

NFDA 2006 PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD ESSAY

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The Stephen R. Haky Funeral, Home, Inc. as part of the Dignity Memorial Provider network, participated, planned, and presented, an innovative and very valuable Veterans Benefit Seminar on Wednesday, March 31, 2004.

Our veterans served this nation, and have protected other countries, with honor and great sacrifice. Many are not aware of local and federal VA death benefits, provisions, and documentation required.

We created positive lasting relationships with our veteran's organizations by taking the time to provide this informational seminar. Our firm has always assisted our families with all business matters following a death. Our entire staff, however, learned in much more detail how to serve our families better, as a team, and was recognized by the community as such.

After months of preparation, planning, and staff training; invitations and registration forms were mailed to the local V.F.W. Posts in the Fayette County, Pennsylvania area, followed by a reminder.

Over eighty veterans and their spouses responded, and attended the seminar, which was held at The Shadyside Inn in a beautiful and spacious banquet hall.

Funeral directors, Steve Haky, Jr., Stephanie Haky Georgiana, Charles Christopher, and staff members Joseph Soom, Penny Hall, and Erica Haky assisted in the registration and technical support in setting up the speakers, and equipment for the seminar.

As each guest arrived, they were registered, issued name badges, given a packet of benefit information and applications, and topics to be reviewed in the seminar. Each guest was seated by a staff member who was assigned as host to their table, for guidance during the program, and to answer questions.

After a warm welcome and statement of appreciation for their sacrifices and service to our country, the pledge of allegiance was recited and all were seated for a wonderful and informative program.

The seminar consisted of a Power Point presentation of United States Veterans Affairs Benefits and Eligibility, necessary documentation, local Fayette County burial benefits, VA National Cemeteries, locations, and eligibility, among many other interesting facts and topics, as listed in the packets provided. As an example, many were surprised to know that there was an application for replacement of lost service medals awarded during their time of service.

Charles Christopher narrated the program, and really had everyone's attention. His spirited presentation was factual, humorous, and inspirational. A full course luncheon followed.

Everyone really found the seminar to be extremely informative, and over half of those who attended made an appointment to learn more about preplanning with our firm. We were really proud to have the opportunity to spend the afternoon with them, provide very valuable information, and affirm our commitment to excellent service. (Refer to Document I. E.)