

Nassuff Newsletter

Winter | 2023



**Update Regarding EDRS Burial Permit Fee From Randy McCullough, NYSFDA
Deputy Executive Director**

**Randy McCullough, NYSFDA Deputy Executive Director sent this email to all NYSFDA members on December 29, 2022. We received permission to share this with our members.*

We have just received word that NY Governor Kathy Hochul has vetoed our legislation that would have eliminated the \$20 State EDRS Burial Permit Fee. This is a very disappointing and frustrating development, as our bill – sponsored by Senator Sean Ryan (D-Buffalo) and Assemblyman Phil Steck (D-Colonie) – passed both the State Senate and Assembly unanimously earlier this year. It was sent to the Governor on December 16.

Actions Leading Up to the Veto

Before receiving the bill for consideration, Governor Hochul's staff indicated some reluctance to act positively on the legislation. They contacted NYSFDA and the State Legislature late last week with a counter-proposal: rather than eliminate the fee outright as would occur under our bill, she would agree to sign legislation that for the first time under law would have allowed funeral homes to pass along the fee to consumers as a "cash advance." We agreed to this proposal as a compromise that still would have represented a positive move forward for funeral service.

However, due entirely to political considerations that allowing the fee to be passed on to consumers could be interpreted as a "death tax," the Legislature – particularly the Assembly – would in no way agree to this compromise proposal from the Governor. Their position on this matter was unchangeable. So, our bill to eliminate the fee – which the Governor had already indicated she was not likely to support – was sent to the Governor without the Legislature's support of her compromise proposal. As such, our bill was vetoed. (Note: Former Governor Cuomo did not allow a pass-through of the fee to consumers for this same reason in 2013.)

Where We Go From Here

Our strong preference remains the enactment of our legislation eliminating the fee entirely as it no longer needs to be collected by New York State. One potential option we are pushing for is for the Governor to include EDRS fee elimination in her proposed 2023-24 State Executive Budget. In fact, this is what the Governor said in her veto message:

"I understand the frustration for funeral directors, who in 2013 agreed to fund the development of the invaluable EDRS through this mechanism. However, this fee provides a revenue stream that is utilized by the Department of Health to maintain the system and make necessary modifications or expansions to it. Consequently, this bill must be discussed within the context of the State Budget."

We will pursue any and all paths such as this one, and I will keep you informed of what shapes up going forward.

I am sorry to give you this disappointing news, but we will persevere.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM!

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Nassau Suffolk
Funeral Directors Association
Symposium & Networking
Event, sponsored by The
Whitmore Group will be held
on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at
The Larkfield in East Northport.
All information will be on the
new NSFDA website in the next
few weeks.

www.NSFDA.org

THE NSFDA HOLIDAY PARTY

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Home for the Holidays!



Family of Linda Hogan- Florenzie



Family of Jeff Gaines



Madelynn Lorey, Conor Lorey and Gabe Gorton with Santa on Christmas



NSFDA President Michael Gorton and Son Gabe ringing in the New Year



A Message from the NSFDA Board President: Michael J. Gorton

Dear Members,

It's 2023, the calendar has turned and we are one by one either succeeding on our new year's resolutions or failing miserably at them, if we even remember them. It happens. It's life.

Recently, I was having a discussion with other funeral directors. I was in the middle of the conversation, listening to them and digesting what was being said and it gave me pause. Some were pushing others to consider that they need to mentor or to mentor the next generation of funeral service. The point that I got out of the conversation is that sometimes we forget how we learned what we know as seasoned funeral professionals. Maybe we are "burnt out" and just don't have the energy to teach.

It made me pause because I wondered if I do enough mentoring to the young professionals and students in our profession. I think I do, but how much is enough. The "I" in the thought process soon turned to "we" – as a profession and as individuals. We're dealing with different generations and assumptions of others. The more I thought about it, the more I came to realize that maybe, the art of mentoring may be dying. Pun intended.

If it made me think about it, I want you to think about it. Are you leaving your legacy to others? The tricks of the trade; are you passing them down to the next generation. Or are you assuming that the next generation will figure it out? To a certain extent when you were cutting your teeth, you were left to figure things out. But you also had a seasoned veteran to lean on or listen to who would show you the ropes and guide you in a path. Are you doing that today, are you being that person who was that person to you many years ago? Do you have that person on your staff who is a mentor?

Being a mentor is being an adviser, a teacher, an instructor, a guide, a coach. Think of people in your life who mentored you. Look back and think, where would you be if it were not for that person. It is time to pay it forward, if you have not done so already. Watching the NFL playoff games made me think of some of the best football coaches. Love him or hate him, Bill Belichick is one of the greatest mentors. He is a mentor to his players and his coaches alike. They look at him and listen to him. He gets players to play for him and follow his vision. Collectively, they succeed. And they surround themselves with people who also mentor and raise people up. Bill O'Brien is coming back to lead the Patriot offense, yet again. Take a moment and look at some of the other great coaches who have won and built successful programs. Look at Andy Reid, John Harbaugh, Pat Summitt, Jim Boeheim and Geno Auriemma. They are good teachers, get the best out of the teams they ran and well respected and had assistants who were successful.

I am going to ask everyone to mentor more. Help lift up the next generation of funeral service. If you are already mentoring, thank you. If you are not, take 5 minutes out and explain what you are doing and why you do it to your staff. Whether you are in management or not, I ask you to help raise our profession. We cannot assume that everyone who walks into a funeral home looking for a job will know everything. The only thing we should assume is that a young professional or student will be looking up to you for guidance and direction.

Give them everything you got. Yes, you may have done it before with others, but you can't take your experience and knowledge with you. That millennial or Gen Z will one day be leading your firm that you built. Give them all of the tools to be successful. Teach them well...This comes to mind with the recent passing of

David Crosby from the great Crosby, Stills Nash and Young song "Teach Your Children" ... "and feed them on your dreams; the one they pick is the one you'll know by".

Yours truly,

Michael J. Gorton, Jr, CFSP
President, NSFDA

Continuing Education Webinar

"Care for the Caregiver: Self-Care for Funeral Director"

Speaker: Joanne L. Harpel, MPhil, CT, JD,
President and CEO, Rethink The Conversation and

President, Coping After Suicide

1 CREDIT

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 @ 3pm

To provide funeral directors an opportunity to consider the psychological impact of working in funeral and bereavement care (including the impact of sudden or traumatic deaths), recognize vicarious traumatization and compassion fatigue, and cultivate strategies for engaging in effective self-care.

When you "Click to Register" below, this will take you to the NSFDA website continuing education page. The webinar information will be the first event listed. Click on the "View Detail" to the right of the webinar information. This will take you to the Go-To-Webinar registration page.

Please renew your membership for 2023 which is done through the website www.nsfda.org (click Directors Tools and Join the NSFDA).

You also must register on the website to set up your individual portal (click Directors Tools and Create a Member Profile).

Each participant who wishes to receive a CEU must register in advance and use their unique address when registering. Our system will only email one certificate per email address per webinar. This is an effort to prevent fraud.

REGISTER HERE

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES!

Dear Members,

Happy New Year to all. I like to look back on what has been accomplished over the last year and what we're working on and what we can do to be better as your local association.

The board and our executive director work tirelessly to support our Member Firms. Affiliates, Colleagues, Student Members and Emeritus Members. I have always wanted to bring the best possible CEU programs and speakers to you. Having timely topics and current speakers is important. We all need our CEUs, and I'd like for them to be the best opportunity for you. I think we have accomplished that.

The board and its committee chairs have addressed issues as they have been presented to us. And we have had great success in solving issues facing funeral service in our counties. One of the best examples of this is the implementation of the Town of Islip online payment process for certified copies. In working with various clerks, we saw that expand this year. We hope other registrars will follow suit.

We continue to be a part of the chapter model program with NYS Funeral Directors Association. The board is active on this concept and have seen good things come of it. We will continue to keep an active role in it. The board sees value in this idea and that's why we continue to remain active.

We continue to seek member benefits and advantages for you to belong to NSFDA. We have been working on a new website with a member portal where you will be able to register, pay and receive your CEUs. There is a lot of info packed into the site including an updated cemetery portal and member location finder. More information about this in the coming weeks.

We all have been affected by inflation and rising expenses in our funeral homes and our personal homes. The times are changing, and costs don't seem to be going down. As an initiative to give back to our members who gave so much in the 2020 year of Covid, we lowered the dues to \$350 per firm in 2021. We hoped that it would encourage nonmembers to join our ranks and see the benefits of being a part of a local trade association. The board held the rate for 2 years. Unfortunately, membership didn't increase to the level we hoped, however, our expenses have increased. The board has voted to roll back the dues to the pre Covid price and add a small increase. The new rates for 2023 are as follows:

- Firms \$595.00
- Affiliates \$90.00
- Colleagues \$90.00
- Emeritus \$25.00

We hope that the membership will understand and support NSFDA. We will continue to bring you great CEU opportunities in person and will move forward with our 6-credit symposium. We will offer free virtual webinars as we can. The bottom line is that there is value in belonging to other trade associations, but there is greater value in belonging to a local, backyard trade association for funeral directors. We look forward to what 2023 will bring and we look forward to seeing you in the next year.

Registration to renew your membership can be done directly on our website using the following link: <https://nsfda.org/membership>.

After you have completed your registration, you must go back to the website and click the "Register" tab on the top right corner. Each individual funeral director must register and choose their own username and password. This will be your folder that your continuing education certificates will be placed and where information will be placed for any events your register for. Please make note of your username and password.

All the best to you all and your families and staff and a happy and healthy 2023!

Regards,

Michael J. Gorton, Jr., CFSP
President, NSFDA

A Message from the Executive Director



Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays with their family and friends. The Board of Directors have been busy over the last few months planning all the upcoming events for 2023. We are offering a continuing education webinar in February and information will be emailed to you in the upcoming weeks. The Nassau-Suffolk Funeral Directors Symposium and Networking Event, sponsored by The Whitmore Group LTD., will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at The Larkfield in East Northport. This event will offer continuing education credits, the annual meeting with elections, a graduating student in the

mortuary science program at Nassau County Community College will be presented with a scholarship and we are in the planning stage of the networking portion of the event. The NSFDA launched its brand new and fabulous website, www.nsfda.org. A big thank you to Michael Hoddinott, Suffolk County Representative, who spearheaded and developed the website along with Richard J. O'Shea Jr., Immediate Past President and NYSFDA Region 9 Director and Joseph Bernaudo, Nassau County Representative. The members will be able to renew their membership using the website utilizing a credit card at, <https://nsfda.org/membership> and register on the website, <https://nsfda.org/register>. Each member that registers will develop a "folder" utilizing a username and password that you design, and this will be where all your continuing education credit certificates will be stored for easy access (starting in 2023), so there will no more searching for those loose paper certificates. Please include your cell phone number when registering as we use text messaging as a form of communication as well. We hope to be able to utilize the website for all forms of communication. Watch your emails for exciting news on other ways the website will be utilized to benefit the membership.

A big thank you to Melissa Schmidt, Nassau County Representative and Programs chairperson for the amazing job in making the 1st Annual NSFDA Holiday Social on December 13, 2022, a huge success. The event was well attended, the food and drink at the Stonebridge in Smithtown was amazing and the DJ had everyone up on their feet. We are looking forward to planning this event again for you next year with a few exciting additional features for the evening.

Just a reminder that we use Constant Contact as the platform for all emails. If you are not receiving emails from us, please contact me at Hollynsfda@yahoo.com

As I begin my 8th year as your Executive Director, I want to thank the board of directors and the membership for giving me the opportunity to continue being a part of this wonderful association.

Wishing you all a happy & healthy 2023.

Holly

NYSFDA ANNUAL STUDENT DAY APRIL 22, 2023

The future of our industry is as important as ever, and NYSFDA is committed to cultivating relationships with mortuary science students, registered residents, and recent graduates. The NYSFDA Student Day is an annual, in-person event designed for students and residents to connect, network, and learn from one another and licensed funeral directors.

Students from all four mortuary science programs throughout the state are invited to participate in the event, which includes an opportunity to meet fellow students and hear from association leaders and licensed funeral directors.

The educational portion of the event is interactive, hands-on, and presents real-life situations to get students thinking creatively on how to best serve families. Topics have included First Call/Arrangement, Techniques & Tips, and Professional Preparation.

Students are also given the opportunity to “Ask the Funeral Director,” allowing participants to ask their burning questions. Throughout the day participants connect with one another in small groups, talk one-on-one with NYSFDA leaders, and gain practical information designed to prepare them for their early career as a funeral director.

Mark Your Calendar

Student Day will take place on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at NYSFDA headquarters in Albany, NY.

Just announced! This year’s program will include TikTok stars Eileen Hollis (@hollisfuneralhome) and Melissa Schmidt (@funeralbabe). Additional details and registration coming soon.

For more information visit A Career in Funeral Service <https://funeralservicecareer.com/>





DIVISION OF CEMETERIES

Please see attached memo from The Division of Cemeteries in regard to the New Authorization for Cremation & Disposition form. The link in the memo will take you to the new form for you to download and print. It is also available below.

[Click for Memo](#)

[Click for Document](#)

New England Cremation Supply will be coming down to Long Island on the 3rd Monday of each month. All orders must be made through Jeff Davis at Jeff@rockypointfuneralhome.com. Deadline for orders is the Monday before the scheduled delivery date. Remember that this is a member benefit so please do not contact New England Cremation Supply.

Nominations Are Now Open!

To my fellow members of the NSFDA,
As the chairman of the nominating committee I am informing you that all members in good standing and must have been a member for no less than three years are eligible to be members of the board of directors. Let it be known that there are positions available on the board in both Nassau and Suffolk County. Please let me know if you would like to join the board to help guide the future of your association.

Thank you,
Jeff Davis

Jeff@rockypointfuneralhome.com.

A NEW NSFDA ORG!

“A New NSFDA.org!”

Late in 2022, the Board began exploring options for redesigning the online presence of the Nassau-Suffolk Funeral Directors Association. Our old website was dated and difficult to navigate. It lacked many of the features we saw with other organizations and felt were most important to Funeral Directors, consumers, and students. Together, Rich O'Shea, Joe Bernaudo, and Mike Hoddinott set out to create a tool that really serves all facets of our organization.

Foremost, we wanted to transition to a nearly paperless platform. Beginning in 2023, you will see that registration for CEU's, the Golf Outing, the Symposium, and even CEU's will be processed through the website using simple forms that are accessible on computers, tablets, or mobile phones.

Beginning now, you are invited to go to www.nsfda.org. In the top right corner select the button that says "REGISTER" to request your *personal* online profile. Once you have requested your profile, just sit back and relax. It will take us a few hours to verify and process the applications but you will get a confirmation email once your account is activated. When you get that email, be sure to head back to the website and login to enter your individual member details such as your mailing address, phone, email, and license number. Please enter your details as they are on your registration with New York State. One of the greatest functions of the new site is that along with registration, all CEU certificates from 2023 onward, will be electronically delivered to your profile on our website - having a complete profile will ensure that we don't issue your certificate with missing or incorrect information!

Remember, *ALL* members must have an online profile to participate in CEU's and membership events moving through 2023 but you will only need to create this profile once!

The homepage features a calendar of events which include meetings, CEU's and events hosted by the NSFDA. A more indepth listing of upcoming CEU's is listed under Directors by clicking Continuing Education. The "Latest News" offers snippets of information and links to content like information from New York State, Division of Cemeteries, or policy changes with area partners that may affect your business and families.

Our new "Find a Funeral Home" tool helps consumers to locate trusted member firms with a search engine that lets them find you by name, town, or searching on a map. Firms who have a Regular Firm Membership will soon be able to enhance their listing to help their funeral home stand out on the map. A similar tool has been developed to replace the former cemetery portal. This tool now includes not just the location of the cemetery, but also price lists, maps, and other documents if they are available to us. You can help the Cemetery Portal Project by submitting any missing cemetery names and information to mike@bfhli.com

We've been working overtime to get the membership dues and renewals online. We anticipate that they will be going live very shortly. These renewals (dues) are independent of creating your new user profile. As soon as we are ready to begin processing dues you will be notified by email. At that time you can go to <https://nsfda.org/membership> or select "Join the NSFDA" from the Directors Tools tab. On the right side select a "Firm" or "Individual" membership - Firms can enroll and pay dues for up to 15 members while renewing a Regular Firm Membership. Individuals who need to renew can do so by clicking the "Individual Member" button and completing the simple form.

Be on the lookout for additional tools coming in early 2023.



Kevin LaValle has been appointed Registrar of the Town of Brookhaven.

Mr.LaValle's name will appear on the Death Certificates on February 3, 2023.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JEFF GAINES OF ABIGAL PRESS!!



Congratulations to Jeff Gaines of Abigal Press on his retirement. Jeff was presented with a plaque from NSFDA President Michael J. Gorton on behalf of the Board of Directors and members on Tuesday, October 25th, 2022 at the NYSFDA Chapter CE & Roundtable Event held at the Garden City Hotel. Jeff gave 47 years of service to the funeral industry and we wish him the best of luck. He is looking forward to spending time with his grandchildren.

Issues with Hospice and Certified Death Certificates

Over the last two years, the board has been writing to the NYSFDA Government Affairs Committee to have elected officials consider having Hospice being responsible for certifying death certificates of patients who are on their hospice program. We have reached out to NYSFDA Government Affairs Committee to please consider legislation to amend Article 41 Title 4 "Registrations of Death" to make it clear that individuals who pass away on hospice, whether it be at home or in a facility, other than a hospital, that the hospice agency be the responsibility party for securing the death certificate.

It has happened far too often when a doctor refuses to sign the death certificate and hospice feels the attending physician signed the death certificate. Both parties have gone back and forth and have left the funeral directors and more importantly the families in the middle of getting a certified death certificate and disposition permit in a timely fashion. This can add stress when it is not needed.

We believe that the PBH code should be changed to add a section under 4141 (like 4141-A) Duties of a hospice agency. With the increase of families signing on to hospice for end of life care, there will be more situations where hospice should be the responsible party for certifying the death certificate.

We still feel strongly that there needs to be a change to PHC in regard to this. It's hard to comprehend how a doctor or nurse practitioner for hospice can order a prescription for medication, more times than not a controlled substance and quite possibly the last medication they ever receive and yet there is no code or law requiring the MD or NP from hospice to sign their death certificate and hospice can just pass on it and say it's the responsibility of the attending physician.

There are times that Hospice is helpful and does do it's job in securing the doctors certification, but it has happened far too many times when the doctor refuses and hospice tries to no avail to convince the doctor to sign. This puts the family in the middle and us trying to get our jobs done.

I am pleased to say that the NYSFDA Government Affairs committee has recommended this be part of its legislative agenda for 2023. Hopefully we will see this become part of the code. We know that changing things legislatively does take time. Hopefully not too much time. We will report back once we have more information and progress is happening.



National Cemetery Scheduling Office Hours Change

Change in National Cemetery Scheduling Office Hours

Effective November 7, 2022, the National Cemetery Scheduling Office is changing our weekend hours. The new Scheduling Office operational hours will be as follows:

Saturday: The office will be open from 9:00am – 5:30pm Eastern Time

Sunday: The office will be closed

The scheduling office hours are Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 7:30pm Eastern time and Saturday from 9:00am – 5:30pm Eastern Time.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to work to improve our burial scheduling services to streamline operations and improve our ability to deliver timely, quality services to our Veterans, their family members, and their personal representatives.

NEW 2023 LI CREMATION COMPANY PRICING

CLICK HERE FOR PRICING



Calverton National Cemetery

Please see attached for updated guidance regarding procedures at Calverton National Cemetery

Click Here for Document

[Document Link](#)

NYSFDA's Op-Ed from Randy McCullough following his letter to members (Buffalo News on January 12, 2023)

[Click Here](#)

RENEW MEMBERSHIP



*It is with deep sadness that the NSFDA
announces the passing of:*

*Caroline M. Nicholson, the mother of Travis
Nicholson, NSFDA member & owner of the Massapequa Funeral Home*

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Catie.Canetti@cffinc.com

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Melissa Schmidt

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Nomination Committee: Jeff Davis

TFCU/AdHoc Committee: Richard O'Shea Jr.

Bylaw Committee: Jeff Davis/Bea Lewanduski

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