



136th VFDA ANNUAL CONVENTION

JUNE 02-05, 2024

MARRIOTT VIRGINIA BEACH OCEANFRONT

VFDA.NET

THE HOTEL

Marriott Resort Virginia Beach Oceanfront is located just off the north end of the famous Virginia Beach boardwalk and is a part of The Cavalier Resort, with The Historic Cavalier Hotel and its famed Tarnished Truth Distillery and SeaHill Spa just across the street. Enjoy exceptional amenities including adjacent indoor/outdoor swimming pools, a large 24-hour fitness center and spacious landscaped grounds with bocce ball, fire pits and terraces. Relax in the modern luxury of our hotel's 305 guest rooms and suites, all with sweeping ocean views. Treat yourself to the rooftop wok station and sushi bar at Orion's Roof, or enjoy the salty sea air and scratch cooking with a priority on healthy, mindful eating at Tulu Seaside Bar & Grill. With over 25,000 square feet of event space, including the largest ballroom in Virginia Beach, our oceanfront resort hotel is ideal for meetings, retreats, and unforgettable beach weddings. Whether visiting for business or pleasure, we look forward to welcoming you.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To all VFDA and VFSA members,

Amanda and I would like to invite you to join us at the 136th VFDA Annual Convention, June 2nd – 5th, 2024, at the Virginia Beach Marriott Oceanfront. We hope this convention will allow you to relax and learn with new colleagues and familiar faces. Our association has continued to grow in 2024, and the board of directors and event committees have worked hard to provide activities that will be beneficial to our attendees.

Activities will begin daily at 7:30 a.m. with a continental breakfast served in the convention hall where Continuing Education opportunities are being provided. These classes, offered on a wide range of topics, will be held Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday mornings until around noon. Please note the dress code for all CEU classes is casual.

An addition to this year's convention is the opportunity for vendors to interact with customers via tabletop displays. These vendors will be displaying in the Grand Hall on the second floor on Monday and Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

It is our hope that free time can be spent on the beach, catching up with friends, making new connections with vendors and colleagues, and enjoying all Virginia Beach has to offer.

Sunday, June 2nd:
Our time together for the 2024 convention will begin with our annual Service of Remembrance, which will take place at 5:00 p.m. Out of respect for the colleagues and friends we have lost, the dress code for this event is business attire.

At the conclusion of the Service of Remembrance, a social hour will commence at 6:00 p.m. Following the social hour, we will gather for the president's welcome reception at 7:00 p.m., which is sponsored by the districts in the VFDA. This year's reception will be "Aloha" themed, so please come dressed in Hawaiian attire ready to enjoy our evening together.

Monday June 3rd:
Amanda will be hosting the spouse's luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Please register for this event if you wish to attend. As in years past, there will be no scheduled events on Monday evening.

Tuesday, June 4th:
Our annual business meeting of the VFDA will be held at 8:00 a.m.

The convention will conclude with our social, dinner, and awards banquet with a cocktail hour at 6:00 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. To wrap up the evening, the Virginia Funeral Sales Association has sponsored a time of music, dancing, and refreshments in the grand ballroom. This year our banquet will be returning to a semi-formal dress code.

Due to a much-appreciated sponsorship from Dodge Chemical Company, we will again have a "Kids Club" event the night of the banquet, with childcare, entertainment, and a menu especially tailored to children.

The VFDA Board of Directors are especially grateful to the Virginia Funeral Sales Association, as well our many generous sponsors who make this much-needed convention possible each year. Please express your gratitude to them during our time together.

We have again been able to offer the Marriott convention room rates for additional days before and after the convention to allow your family to extend their vacation.

I hope you will look over the schedule of events for the week and plan to join us at the 136th VFDA Convention. Convenient links are provided for both hotel and convention registrations. Please note all resort fees will be waived upon check-in.

We look forward to seeing you in Virginia Beach,

Matthew R. Perry, President



CONVENTION REGISTRATION

To register, just complete the event registration form online, [CLICK HERE](#). If you have any questions, please contact the VFDA by email at communications@vfda.net or by phone at 804.264.0505.

Cancellation Policy: Full registration refunds will be given provided cancellation is received via email by **May 20, 2024**. No refunds will be given after 5 p.m. May 24, 2024.

*Registrations no later than **May 24, 2024**

RESERVATIONS

Book your rooms by **Friday, May 10, 2024** to receive a discounted room rate. [BOOK ONLINE](#) or by calling the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront at 757.937.4200. Individual attendees must identify themselves as a member of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association in order to receive these special rates.

REGISTRATION TYPE	PRICE
VFDA/VFSA Member - Early Bird	\$595
VFDA/VFSA Member - After April 15, 2024	\$695
VFDA/VFSA Non-Member	\$795
VFDA Member Single-Day	\$295
Meals Only or Spouses Fee	\$175
Banquet Only	\$125

VFDA FOUNDATION 50/50 RAFFLE

Help support the VFDA Foundation by purchasing a 50/50 raffle ticket. The Foundation engages business and community partners in the support of professionals and students currently in or entering the funeral service profession through education, advocacy and leadership development. By doing this, the Foundation will help to eliminate barriers to opportunities by helping people to reach their full potential. The money raised will help support the Foundation's scholarship fund! Tickets may be purchased at the 136th Annual VFDA Convention.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Diamond Level \$10,000+

4 complimentary Registrations, Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Platinum Level \$7,000 – \$9,999

3 complimentary Registrations, Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Gold Level \$5,000 – \$6,999

2 complimentary Registrations, Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Silver Level \$3,000 – \$4,999

1 complimentary Registration, Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Bronze Level \$1,000 – \$2,999

Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Partner Sponsorship \$500 – \$999

Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, Digital Recognition during all meetings.

Friends of the VFDA \$250-\$499

Listing on Website and Convention Brochure, digital recognition during all meetings.

NEW THIS YEAR: TABLETOP VENDOR OPPORTUNITIES

VFSA members- \$ 395.00
Non VFSA members- \$ 695.00

Tabletops consisting of 1 table (6ft x 30") including power are available for display at the above rates on Monday and Tuesday from 7:30 am to 1 pm in the grand hall during the CEU classes. These spaces will only be offered until the available space is filled. Any additional upgrades to the tables must be obtained through the hotel. For more information regarding this new offering please contact us at communications@vfda.net

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Diamond Level \$10,000+

Platinum Level \$7000 – \$ 9,999



Gold Level \$5,000 – \$6,999



Silver Level \$3,000 – \$4,999



Bronze Level \$1,000 – \$2,999



Partner Sponsorship \$500 – \$999

Friends of the VFDA \$250 – \$499

**** Please submit your electronic company logo to communications@vfda.net**

CONVENTION SCHEDULE – SPONSORED BY: THACKER CASKETS



8:00–8:30 AM Continental Breakfast

Sunday Continuing Education Sponsored by Federated Insurance

8:30–9:30 AM Techniques to Keep that Casket Open
Amanda King
1.0 Hour

10:00 AM–12:00 PM The Future of the Funeral Home Workplace
Scott Lesnick (Keynote Speaker)
2.0 Hours

5:00 PM Service of Remembrance
Business Attire

6:00 PM Social Hour

7:00 PM Presidents Welcome Reception (Aloha Theme, Please come dressed in your best Hawaiian outfits.)
Sponsored by VFDA District Associations



7:30–8:00 AM Continental Breakfast

8:00–9:00 AM What is a Death Doula?
Anna Adams
1.0 Hour

9:30–11:30 AM Hot Dogs & Decomp
Damon de la Cruz
2.0 Hours

11:30 AM VFDA Spouses Lunch
Hosted by Amanda Perry
Sponsored by Perry Cremation & Funeral Alternatives

12:00–1:00 PM Ethical Issues in Funeral Service
Jeff Zealley
1.0 Hours



7:30–8:00 AM Buffet Breakfast

8:00–10:00 AM VFDA Annual Business Meeting
2.0 Hours

10:30–11:30 AM The Psychology of Price & How to Compete
Brent Thomas
1.0 Hours

12:00–5:30 PM Afternoon by the Beach and Pool

6:00–10:00 PM Kids Club (Dinner will be provided along with activities)
Sponsored by Dodge Chemical Company

6:00 PM Social Hour

7:00 PM Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony (Semi-Formal Attire)

9:00 PM Hospitality and Entertainment
Sponsored by VFSA



8:00–9:00 AM Buffet Breakfast & Federated Insurance

9:00 AM Virginia Funeral Directors Association Board of Directors Meeting



CONVENTION SPEAKERS

SCOTT LESNICK

Scott Lesnick is a Global Leadership Keynote Speaker. He presents powerful keynotes, training and interactive sessions at 40+ events a year and is an author. Also, Scott earned his CSP- Certified Speaking Professional from the National Speakers Association. Only 12% of speakers world-wide have this designation! Scott is also a Certified Virtual Presenter. Scott recently presented at TEDx. And, he's run the equivalent of 2X around the planet. That's 50,000 miles! In addition, Scott spent 24 award-winning sales and management years at Shaw Industries a Berkshire Hathaway Fortune 500 company. Scott served as the Dean of the Academy for Professional Speakers in 2016-17. He is a graduate of The University of Miami, Florida. His memoir, "Kidjacked – A Father's Story" and his book Lifejacked: Life Lessons on Leadership were published to critical acclaim.

Learn more at www.scottlesnick.com



ANNA ADAMS

Through my extensive experience in hospice and elder care, as well as my certifications as an End-of-Life Doula and End of Life Educator, I have dedicated my life to providing compassionate support and guidance to individuals and their families during their end-of-life journey. My goal is to ensure that every person in my care receives the comfort, dignity, and respect they deserve during this sacred transition. I have cared for and helped thousands of families go through their end-of-life journeys.

I have worked in a Hospice Inpatient Unit and as part of a Hospice Crisis Care Team for most of my life. I work as an End-Of-Life Doula at Holistic Care Hospice and Caring Hands Hospice in San Antonio. I have over 25 years of experience in hospice and elder care and 10+ years in High Acuity care with EMS. I am a Certified End-of-Life-Doula, End of Life Educator. I am also the owner of Savior Doula Services and the founder of the International Doula Life Movement.



JEFF ZEALLEY

Jeff Zealley has been licensed in five states during his 30 years in funeral service, has been a member of DMORT since 2002, serves on the Utah Board of Funeral Service, and is currently an associate professor in the Salt Lake Community College Mortuary Science Program. He has an MBA and a Master in Bioethics. He is an avid tombstone tourist, loves to travel, study World War II history, and cook Cajun food. He and his wife have four children and five grandchildren.



AMANDA KING

Amanda Marie Ellis King, CFSP & MBIT, is an Embalmer and Funeral Director holding licensure in multiple states, as well as honorary membership to the Belgium Institute of Thanatopraxie. She completed her embalming apprenticeship under Vernie R. Fountain, as well as extensive training in postmortem reconstructive work. In addition to her AAS in Mortuary Science from ACC in Colorado, Amanda holds a B.S. from Skidmore College for Studio Art and Biology, and a Post-Baccalaureate degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She is also an educator who specializes in and teaches reconstructive work and cosmetic application. Her contributions in the field outside of the funeral home include articles, illustrations, and photography for trade journals. Currently she is a Funeral Director and Embalmer for Bailey Family Funeral Homes in CT, and also does freelance work as AMEKgraphics, as well as being an embalming specialist with Frigid Fluid Company.



DAMON DE LA CRUZ

Damon de la Cruz, PhD is a licensed Embalmer and Funeral Director. He is the Cypress College, Mortuary Science Program Director, the Director of Education for Frigid Fluids and has served on the American Board of Funeral Service Education Curriculum committee. He speaks nationally and internationally on a regular basis. His embalming career has spanned multiple states, countries, and continents. Damon has a bachelor's degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology and was awarded a Doctorate in Pathobiology from the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California for his work on stem cell homeostasis.



BRENT THOMAS

Brent Thomas is the Director Field Training and Development at Homesteaders Life Company. Prior to his current role, Brent's experience ranges from preneed counselor and cemetery sales management to key account and business consulting with Buchanan Group, Inc., and Batesville Casket Company. With nearly 30 years of experience and a wealth of knowledge in various aspects of the industry, Brent has spoken on many topics at events such as ICCFA's DEAD Talks. He holds a degree in Organizational Communications from Indiana University and is a certified facilitator of GROW Coaching. Brent's award-winning experience as a business consultant, coach/mentor and strategic sales leader is rooted in his commitment to helping families honor their loved ones.



AWARDS PROGRAM

To nominate an a deserving candidate for each award, please email Communications@vfda.net or call 804.264.0505

VIRGINIA FUNERAL DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

A special award bestowed upon a Virginia Funeral Directors Association 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 service licensee who has served within the VFDA, 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 04, 2024.

GOLDEN LICENSEE

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association 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. If you, or someone you know is eligible for this award, please email us at communications@vfda.net.

INTERN OF THE YEAR

The "Intern of the Year" award, which is open to all interns working in a Virginia Funeral Directors Association 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 04, 2024 at no charge. This is a great opportunity for your firm to recognize the rising stars and an opportunity for nominees to attend the 136th Annual VFDA Convention.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association 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 17, 2024. All "Rookie of the Year" nominees will be invited to the VFDA Annual Banquet on June 04, 2024, at no charge. This is a great opportunity for your district to recognize the rising stars and an opportunity for nominees to attend the 136th Annual VFDA Convention.

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.

2024 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: "Where do i see the Funeral Profession in Five Years?"
6. All applications/essays must be submitted to communications@vfda.net by May 17, 2024. 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: _____

Email: _____



Let us put our more than 115 years of experience to work for you! Federated Insurance is proud to be the exclusively recommended insurance provider of the VFDA, Virginia Funeral Directors Association, for property and liability, workers compensation, and financial protection services. We're ready to provide the VFDA members with quality coverages customized to each business. As Federated clients, VFDA members will be served by knowledgeable, local marketing representatives, professional risk management consultants, and dedicated claims professionals.

Find your local representative by logging into the VFDA Member Portal at www.vfda.net.

**A Perfect Fit
for Protecting Your
American Dream**

Federated Insurance's partnership with your association has one goal: helping your business succeed. You deserve an insurance provider who understands your profession. Put our knowledge and experience to work for you.

It's Our Business to Protect Yours®
Scan to learn about mySHIELD®,
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VFSA SCHOLARSHIP OUTLINE – \$750

VIRGINIA FUNERAL SALES ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

To be considered for the Virginia Funeral Sales Association scholarship, applicants should complete the requirements listed below and submit the application form to your right.

1. Completed an Accredited Funeral Service program or graduating from an Accredited Funeral Service program during the current year of application and is accepted by the Virginia State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. Proof of enrollment required.

2. Write an essay of 500 words on the following topics: (1) How will I, as a Funeral Service Licensee, enhance the funeral profession? (2) What need do I have for applying for this scholarship? (Essay must address both questions.)

3. Applicant(s) are only eligible for this scholarship once. Previous recipients are ineligible



4. Applicants(s) must have a “C” or above average or a GPA of 2.5.

5. Two letters of Recommendation: (1) by a supervisor or funeral service licensee in good standing in the Commonwealth of Virginia and (2) from a personal or community service reference (friend, co-worker, school, church, civic group, local organization, etc.)

6. Provide a copy of an Unofficial Mortuary School transcript, proof of successfully passing the National and State Exams, and a receipt showing these exams have been paid for in advance.

7. Reimbursement will be provided for both exams, but only if the requirements in #6 have been met.

8. Scholarship Application DEADLINE: May 17, 2024 of each year. Applicants post marked after May 17, 2024 or missing documentations will not be considered.

9. All applications received will become the property of the

10. Virginia Funeral Sales Association.

11. Need to provide proof of I. D.

12. Willing to receive and participate in a teleconference interview with Scholarship Committee.

NOTIFICATIONS

- Applicant(s) will be notified in writing
- Applicant(s) will be invited to attend the Annual Banquet for recognition, or presented to them at a VFDA meeting in their locale if unable to attend.

VFSA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Scholarship Application Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone:() _____

Email address: _____ Date Of Birth: _____

Education: _____ High School _____ College and/or Equivalent _____

School Name: _____ Dates attended (graduation date): _____

Address: _____

Current School of Funeral Service: _____

Do you qualify to be a Funeral Service Intern in the Commonwealth of Virginia as defined by the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers? Yes No

Are you currently a Funeral Service Licensee? Yes No
If yes, name and address of the firm employed by: _____

Additional Comments/Awards: _____

Check List: Application: _____ Essay _____ (2) Letters of Reference _____
Unofficial Transcript _____ Proof of Paid National/State Board Licensing Exam _____

I affirm the information provided on and in this package is true to the best of my knowledge. I further commit that if I should discontinue my participation in the Funeral Service Program (the scholarship year), I will return this scholarship in its entirety.

Applicants Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please email or mail completed application to: P.O. Box 484, Forest, VA 24551, vfsainfo@gmail.com

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ACCREDITATION

All seminars are accredited through the Virginia Funeral Directors Association. The VFDA Board of Directors evaluates each seminar to ensure quality and relevance to funeral service.

VA MANDATORY CONTINUING EDUCATION

Unless otherwise noted, all VA Mandatory seminars have been approved for 1 CEU from the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers.

CONTINUING EDUCATION VERIFICATION POLICY

All attendees receive a name badge at check-in. The badge must be worn at all times. We will have sign-in sheets during each CEU session to sign. Must present name tag to enter all events and seminars.

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association will not grant CEUs to attendees who miss more than 10 minutes of instructional time during a one hour seminar or who miss more than 15 minutes of total instructional time during a two-hour seminar. There are no exceptions. Completion of a program examination may be required for issuing continuing education credit. A continuing education certificate will be issued 30 days following the last seminar presentation.

GENERAL SESSION

General Session is open to all VFDA members and registered Convention guests. Members who are not registered for the Convention must receive a meeting badge for admission from the Convention Registration Desk.

REFUNDS

Full registration refunds will be honored provided cancellation is received in writing via email or mail by May 20, 2024. After that date, a refund of 50% will be given provided the cancellation is received in writing via email or mail before May 24, 2024.

DRESS CODE

The dress code for continuing education classes is casual. Please dress in business attire for the Service of Remembrance. The inaugural banquet is semi-formal.

ROOM RESERVATIONS

Third party firms may attempt to contact attendees to solicit hotel reservations. Such firms have not been authorized to book reservations and are not affiliated with the VFDA or Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront in any way.

To ensure valid room reservations, it is recommended that attendees make reservations online at Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront.

If your hotel reservations were made through the VFDA Office last year please note that we will only make reservations for attendees if requested.

The office will not make reservations unless notified. When requesting reservations, please include the following: number of guests, number of rooms needed, room preference (i.e. oceanfront, king/double, etc.), check-in date, check-out date, name on reservation, credit card number (for security, please call the VFDA Office with your credit card information, do NOT send by email).

PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE AND DISCLOSURE

All photography, video, and audio recordings captured by the VFDA or any of its affiliated entities are the property of the VFDA. The VFDA reserves the right to use and distribute such images and recordings at its sole discretion. Participation by the attendee, guest, or representative constitutes permission for the VFDA to capture and use such images or electronic recordings.

This information is subject to change without notice.

HOTEL INFO

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association Reunion returns to Virginia Beach at the new luxurious Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel. With its convenient location you can enjoy the historic Cavalier Hotel or take a stroll to the boardwalk.

DISCOUNTED ROOM RATES

1 King/2 Queens: \$279 per night (plus applicable tax and fees)
Rates will be in effect Tuesday, May 28, 2024, through Saturday, June 08, 2024.

PARKING

The hotel has on-site parking for \$20 daily or valet parking, for \$28 daily.

RESERVATIONS

Book your rooms by Friday, May 10, 2024 to receive a discounted room rate. [BOOK ONLINE](#) or by calling the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront at 757.937.4200. Individual attendees must identify themselves as a member of the Virginia Funeral Directors Association in order to receive these special rates.

CANCELLATIONS

One night's room and tax deposit required to reserve. Refundable deposit if cancelled before 72-hour window.

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