

# **PROTECTION AGAINST ERRORS IN PRINTED FUNERAL MATERIALS**

**by  
T. Scott Gilligan  
NFDA General Counsel**

In an event as emotionally charged as a funeral, the littlest error can have a substantially adverse impact on the family's overall experience. An obituary that omits the name of a surviving family member, a funeral program that misidentifies the pallbearers, or a prayer card containing a misspelled word can ruin the most precisely planned and conducted funeral service. Moreover, those in attendance who notice the error are going to assume in nearly every case that the funeral home was at fault for the mistake when in fact that often is not the case.

In addition, mistakes that are not caught early on in the process will cost funeral homes time and resources to correct. If the family finds an error in a funeral program after 500 copies have been printed, it will usually be the funeral home that will absorb the cost of reprinting the corrected program. When a death certificate must be amended because it contains incorrect information, generally it is the funeral home employee who fills out the corrected form and makes a second trip to file it with the county health department.

To reduce the risk of errors and to document that it is the family's and not the funeral home's responsibility to check drafts of printed materials for mistakes, NFDA has placed on Faxback a new form entitled "Document Proofing and Approval Acknowledgement." A copy of the form appears on page \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_.

The new form serves two purposes. First, by having the family sign off on a form, it will reinforce to the family member who is proofing the document that it is vitally important for them to carefully review every aspect of the product. Individuals are more apt to scrutinize a document if they are signing a form attesting that they have proofed and approved the draft. Secondly, in the event that a mistake has been overlooked, the form documents that the overlooked error is the responsibility of the family and not the funeral home. This may place the funeral home on better grounds when confronted with a family that is demanding a refund or discount because of a mistake in a funeral program or a prayer card.

NFDA members with questions regarding this form may contact Scott Gilligan at (513) 871-6332.

# DOCUMENT PROOFING AND APPROVAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1. **PARTIES:**

“FUNERAL HOME:” \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Funeral Home)

“REPRESENTATIVE:” \_\_\_\_\_  
(Use Reverse Side for (Name of Representative)  
Additional Names)

“DECEDENT:” \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Decedent)

2. **AUTHORITY OF REPRESENTATIVE:** The REPRESENTATIVE warrants and represents to FUNERAL HOME that the REPRESENTATIVE is the person or the appointed agent of the person who by law has the paramount right to arrange and direct the disposition of the remains of the DECEDENT.

3. **PROOFING OF FUNERAL DOCUMENTS:** The funeral documents that have been designated with an “x” as listed on the next page have been presented to the REPRESENTATIVE for review. The REPRESENTATIVE agrees to check each one **CAREFULLY** for misspellings, incorrect or missing information, incorrect dates, times and locations, and any other incorrect or omitted information.

4. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE:** After the REPRESENTATIVE has signed off and approved each of the funeral documents listed on the second page, the REPRESENTATIVE understands and agrees that, after correcting any mistakes noted by the REPRESENTATIVE, the FUNERAL HOME will no be responsible for any errors or mistakes when the document is printed as per approval of the REPRESENTATIVE.

5. **INDEMNIFICATION:** The REPRESENTATIVE agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the FUNERAL HOME from any claims or causes of action arising or related in any respect to the approval of the funeral documents set forth on page two.

**DATE:**

**SIGNATURE OF REPRESENTATIVE:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **LIST OF FUNERAL DOCUMENTS**

### **Documents**

### **Directions** (Select only one option)

Obituary

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.

Death Certificate

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.

Funeral Program

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Other Document)

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Other Document)

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Other Document)

I proofed it and approve it as is.

I proofed it and approve it with corrections noted.

Make corrections and return it to me for additional proofing.