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The Conference Holds 109th Annual Meeting

The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards held its 109th Annual Meeting February 27 - 28, 2013, at The Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort in Henderson, Nevada. The two day event focused on regulation in the death care profession and was attended by members of the regulatory community throughout the United States and Canada.

This year The Conference debuted its Board Member Training Program, focused on educating attendees on their roles and responsibilities as regulatory board members (see page 3).

Wednesday morning began with a meeting of the Association of Executives of Funeral Service Boards (AEFSB), which was attended by state and provincial regulators from across North America. The meeting focused on the future of funeral service regulation, alkaline hydrolysis, working with the state legislature, and FTC sweeps.

Two simultaneous presentations were held on Wednesday morning as well. Dale Atkinson led a discussion regarding regulatory and legal issues for regulatory board members. Eric Forsbach, Examination Services Coordinator for The Conference, held a forum for funeral service education where he discussed application processes, the importance of examination security, and future

enhancements with the new website launch. Mr. Forsbach also discussed the most recent NBE Item Writing Workshop that The Conference hosted in January. “The item writing workshop is one of the best experiences faculty can have as

professionals,” said Jolena Grande, a mortuary science professor from Cypress College who attended the workshop.

President Bart Thompson called the meeting to order and welcomed all regulators, educators, and funeral service

professionals in attendance. At the opening business meeting and luncheon Donna Mooney, the manager of discipline proceedings for the North Carolina Board of Nursing, gave a presentation over today’s licensees, and the strengths and weaknesses that define the different generations.

Following Ms. Mooney’s presentation, an investigators panel discussion was held. Deborah Orecki of the New York Bureau of Funeral Directing, Ruth Ann Arty of the Maryland Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors, and Diane Shaffer of the Nevada State Funeral Board, discussed policies, procedures, and requirements in each of their respective jurisdictions.

The final presentation of the day was led by William Hatherill, CEO of the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT). Mr. Hatherill discussed the



The 2013-2014 Board of Directors

Annual Meeting Continued



The 2013-2014 Annual Meeting general assembly

role of examinations in the licensure process.

The second day of the event began with an update on current issues in mortuary science education led by Patty Hutcheson,

Past President of the American Board of Funeral Service Education. The morning continued with a presentation from Jacqueline Taylor, Ph.D., in which she discussed the role education plays in licensure. Following Dr. Taylor, Dale Atkinson presented on legislative updates where he highlighted cases that influence administrative policies, laws, and rules.

District meetings followed the morning sessions. These meetings gave attendees an opportunity to discuss issues and best practices with fellow regulators from other districts. During the district meetings, elections were held for districts three, five, six and nine.

Elected to second terms were Gail Thomas-DeWitt from District 3, Letricia Chandler from District 5, and Bart Burton from District 9. Douglas "Mack" Smith, of the Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts, was elected to represent District 6. Mr. Smith has previously served on the board and was president in 1992-1993.

Thursday afternoon kicked off with the annual awards luncheon. Following the district meeting and AEFSB reports, President Thompson presented Mack Smith with the President's Distinguished Service Award. Mr. Smith was recognized for his ongoing commitment and outstanding service to The Conference.

District 9 Director, Bart Burton, was elected to serve as Vice President, and District 2 Director, Dr. Hari P. Close, II, was elected to serve as Secretary/Treasurer. At the close of the awards luncheon, Gail Thomas-DeWitt, Director of District 3, was sworn in as President of The Conference. President Thomas-DeWitt received the ceremonial president's gavel from Past President Bart Thompson.

The afternoon continued with two final sessions. Dale Atkinson described recent legal cases in the regulatory community and discussed what can be learned from them. The second session was an afternoon spotlight on a Model Practice Act for funeral service.

Dwight Hymans, Deputy Executive Director of the Association of Social Work Boards, gave a presentation on the significance of a Practice Act, followed by a group activity where attendees split into groups to discuss and

analyze seven potential content areas in developing a Model Practice Act.

1. Pre-need
2. Discipline
3. Regulatory Authority
4. Dual Vs. Single Licensure
5. Apprenticeship Requirements
6. Licensing Standards for Funeral Directors
7. Licensing Standards for Embalmers

The annual meeting concluded with a dinner at Lindo Michoacan Restaurant. Overlooking the lights of Las Vegas, attendees were able to reflect on the meeting topics while dining with fellow regulators.



Gail Thomas-DeWitt receives the President's Gavel from Bart Thompson

2014 Fee Change

Please note that as of January 1, 2014, exam fees will be as follows:

- National Board Examination (Full) - \$500
- National Board Examination Arts - \$250
- National Board Examination Science - \$250
- State Board Examination Arts - \$200
- State Board Examination Science - \$200

For applicants who submitted examination fees before January 1, 2014, but are scheduled to take the exam after that date, the remainder of the fee can be submitted via order form, or cashier's check/money order.

Douglas “Mack” Smith Returns to The Board of Directors



Douglas “Mack” Smith, who served as president of The Conference in 1992-1993, was elected to serve once again on the board of directors. Mr. Smith was elected District 6 Director

by his peers in the funeral regulation profession at the 109th Annual Meeting in Henderson, Nevada.

As District 6 Director, Mr. Smith represents funeral service regulators from Iowa, Kansas, Manitoba, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Mr. Smith previously served on The Conference Board of Directors in the late 80’s and early 90’s.

“I’m excited about the opportunity to return as a Board Member of The Conference,” said Mr. Smith. “A lot has happened since I was president in 1992-1993. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors, Executive Director, Dalene

Paull and the administrative staff to hopefully contribute to the team effort of forwarding The Conference in future endeavors.”

Following his election to the board of directors at the Annual Meeting, Mr. Smith also received The President’s Award. President of The Conference, Bart Thompson, presented Mr. Smith with the award on the second day of the meeting during the annual awards luncheon. The award symbolizes the recipient’s ongoing commitment and service to The Conference as well as to the funeral service profession.

“I look forward... to the team effort of forwarding The Conference in future endeavors.” - Mack Smith

Mr. Smith has been the Executive Secretary to the Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts for almost 33 years. Mr. Smith has always been highly involved



Douglas “Mack” Smith receives the President’s Award

in professional and regulatory associations. He is a past president of the Council of Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR), past board member of the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) and American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), and served for two years as the president of the Association of Executives of Funeral Service Boards (AEFSB). Mr. Smith also chairs the Board Member Training program for The Conference. He is in his fourth term as mayor of Silver Lake, Kansas.

First Board Member Training Program a Success

The Conference hosted a sold-out program for the first board member training session held on February 26-27 in Henderson, NV. The eight hour training seminar included attendees from Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Washington. The attendees listened to presentations by The Conference staff and Legal Counsel, Dale Atkinson, before being split into two teams to analyze problematic scenarios involving board regulation.

Richard Dugger, President of the Oklahoma Funeral Board stated that “the board training and interaction with fellow regulatory board members from around the country was great.” He reminisced of a quote his grandfather shared with him several years ago, “the greatest good we can do for others is not to share our riches but reveal theirs.” Dugger went on to say, “This training provided valuable insight that every board member needs to be a better educated and prepared board member.”

The Conference will conduct a second Board Member Training Program in conjunction with the Association of

Social Works Boards on July 12-14, 2013 in Arlington, Virginia at the Crystal City Marriott. Seminar topics will include: the role of a regulatory board member, political realities of boards, adjudication/discipline/enforcement, the licensure examination, and other current regulatory issues. The training program is open to any member of any board regardless of how many years served.

All registration forms for the upcoming July session must be received by May 10, 2013. The registration fee is \$250.00. Space is limited so please visit the “For Regulators” tab on www.theconferenceonline.org for the registration form or contact Lauren Thomas at services@theconferenceonline.org for more information.



Delegate Grant Program Awards Two Recipients

The Conference Board of Directors awarded two grants through the Delegate Grant Program for the 109th Annual Meeting. Ms. Roberta Perea of the New Mexico Board of Funeral Services and Mr. Peter Burke of the North Carolina Board of Funeral Service each received scholarships to aid their attendance at the Annual Meeting in Henderson, NV.



Peter Burke (left) discusses regulatory issues with North Carolina attendees.

First time attendees at the Annual Meeting, Mr. Burke and Ms. Perea participated in the general assembly, district meetings, and played an integral role in the group exercise portion centered around the Model Practice Act For

Funeral Service. In addition, Ms. Perea participated in the Association of Executives of Funeral Service Boards meeting

while Mr. Burke concluded day two of Board Member Training.

The Conference Board of Directors is dedicated to the goal of full participation by the Member Boards in the Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Since meeting attendance is mutually beneficial, in September 2012, The Conference Board of Directors approved the Delegate Grant Program as a way to provide the opportunity for member boards to apply for assistance to attend the meeting.

As a non-profit organization, The Conference must be fiscally prudent at all times. The number of grants available from year-to-year is determined by the Board of Directors. Funding is awarded based on the needs of each Member Board, district representation, and criteria deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors.

Please visit the annual convention section on www.theconferenceonline.org for the Delegate Grant policies and procedures as well as the application for more information.

The Conference Awards NBE Scholarships

The Board of Directors of The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards has selected 10 recipients to receive the National Board Examination (NBE) Scholarship. Each ABFSE accredited program was asked to submit one candidate name to The Conference based on their own criteria.

Winners were selected at random during the Board of Directors meeting on February 26, 2013 in Henderson, Nevada. The NBE Scholarship allows each recipient to sit for the NBE at no cost. The 2013 NBE Scholarship recipients are as follows:

- Shaniqua Cole, Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science
- Scott Fields, Mercer County Community College
- Michelle Graves, John Tyler Community College
- Davis LaMuerta, Mt. Hood Community College
- Robert Marshall, Arkansas State University at Mountain Home
- Tiffany Pollack, Delgado Community College
- Alyanna Sabio, Cypress College
- Carolyn Smith, University of Central Oklahoma

New Website Launch

Starting in late May/early June The Conference will launch a new version of the website, www.theconferenceonline.org. The overhaul will include a variety of features that are designed to make the site user-friendly, and increase functionality.

Exciting new features will include:

- User-friendly interface
- Secure online document exchange
- Compiled events calendar
- News/announcement center
- Members content area

- Amanda Spidell, Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Mike Terwilliger, Des Moines Area Community College

New Executive Committee Elected

New officers were elected to the Executive Committee of The Conference Board of Directors at the board meeting in Henderson, NV. Gail Thomas-DeWitt was elected



Bart Thompson presents Gail Thomas-DeWitt with the ceremonial President's Gavel

President, Bart Burton was elected Vice President, and Dr. Hari P. Close II was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Ms. Thomas-DeWitt was sworn in on the second day of the Annual Meeting, during the awards luncheon. "I am excited about the opportunity to lead this organization and further the mission of The Conference to the best of my abilities," said Ms. Thomas-DeWitt to those in attendance.

Ms. Thomas-DeWitt was elected to serve on the Board of Directors from District 3 in 2010. She was elected Secretary/Treasurer in 2011 and Vice-President in 2012. She served on the Examination Committee from 2008 to 2010. As District 3 Director, she represents the funeral service regulatory boards of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

In 1995 she was elected the first African American woman mayor of the city of Chattahoochee. In 1996, Ms. Thomas-DeWitt purchased Bruton's Funeral Home in Orlando, FL, which is now Gail & Wynn's Mortuary, Inc.

Ms. Thomas-DeWitt's love for the Funeral Profession led her to become a member of the National Disaster Operational Response Team (DMORT) in 1996. She served as Chief of Morgue Operations for DMORT. Ms. Thomas-

DeWitt has been a member of the Florida State Board of Funeral Services since 2005, and currently serves as vice-chairman.

Mr. Burton and Dr. Close were sworn into office alongside their peers on the second day of the meeting as well.

Mr. Burton was appointed to The Conference Board of Directors in 2010 and was elected in 2011, becoming Secretary/Treasurer in 2012. As District 9 Director, he represents funeral service regulators from Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah.

Mr. Burton was appointed to the Nevada State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers in 2007. He is currently the manager of the Palm Mortuary Care Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. He has been employed at Palm Mortuary since 1985.

Dr. Close was elected to The Conference Board of Directors in 2011. As District 2 Director, he represents funeral service regulators from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C.

He has been the president of the State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors of Maryland since 2008. He is the owner and managing director of Hari P. Close Funeral Service, P.A. He is the past Director Governor II of the Board of Directors of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association and is a past chair of the Funeral Directors Association of Maryland.

Dr. Close holds an Associate of Arts in Mortuary Science from Catonsville Community College, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Economics from Tuskegee University, a Master of Science in Finance from Auburn University, a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies from Eastern Theology Seminary, a Master of Arts in Theology

from Eastern Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Divinity in Bible Instruction from the Bible Institute, and a Doctor of Divinity from Eastern Theological Seminary. He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Education at the University of Maryland.



From Left: Bart Thompson, Hari Close, II, Bart Burton, Gail Thomas-DeWitt

Regulations in Licensing

The Conference compiles a booklet entitled "Regulations in Licensing, Continuing Education and Pre-Need." This publication provides a resource for state regulators and their legislatures.

In order to provide current information, a comprehensive, user-friendly survey that covers the primary areas of funeral service-related regulation will be sent to member boards in the coming weeks.

Once the results are compiled the document will be sent out to member boards and posted on The Conference website.

NBE Quarterly Statistics

January 1, 2013 - March 31, 2013

National Board Arts Examination

	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #
First Time	354	255	72%	99	28%	5
Repeater	130	48	37%	82	63%	5
Total	484	303	63%	181	37%	10

National Board Science Examination

	Total Tested	Pass #	Pass %	Fail #	Fail %	Absent #
First Time	382	243	73%	89	27%	2
Repeater	103	40	39%	63	61%	5
Total	435	283	65%	152	35%	7

For a full listing of quarterly stats, please visit
www.theconferenceonline.org/stats-2013.shtml

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Upcoming Jurisdiction Board Meetings

- Arizona - 4/16, 5/21, 6/13, 7/16, 8/20, 9/17, 10/15, 11/19, 12/17
- Delaware - 5/28, 7/30, 9/24, 10/29, 128/31
- Florida - 5/9, 6/5, 7/11, 8/1, 9/5, 10/3, 12/5
- Washington D.C. - 5/2, 6/13, 7/11, 9/12, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5
- Georgia - 5/14, 6/11, 7/16, 8/13, 9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 12/10
- Idaho - 7/16, 7/17
- Iowa - 6/13, 9/12, 12/12
- Kansas - 7/11, 10/10
- Maryland - 5/8, 6/12, 7/10
- Mississippi - 7/4, 10/3
- Ohio - 4/16, 5/14, 5/15, 6/17, 6/18
- Oklahoma - 5/9, 7/11, 8/8, 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12
- Oregon - 5/28, 7/23, 9/24, 11/19
- Tennessee - 5/14, 6/11, 7/9, 8/13, 10/8, 11/21, 12/11
- Virginia - 4/23, 7/23, 10/22
- Washington - 6/11, 9/10, 12/11
- South Carolina - 6/5, 12/12

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