeral Rule is still needed? How would this affect you if the Rule was repealed?
- Much has been made about the need to address frontline providers or first responders to the effects of PTSD. What are we as regulators doing to address this? Is it our responsibility - if not, who's is it?

- As a member of The Conference, what additional services would benefit your State Board?

The Conference invited attendees to submit Fishbowl topics prior to the Annual Meeting. All questions were drawn at random by participants during the session. The Conference Fishbowl will return to the 115th Annual Meeting.



San Diego 2019!

The Conference Board of Directors invites your ideas and proposals for the 115th Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA.

Proposals for topics, ideas, or future meeting locations can be made by emailing us at:

services@theconferenceonline.org

**The Dana
on Mission Bay**

Service Continued

licensing regulations, and pre-need regulations for each of The Conference's 56 member jurisdictions.

In 2014, The Conference's sought to expand its services even further, and began work on the *Model Practice Act for Funeral Service*. The goal of this document, first published in 2015, is to facilitate the protection of the public by providing legal mechanisms that establish and provide for the

enforcement of uniform standards. *The Model Practice 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.

In an effort to expand the Model Document Series, The Conference published *The Model Application* in 2016. The primary purpose of *The Model Application* is to provide a resource for the funeral service regulatory community in requesting/requiring the disclosure of pertinent information on the application of a potential licensee. *The Model Application* promotes standardization of terminology and requirements with the goal of increasing licensure portability through uniformity and consistency. In 2017, The Conference began work on *The Model Internship*, a document that is designed to standardize apprenticeship/internship requirements.

The Conference has always offered a forum through the Annual Meeting, seminars, and other industry meetings for

professionals to discuss common issues and share best practices, however, now the organization also serves as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of information to licensing boards in those areas of mutual concern. If a member board has a question on statute language, requirements, or developing trends, the membership can be polled to collect the requested information. The organization has become a vital resource for licensing boards, educators, exam candidates, and licensees.

The Conference is committed to protecting the public protection through serving the needs of our membership. In addition to providing numerous national and state level services, The Conference also guides future and current licensees. Whether a candidate is registering for an examination, a licensee is requesting certified exam results sent to a state licensing board, or seeking information about licensing requirements, this organization is here to serve.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service to others.” In 2017, The Conference had eight committees comprised of 46 volunteers who dedicated their time and expertise so the organization can better serve the profession, and ultimately the public. The Conference will continue to strive to be the premier source examination services, information and regulatory support to the death care profession.

Meet Your Director (2018-2019)



Sandy Sebastian, President & District 5 Director
Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee
Sandy Sebastian was appointed to The Conference Board of Directors in 2015 to complete her predecessor's term and elected Vice President in 2017. She is the Executive Director of the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors and State Board of Podiatric Medicine for the state of Missouri.



Mark Ransford, CFSP, Vice President & District 4 Director
Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Ontario
Mark Ransford was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2015 to complete a two-year term left by his predecessor. He was elected for his first term in 2017. He currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Michigan Board of Examiners in Mortuary Science.



Douglas "Mack" Smith, Secretary/Treasurer & District 6 Director
Iowa, Kansas, Manitoba, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
Mack Smith was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2013 to complete a term left by his predecessor. He has worked as the executive secretary to the Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts for over 37 years and is currently serving his fifth term as mayor of Silver Lake, Kansas. He was President of The Conference in 1992.



Edward Muhleisen, Past President & District 7 Director
Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Edward Muhleisen previously served as President of The Conference in 2017. He was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2014. Muhleisen presently is the manager of his family firms, L.A. Muhleisen & Son Funeral Home and Magnolia Crematory. Muhleisen has served on the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors since 2013.

Robert Barnes, CFSP District 1 Director
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Nova Scotia, Rhode Island, Vermont
Robert Barnes, CFSP, was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2016, previously serving as Conference Board President in 2010. He has been a licensed funeral practitioner for 44 years with Jones, Rich, & Barnes Funeral Home in Portland, Maine.



Blair Nelsen, CFSP District 2 Director
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C.
Blair Nelsen was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2017. Mr. Nelsen currently serves as Director, Governmental Affairs, Eastern Region of SCI Management. He is currently serving his third term as a member of the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and is a past president of the Board.



Charles Perine, CFSP District 3 Director
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina
Charles Perine was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2017 to complete his predecessor's term. Mr. Perine has been the Executive Director for the Alabama Board of Funeral Service since 2013 and previously served as the Associate Executive Director of the board.



Cameron Smock District 8 Director
Alaska, Alberta, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Saskatchewan, Washington, Wyoming
Cameron Smock was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2018. He is currently a member of the Washington State Funeral and Cemetery Board, and is the President and CEO of Bonney-Watson Funeral Homes in Seattle, WA.



Bart Burton District 9 Director
Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah
Bart Burton was appointed to The Conference Board of Directors in 2010 and elected in 2011 to complete his predecessor's term. He was elected to his first term in 2013 and served as Conference President in 2014. Mr. Burton is an Area Director for SCI and was appointed to the Nevada State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers in 2007.





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NBE Quarterly Statistics

| January 1, 2018 – March 31, 2018 | | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| National Board Arts Examination | | | | | |
| | Total Tested | Pass # | Pass % | Fail # | Fail % |
| First Time | 200 | 153 | 76.5% | 47 | 23.5% |
| Repeater | 108 | 53 | 49% | 55 | 51% |
| Total | 308 | 206 | 67% | 102 | 33% |
| National Board Science Examination | | | | | |
| | Total Tested | Pass # | Pass % | Fail # | Fail % |
| First Time | 200 | 135 | 67.5% | 65 | 32.5% |
| Repeater | 133 | 40 | 30% | 93 | 70% |
| Total | 333 | 175 | 53% | 157 | 47% |

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Upcoming Jurisdiction Board Meetings

- Alabama - 7/16, 10/15
- Arizona - 5/15, 6/19, 7/17, 8/21, 9/18, 10/16, 11/20, 12/18
- Arkansas - 5/10
- Connecticut - 6/14, 9/18, 12/6
- Delaware - 5/22, 7/24, 9/25, 11/27
- District of Columbia - 6/7, 7/5, 8/2, 9/6, 10/4, 11/1, 12/6
- Florida - 6/7, 7/12, 8/2, 9/6, 10/4, 11/1, 12/6
- Georgia - 6/12, 8/7, 9/11, 10/9, 11/13, 12/11
- Indiana - 6/7, 8/2, 10/4, 12/6
- Iowa - 6/7, 8/6, 12/6
- Kentucky - 6/5, 7/10, 8/14, 9/18, 10/9, 11/6, 10/9, 11/6, 12/11
- Louisiana - 6/5, 8/7, 9/11, 10/9, 12/4
- Massachusetts - 5/15, 6/19, 7/17, 8/21, 9/18, 10/16, 11/20, 12/18
- Michigan - 10/3
- Minnesota - 6/12, 8/21, 11/6
- Mississippi - 5/14, 7/9, 10/8
- Nebraska - 7/26, 10/25
- Nevada - 6/5, 9/18, 11/13
- New Hampshire - 6/13, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- New Jersey - 6/5, 7/10, 8/7, 10/2, 10/30, 12/4
- North Carolina - 6/13, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- Ohio - 5/30, 8/22, 9/26, 10/24, 11/28, 12/19
- Oklahoma - 5/10, 6/14, 7/12, 8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13
- Oregon - 7/10, 9/18, 10/9, 12/11
- Pennsylvania - 5/16, 7/5, 8/15, 10/14, 11/7, 12/19
- South Carolina - 4/5/22, 6/6, 8/22, 9/13, 10/3, 12/5
- Tennessee - 6/12, 7/10, 8/14, 9/11, 10/9, 11/13, 12/11
- Texas - 6/16, 9/11, 12/11
- Vermont - 7/10, 9/11, 11/13
- Virginia - 8/7, 11/16
- Washington - 8/7, 11/6

* The Conference welcomes any contributions you might share from your jurisdictions. Please submit items to