



1011 East Main Street, Ste 400, Richmond, VA 23219 •  
Phone: (804) 264-0505 • Fax: (804) 264-3260

July 12, 2011

Dear VFDA Member,

The Virginia Funeral Directors Association (VFDA) is asking you to contribute to the annual Professional Futures Fund. As you know, this dedicated fund is used solely for the purpose of advocacy and lobbying for our profession on the state and national levels. VFDA is the voice for all Virginia funeral service practitioners.

Because of your past support, members of the Virginia General Assembly consider the VFDA to be the leading voice and recognized government liaison for our profession. This VFDA leadership role for our industry has been built over many years through the efforts of our dedicated advocacy team working under the direction of our legislative committee. The legislative committee consistently seeks your questions and advice on all issues and with legal and professional guidance from our lobbying team, setting aside personal agendas to do what is best for the funeral service industry.

The 2011 legislative session was a productive one for the endeavors of the VFDA. Many detrimental pieces of legislation were defeated in the legislature while other beneficial bills were able to move through both the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia. Most notably, the passing of legislation expanding those who may sign death certificates. Conversely, several bills failed to pass the legislature's approval process and resulted in further examination throughout the year.

One of the largest legislative issues facing funeral directors this session was a bill introduced by Delegate Harvey Morgan (R-Gloucester) that would have tightened regulations on final expenses insurance. Trepidation surrounding this legislation was that it could potentially restrict product selection, payment plans, and commission payments to funeral homes in Virginia. This bill, if passed, would have mandated that all money received for preneed funeral contracts that wasn't being funded by life insurance be placed in a trust domiciled in Virginia. As Virginia is already one of the most heavily regulated states in this industry, the increased restrictions would potentially have a negative effect on our business community. With so many questions and concerns surrounding the bill, it was defeated in the House of Delegates Commerce and Labor Committee. However, the committee Chairman intends to set up a special subcommittee over the coming months to further study the issue of preneed contracts in Virginia.

One champion of the funeral industry is Delegate Kenny Alexander (D-Norfolk). He is a funeral director himself and President of Metropolitan Funeral Service, a small family-owned business, with two locations in Norfolk, so he has first-hand experience as to the challenges that face today's funeral directors. Del. Alexander has been a member of the Virginia House of Delegates since 2002, and serves on the Committees of Commerce and Labor, Education, Privileges and Elections, and Rules. This session Del. Alexander was able to secure the passage of four different bills to benefit the industry. Those bills included measures to allow local sheriffs to identify unclaimed individuals, establishing requirements of the resale of interment rights, and a more streamlined process for nonprofit organ procurement organizations to gain access to death certificates.



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Del. Alexander also introduced legislation regarding the proper expense for the disposition of unclaimed individuals.

The association's greatest victory this year was Senate Bill 1117. This legislation, introduced by Senator Ralf Northam (D-Accomack) allows nurse practitioners and physician assistants to sign death certificates when instructed to do so by a physician. The bill expands the scope of physicians who are able to sign the certificates, provided that they have access to the deceased's medical history and that the death is due to natural causes. It also provides civil immunity to signers of the death certificates in the absence of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

The Virginia Funeral Director Association's Winter Leadership Summit was held January 24-25 at the Richmond Marriott Hotel. The Summit also included a dinner reception at Old City Bar which was attended by several legislators. This was an excellent networking opportunity that allowed attendees to mingle and socialize with legislators before meeting with them the next day at the General Assembly Building.

Our state lobbying and advocacy efforts also extend to issues that come before the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers where our team represents the interests of VFDA members in matters ranging from licensing to continuing education.

On the national level, the VFDA works closely with the National Funeral Directors Association to lobby Congress for legislation that is vital to our industry.

None of these efforts would be possible without your continued financial support of our Professional Futures Fund. Contributions to the Fund allow us to make political contributions to state legislators with a favorable voting record toward the profession and retain qualified lobbyists to lead our government relations efforts.

Many members tell us that advocacy for their "professional future" is a key benefit of VFDA membership. Please contribute to support the funding of this important program. It means your interests are being protected.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "F. F. 'Frankie' Sheridan".

Frankie Sheridan  
President



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**Professional Futures Fund  
INVOICE**

**Name of Funeral Home:** \_\_\_\_\_

A check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for: (check one)

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Dogwood Level**  
Contribution of \$100                      Recognition in VFDA *Bulletin* and website
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Cardinal Level**  
Contribution of \$250                      Recognition in VFDA *Bulletin*, website and *CLICKS!*
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Dominion Level**  
Contribution of \$500                      Recognition in VFDA *Bulletin*, website, *CLICKS!*  
and Winter Leadership Conference
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Commonwealth Level**  
Contribution of \$1,000                      Recognition in VFDA *Bulletin*, website, *CLICKS!*,  
Winter Leadership Conference and Annual Banquet
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Capitol Level**  
Contribution of \$2,000                      Recognition in VFDA *Bulletin*, website, *CLICKS!*,  
Winter Leadership Conference, Annual Banquet and  
plaque
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Other**                                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to the Virginia Funeral Directors Association with notation that it is restricted to the Professional Futures Fund.**

**DUE September 1, 2011**