

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards

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Photo Included: 2009-2010 ICFSEB Board of Directors (.jpg)

The Conference Holds 105th Annual Convention

Williamsburg, VA – The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc. met February 26-27, 2009 at the Kingsmill Resort and Spa. The convention was attended by over 100 delegates who represented funeral service licensing and regulatory agencies throughout the United States and Canada, as well as accredited mortuary science programs from across the country.

The opening session was called to order during the Thursday luncheon by president, Billie Watson Hughes. The gathering was followed by the convention's first speaker, Dr. Robyn Gershon. Dr. Gershon, the recipient of the 2008-2009 ICFSEB research grant, gave a presentation titled "Avian Influenza Preparedness in the Death Care Profession." For the final meeting on Thursday, attendees had the option of attending one of four breakout sessions; an orientation for first time attendees, the ABFSE round table discussion, a focus group on future conventions, or the Association of Executives round table discussion. The first evening came to a close with a welcome reception which was held at Moody's, Kingsmill's distinguished lounge.

Donna Mooney started Friday off with a discussion on "Generational Differences and their Effect on Discipline," followed by Edith Churchman, whose presentation was titled "Can we regulate ourselves into compliance? A look at the role of the State Board of Mortuary Science." District meetings finished out the morning, which provided attendees a chance to network with other attendees from their area and discuss topics of common concern.

The Awards Luncheon took place Friday afternoon, where new officers were installed for the 2009-2010 term. During a ballroom ceremony overlooking the James River, General Counsel Peter Drumm of Muncie, Indiana, swore in the new slate of officers. President Lisa Moore of Lodi, California, Vice President Bob Barnes of Portland, Maine, Secretary-Treasurer Randal Bangert of Lincoln, Nebraska, and newly elected Director of District 8, Bart Thompson of Helena, Montana took the oath of office.

Also featured at the luncheon were the recipients of the 2008 Academic Achievement Awards. Each year The Conference recognizes the candidate with the highest score on each half of the exam. The Distinguished Arts Academic Achievement Award went to Kurt Larsen

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of American Academy. The Distinguished Science Academic Achievement Award went to Casey Miller of Mid-America College of Funeral Service. The President's Award for Outstanding Service went to Elizabeth Young, the former Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalm, who was honored for her exceptional service in the funeral profession.

The final presentations of the ICFSEB convention were given Friday afternoon. Mark Matthews, Vice President of the Cremation Association of North America, spoke about change in industry regulations when he gave the first presentation of the afternoon titled "Dirty Secrets about Crematory Regulations." Leanne Layne of the Texas Department of Insurance followed Mr. Matthews with an overview of the collapse of National Prearranged Services. The meeting concluded with a panel discussion on "Pre-need Pitfalls and Successes," Moderated by Stephanie Newberg of the Texas Department of Banking, Chuck Renn of the Missouri Insurance Guaranty Association, and Mack Smith of the Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts. Attendees were invited to unwind from the two day event by partaking in a group dinner held at Shield's Tavern – a historic tavern located in the heart of Colonial Williamsburg.

The ICFSEB annual convention provides a valuable opportunity for practicing professionals, regulators and educators to come together for exchange of information, problem-solving strategies, and goals for the future of the funeral service profession. The 2010 convention has been set for February 25th – 26th at the Doubletree Hotel in Orange County, California. For more information on the convention or The Conference, call 479-442-7076, or visit www.theconferenceonline.org.

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