

THE BULLETIN



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Share Your Story with the VFDA

To submit a story idea or share your news in the next issue of The Bulletin, contact Lacy Whittaker at info@vfda.net or (804) 264-0505.

A Message From The President

Greetings,

I'm in awe and yet not surprised when I take a moment to observe how our members are remaining strong during these very different times. The levels at which VFDA members are continuing to adapt and serve the families in our care is something which should make everyone enormously proud.

The ongoing endurance and flexibility demonstrated is commendable to all. We are called to serve and whatever the circumstance, we rise to the occasion with a level of service that makes the VFDA who we are. Ideas that once seemed farfetched and out of the box for some, now seem to be the daily norm. Extending our methods of service to accommodate families is keeping us at the cutting edge of service.

Online condolences have drastically increased as a safer way for a friend to let a family know they care. A drive-up guest register allows our high-risk community to have a safer way to express their condolences to the family. Memorial videos shared online now have an even more special meaning and lasting effect. Adding live feed technology in our service areas allowing individuals from far and wide to take part in services more safely from home, has created a sense of comfort and appreciation to the family during times of limited-gathering restrictions.

Flexibility is key in the new norm of Funeral Service today. It is important that we support each other, reach out to each other, share ideas with each other, and continue to solidify our strength as an association. Certainly, adapting to the new norm creates challenges for us all in our daily routine. Creativity continues to evolve in our profession as we stay the course. What some see as obstacles, our members are taking as opportunities to excel. I am confident that we will continue to adapt and raise the bar of service we provide to the families we serve.

VFDA continues to offer new ideas and leadership opportunities within the association. Your voice and participation in our advocacy grassroots program are a valued asset to our association and aids efforts at making a difference in our profession at the state level.

We hope you will join us for our Winter Conference at the Richmond Marriott Short Pump, Glen Allen, VA, on January 22, 2021. Continue to stay strong and safe as we provide services, as no one else can, to our communities.

May blessings be abundant in your lives,



Marty White, CFSP
President
Virginia Funeral Directors Association



A Message From The Executive Director

Dear Members:

It's a great time to belong to the Virginia Funeral Directors Association.

For the first time ever, members can enjoy exclusive virtual continuing programs FREE of charge. With the COVID-19 pandemic hitting and the continued changes of ways people are working, learning and living, the VFDA is here to accommodate our members and making sure we are providing quality programs in an easy virtual manner, so you stay current with your credits before each deadline. Make sure you are registering for our Virtual CEU day or our Disaster Response CEU. This will be the last continuing education programs we will offer until the new year.

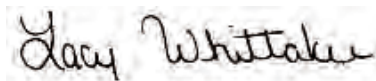
Join our Advocacy-Grassroots initiative this year. Advocacy and grassroots efforts are so important during and after the general assembly sessions. What stronger voice, than your own? When we have hundreds of voices communicating the same message for the common good of the profession, we will be heard. Make sure you have signed up for the VFDA Advocacy program.

I hope you will find our Bulletin this month informative and you like the new updated look. We appreciate all of our members and look forward to working with you in the coming year. Your suggestions, support, feedback and comments help the association create new programs, discussion items and a legislative agenda each year. We are looking forward to working closely with our schools, students, interns and under 40's. New programs and social events both virtual in-person are being developed and we look forward to rolling those out in 2021.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the VFDA Winter Conference at the Marriott Short Pump on January 22nd. We have a great lineup of presenters, a breakfast with vendors and much more planned for the day. You can see the winter conference information in this Bulletin. We look forward to seeing you in-person again soon, until then we will continue offering our virtual programs and networking events. I encourage you to start thinking and planning your hotel stay at the beautiful Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort for our upcoming convention.

Please know how grateful we are to have you as a member. As this extraordinary year comes to a close, may the VFDA offer you support and comfort and hopefully cheer. We hope you celebrate the season this year.

Wishing joy to you and yours,



Lacy Whittaker
Executive Director
Virginia Funeral Directors Association



Welcome New Members!

We're extending the warmest welcome to our newest members:

- **Paul Matthews**
Chiles Funeral Home
Richmond
- **John R. Groome**
Charlton and Groome Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc.
Fishersville

Thank You, Donors!

Thank you to the following donors for supporting the 132nd Annual No Show Convention. We appreciate your support of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association.

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The Song of Life

In the presence of death, we must continue to sing
the song of life.

Out of our sorrows should come understanding.

Though we grieve the deaths of our loved ones,
we accept them and hold on to our memories as
precious gifts.

Let us make the most of the time we have with our
loved ones while they are with us, and



May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind *always* be at
your back, the sun shine warm
upon your face, the rains fall
soft upon your fields and until
we meet again may God hold you
in the hollow of his hand.

- AN IRISH BLESSING

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Time is too slow
for those who wait, too
swift for those who fear,
too long for those who
grieve, too short for
those who rejoice, but
for those who love,
time is *eternity*.

HENRY VAN DYKE



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From The Advocacy Team

Special Session – Special Times

A special session of the General Assembly was called by Governor Northam during a not-so-special time – the COVID-19 pandemic. Who would have thought that it would have lasted as long as a regular “long session” of sixty days? By the time the legislators finish their work on the budget as anticipated during the week of October 12, it will have been that long.

With the 2020 regular session ending about a week later than expected (it finally adjourned Sine Die on March 12), and the Special session, legislators and advocates alike will have been engaged in the legislative process for a total of 123 days by the end of next week. The 2020 legislative sessions should have lasted approximately 60 days. With the special session tacked on, the General Assembly as been in session for one third of the year and 105% longer than what a pre-COVID-19 year would have wrought.



The 2021 Legislative Session is Around The Corner

In addition to the special session, the pre-filing period for the 2021 regular session of the General Assembly has been underway since July; however, the focus has been fully on the special session as only two House bills and two Senate Joint Resolutions have been introduced to date. There is likely to be a desire by legislators to get back to their regular jobs and family routines, taking a break from their legislative duties for at least a short period of time before the flurry of activity to introduce legislation. Many may be waiting to see what ultimately comes of the special session before making decisions on the limited number of bills they will be allowed to introduce during the “short session” next year. Many have submitted legislation already, but hit has not been introduced via the Division of Legislative Services.

Advocacy During the 2021 Legislative Session

It has been confirmed that limited access to legislators during the 2021 legislative process will continue as it has during the special session. The Senate will continue to meet at the Science Museum and the House will continue remotely, we are told. VFDA’s membership will need to take more active roles in outreach to their legislators beginning very soon.

VFDA’S Proactive Legislation

The VFDA Executive Committee has agreed to seek two proactive pieces of legislation this year. The first being the “Next of Kin” legislation that would clarify and streamline who would control disposition of a dead human body. The second is “Manager of Record” legislation which clarifies that a funeral home establishment that conducts embalming is required to have a funeral service licensee as a manager of record.

Your Advocacy Team is Proud to Work with You!

We look forward to working with the members of the VFDA to move these efforts forward. You will be hearing from Lacy about reaching out to your legislators in support of your VFDA’s initiatives.

Angie Bezik

Cindy DiFranco

Julia Hammond

2021 Legislative Agenda

The 2020 General Assembly Session(s) have seemed like a never-ending story. The 2020 regular session ended a week later than anticipated in a “long session” on the day that the Governor announced the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

In the chaotic months that followed VFDA Executive Director, Lacy Whittaker, worked at breakneck speed to bring you up-to-date information on the changes that were occurring in policy and practicality across the state. She had “Zoom Fatigue” before it was even a phrase. She chased down PPE and body bags for members. She sat on literally over 36 hours of Department of Labor and Industry/VOSH and related meetings to keep you up to date on the safety measures required to by businesses in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Multiple Mass Fatality Taskforce calls had Lacy’s participation as well as efforts to be sure that legislation that passed and created opportunities for VFDA engagement included membership. All that and more in addition to the daily efforts of serving a state-wide association and working to provide the best situation for the Annual VFDA Convention possible.

August 18, 2020 the General Assembly began a “special session” in which the budget would be addressed due to COVID-19 impacts, as well as criminal and social justice reforms. This covered a broad spectrum of legislation. The “special session” eclipsed the long, regular session (+1 week) and the House and the Senate finished work on conference reports and the budget nine weeks later on October 16, with just over a month left for legislation to be submitted for drafting as “prefiled legislation” for the regular 2021 General Assembly session. As of October 16, only five pieces of legislation have been prefiled and placed on the system.

Your VFDA Executive and Legislative Committees have approved two pieces of legislation for which patrons will be sought and lobbying activities will be expended. Engagement by the membership on these issues is paramount to successful promotion of the proposed legislation.

Establishing Order of Descendants; Control of Disposition of Decedent

The first piece of legislation should not be new to membership. We have commonly called it “Next-of-Kin” legislation. It was patroned during the 2019 legislation by Senator Creigh Deeds and Delegate Mark Sickles. It has been streamlined with the help of the Virginia Bar Association. The legislation establishes the order in which the next-of-kin controls the decision-making process about the decedent’s disposition, similar to the course of descendants within the Code of Virginia Title 64.2-200, Wills, Trusts, and Fiduciaries.

The order established within the “Next-of-Kin” legislation clarifies who has the right to determine the disposition of the a decedent; how and when that right can be transferred; and what acceptable contact of next-of-kin includes. It does not preclude anyone from paying the funeral home for the services, whether or not the person is next-of-kin. The legislation also defines “disposition” and “next-of-kin,” as well as providing immunity for funeral service establishments and crematories that have followed the established guidance.

Manager of Record for Funeral Service Establishments

The second piece of proposed legislation is in response to legislation, which passed during the 2020 regular session requiring the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers to promulgate regulations to re-establish funeral director-only and embalmer-only licenses. During the expedited regulatory process, BFDE staff informed RAP members that the legislation did not provide leeway to change anything regarding the status or requirements of a manager of record of a funeral service establishment and blocked addressing the concern. However, it remains a concern for membership and legislation has been proposed establishing what level of credentialing a manager of record for a funeral service establishment must have based upon whether embalming services are provided.

Known Other-Sourced Legislation

There is a piece of legislation that Delegate Martha Mugler has decided to patron that would establish unequivocally that in the case of a declared emergency due to communicable disease, funeral service(s) licensees will be considered essential workers and will be afforded priority as such during a declared emergency with regard to receipt of PPE.

The VFDA has agreed to support the legislation.

From NFDA General Counsel

Photographing and Fingerprinting Decedents

By T. Scott Gilligan, NFDA General Counsel

A question that NFDA increasingly receives from members is whether a funeral home may photograph a body and/or take fingerprints of the decedent without the family's consent or knowledge. The primary reason for photographing is to document identification of the decedent or the condition of the body prior to or during embalming. Additionally, with fingerprints, some funeral homes wish to have the fingerprints on file in case the family later wants a Thumbie after the body **has been buried or cremated.**

Photographs. With everyone carrying a smartphone equipped with a camera, the issue of unauthorized photography has increasingly become a privacy problem that state legislatures are wrestling with. Arizona and Tennessee have placed laws on the books making certain unauthorized photography a crime. In Arizona's case, the photograph had to be of a person who was nude or partially nude. Tennessee's law is less restrictive and covers any unauthorized photo that may embarrass or offend the subject, which was taken in a place where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, and was taken for the sexual arousal or gratification of the defendant.

It is highly doubtful that either of the statutes would ever come into play against a funeral home taking photos of a decedent without family authorization. But, just last year, a Pennsylvania funeral director who took cell phone photos of several sets of human remains in order to "gross out her friends" was charged with the crimes of abuse of a corpse, disorderly conduct, and harassment. Other improper uses of photos of corpses have led states to enact criminal laws. New Jersey has made it a crime for first responders to post photos or videos of accident victims without their consent. A similar bill was recently introduced in West Virginia.

While funeral homes that take unauthorized photos of decedents for identification purposes are very unlikely to transgress criminal laws, they do open themselves up to civil lawsuits, especially if those photos are ever misused. In 2012, a California family received a settlement from the California Highway Patrol of \$2.35 million because investigative photos of their dead daughter in a car accident were leaked to the internet. The 18 year old daughter was involved in a horrendous car crash that nearly decapitated her. Photos of her mangled remains taken by the California Highway Patrol accident investigator were somehow posted to the internet. Despite repeated pleas from the family, the photos remained on many websites. The California Highway Patrol ended up paying the multi-million dollar settlement not because it took the photos, but because it failed to safeguard them.

NFDA is unaware of any funeral home that is being sued for either taking unauthorized photographs or for having those photographs leaked out. However, just looking at the case of the Pennsylvania funeral director sharing cellphone photos of decedents and the California Highway Patrol paying a \$2.35 million settlement for allowing photos to be improperly posted to the internet should serve as a cautionary tale. Even though the California Highway Patrol had the legal authority to take the photos and never intended for them to be posted on the internet, someone's carelessness ended up in a \$2.35 million settlement.

In light of the potential liability funeral homes could face, what guidance does NFDA have? First, to protect against claims that the photos were not authorized, we recommend that they be taken only after the person with the right of disposition has provided written consent. For funeral homes that want to use photos for identification



purposes, the consent can be documented on the embalming authorization form, the cremation authorization form, or a separate photograph authorization form. NFDA has sample embalming and cremation authorization forms which provide for negative consents for photographs. In other words, the funeral home is given permission to photograph the remains unless the authorizing agent checks a box denying permission. The sample language from the embalming form reads as follows:

PHOTOGRAPHS: Unless the box at the end of this paragraph is checked by the REPRESENTATIVE, the FUNERAL HOME has authorization to take photographs of the remains to document the condition of the remains prior to or during embalming. These photographs will be maintained in the internal records of the FUNERAL HOME.

Permission is denied.

Secondly, NFDA recommends that the photos only be taken by a licensed funeral director or embalmer. The photos should be limited to that portion of the body required for identification purposes such as the face or a particular tattoo or scar if needed for identification. The camera or cellphone should be the property of the funeral home so that no one can claim that the photos belonged to anyone other than the funeral home.

One of the most important components of any photo policy is security. If a photo is leaked to the public, the funeral home has a huge liability on its hands. Obviously, the best security is to delete the photo and destroy any copy. Once the photo has been used for identification purposes, the safest option for the funeral home is to delete all electronic versions of it and destroy any hard copies.

If the funeral home decides to retain the photograph in case identification is ever questioned or an embalming claim is made at a later date, it must ensure that all photos are protected. Obviously, photos in electronic files are more susceptible to being hacked and shared on the internet than hard copies. Funeral homes should strongly consider whether to maintain photos in an electronic format.

If photos are kept past the initial time they are used for identification, NFDA recommends that they be deleted and/or destroyed according to a set timetable. For example, if the statute of limitations for a breach of a contract claim in the funeral home's state is five years, the funeral home may decide that after five years, all photos of the decedent in the funeral home files would be deleted and/or destroyed.

Fingerprints. Fingerprints do not pose the same potential liability for funeral homes that photographs of the decedent do. Nevertheless, NFDA still recommends that they only be collected if the person with the right of disposition provides written consent to take the fingerprints. NFDA has sample embalming authorization forms with a fingerprint authorization contained in it. In addition, NFDA provides a sample form entitled "Authorization to Obtain Handprint or Fingerprints" on the NFDA website.

NFDA members with questions regarding this article may contact General Counsel, Scott Gilligan at (513) 871-6332 or scott@gilliganlegal.com.

From Regulatory Support Services

The Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers met via video conference on Tuesday, October 6 for a regularly scheduled meeting.



After lengthy and in-depth discussions, the Board adopted the Emergency Regulations for the Licensure of Funeral Directors and Embalmers in accordance with the requirements of SB1044, 2020 Acts of the General Assembly Ch. 943. The Emergency Regulations include chapters 20 (General Regulations), 30 (Preneed Funeral Planning), and 40 (Funeral Service Internship Program) of 18 VAC 65 and were approved with the following amendments:

- Under section A. 3. of **18 VAC 65-20-231 Requirements for licensure by reciprocity or endorsement**, the board approved removal of the requirement for an applicant to successfully complete coursework in anatomy. The regulation retains the requirement that an applicant complete coursework in pathology.
- **18 VAC 65-20-350 Requirements for licensure by reciprocity or endorsement** was amended to clarify that applicant must hold a valid license for the practice of funeral service, funeral directing, or embalming, or an equivalent license in another state

A status report of previously approved changes to regulations was provided to the Board. As of September 21, 2020:

- Final changes to 18 VAC 65-20 Regulations of the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, and final changes to 18 VAC 65-30 Regulations for Preneed Funeral Planning have been at the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth for 41 days.
- Proposed changes to 18 VAC 65-40 Regulations for the Funeral Service Intern Program have been at the Governor's office for 262 days.
- Board staff advised that future matters for consideration are cremation authorization for donated bodies, remote viewing of remains by a Medical Examiner for cremations, and alkaline hydrolysis as a method of disposition. Staff also reported the continuing trend of increases in applications for surface transportation and removal service permits.
- Congratulations to Mia F. Mimms, FSL for her reappointment, as well as for completing her term as Board president. We also congratulate new Board member Joseph Michael Williams, FSL.
- Elections for Board officers were conducted, and we offer congratulations to R. Thomas Slusser, Jr., FSL, President; Kenneth Scott Hickey, M.D., Vice President; and Jason Graves, FSL, Secretary/Treasurer.

In major positive news for the funeral profession, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released the "Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine," which was requested by the CDC and the National Institutes of Health, and includes funeral directors in the highest-priority phase for vaccine allocation.

While vaccines will not be mandatory, the framework is designed to assist health authorities, as they create and implement national and/or local guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine allocation.

Member Spotlight

When Megan Gish began her career, she was a high school student tending to the patients of a local nursing home in her hometown of Christiansburg, Virginia. As a certified nursing assistant, she worked closely with her patients and their families helping them as best she could while they wrestled with making difficult decisions, managing expectations, and, ultimately, dealing with the loss of a loved one.

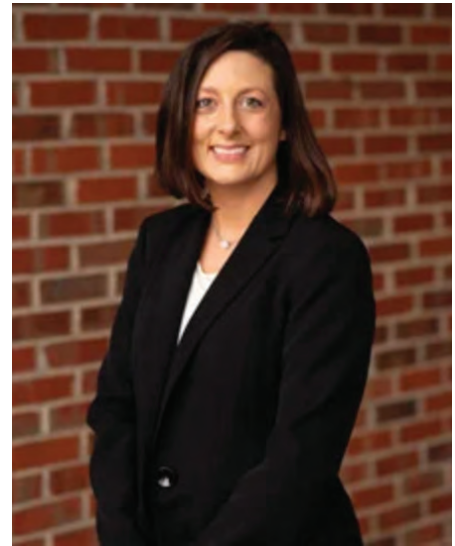
And it was in the moments of loss that she realized she could better serve grieving families as a funeral director.

“That’s when I decided I would go to college, get my degree and then be available in all aspects of this business to serve others,” Gish said. “It is satisfying to know that I have helped family members of all ages through some of the most difficult times of their lives.”

While her dedication to the profession is driven by her commitment to helping others, she also has a profound respect for the business itself and the experiences that come with it. Experiences like networking with and learning from others in the profession thanks to organizations like the Virginia Funeral Directors Association.

“In this business, knowledge, pride in your work, professionalism and kindness is of utmost importance. As Ray Lewis says, ‘It is what you do when no one is watching. That’s when it really counts.’”

Gish graduated from John Tyler Community College with an Associate’s Degree in Applied Science/Funeral Service Management in 2010. She joined Finch & Finch Funeral & Cremation Service in 2019 as a Funeral Service Licensee. She is past President of the Blue Ridge Funeral Directors Association and currently active in the Virginia Funeral Directors Association.



Past Presidents Council Scholarship



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2021 Past Presidents Council Scholarship Application

The VFDA Foundation is offering a \$750 scholarship to future funeral directors and those in the funeral profession to be used toward tuition, books/supplies or National Boards exam fees. Scholarship(s) will be awarded each year based on the amount previously approved by the Past Presidents Council. Applicants will receive consideration without discrimination of race, creed, color, sex, age, marital status, national origin or handicap. Tell your friends! Apply today!

Qualifications for the Scholarship:

1. Virginia resident.
2. Employed and endorsed by a VFDA member firm in good standing.
3. Supporting documents.
4. 2.0 grade point average (on 4.0 scale)
5. Short paragraph: "Why I Chose Funeral Service as My Profession."
6. All applications/essays must be submitted to info@vfda.net by **May 14, 2021**.
Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
7. Scholarships will be awarded at the sole discretion of the Scholarship Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association Foundation based on the evaluation of the above-named items.

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Over the years, Chosen Payments has grown to capture a significant portion of the nationwide market share in funeral care industry due to their superior rates and services. Equally as important, they are offering a discount that should make their services even more appealing for every Virginia Funeral Director Association Member. If you are not a current client and Chosen Payments cannot save you money on processing fees, they will pay you \$500! It's a Win/Win.



When you select Chosen Payments as your new provider, your Member benefits will also include:

- Contactless Payments
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With the ability to receive a FREE Contactless Terminal *terms and conditions apply, as well as offset lower costs to operate your business, this an immediate win for VFDA members. Their goal today is to keep each and every one of VFDA's members in the best position possible and we believe this is one GREAT step to aid in that mission.

Over the next few weeks, a Chosen Payments representative will contact you to discuss details on how you can take advantage of this Member discount. If you would like to contact Chosen Payments directly to receive this benefit package immediately, please contact Maria Prado at (805) 910-1445 or maria.prado@chosenpayments.com. For more information, please visit their website at www.chosenpayments.com.

Traveling Jeanne

I love to travel. Many of my favorite childhood memories include family vacations. As an adult, I have been blessed with the ability to continue to travel. Travel gives me time to recharge and reconnect. Today, much of my travel revolves around a 13 year old's baseball schedule. With creativity and a little planning, we are often able to combine his passion of playing the game and my love of adventure. Through my stories, I hope you will find that you too can travel. Whether it's a weekend trip to a spa, a camping trip with friends, or a solo trip - I am here to help you find and plan the perfect destination. Let me help you see the world.

Once your trip is planned, I keep working for you. Need help finding the perfect dining spot? Do you find planning daily activities overwhelming? I will work with you to make sure every detail is taken care of so that you can enjoy your travel without stress and worry. <https://travelingjeanne.wixsite.com/mysite/services>

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Industry Updates

Thacker Caskets Thanks Retiring Employees

Thacker Caskets announces the retirement of Sandy Saucier and Lounell Badgett. Upon relocating to the new headquarters, Sandy and Lounell are retiring from Thacker after many years of dedicated service.



2020 marks Sandy's 40th year with Thacker Caskets! Sandy is the pinnacle example of loyalty and dedication. For many years, she was an integral part of making sure that the business continued to run fluidly during many new business ventures, including many of the early acquisitions and building the manufacturing plant in Alabama.

Sandy was an incredibly versatile member of the team who could jump into any situation from accounts receivable to sales and even working convention booths. She had an excellent rapport with customers and Thacker Caskets will certainly miss having her expertise. Sandy commented, "I knew the Thacker family before I was in the business and it has been an absolute pleasure building my career in the funeral industry. I would like to take a moment to thank the customers I have worked with for a memorable 40 years." She also remarked that she good friends with Audrey Thacker, reflecting back on their friendship she said, "Audrey and I used to walk the block together, I watched CJ grow up. It's been quite an adventure working beside her all these years. I remember moving to Clinton from Washington, DC, and that was just as big of a deal to us as moving to Monrovia is for the new generation of Thackers."

Lounell celebrated her 34th year with Thacker Caskets this year. Lounell has been part of the backbone crew who has kept the internal processes afloat while larger projects were being conducted that continued to move the company forward. Lounell has been a valuable resource, wealth of knowledge and an integral part of the customer service team. She always been a team player and has provided wonderful assistance to the new team members in training and educating them on the internal processes and procedures. Lounell's retirement from Thacker is well-deserved and she will be greatly missed.

CEO of Thacker Caskets, CJ Thacker remarked, "I have had the pleasure of work with Sandy and Lounell throughout their entire careers with Thacker. They both epitomize the definition of loyalty and commitment and we are eternally grateful for their commitment to this company."

Thacker Caskets would like to sincerely thank Sandy and Lounell for their loyalty throughout the years. Thacker is both delighted for Sandy and Lounell yet saddened to see them leave and extend best wishes as they embark upon the next journey of their lives.

Thacker Caskets is the funeral industry's leading family-owned funeral supply company.

Industry Updates

Messenger Honors Top Sales Representatives for 2019 Achievements

Messenger, the leading provider in funeral stationery, personalization solutions and insurance funding, recently recognized its sales representatives with achievement awards through a virtual event held September 21, 2020.

The Director's Movers and Shakers Award is presented to the sales representative who moved up the most positions in the total team rankings. This award was presented to both Keisha Addison and Brad Johnson for moving up four positions in 2019.



The President's Club Award is presented to the Top 10 representatives for 2019 and includes Tom Ahlers, Jay Amburgey, David Bednar, Jeffrey Burnett, Steve Coker, Meredith Feminis, Mike Kane, Dave Kolbe, Sherry Noble and Glenn Vaughn. The Vice President's Club Award is presented to the sales representatives rounding out the top 20: Keisha Addison, Paul Ambroselli, Cameron Audette, Michael Borrer, Ellie Dane, John Duncan, Todd Ely, Michael Suthoff, Bret Welsh, and father and son team Gerry and Greg Wright.

"We are truly blessed with an amazing sales team who strive to go above and beyond in all that they do" states Bob Hoaglund, Vice President of Industry Relations at Messenger. "They are the main point of contact between our company and our funeral partners. Year after year, we see just how strong these relationships are and Messenger would not be where we are today without the commitment and dedication of our entire sales team."

Messenger's highest and most prestigious sales honor, Sales Representative of the Year, was awarded to Keisha Addison for her exceptional sales achievements in 2019. This award is bestowed to the sales representative who achieves exemplary sales performance and service throughout the year.

"It's an honor to recognize Keisha for her accomplishments" stated Brian Clary, Sales Director, East Region for Messenger. "Keisha joined the Messenger sales team in 2017 and this award validates her hard work to build

relationships and deliver solutions to funeral professionals in her territory." Addison serves funeral homes in state of Georgia.



The Messenger Sales Team consists of 45 sales consultants in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Industry Updates

Messenger Releases New Solutions Guide

Messenger has announced the release of its new Solutions Guide: Inspire, Engage, Grow. The 48-page guide showcases on-trend products and service solutions to help funeral professionals better serve the changing needs of today's families.

“As with all our products and services, we have invested much care to develop this guide into something more than just a standard product catalog” stated Alicia Norman, Director of Product Services at Messenger. “It’s meant to serve as a look-book of fresh ideas, concepts and inspiration to showcase the very best of what Messenger and our partnering companies have to offer,” Norman continued.

Inside the guide, funeral professionals will be introduced to Messenger’s full suite of personalization solutions: Make It! Personal, Signature Service and Remembering with Love. Other noteworthy items include Messenger’s new Virtual Guest Registry, mailing service to help families stay connected, at-need insurance assignment by Express Funeral Funding, Aftercare Products and so much more.

Heather Garman, VP of Sales and Marketing at Messenger had this to add, “During this unprecedented year, we have seen first-hand how fast funeral service is changing and we are eager to share our full breadth of solutions with funeral professionals. Our hope is for funeral professionals to find one thing that inspires them and implement it to make a big impact on their families and communities. Change is imperative for funeral homes to stay relevant as consumer buying patterns and preferences continue to evolve,” Garman continued.

Messenger’s catalog is currently available online at www.messengerstationery.com/catalog. Printed copies will be distributed by Messenger’s team of local Sales Consultants in the coming weeks.



Industry Updates

Bass-Mollett Expands Facilities

Bass-Mollett Publishers, Inc., a leading provider of printed funeral stationery, is pleased to announce it has expanded its facilities.

“February of this year Bass-Mollett acquired an existing 35,000 square foot warehouse facility to consolidate some of our operations. We are pleased to announce that the facility is live as of September 21, 2020. In addition to warehouse and production spaces, we have also added offices for an expanded IT staff as well as a fully video conference enabled meeting center.”, said Tad Flowers, Vice President of Operation of Bass-Mollett.

“Additionally, we are in the process of migrating our Elegante Brass operations located in Brooklyn NY, to the new location in Greenville IL. This move will serve to centralize shipping of product and will provide expedited service to a much larger portion of the geographical customer base. Robert DeLauro of Elegante Brass Co. will continue his role with Bass-Mollett and Elegante.”, added Flowers.

“All of this was executed in a rather difficult year as we all know. However we viewed the benefit to our funeral directors and the families they serve to be well worth the investment.”



Stay up-to-date on industry news, continuing education events and what's happening with the VFDA by following us online at www.vfda.net and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/virginiafuneraldirectorsassociation

Winter Conference

January 22, 2021

Richmond Marriott Short Pump

4240 Dominion Boulevard, Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

- 7:30 a.m. **Registration**
- 8:00-9:00 a.m. **Breakfast with Virginia Funeral Service Suppliers**
Virginia Funeral Service Suppliers this is your opportunity to meet and have breakfast with funeral service professionals who attend this year's winter conference. Registered suppliers will be provided a 6 ft table to display handouts (these table will be around the perimeter of the room). We encourage you to provide a giveaway prize (electronics, gift baskets, gift cards, etc.). You will have an opportunity to draw for your giveaway during the conference.
Tables will be removed and the room closed at 9:30 a.m.
Please limit your representatives to no more than 2 people.
- 9:00-10:00 a.m. **State of the US in 2021, Dr. Bob Holsworth (1.0)**
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. **Virginia Laws & Regulations Update, Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Corie Tillman Wolfe, Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers (1.0)**
- 11:00 a.m.-Noon **Creating Conscious Leaders and Accountable Teams, Jeff Nischwitz, The Nischwitz Group (1.0)**
- Noon-1:00 p.m. **Lunch, Sponsored by Federated Insurance**
- 1:00-2:00 p.m. **Townhall Meeting (1.0)**
Dr. William Gormley, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Examiner
Rick Sikon, Virginia State Anatomical Group
Janet Rainey, State Registrar, Virginia Department of Health, Office of Vital Records
- 2:00-4:00 p.m. **Board of Directors Meeting, Virginia Funeral Directors Association Board**

Preneed Course Online is Free to Attendees



Winter Conference

Dr. Bob Holsworth

Dr. Bob Holsworth is one of the leading political analysts in Virginia. His comments on Virginia and national politics have appeared in local and national newspapers as well and he has made appearances on major American television networks and on the BBC. The author of five books and numerous articles on public policy and American politics, he was the Founding Director of both the Center for Public Policy and the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at VCU.

Corie E. Tillman Wolf

Corie E. Tillman Wolf, J.D., has served as the Executive Director of the Virginia Boards of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Long-Term Care Administrators, and Physical Therapy since August 2016. Prior to this role, Corie worked for more than 8 years as an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Attorney General. In the Health Professions Unit, she prosecuted administrative disciplinary and licensing cases and appeared regularly before the boards within the Department of Health Professions. As the Statewide Facilitator for Victims of Domestic Violence, she collaborated with stakeholders from numerous state and local agencies and organizations on ways to improve the response to and prevention of domestic and sexual violence. Before her tenure as an Assistant Attorney General, Corie worked in private practice as a family law attorney, clerked for a local Circuit Court judge, and served as a Special Assistant to the Secretary of Public Safety in the Office of the Governor. Corie received her undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and her Juris Doctorate from George Mason University School of Law.

Jeff Nischwitz

Jeff Nischwitz is an experienced coach, speaker, leader, and trainer that helps companies propel their businesses and thrive. He uses the power of stories and the importance of relationships in business to engage audiences and train them in strategies to build beneficial and genuine relationships. His programs offer guidance in creating conscious leaders and accountable teams; creating transformational change for businesses, employers and employees alike. He is also the author of 4 inspiring books, including most recently, *Just One Step: Walking Backwards to the Present on the Camino Trail* (Eagle Heart Press 2020). Based upon Jeff's walking journey on the Camino de Santiago in Spain, *Just One Step* shares the life and leadership lessons Jeff experienced and learned that you can use to embrace and live your unstoppable you.

Dr. William T. Gormley

Dr. William T. Gormley, Chief Medical Examiner, has worked for the VDH as an Assistant Chief Medical Examiner since 2000 and has had numerous leadership roles within the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Dr. Gormley came to the VDH after a career in the Air Force where he served as a flight surgeon and forensic pathologist. In that capacity, he participated in and supervised the medical investigation of many aircraft mishaps and a few mass fatality incidents. As the Assistant Armed Forces Medical Examiner, Dr. Gormley supervised the world-wide military system for medicolegal death investigations.

Janet Rainey

Janet Rainey, is the Director and State Registrar for the Division of Vital Records at the Virginia Department of Health. She is a graduate of Smithdeal-Massey Business College. Ms. Rainey has over 40 years of experience in the administration of the system of vital records. As custodian she is responsible for all operational, technical and administrative duties associated with the Division of Vital Records.

Ms. Rainey is a member of the National Association for Public Health Statistics Information Systems (NAPHSIS), State Child Fatality Review Team and the Advisory Committee National Violent Death Reporting System.

Winter Conference

Rick Sikon

Rick Sikon is the Operational Director of the Virginia State Anatomical Program (VSAP) at the Virginia Department of Health. VSAP provides Virginians with an opportunity to choose whole body donation for study and research in medical science in a dignified, respectful and professional manner. Through these generous gifts, VSAP helps educate health professionals and facilitates medical research at the State's medical schools, colleges, universities, and research facilities.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions meeting rooms will be set-up to comply with social distancing rules, masks should be worn when moving around the meeting rooms and hand sanitizer will be provided.

VFDA Members \$85

Non-Members \$170

Intern/Students FREE – MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE

Suppliers \$40 BREAKFAST (ATTEND LUNCH ADDITIONAL \$25)

ATTENDEE/VENDOR REGISTRATION FORM

Name (s): _____

Funeral Home/Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Food Allergies: _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Check Enclosed (Payable to VFDA) VISA MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____ Sec. code _____ Name on Card _____

Signature _____

Questions? Contact Lacy Whittaker, VFDA Executive Director at lwhittaker@vfda.net

Please return this form to the Virginia Funeral Directors Association at:

P.O. Box 395, Hanover, VA 23069

Phone: (804) 264-0505 Fax: (804) 264-3260

E-mail: info@vfda.net

Register ONLINE at <https://www.vfda.net/category/continuing-education/>

Discover Our Districts Across the Commonwealth

Blue Ridge District Funeral Directors Association

President

Michael Rorrer

McCoy Funeral Home

mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net

Vice President

Jonathan Stilwell

John M. Oakey & Son, Inc.

jonathan@johnmoakey.com

Secretary-Treasurer

Jeff Wolfe

John M. Oakey & Son Inc.

jeff@johnmoakey.com

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday in January, March, May, July, and September. Installations in July.



Blacksburg

Central District Funeral Directors Association

President

Kaylinn Bezenar

Morrissett Funeral & Cremation Service

kaylinn@morrissett.com

Vice President

Margaret Edie

Morrissett Funeral & Cremation Service

margaret@morrissett.com

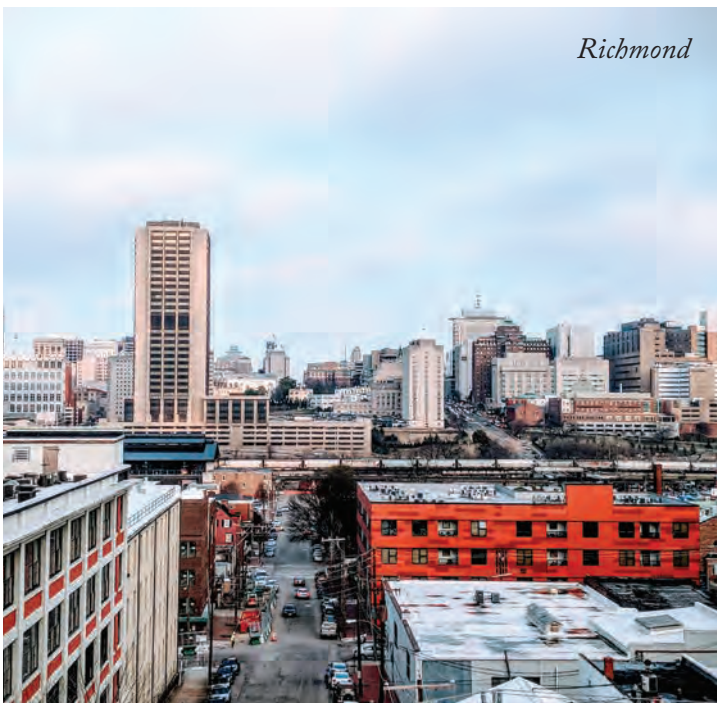
Secretary-Treasurer

Daniel Woodfin

Bliley's Funeral Home

dwoodfin@blileys.com

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Installations in November.



Richmond

Discover Our Districts Across the Commonwealth

Leesylvania State Park



Northern District Funeral Directors Association

President

Benjamin Hinkle

Mountcastle-Turch Funeral Home
ben.hinkle@mountcastleturch.com

Vice President

Tyra Baker Thompson

Chinn and Baker Funeral Home
tyrabt@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Cachet Hammond

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday in March, June, and September. Installations in June.

Shenandoah District Funeral Directors Association

President

Neal Wong

Johnson Funeral Service
nwong@johnsonfs.com

Vice President

Jay McIntyre

Reynolds Hamrick Funeral Homes & Crematory
jrmcintyre685@gmail.com

Secretary

Charlie Rimel

Henry Funeral Home
charlierimel89@gmail.com

Treasurer

Daniel Chapman

Johnson Funeral Service
dchapmanp@gmail.com

Meetings are held on the third Thursday in January, March, May, September, and November. Installations in May.

Bridgewater



Discover Our Districts Across the Commonwealth

Southside District Funeral Directors Association

President

Paul Spiggle

Robinson Funeral Home
spigglefam@aol.com

Vice President

Butch Gatewood

Norris Funeral Services
butch.1947@hotmail.com

Secretary-Treasurer

Les Powell III

Powell Funeral Home, Inc.
lespowell111@gmail.com

Meetings are held quarterly and determined by the district. Installations are also determined by the district.



Southwest District Funeral Directors Association

President

Tyler Bailey

Frost Funeral Home
tylersbaileyfh@gmail.com

Vice President

John Britton

Mullins-Sturgill Funeral Home
monumentsservices@yahoo.com

Secretary

Marty Hagy

Hagy & Fawbush Funeral Home
info@hagyfawbush.com

Meetings are held on the third Thursday in March, June, September, and December. Installations in June.



Discover Our Districts Across the Commonwealth

Tidewater District Funeral Directors Association

President

Eric Wray
E. Vaughn Wray
evaughnwray@gmail.com

1st Vice President

Stephanie Smith
sgs.rhsfh@gmail.com

2nd Vice President

PG Thomasson
pthomasson858@gmail.com

Secretary

Jamie Karpa
R. Hayden Smith Funeral Home
Jamiekarpa@gmail.com

Treasurer

Bryan Graves
HD Oliver
hdofh@aol.com

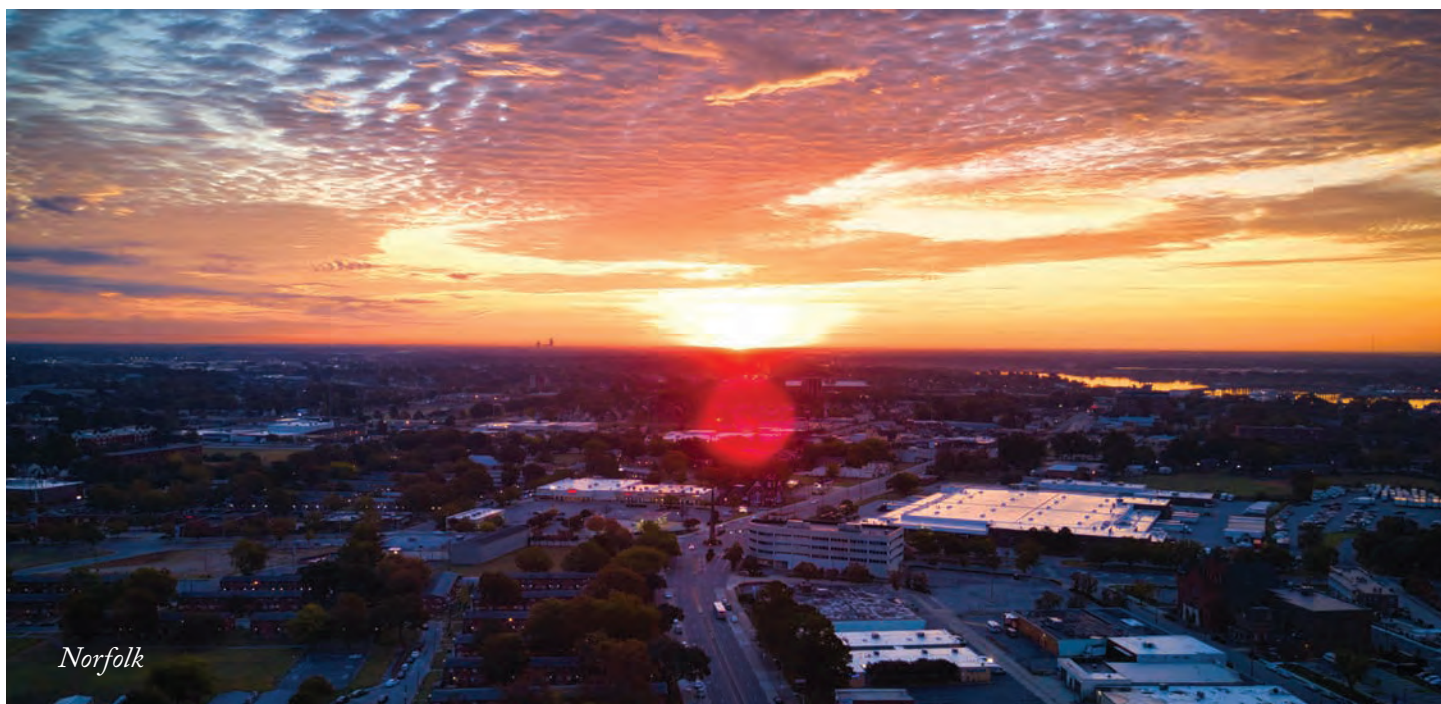
1st Year Director

Renee Battle
TE Cooke Overton Funeral Home
tecofh@aol.com

2nd Year Director

Danny Tstouris
Peninsula Funeral Home
danny@peninsulafuneralhome.com

Meetings are held on the third Monday in January, February, March, May, September, and October. Installations in April.



2020-2023 Calendar of Events

December 2, 2020	Virtual CEU Alkaline Hydrolysis
December 3, 2020	Virtual CEU Disaster Planning
January 21, 2021	4:00 p.m. District Officers Meeting, Zoom Conference Meeting 5:30 p.m. Virginia Funeral Sales Association Membership Meeting, Richmond Marriott Short Pump, Glen Allen, VA
January 22, 2021	Winter Conference, Richmond Marriott Short Pump, Glen Allen, VA
January 23, 2021	Train the Trainer, Richmond Marriott Short Pump, Glen Allen, VA
May 13, 2021	4:00 p.m. District Officers Meeting, Zoom Conference Meeting
June 13-16, 2021	133rd Annual VFDA Convention, Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront The Cavalier, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, 4200 & 4201 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451
June 12-15, 2022	134th Annual VFDA Convention, Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront The Cavalier, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, 4200 & 4201 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451
June 11-14, 2023 <i>(Dates subject to change)</i>	135th Annual VFDA Convention, Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront The Cavalier, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, 4200 & 4201 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Save the Date!
133rd Annual VFDA Convention
June 13-16, 2021



In Remembrance

Southside Virginia Funeral Directors Association

July 29, 2020

Beverly Jean Brown Whitten

August 29, 2020

Franklin Hardwell "Frank" Whitten

Virginia Funeral Sales Association

August 5, 2020

Patricia Russell Spencer

October 23, 2020

Frances Rosenberger

Tidewater Funeral Directors Association

August 13, 2020

Albert Lee Foster

October 7, 2020

Jake Robert Williamson

Friend of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association

September 8, 2020

Everette Thomas "Tom" Huddleston

Shenandoah Valley Funeral Directors Association

October 27, 2020

Jack Deyerele Lohr

Blue Ridge Funeral Directors Association

October 30, 2020

Timmy Asbury McFarland

Central Virginia Funeral Directors Association

October 30, 2020

N. Elleen Lomax Harper

Southwest Virginia Funeral Directors Association

November 9, 2020

Jess Johnson

*Save the Date
Service of Remembrance
June 14, 2021*



Meet the VFDA Team



Lacy Whittaker, Executive Director

Lacy Whittaker is the Executive Director of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association. She has served in this position since 2007. She is an experienced association executive and marketing operations leader. She is a forward-thinking leader with a record of success in developing and executing strategic plans to drive organization goals while cultivating an environment of excellence. She is performance-driven while focusing on maximizing program effectiveness to increase engagement of members. Her entrepreneurial spirit drives growth by means of strategic marketing and improvement through change management.

Mrs. Whittaker has a long history of being a proactive leader and communicator. She is an influential leader who provides vision and leadership to organizations. She specializes in building teams, attracting strong talent, and providing tools and support to deliver “best in class” performance. In addition to being Chair of the Board of Directors for Partners Financial Federal Credit Union, she is active in the Council of Funeral Association Executives and is founder of The Carmel School Lower School Parents Association. Lacy graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a B.S. in business administration.



Angie Bezik, Lobbyist

Angie Bezik originally founded Principle Advantage Government Relations Group, LLC, a Hampton Roads-based public relations and government relations firm, in 2009. Angie develops and implements successful strategies for legislation, budget items and project coordination with an array of clients at the state and local level, including clients within the alternative/renewable energy, health, technology, and transportation sectors, and local government and quasi-governmental authorities. Additionally, she works with businesses and organizations to develop strategic plans to enhance their profiles, missions and branding by making introductions to appropriate businesses, government officials and staff, community leaders and organizations.

Angie started her political and public relations career as the Legislative Director for a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. After seven years, she was recruited by a prominent Richmond-based lobbying firm to run its Hampton Roads office.

Through her career, Angie has established solid relationships with local, state, and federal representatives, departments and agencies, and business leaders. She currently serves on the Virginia Beach Board of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce; the Hampton Roads Association of Commercial Builders (HRACRE) Legislative Committee; and the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) of the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO); and the Roanoke River Basin Association (RRBA) Board of Directors. In 2013, she was chosen to serve on Governor Terence R. McAuliffe’s Technology Transition Team and currently serves as Chairman of the Public Awareness Committee of Champions for Children Hampton Roads, a 501(c) 3 whose mission is to eradicate child abuse and neglect in the Hampton Roads region.

Meet the VFDA Team

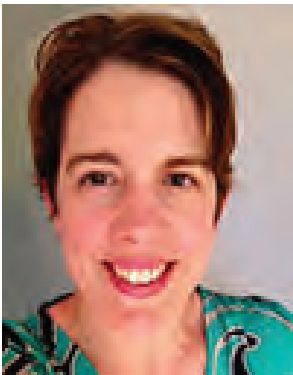


Teresa Craig, Field Recruiter

Teresa Craig brings an extensive background in non-profit organizations to the VFDA management team. She oversees the VFDA field activities, coordinating recruitment and networking events as well as creating and managing the VFDA Connections Program throughout the state.

She previously worked for Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA) as Membership Development Director for 12 years and Return to Nature, Inc., a conservation education program in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where she was the Director of Administration for 7 years. In both positions she had the opportunity to work with many other state and national membership groups.

Serving as the Virginia State President of the Virginia General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) for the 2012-2014 term, Teresa also held many local and state leadership positions in that organization, such as District Junior Director, District President, local Club President, many District and State Chairmanships. Continuing her service in this organization she now serves on South Eastern Region (SER) that encompasses six states as the SER Presidents Special Project Chairman and serves as GFWC Virginia Meetings Chairman. She has been a member of the GFWC Bedford Woman's Club for 32 years. Her career in non-profit and volunteer organizations shows her understanding and dedication to this business sector.



Karen Dec, Webmaster

Karen Dec has been making websites for over 15 years, and working on the VFDA website since 2013. She specializes in WordPress website hosting, maintenance, support, and consulting. Karen holds a degree in psychology from Michigan State University, two degrees from Indiana University in higher education and counseling, as well as advanced certificates from Washtenaw Community College in both web coding and website graphic design. Karen loves the technical side of web design and development, but she also loves working with people and being a valued partner in helping her clients reach their goals.



Leah Jarvis, Writer

Leah Jarvis is a writer and marketer who shares stories that honor people and brands that seek to make a difference in the lives of others. She is the daughter of a first-generation funeral director who raised her to believe in the healing power of both grief and celebration.

She holds a Master of Business Administration as well as a Bachelor of Business Administration from Campbell University.

Advertise With Us

The VFDA is the leading state trade association for the funeral profession. Advertise today in our online membership directory, website: www.vfda.net, and in our Bulletin magazine!

The Bulletin is one of our most popular member benefits, reaching over 400 member firms. Don't miss out on these opportunities to reach Virginia's funeral professionals with your product and service messages! All funeral homes as well as suppliers can advertise with us.

Advertising Rates

We offer the following advertising opportunities in our publications and online. Listed rates are valid as of August 2020.

The Bulletin Magazine

- Full Page Ad - \$1,000
- Half Page Ad - \$900
- Quarter Page Ad - \$650

Membership Directory (Includes Online)

- Full Page Ad - \$1,000
- Half Page Ad - \$900
- Quarter Page Ad - \$650

Directory + Bulletin (All 4 Issues)

- Full Page Ad - \$1,500
- Half Page Ad - \$1,350
- Quarter Page Ad - \$975

Convention Brochure

- Full Page Ad - \$300
- Half Page Ad - \$200
- Quarter Page Ad - \$125
- Business Card As - \$85

Member-Exclusive Emails

- Four Email Package - \$900
- One Email - \$250

Website Ads

- Contact the VFDA Office for website advertising only.

Publication Deadlines

Publication

- VFDA Membership Directory
- The Bulletin JAN | FEB | MAR
- The Bulletin APR | MAY | JUN
- The Bulletin JULY | AUG | SEPT
- The Bulletin OCT | NOV | DEC
- Email Advertisements

Ads Due

- January 4, 2021
- January 18, 2021
- April 19, 2021
- July 12, 2021
- October 11, 2021
- The 8th of the previous month

Art File Formats

- Please send your ad as an email attachment in one of the following high resolution formats: PDF or JPG (300 dpi at print size) to info@vfda.net.
- Microsoft Word format is not preferred.

Instructions

Complete the form on the next page with payment information and send to:

Virginia Funeral Directors Association
P.O. Box 395
Hanover, VA 2306



New Advertising Opportunity Available

From the Desk of the Executive Director:

Thank you for the hard work and dedication you provide to make the funeral profession in Virginia the best it can be. Without you, our member firms would not be able to provide the care and comfort needed during times of loss.

I'm writing to you today to let you know of a new way you can advertise to those member firms. Beginning November 1, you can advertise your company directly in our VFDA emails!

Our emails go out twice a month and include information about what's happening within our association, what's new in the profession in general, and member firm updates.

A few key benefits of our new email advertisements:

- You can offer time-sensitive promotions and discounts that require quick action
- You can promote seasonal products and content
- You can encourage online ordering if applicable to your business
- You can increase brand awareness
- Your details land directly in the inbox of your target audience

Email advertisements begin at \$250 per ad and you may bundle four of them to save \$100! Enclosed, you will find details about all of our advertising options and instructions on how to secure your next advertisement.

Thank you again for partnering with the funeral professionals in our state. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

ADVERTISER PAYMENT FORM

Organization Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Ad Type: _____

Check Enclosed (payable to VFDA, VFDA Federal Tax ID #54-0419116)

VISA MasterCard AMEX Discover Expires: _____ Security Code: _____

Card #: _____ Zip Code: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Protecting Your Business: *You Hold the Keys*

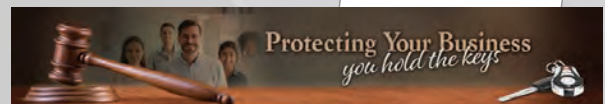
Confidently place the **right** people behind the wheel of your company vehicles with the help of our driver screening tools.



Scan to learn more about driver screening and monitoring tools, a sample driving policy, and the potential for costly crash-related litigation.



Sample Driving Policy



Commercial Insurance Property & Casualty | Life & Disability Income | Workers Compensation | Business Succession and Estate Planning | Bonding
Federated Mutual Insurance Company and its subsidiaries* | federatedinsurance.com | Ward's 50® Top Performer | A.M. Best® A+ (Superior) Rating