



The Conference Report

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The International Conference of
Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc.
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New Officers Sworn In for 2005-

Rogers, AR – The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, Inc. met April 9 and 10 at the Embassy Suites of Northwest Arkansas. Held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Board of Funeral Service Education, the annual convention was attended by over 100 delegates representing the ICFSEB, the 60 accredited schools, and the licensing and regulatory agencies throughout the United States and Canada. At the President's Banquet on Saturday evening, outgoing President John Michelotti and General Counsel Peter Drumm swore in the new slate of officers for the 2005-2006 term: President John D. Runsvold, Vice President Jerry Griffin, and Secretary-Treasurer O. C. "Chet" Robbins.

Mr. Runsvold is owner of Hanson-Runsvold Funeral Home in Fargo, North Dakota. He was elected as District 6 Governor in 2000, then served as Secretary-Treasurer during 2003-2004 and as Vice President for 2004-2005. He is a past president of the North Dakota Funeral Directors Association and he currently serves as president of the North Dakota State Board of Funeral Service.



New officers are sworn in at the President's Banquet: (pictured left to right) Vice President Jerry Griffin, Secretary-Treasurer O. C. "Chet" Robbins, President John Runsvold, General Counsel Peter Drumm, Executive Director

Mr. Griffin is a graduate of Kansas City Kansas Community College and serves on the Missouri State Board. He is area general manager of SCI Missouri-Kansas Funeral Services, Inc. He was elected to the ICFSEB Board of Directors as Governor of District 5 in 2004. He is licensed in both Missouri and Kansas.

Mr. O. C. "Chet" Robbins of Austin is a native of North Kansas City, Missouri. Robbins attended Truman State University and Wentworth Military Academy College. After completing his undergraduate work, he went on to a distinguished 20-year career as a healthcare administrator in the United States Army. In 1997 Robbins enrolled at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston, Texas, where he received the coveted "Chairman's Award for Excellence" at graduation.



In 1999 Robbins was named Executive Director of the Texas Funeral Service Commission. In 2004 he was elected to the ICFSEB Board of Directors as Governor for District 7.

Also sworn in were Joe Richer of Ontario, Canada, as Governor for District 4 and Billie Watson Hughes of Alexandria, Virginia, as Governor for District 2.

Newly elected District Governors take their oath of office during the President's Banquet. (pictured left to right) O. C. "Chet" Robbins, District 7; Joseph Richer, District 4; Billie Watson Hughes, District 2.



From the



Another annual convention has come and gone and I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did. A special thank you is in order to our executive director, Dalene Paull and her staff, Jolene Diven, Bee Crandall, and Lauren Harriman for hosting us in Rogers, Arkansas. They have done a great job with the home office, both the way it looks and the way it runs on a day-to-day basis.

As we begin our new year I can't help but reflect on the great leadership we have had in the past and everything that has been accomplished for the benefit of The Conference and for funeral service. I am grateful to Past Presidents John Michelotti, John Kazlauskas, Terry Woodard, Joe Jenkins, Corrine Culbreth and David Benke for the encouragement, support, and guidance they bestowed upon me since being elected to the board. David and I have been friends since mortuary school at the University of Minnesota and have vacationed together on our Harleys. It was he who encouraged me to get involved with The Conference, attend some meetings, and he has been there for me ever since. I would like to thank the members of District 6 for showing faith in me by electing me to serve as their Governor since 2000. It has truly been a joy to be involved with such a progressive and positive organization during such quickly changing times in funeral service as well as life in general in the twenty-first century.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Patrick Obarzanek and Paul Brush for their many contributions to The Conference while serving on the Board. They will be greatly missed. Congratulations to new Board members Billie Watson Hughes and Joseph Richer. I look forward to working with both of you. Welcome to new Executive Committee members Jerry Griffin and O. C. "Chet" Robbins who will be serving as Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer respectively. It is going to be a good year. Last but not least, I thank my wife Cydney and our children for their support and the staff of Hanson-Runsvold Funeral Home for their understanding on time spent away from the business.

There are many interesting projects and challenges on the horizon for The Conference. Among the ones that stick out the most in my mind is the disciplinary database for funeral service. It seems to be a perfect fit for us and we will keep you updated as District 7 acts as our test site. Chet Robbins has done a lot of research on this and Dalene will follow up as we move forward with this throughout the year.

It has been a difficult and trying time saying goodbye to a dear friend and colleague, Jack Kazlauskas, but one way we can honor his memory is by following through on something that was close to his heart. He felt strongly about The Conference providing some significant and meaningful scholarships to deserving mortuary school students. A scholarship of \$2,500 in his name has been established, along with at least three others in similar amounts to be awarded within the year.

Sincerely,

John D. Runsvold, President, 2005-2006

2005 NBE Statistics January - June

National Board - Arts Examination (NBA)

	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #	Absent %	Total Number
First Time	755	640	84.8%	115	15.2%	6	0.8%	761
Repeater	124	59	47.6%	65	52.4%	1	0.8%	125
Total	879	699	79.5%	180	20.5%	7	0.8%	886

National Board - Science Examination (NBS)

	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #	Absent %	Total Number
First Time	750	568	75.7%	182	24.3%	8	1.1%	758
Repeater	240	86	35.8%	154	64.2%	8	3.2%	248
Total	990	654	66.1%	336	33.9%	16	1.6%	1,006

Northwest Arkansas Welcomes Annual Convention Delegates to Scenic “Hawg

The unpredictable spring weather cooperated and the Arkansas sun shone brightly on the 100-plus delegates and their guests during the 101st Annual Convention. The beautiful Ozark mountains and lush countryside were a contrast to some of the more urban venues of other convention venues. Plus, it gave the members of The Conference a chance to visit “their” office.



AFSEB President Cheryl Smith and NBE Committee member Gary Refsland enjoy

Activities began with the AEFSEB meeting on April 8. Their annual meeting serves as a forum for sharing information that will enhance protection for funeral service consumers.

The Arts and Sciences Examination Committees spent all day both Thursday and Friday reviewing the content of the National Board Exam. Twice a year this hardworking group of acknowledged experts in their respective fields carefully evaluates every detail of the exam, ensuring that it is relevant, up to date with our evolving industry, and consistent with the curriculum offered in ABFSE-accredited mortuary schools nationwide.

Friday evening began with a reception at the ICFSEB office headquarters. Since moving the headquarters to Fayetteville in 2002, the Executive

Director and Conference staff have worked steadily to improve efficiency and productivity. With the advent of computer-based testing in January of 2004, the staff has continued to implement updated procedures and systems designed to enhance our ability to serve the varying needs of students, schools, regulatory boards, and practicing professionals. After the reception, delegates were treated to a BBQ dinner at the beautifully restored Victory Theater in historic downtown Rogers.

The convention opened with a business session early Saturday afternoon, followed by a highly informative presentation from Douglas Howard, Deputy Director of the U.S. Army Mortuary Affairs Center, who updated attendees on current mortuary operations in Iraq and areas of Southeast Asia affected by the tsunamis.

District meetings and elections were held from 4:00 to 5:30 Saturday afternoon. The evening began with a reception in honor of outgoing Vice President Runsvold, followed by a banquet honoring outgoing President Michelotti. Awards were presented and new officers were sworn in at the gala banquet. (See related articles on pages 1 and 4.)

Sunday’s session began with Julia Works of the Atkinson & Atkinson law firm in Evanston, Illinois, who spoke on recent regulatory cases and attorney general opinions pertinent to the funeral service industry. Todd Van Beck, President of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston, Texas, inspired delegates as he spoke of the opportunities for public service in the funeral service profession. Committee reports updated members on the progress being made in several areas, including education, accreditation issues and professional policies.



John Runsvold, Patrick Orarzanek and O.C. “Chet” Robbins enjoy a hearty laugh at the

The annual convention provides a unique 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 industry. The 2006 convention is slated for April 5 and 6 in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information contact Dalene Paull, 479-442-7076, or visit www.cfseb.org.



Seated (pictured left to right), Secretary-Treasurer O. C. “Chet” Robbins, Past President John Michelotti, President John Runsvold, Vice President Jerry Griffin. Standing, District 9 Governor Lisa Whitney, ABFSE Representative Jim Augustine, General Counsel Peter Drumm, District 4





Students Honored for Academic

At the President's Banquet on Saturday evening during the 101st annual convention, The Conference was proud to recognize Katherine Radice of Red Bank, New Jersey, for outstanding academic achievement. From over 1,300 students who sat for the National Board Exam in 2004, Ms. Radice made one of the two highest scores. Robb Smith and Deborah Tolboom represented Mercer County Community College at the award presentation.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Ms. Radice graduated with honors from Rutgers University with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature. She has three children and spent 10 years as an antique dealer before joining Worden-Hoidal Funeral Home of Oakhurst and Red Bank, New Jersey, where she is currently an intern and office manager.

Meg Dunn of American Academy McAllister Institute accepted the academic achievement award for Helen Choi, who attained the other top score in 2004 but was unable to attend.



Pictured left to right: Deborah Tolboom, Katherine Radice and



Pictured left to right: Meg Dun, ICFSEB Executive Director Dalene

102nd Annual Convention April 5-6, 2006



From legendary Churchill Downs and Slugger Field, to riverboat rides, gaming, shopping, museums, and more.

Join us in Louisville for all the

