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The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards

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Photo Included: 2022-2023 ICFSEB Board of Directors (.jpg)

The Conference Holds 118th Annual Meeting

HOUSTON, TX (February, 2022) – Members of the regulatory community from throughout the United States and Canada reconvened in-person for the 118th Annual Meeting of The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc., February 23 – 24, 2022, to discuss regulation in the death care profession. The meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency Galleria in Houston, TX.

“Phase Next” was the theme of the two-day event that centered on moving forward after the COVID-19 pandemic with public protection as the primary focus. The Conference welcomed a diverse group of attendees from state and provincial governing boards, funeral education programs, and other industry professionals.

The welcome dinner kicked the event off on Tuesday evening as attendees were thrilled to meet in-person for the first time in two years. The event was officially called into session the next morning by President Blair Nelsen at the Annual Business Meeting. Formal business of the organization was conducted including: the delegate roll call, committee reports, and board nominations.

Staff of The Conference participated in a panel discussion to provide an overview of the services of the organization. Candidate services, member board services, examination processes and development, and technology infrastructure were topics that highlighted the presentation.

Jennifer Kandt, Executive Director of the Nevada Funeral Board and Vice President of The Conference, led the next presentation of the day where she focused on the respect of human remains in regulation. Ms. Kandt emphasized the subjectivity of dignity and respect as it pertains to the storage of remains and discussed enacting regulations, the public’s perception, and the expectations of loved ones.

District meetings provided an opportunity for smaller groups to meet and share current regulatory issues including split vs. combined licenses, educational trends, and legally defensible exams. Board

of Directors elections were also held for districts three, five, seven, and nine. Charles Perine, Executive Secretary of the Alabama Funeral Board, was elected to his second term representing District 3. Robert Gribble, Executive Director of the Tennessee Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, was also elected to a second term representing District 5. Rodney McFarland, board member with the Louisiana Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors was elected to represent District 7, and Jennifer Kandt, Executive Director of the Nevada State Funeral and Cemetery Services Board, was elected to represent District 9 for a second term.

Conference Legal Counsel, Dale Atkinson, began day two of the event by providing attendees with an update on recent cases involving various regulatory professions nationwide and discussed key learning points from each case. Attendees then broke into smaller sessions. The Funeral Service Administrators Forum provided regulatory colleagues an opportunity to discuss common issues and share best practices. The Exam Roundup session provided a forum to discuss common goals and obstacles pertaining to licensing exams, education, and licensure. The roles and responsibilities of The Conference, the American Board of Funeral Service Education, and professional associations were discussed.

The Conference Fishbowl made a return this year. An attendee-favorite, the fishbowl is an interactive session in which attendees rotate in small groups to discuss current burning questions. At the awards luncheon, exam committee member, John Rice, was presented the President's Distinguished Service Award for his continued service and dedication to the profession, including 11 years of volunteering on the exam committee. The 2022-2023 Board of Directors and Executive Committee were installed. District 9 Director Jennifer Kandt was elected to service as President, District 4 Director Jon Rettig, Sr., was elected to serve as Vice President, and District 6 Director Martin Rieken was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. Blair Nelsen will serve as Past President.

After the Annual Meeting concluded, attendees were invited to tour the National Museum of Funeral History, where they were able to experience the cultural heritage of funeral service and learn about the evolution of the industry through America's largest collection of authentic, historical funeral service items.

The Conference Annual Meeting provides a valuable opportunity for those interested in furthering funeral service regulation to exchange information, problem-solving strategies, and goals for the future of profession. The 119th Annual Meeting will be held March 1 – 2, 2023, in Chandler, AZ. For more information on the Annual Meeting, visit www.theconferenceonline.org.

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