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# 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](mailto:info@vfda.net) or (804) 264-0505.

# A Message From The President

Greetings,

It is hard to imagine that a year ago, we were on the cusp of events that would pause, and ultimately change, everyday life as we knew it. As funeral professionals, we have faced countless challenges as we worked overtime to meet the needs of the families in our communities and the loved ones they trusted to our care.

As I said in a previous note to you, flexibility is the key to our new normal; however, that flexibility must be accompanied by resilience.

**Our VFDA members are resilient.**

I have heard dozens of stories of innovation and ingenuity as you continued to provide the services you trained for without sacrificing the quality and professionalism our communities expect, no matter what situation presented itself.

I have witnessed the impact we can have when we come together to advocate for policies and protocols that protect our profession and those we serve.

I have observed members helping each other through shared resources, volunteered time, and advocating for each other whenever possible. I have also watched with awe as members put their calling ahead of pride to ask for help when they need it.

While I share my experiences over the past 12 months with you, I am not surprised by any of them. You are committed to the important work you have been called to do, and I am honored to represent you as President of the VFDA.

I challenge you to take a moment to conduct your own inventory of what you experienced this past year, both the struggles and your successes. And I welcome you to share how the VFDA played a role in them if you'd like either online or, perhaps, in person at the 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual Reunion in Virginia Beach this June.

There may still be tough days ahead of us with challenges of their own, but I am confident that we will be able to face them stronger and more united than ever before.

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 hard to believe we're already a few months into 2021! While things are hardly back to "business as usual" in light of the pandemic, I hope the year is off to a good start for you.

Here at the VFDA, we have many exciting initiatives and events in development for our members this year, including the launch of our new logo! The updated look is a representation of the strength and innovation of our association. We greatly appreciated your feedback throughout this process and your participation in voting. If you missed the unveiling online, you can see it on the cover of this edition of our Bulletin.

Our renewed commitment to innovation and resiliency in funeral service is inspired by your dedication to the communities of Virginia and by the forward-thinking, servant leadership of outgoing VFDA President Marty White.

Marty's tenure as President has been anything but ordinary. From being sworn in and accepting his duties via Zoom meeting to making difficult, but necessary decisions about gathering for our signature association events, he has demonstrated tremendous understanding and led with a visionary mindset to solve problems and serve others.

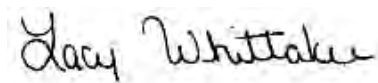
It is an honor to work alongside him as we have advocated for the safety and livelihoods of funeral professionals at a state-level throughout the pandemic. And I am personally inspired by his kind acknowledgment of both the significant challenges our members face and of their hard work despite ever-changing rules and restrictions.

We will recognize Marty's accomplishments and service at the 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual VFDA Reunion on June 13-15 in Virginia Beach, along with a full schedule of continuing education opportunities, networking events, vendor mixers, local expeditions, and a celebration to install Jay McIntyre as our next President.

You can find all the details about the Reunion, register to attend, and secure your room reservations at the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel on our website.

As always, we are grateful that you are a member of the VFDA and we look forward to the great work we will accomplish together in the coming year.

Hope to see you at the Reunion,



Lacy Whittaker  
Executive Director  
Virginia Funeral Directors Association



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## Winter Conference Wrap-Up

Thank you to all who participated and supported the Virginia Funeral Directors Association's Winter Conference this year. Although the conference was moved to a virtual event, we were able to still have our wonderful presentations and presenters, allowing attendees to have a quality program while receiving their continuing education credits.

A special thank you to our speakers, Dr. Bob Holsworth, Corie Tillman Wolfe, Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, Jeff Nischwitz, The Nischwitz Group, 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.

Thank you sponsor to our sponsor Federated Insurance.

Thank you to our suppliers for supporting the event, Warfield-Rohr Casket Company, Inc., Messenger, Treasured Memories, ECE Menswear, Lakeland Preneed Planning, Bass-Mollett Publishers.

Join us for the 2022 Winter Conference on January 23-24, 2022 at the Marriott Richmond Short Pump.



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## Member Updates

Congratulations are in order for the following members on completing their Certified Aftercare Specialist training held by the International Grief Institute:

- Jonathan Stillwell, John M. Oakey & Son Funeral Home & Crematory
- Kimberly Harris, Honaker Funeral Home (*not pictured*)
- Lacy Whittaker, VFDA Executive Director

The Certified Aftercare Specialist program is an accredited training developed exclusively for funeral professionals and affiliated with the National Funeral Directors Association. It equips funeral professionals with the language, tools and practical methods to connect with their clients via a powerful approach.



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## From The Advocacy Team

February 17 marked the start of the 2021 Special Session in accordance with Governor Northam’s official proclamation issued on February 4. HJ5001 was introduced by House Majority Leader Herring which establishes the schedule and conduct of business for the Special Session. As the Governor stated when issuing the Special Session proclamation that the special session will align the legislative calendar with the customary 46-day Regular Session length for odd-numbered years, HJ5001 sets the following rules which are consistent with the rules at cross-over during a regular session. Except with the unanimous consent of the house in which the legislation is offered no bill, joint resolution, or resolution shall be offered or considered in either house during the Special Session other than:

- Bills or joint resolutions continued from the 2021 Regular Session pursuant to Section 7 of Article IV of the Constitution of Virginia and House Joint Resolution No. 575 providing for legislative continuity
- The Budget Bill
- Single-house commending or memorial resolutions;
- Bills, joint resolutions, or resolutions affecting the rules of procedure or schedule of business of the General Assembly, either of its houses, or any of its committees
- Joint resolutions or resolutions relating to appointments subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly or either house
- Bills, joint resolutions, or resolutions relating to the election of judges and other officials subject to the election of the General Assembly; or
- Bills or joint resolutions requested in writing by the Governor

In accordance with HJ5001, special session is scheduled to end no later than March 1, 2021.

Below is a statistical summary update of the status of the 828 carried-over bills and resolutions from the regular session and 25 new resolutions introduced during the special session.

Type	Introduced	Passed House	Passed Senate	Passed	Cont'd from last session	Failed	Pending	Approved	Vetoed
H.B.	378	376	197	155	376	28	195	0	0
H.J.R.	173	172	155	154	171	0	19	0	0
H.R.	33	13	0	13	0	0	20	0	0
S.B.	265	116	265	85	265	4	176	0	0
S.J.R.	17	3	17	2	16	3	12	0	0
S.R.	23	0	19	19	0	0	4	0	0
Totals	889	680	653	428	828	35	426	0	0

### Committee and Floor Schedules

The House is using an adjusted block scheduling system with two-hour blocks of committees and/or subcommittees occurring at 7:00 am, and 9:00 am, and a third afternoon block that commences after the daily floor session. The Senate’s committee schedule is in-line with a traditional regular session schedule. Both houses are returning to a noon Floor Session start time. The full daily schedule of all House and Senate sub-committees, full committees, and bills that on each day’s floor session calendar is can be found on the [2021 Meeting Schedule](#). The meeting and floor schedules are updated daily.

The Special Session commenced Wednesday, February 10 with the House holding several committee meetings and a floor session on Monday, February 8th to keep bills moving through the process in order to carry those voted favorably on forward to the Special Session. A joint session of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees was held Tuesday, February 9 for the purpose of interviewing judicial candidates which are now also livestreamed on the General Assembly’s website.



Floor sessions held on Wednesday and Thursday were shorter in duration than the previous week which is typical of the days immediately following the half-way/crossover with both House and Senate bills that were carried over to Special Session still in the committee hearing process.

With bills relating to criminal justice reform, education, election administration, energy, insurance, healthcare, marijuana legalization, and worker protections still under consideration the remaining two weeks of Special Session will likely include some lively committee or floor debates.

Below are updates on legislation we have been reporting on during the 2021 General Assembly. They include the bills that VFDA has in its 2021 Legislative Agenda, which are [SB1268](#) and [HB2005](#) – companion bills that would create a defined order for next of kin for a decedent; [SB1424](#) – manager of record; and the VFDA supported Delegate Mugler’s [HB2116](#), priority for personal protective equipment and immunization for funeral service licensees and funeral service establishment employees.

The two initiatives in the VFDA 2021 Legislative Agenda did not pass this year. However, we do want to commend the following members of VFDA for their participation in the legislative process in defense of HB2005 as it came before the Senate General Laws and Technology Committee on Wednesday, February 17th. (The clip can be watched [here](#).)

Those who stepped forward to support the VFDA’s efforts are: David Bashline (Chair-elect to Legislative Committee), Gregg Faulkner (testified in committee), Rob Finch (member of the Legislative Committee), Jay McIntyre (Current Chair of Legislative Committee/testified in committee), Randy Minter (testified in committee), Larry Spiaggi (testified in committee), and Michael Turch (testified in committee) – as well as our Executive Director, Lacy Whittaker, who works tirelessly to support VFDA members and initiatives. We also thank Steve Wooddell for bringing his attorney, John Hale, to the efforts with Delegate Sickles and in committee. Mr. Hale testified in favor of the bill.

This level of participation is exceptional and moved the needle on the number of votes in favor of HB2005 over its companion bill, SB1268. It cannot be stressed enough that the changes in the members of the General Assembly have also changed how outreach and testimony is expected to be received by them. We are hopeful that more members of VFDA will follow these leaders and agree to also participate in the legislative process.

We also want to recognize that Becky Bowers-Lanier supported the next of kin legislation by bringing her clients, Virginia Network of Private Providers, Virginia Association of Community Services Boards, and Virginia Association for Hospices Boards to the table.

## **Budget**

After passing their respective budgets on February 12, (HB1800 - 68-Y, 30-N and SB1100 31-Y 8-N), the General Assembly received word from the Governor on Monday that the final mid-session revenue review showed continued growth in Virginia’s revenue stream. This positive revenue review increases projected General Fund resources by \$730.2 million for the 2020-2022 biennium giving member of the General Assembly revenue resources as they vote on legislation with a fiscal impact and work to negotiate a final budget in the final days of session.

As each house had previously taken differing approaches to addressing the needs of the Commonwealth’s core service areas, how to allocate these additional General Fund resources will certainly be a big part of the negotiation. As we previously reported, the Senate budget included requiring school systems to conduct in-person learning by July 1st, which is not included in the House budget. The floor amendment introduced on the House floor Friday, February 12th adding the in-person learning to the House budget as well, failed. Both budgets include more funding for education than the Governor’s introduced budget; however, the budgets differ in the amount of funding for teacher raises and funding levels for summer/remediation schooling. The Senate budget includes \$30 million more in funding for home healthcare workers than the House budget.

- [Governor Northam Announces Additional General Fund Resources from Mid-Session Reforecast](#)
- [Economic and Revenue Update Presentation](#) – Secretary of Finance, Aubrey Layne – 2/17

Budget conferees must be appointed by February 19 to negotiate the final budget with a final floor vote expected on February 27 or March 1.

### **Participating in the Legislative Process**

The public and interested groups may participate in session, by speaking at a committee hearing. The agenda for each House and Senate committee hearing includes a link to sign up to speak during committee. The committee clerk will send a link to the email used on the sign-up form thirty minutes before the start of the committee hearing. The sign-up link for each committee hearing is activated once the committee clerk posts the agenda for the hearing and can be viewed on the [LIS Meeting Schedule](#). The House of Delegates also provides an option to submit written comments on a bill that is being heard in committee. These written comments are able to be viewed by all members of the committee and the general public. To look up who represents your legislative district, visit [Who Is My Legislator](#).

### **Media Clips**

- [Free community college plan nears the finish line](#)  
A proposal to make community college free for low- and middle-income Virginians seeking jobs in high-demand fields is nearing the finish line, pending whether budget leaders can work out some... richmond.com
- [Virginia lawmakers advance Consumer Data Protection Act](#)
- [Long deadlocked, Virginia lawmakers reach compromise to seal past criminal convictions](#) - Virginia Mercury  
Democrats in the House and Senate have been at odds for more than a year over dueling proposals to allow people convicted of certain crimes to have their criminal records sealed. On Wednesday, lawm... www.virginiamercury.com
- [Business groups ask Va. lawmakers for higher PPP tax deductions](#) |  
Virginia BusinessVirginia's two legislative bodies have not yet agreed on an amount that Virginia businesses can deduct from federal Paycheck Protection Program loans they received last year, and how much of the lo... www.virginiabusiness.com
- [Recovery? Va. economy, revenues buoyed by consumer demand, big business](#)  
Virginia collected slightly more tax revenue in the past 11 months than it did in either of the previous two years, despite a public health emergency that has devastated parts ... richmond.com
- [Northam signs bill to grow vaccinator pool, announces launch of expanded call center for vaccine registration](#)  
In an effort to speed up vaccinations and ensure equitable distribution, Virginia officials this week expanded the number of people eligible to administer the COVID-19 vaccine and issued a requirement... richmond.com
- [Hiccups as Virginia lawmakers adapt to legislating by Zoom](#)  
RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic is again upending the daily routines of the tradition-bound Virginia General Assembly. The body that traces its lineage back more than four... apnews.com
- [Tenant, homeowner protections heading to Northam's desk after General Assembly passage](#)  
A bill that would expand Virginia renters' right to settle outstanding balances and keep their housing and another measure that would expand foreclosure protections are headed to Gov. Ralph Northam's ...richmond.com
- [How will Opioid Settlement Dollars Be Used](#)
- [Virginia House rejects Senate substitute to bill giving localities option for 'outdoor refreshment areas'](#)  
While legislation giving localities the option to set up three outdoor refreshment areas where ... WRIC



## Legislative Tracking Update

### [VA - HB2005](#)

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral.

Primary Sponsor: [Delegate Mark D. Sickles](#) (D)

#### Committees:

[Health, Welfare and Institutions \(House\)](#)

[General Laws and Technology \(Senate\)](#)

#### Summary:

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral and disposition of remains. Establishes an order of priority for persons who have the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains and establishes processes by which such persons may assert or forfeit their right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains. The bill also provides protections for any funeral service establishment, funeral service establishment manager of record, funeral service licensee, funeral director, embalmer, registered crematory, registered crematory owner, registered crematory manager of record, or certified crematory operator that relies upon a written statement made by a person attesting to his right to make arrangements or otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and sets out rights of funeral service establishments when there is a dispute regarding the arrangements of a decedent's funeral or his remains or the identity of any persons who have the right to make arrangements for the decedent. The bill also adds provisions related to designation of a person to make arrangements for a decedent's funeral or disposition of a decedent's remains, clarification of decision-making authority when next of kin disagrees, and procedures in the absence of next of kin for cemeteries or cemetery companies.

#### Amendments:

[House subcommittee amendments and substitutes offered](#)

[House subcommittee amendments and substitutes adopted](#)

[House committee, floor amendments and substitutes offered](#)

#### Actions:

February 17, 2021: Failed to report (defeated) in General Laws and Technology (5-Y 9-N 1-A).

February 5, 2021: Continued to 2021 Sp. Sess. 1 in General Laws and Technology (14-Y 0-N).

February 4, 2021: Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology. Constitutional reading dispensed.

February 3, 2021: VOTE: Passage (91-Y 8-N). Read third time and passed House (91-Y 8-N).

February 2, 2021: Engrossed by House - committee substitute HB2005H1. Committee substitute agreed to 21103975D-H1. Read second time.

February 1, 2021: Read first time.

January 28, 2021: Committee substitute printed 21103975D-H1. Reported from Health, Welfare and Institutions with substitute (18-Y 3-N). Subcommittee recommends reporting with substitute (5-Y 1-N).

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## [VA - SB1268](#)

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral.

*Primary Sponsor:* [Senator R. Creigh Deeds \(D\)](#)

### **Committee:**

[General Laws and Technology \(Senate\)](#)

### **Summary:**

Disposition of the remains of a decedent; persons to make arrangements for funeral and disposition of remains. Establishes an order of priority for persons who have the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, provided that any such person is 18 years of age or older and of sound mind. The bill sets out, among other things, the circumstances under which such persons forfeit the right to make arrangements and otherwise be responsible for a person's funeral and the disposition of his remains and sets out assertions that a person seeking to exercise the right to make such arrangements must attest to in a signed written statement to be delivered to the funeral service establishment. Any funeral service establishment, funeral service establishment manager of record, funeral service licensee, funeral director, embalmer, registered crematory, registered crematory owner, registered crematory manager of record, or certified crematory operator that relies upon such a written statement shall be immune from civil or criminal liability for any act, decision, or omission in connection with following such person's direction related to the decedent's funeral and the disposition of his remains, unless such act, decision, or omission resulted from willful neglect or bad faith. The bill sets out rights of funeral service establishments when there is a dispute regarding the arrangements of a decedent's funeral or his remains or the identity of any persons who have the right to make arrangements for the decedent. The bill specifies that the provisions do not apply to cemeteries or cemetery companies.

### **Amendments:**

[Senate committee, floor amendments and substitutes offered](#)

### **Actions:**

February 2, 2021: Passed by indefinitely in General Laws and Technology (11-Y 3-N).

## [VA - SB1424](#)

Funeral service establishments; defines "manager of record."

*Primary Sponsor:* [Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr. \(R\)](#)

### **Committee:**

[General Laws and Technology \(Senate\)](#)

### **Summary:**

Funeral service establishments; manager of record. Defines "manager of record" as a person who manages and handles all operations of a licensed funeral service establishment and sets out the conditions under which a funeral service licensee or a funeral director may serve as a manager of record. The bill requires that funeral service establishments employ a full-time manager of record.

### **Amendments:**

[Senate committee, floor amendments and substitutes offered](#)

### **Actions:**

January 27, 2021: Passed by indefinitely in General Laws and Technology (12-Y 3-N).



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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 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.

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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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## Board Member Spotlight | Krystina Diman, CFSP, CPC, CCO, Certified Celebrant



Krystina Diman was a high school student when our country experienced the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. She, like many other patriotic Americans, enlisted in the United States Army with the intention of serving as a military police officer. Upon learning there were no vacancies in that position she was forced to select another duty assignment.

The Army recruiter educated her about all possible specialized training assignments and Krystina ultimately selected mortuary affairs, under the impression that it would be like the CSI-themed shows on television, only to learn through first-hand experience that it was not like that at all. Instead, her time as a mortuary affairs specialist changed her life forever.

During her tour in Mosul, Iraq, Diman's unit was involved in a mass casualty event where she was assigned the lead to process the personal effects of soldiers killed in action. In the military, mortuary affairs specialists care for the deceased in addition to inventorying their belongings to ensure proper and dignified return of the possessions to the soldiers' families.

While processing one particular soldier's personal effects, she discovered the standard letter most military members carry with them to return to their families if they do not survive in addition to other personal items of obvious sentimental significance to that hero's family. That interaction coupled with the loss of her baby sister when she was seven years old, drove her to pursue the funeral service profession.

"That was the moment I knew I wanted to be a funeral professional stateside," Diman said. "In that moment and for weeks after, I could not stop thinking about his family and wondering if they had been informed. Who would be there to comfort them? What was that experience like outside of military protocol? That's when I understood my calling to support grieving families."

In order to continue serving those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country and empowered by the first-hand experience of repressed grief during the loss of her sister and partially due to having been prevented from attending the funeral services, Diman enrolled in the funeral service program at John Tyler Community College.

"My time in the military, in conjunction with the loss of my sister, propelled me to go to college and do this stateside so I could be that person for families, that guiding light in a time where there seems to be no clarity whatsoever," she said. "I believe I was put in those situations so I could realize my calling."

Diman soon discovered her natural talent for embalming and restorative art which allowed her to experience the personal satisfaction of allowing the bereaved family to experience closure by viewing their loved one for a final time. Now, Diman serves as manager of Woody Funeral Home and possesses over 15 years of experience in the funeral service profession. She spends her days caring for families in central Virginia and takes great pride in helping families, with a focus on personalizing care for veterans and cases involving the loss of a child and childhood grief.

"I am very humbled and forever grateful for the people in my life who have supported, encouraged and mentored me to discover my full potential as a funeral service professional," Diman said. Krystina's association involvement began with joining and serving her local district. She has since taken on more responsibility as a member of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association.

"Once I was stable in my career, I knew I had to get involved," she said. "I care about the profession as a whole. It's not just that I'm a funeral director. The compassion for grieving families comes organic to me. I am passionate about moving the profession forward, helping my fellow funeral directors, and doing what I can as a willing and able professional to educate and shine a positive light on our beloved vocation."

She currently serves as the representative for the Central District and on the leadership advisory committee as well as the membership services and outreach committee chair. Previously, she has served as the Association's chaplain.

"The landscape of funeral service is ever-changing and evolving and what an exciting time to be a part of something great! We welcome and encourage involvement at the VFDA," she said. "It's the people who are willing to be involved who make a change in the world."



## Meet Your VFDA Team: Teresa Craig, Field Recruiter

Teresa Craig has never met a stranger, which works to her advantage in her role as field recruiter for the Virginia Funeral Director's Association. But what exactly does a field recruiter do?

Her main responsibility is to increase membership in the Association. She does this through the coordination of recruitment and networking events as well as creating and managing the VFDA Connections Program throughout the state. She's also in charge of finding out why non-members haven't joined and why some members choose to leave.

With over 30 years of experience in government, non-profit, and volunteer organizations, Craig understands the power people have when they work together to accomplish a common goal. And she aims to help others understand that even if they are not a member of an organization in their field, they are still likely benefiting from the work it does.

"When the VFDA goes to lobby an issue, we're first asked how many members we have," she said. "Then, we're asked why non-members haven't joined our cause if it's so important. That's why being a member is critical to the advancement of the profession."

Members of the VFDA benefit from communicated industry updates, continuing education programs, leadership and mentorship opportunities as well as regional and state-wide events like the upcoming 133rd Annual Reunion in Virginia Beach.

But more than personal gain, VFDA members have the opportunity to make significant change and voice their opinions and concerns at both state and national levels when it comes to policy and legislation that affect the industry.

"I've always believed that if you want to get something done, you need to be part of the solution," Craig said. "Being part of the solution means joining something bigger than yourself and speaking up about things that matter to you."

As for her advice for current members looking for ways to help the Association, she says the goal is not to be Virginia's best-kept secret.

"The number one reason why people don't join an organization is that they've never been asked," she said. "It's our job to let them know we need them."



## 2021 Award Nominations

### **Virginia Funeral Director of the Year**

A special award bestowed upon a VFDA member, recognizing his/her professional skills and talents displayed through involvement at the local, state and national level. This award is an honor, above all others, presented to the funeral licensee by his/her peers, citing expert leadership and professional integrity displayed within the funeral service profession. Our nominee should be a funeral licensee who has served within the Virginia Funeral Directors Association, in various capacities. This individual should have displayed a dedicated spirit in the name of funeral service, for the collective good of our VFDA Membership and possess forethought for our future advancement. The nominee should be an association member in good standing and have not received the award in the past 10 years.\*\*

Award recipients and their guests must be registered for the Banquet installation of officers and awards ceremony on June 14, 2021.

### **Golden Licensee**

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association, Inc. will honor those individuals who have contributed fifty, fifty-five, sixty, sixty-five, seventy or more years of service to the funeral service profession. These individuals have actively participated in charting the course for our future, and have contributed greatly to our history and tradition. These individuals are association members in good standing.

### **Intern of the Year**

The “Intern of the Year” award, which is open to all interns working in a VFDA member firm. The member firm must be in good standing. Member firms should nominate those outstanding interns who go above and beyond in their firm and community. All “Intern of the Year” nominees will be invited to the VFDA Annual Banquet on June 14, 2021 at no charge. This is a great opportunity for your firm to recognize the rising stars and an opportunity for nominees to attend the 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual VFDA Reunion.

### **Rookie of the Year**

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association (VFDA) is excited to announce a funeral service award sponsored by the VFDA for all association district members. The “Rookie of the Year” award will be open to all district members who have five years or less experience as a licensed funeral director currently in the funeral service profession. Your district is responsible for nominating your district “Rookie of the Year” and submitting that information to the VFDA office by May 14, 2021. All “Rookie of the Year” nominees will be invited to the VFDA Annual Banquet on June 14, 2021, at no charge. This is a great opportunity for your district to recognize the rising stars and an opportunity for nominees to attend the 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual VFDA Reunion.

### **Virginia Funeral Supplier of the Year**

A special award bestowed upon a VFSA member, recognizing his/her professional skills and talents displayed through involvement at the local, state and national level. This award is an honor, above all others, presented to the funeral supplier by his/her peers, citing expert leadership and professional integrity displayed within the funeral service profession. Our nominee should be a funeral supplier who has served within the Virginia Funeral Sales Association, in various capacities. This individual should have displayed a dedicated spirit in the name of funeral service sales, for the collective good of our VFDA and VFSA memberships and possess forethought for our future advancement. The nominee should be an affiliate member in good standing with the VFSA.

### **NOMINATE YOUR PEERS AND COLLEAGUES!**

Please consider nominating your peers for the awards listed in this year’s brochure. Forms for these awards can be found on the VFDA website at. All nominations are due May 14, 2021.

# Past Presidents Council Scholarship



• P.O. Box 395 • Hanover • Virginia • 23069 •  
Phone: (804) 264.0505 • Fax: (804) 264.3260

## 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](mailto: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.

Name (First/Middle/ Last) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Endorsement Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

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## Industry Updates

### Audrey Thacker Retires from Thacker Caskets

Thacker Caskets announces the retirement of the Chief Financial Officer and Vice President, Audrey Thacker. Audrey's career with Thacker Caskets has truly been remarkable, as she began her involvement with the company in 1959 when she and Carl C. Thacker, founder of Old Dominion Casket Company (later renamed Thacker Caskets), got married.



Audrey was no stranger to the industry though, as she met Carl through her work at Casket Shells, Inc. Audrey immediately began working with Carl following their marriage and became an integral part of Thacker Caskets. In 1981, Carl C. Thacker passed away and Audrey suddenly found herself at the helm of Thacker Caskets with her son, Carl "CJ" Thacker, who just graduated high school. There was no doubt that Audrey would want to continue building Thacker Caskets, she said, "It was the only thing I had ever done, and it never really crossed my mind to pursue anything different. We both wanted to carry on Carl's legacy." At the time, Audrey was the only female owner of a casket company.

Being the only female in an industry dominated by men was not an easy feat. However, Audrey did not let that deter her and she was able to prosper with her son by her side. Once called the Matriarch of the Industry by American Funeral Director Magazine, Audrey's impact has been astronomical, and she truly has epitomized the definition of leadership over the years. Today, Thacker Caskets is the third-largest funeral supply company in the country and the largest family-owned funeral supply company.

CJ Thacker, Audrey's son and CEO of Thacker Caskets, is thankful for the opportunity to build a business with his mother, "Growing up, I always knew I wanted to be a part of the family business and we went through some very difficult times together with the loss of my father. To be able to persevere and expand and grow Thacker Caskets with my mother, and then with my children is something I will be forever grateful for. I am very fortunate to have all three of my children working within the business and I know my mom had a big influence on their decision to be a part of the company through watching her hard work, dedication, and love for the business throughout their childhood and into adulthood."

Danielle Thacker, Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing and Audrey's granddaughter said, "My grandmother showed an incredible amount of fortitude in taking the helm in the late '70s and early '80s as the only female owner of a casket company. Having three girls myself, I can only hope my girls grow up to be as strong, bold, and courageous as their greatgrandmother. Her commitment to the industry has been longstanding, but her bittersweet retirement is well deserved!"



## Industry Updates

Justin Thacker, Director of Operations and Audrey's grandson fondly recalls the lessons he has learned working with his grandmother, "Audrey, my grandmother, has always been an inspiration to me in both my personal and business life. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to the success of the business and more importantly to the customers that we serve. As I have grown in the business, she afforded me the opportunity to make my own decisions, which has helped me immensely. No other woman in the industry has accomplished what Audrey has, and she made it happen with hard work and dedication to every facet of the business."

Reflecting on her grandmother's perseverance and impact on the industry, Sara Thacker, Director of Operations and IT, said, "My grandmother is a businessperson through and through and that was clear from my first summer working. Anyone that has worked with her would agree that her persistence and grit to get the job done, and done correctly, is paramount. Although I do not think she realized it, those qualities were essential when looking back at all the challenges and hurdles she had to overcome over the years."

Thacker Caskets owes its very existence to Audrey and her strong determination in the face of extremely difficult conditions. Audrey's retirement is bittersweet for Thacker, as they are delighted for her to enjoy her retirement, yet saddened to lose the expertise, knowledge, and wisdom that she brought to the office every day. Audrey still plans on visiting Thacker's headquarters in Monrovia, MD, and will stay up to date on internal current happenings. Thacker Caskets would like to sincerely thank Audrey for her loyalty throughout the years, to both Thacker and the entire industry.

Thacker Caskets is the funeral industry's leading family-owned funeral supply company. To learn more about Thacker, please call 800.637.8891 or visit [www.thackercaskets.com](http://www.thackercaskets.com).

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## Industry Updates

### Thacker Caskets Acquires Quality Professional Products of Michigan & Indiana

Thacker Caskets is excited to announce its recent acquisition of Quality Professional Products, also known as “QPP”. The acquisition was the largest acquisition in Thacker’s history and was made official on January 18, 2021.

Quality Professional Products was founded in 2007 by Ron Cook to help funeral homes improve their gross profits by providing them with superior casket values and service. President of QPP, Jeff Pulver, says:

“We are delighted to join forces with Thacker Caskets. This acquisition creates a formidable new Thacker/QPP co-brand that will continue the great service and product value our customers are accustomed to in addition to the merchandising strength and product breadth that Thacker brings to the marketplace.

Thacker Caskets is a family of high integrity, serious minded people who are committed to being the best they can be. They continually adapt by showing excellent leadership and innovation within our industry. We are honored to become part of their outstanding company.”

It was of utmost importance to QPP that they found a partner that would continue to meet their high standards of steadfast reliability and outstanding customer service. In addition, it was important for QPP to partner with another independently owned business with the capability of understanding the value of building and maintaining long-term relationships with high integrity.

Owner and CEO of Thacker Caskets, CJ Thacker excitedly commented on the acquisition. “We have silently watched and very much admired the ability of Quality Professional Products to grow their market share so significantly in such a short period of time. Their strategy in approaching the market is unique and undoubtedly successful. By partnering together, Thacker and QPP will experience a synergy that makes both companies better together!”

Thacker Caskets has been providing innovative products, made in the United States for over 80 years. A commitment to customer service has been a cornerstone of the business since its inception and their new customers in Michigan can expect the same level of dependability to be passed on to them. Quality Professional Products customers can trust that the level of customer service they have come to expect will still be met by Thacker Caskets.

From the very beginning, Thacker’s mission has been to be the most trusted supplier to more families by providing an honest product at an honest price, with honest service. The acquisition of Quality Professional Products is just another step by Thacker to maintain its high standard of customer satisfaction with high-quality products.

Quality Professional Products and Thacker Caskets are both excited about the acquisition and look forward to working together to ensure all of their customers are taken care of with the utmost respect and care.

Thacker Caskets has been the industry’s leading family-owned funeral supply company since 1939. To learn more about Thacker Caskets and its acquisition of Quality Professional Products, please call 800.637.8891 or visit [thackercaskets.com](http://thackercaskets.com)



## Industry Updates

### Messenger Expands Top-Tier Stationery Offering with New Genuine Leather Register Book

Messenger, a leading provider in stationery, funeral service and personalization solutions, has added a new genuine leather register book to its M Collection of top-tier stationery offerings entitled Merlot. The oversized register book cover is made in the U.S.A. from top-grain genuine leather by Rustico®. The Merlot register book resembles a high-end leather journal and features exposed edges with loop closure for sophisticated detail and broad appeal. The book pages feature a modern marbled texture and foil accents throughout.

“The top-tier plays a significant role in a funeral home’s stationery merchandising structure” stated Heather Garman, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Messenger. “Adding products with a clear distinction to the top level gives more value to a funeral home’s entire product assortment.” Garman goes on to say, “While families may not select from the top-tier frequently, they will find the next tier down more attractive and that is where funeral homes will want most of their families to make a selection.”

“As we have introduced new products in recent years, we noticed a need to take a new look at the stationery offerings in the top-tier” stated Alicia Norman, Director of Product Services at Messenger. “Many of the products at this level felt dated and have lost relevancy as preferences and tastes have evolved with the generations. Wood and leather options still have a high perceived value, so the goal was to transform them into trendy, modern options that appeal to today’s families. We definitely accomplished that with the new Merlot leather register book.”

The M Collection includes the Monarch and Merlot Register Books which share a full line of coordinated stationery pieces. The book interior includes extra Gallery Pages between sign-in pages provide an enhanced guest sign-in experience. Interiors can also be infused with Gallery Pages featuring six popular art themes exclusively available from Messenger. The line includes five sizes of service folders, deluxe size thank you cards in retail quality packaging, two sizes of laminated bookmarks, prayer cards, candles, and more. The stationery components for this series are easily personalized and printed through Messenger’s free Make It! Personal web application.

The Merlot Register Book will be available for sale to funeral homes on March 1st, 2021. For more information, please call Messenger at 1.800.827.5151.



*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](http://www.vfda.net) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/virginiafuneraldirectorsassociation](https://www.facebook.com/virginiafuneraldirectorsassociation)*

## 2021-2023 Calendar of Events

May 13, 2021	4:00 p.m. District Officers Meeting, Zoom Conference Meeting
June 13-15, 2021	133rd Annual VFDA Reunion, Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront The Cavalier, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, 4200 & 4201 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451
January 23-24, 2022	VFDA Winter Conference, Marriott Richmond Short Pump
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	135th Annual VFDA Convention, Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront The Cavalier, a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, 4200 & 4201 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451

*(Dates subject to change)*

*Save the Date!*  
*133rd Annual VFDA Reunion*  
*June 13-15, 2021*





## In Remembrance

### **Blue Ridge Funeral Directors Association**

*January 7, 2021*

Edward Louis Vest

*February 2, 2021*

Charles Edwards Pryor

### **National Funeral Directors Association**

*December 14, 2020*

Thomas "Tom" Leo Riddle

### **Northern Virginia Funeral Directors Association**

*January 15, 2021*

Julian Wilson Everly, Sr.

### **Shenandoah Valley Funeral Directors Association**

*December 5, 2020*

Rosalie Janelle Kagey

*January 28, 2021*

Harry Donald "Donnie" Morehead

### **Southside Funeral Directors Association**

*January 21, 2021*

James P. Wilkerson, III

### **Tidewater Funeral Directors Association**

*August 13, 2020*

Albert Lee Foster

*October 7, 2020*

Jake Robert Williamson

### **Virginia Funeral Sales Association**

*January 25, 2021*

Patricia A. "Pat" Cota

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



# 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

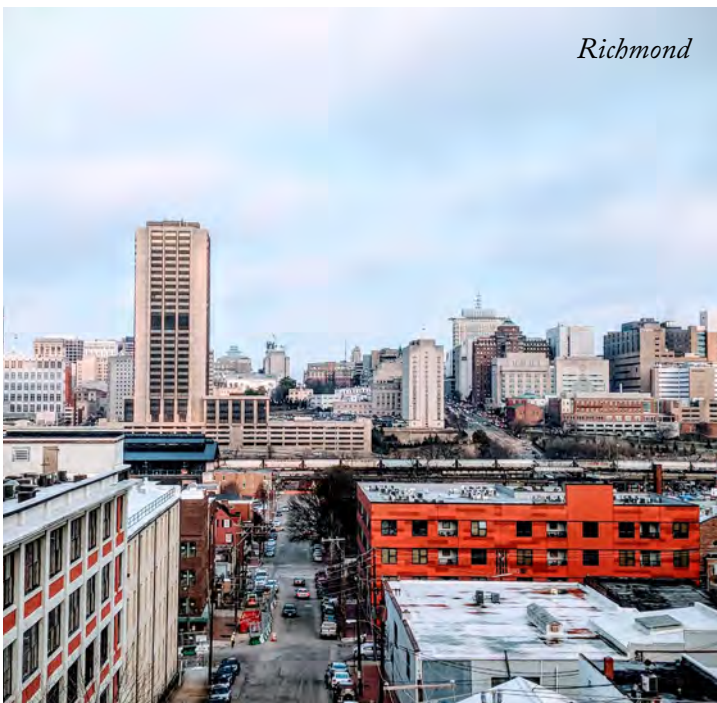
### Secretary-Treasurer

**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

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

**Stephanie Smith**  
sgs.rhsfh@gmail.com

### **2<sup>nd</sup> 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

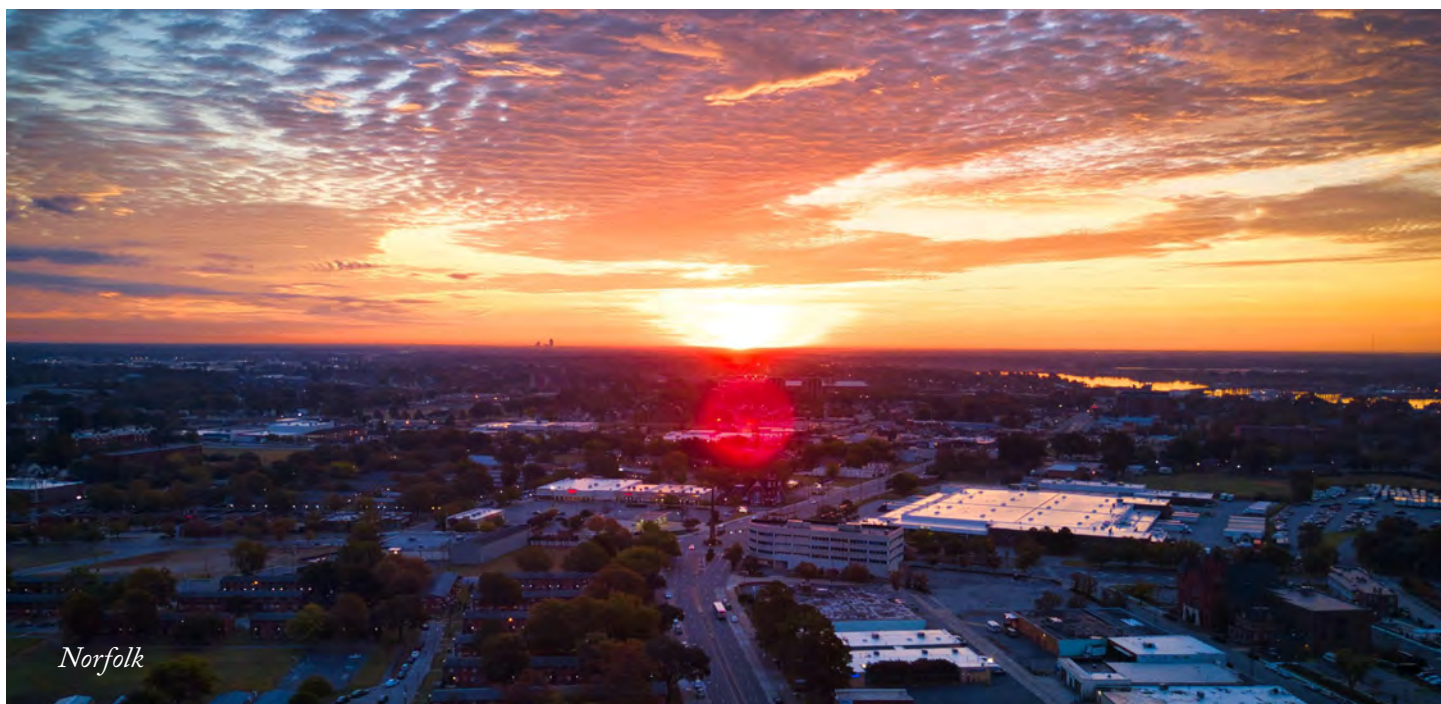
### **1<sup>st</sup> Year Director**

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

### **2<sup>nd</sup> 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.





## 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](http://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 March 2021.

#### 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 Ads - \$85

#### Member-Exclusive Emails

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

#### Website Ads

- Contact the VFDA Office for website advertising only.

### Publication Deadlines

#### Publication

- The Bulletin APR | MAY | JUN
- The Bulletin JULY | AUG | SEPT
- The Bulletin OCT | NOV | DEC
- Email Advertisements

#### Ads Due

- 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](mailto: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





# Advertising Opportunities 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. You can now 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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: \_\_\_\_\_


# Ever Feel Like You Need More Hours In Your Day?

You put in long hours taking care of families in their time of need. On a typical day, you provide support, take care of paperwork, run your business, and ensure that even the smallest details are properly handled.

Your days move fast, with so much to do—the right funeral home management tools can free up time, so you can focus on what's most important to you.

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 byondcloud the premier online marketplace for the death care industry.

 byondpro the comprehensive tool for managing all of your business operations, efficiently.

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