



Eagle's Eye

A Newsletter for Pursuit of Excellence Participants



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From the Chair: Pursuing Service Excellence Comes Full Circle



Contrary to popular belief, our profession is not recession-proof. While many of us may not be facing a financial crisis on par with certain automotive manufacturers and financial institutions, we, too, are feeling the impact of the economy. Our costs of doing business are increasing while families are making different purchasing decisions.

While I share the same concerns as many of you, I see these economic hardships as an opportunity to reflect on why we became funeral directors in the first place. No matter what a family's financial capabilities are, it's our responsibility to help them remember, honor and celebrate the life of their loved one in a personal and meaningful way. In times like these, it's more important than ever to provide families with unique, yet cost-effective options that will add meaning to a funeral or memorial service.

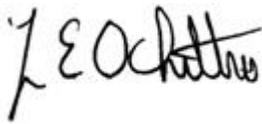
As these tough times remind me of the reasons why I entered the funeral service profession, I also think about the ways in which my staff and I determine how we're going to deliver outstanding service to families and our community. One of the most obvious ways is through

[Pursuit of Excellence](#) participation. With any program that requires time, effort and a monetary investment, it is easy to fall into the ☐What's in it for me☐ mode of thinking. Sure, you get a great set of promotional materials to increase your firm's name recognition and can purchase merchandise that showcases your recognition, but let's refocus on the foundation of our business: the families and communities we serve. How does your participation in the Pursuit program impact those you serve?

Even if no one takes notice of the eagle statues and plaques throughout your funeral home, or the news article about your Pursuit recognition, your program participation adds value to your business. The families you serve expect more; they want their money's worth.

The Pursuit program offers a blueprint for ensuring your funeral home is doing all it can to offer outstanding programs and services; has compassionate and knowledgeable staff; and is dedicated to giving back to the community. So even if it is not outwardly apparent how your Pursuit participation and commitment to funeral service excellence impacts those you serve, it does make a difference. Your involvement in the Pursuit of Excellence program is reflected in the way in which you and your staff serve families and your community. Remember that everything we do, including participating in the Pursuit program, is ultimately for the greater good of those we serve.

Sincerely,



Lynn E. Ochiltree, CFSP
Pursuit of Excellence Committee Chair

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Pursuit of Excellence Joins the Facebook Revolution

Chances are, you either have an account with [Facebook](#) or know someone that does. Several months ago, NFDA launched a [Facebook page](#) as another way to reach out to funeral directors around the world, keep them informed about association activities and promote member engagement. Among the features of this highly-interactive site are a: Discussion Board that allows individuals to comment on a funeral service-related questions or issues; a schedule of upcoming events that you can RSVP to; Notes section with important news in the profession; and a Wall that individuals can leave comments on. With very little promotion, NFDA's Facebook page has become a resource for the latest news and information about funeral service. Currently, NFDA has more than 660 fans on its Facebook page, including several members of NFDA's Executive Board and staff. Are you one of them?



Recently, NFDA created an event on its Facebook page to promote the 2008-09 Pursuit of Excellence entry deadline. The [Pursuit of Excellence entry](#) on NFDA's Facebook page allows fans to RSVP to the entry deadline; leave comments or questions; and view pictures and information related to the program. This is just one more way NFDA staff and Pursuit of Excellence participants can stay connected throughout the program year.



With thousands of new people joining every day, social media sites can be another valuable outlet to promote your business and educate the public about funeral service. In addition to creating a personal Facebook profile, you can create a page promoting your funeral home, just like Pursuit of Excellence participants [Jones-Wynn Funeral Homes](#) of Villa Rica and Douglasville, Ga. If you don't have a Facebook profile, the sign-up process is quick and easy, and before you know it, you will be connecting with professional colleagues throughout the country and around the world, and the general public. If you have any questions about Facebook or need help getting started, contact NFDA Public Relations Manager Jessica Koth at 800-228-6332 or jkoth@nfda.org.

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NFDA Gears Up for Boston

There's only *one event* that brings the *most*

funeral service professionals and exhibitors together under one roof: [NFDA's annual International Convention & Expo](#)! This year, [Boston](#) is the place to be for discovering the newest exhibits; getting practical, easy-to-implement ideas from colleagues; updating your embalming and technical skills; and rubbing elbows with industry leaders.

In between attending workshops, walking the expo floor and taking in the sights of Boston, don't forget to stop by the Pursuit of Excellence area that will be part of "NFDA Central" the hub of all the action! Visit the Pursuit of Excellence area to see which ideas made this year's [Best of the Best](#), pick up your copy of the newly-updated 2009-2010 Pursuit of Excellence Guidelines and take advantage of an impressive early bird registration discount for next year's program!



Since its integration into the program, the Best of the Best ideas have been a focal point in the Pursuit of Excellence area at NFDA's Convention & Expo. However, this year, there will be even *more* ideas for Pursuit visitors to take in!

Although the Pursuit of Excellence Committee can only choose up to ten essays for Best of the Best recognition, there are still additional components of other participants' entries worth highlighting. Perhaps a funeral home has an outstanding clergy relations program or an aftercare program that has had a significant impact on the bereaved this deserves to be recognized! So when Pursuit of Excellence Committee members come to NFDA headquarters to review program entries in August 2009, they will select various programs and services from

participant entries that are unique and had a considerable impact on those served. These "committee picks" will be showcased in the Pursuit of Excellence area at convention. So if you're looking to ignite your firm's innovation and discover *more* ways to reach out to families and your community, Pursuit of Excellence is the place to be!

You also won't want to miss the All-Star Recognition Ceremony, Monday, October 26, 4:30-6 p.m. The All-Star Recognition Ceremony is your chance to mingle with the "who's who" of funeral service, while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar; accept your Pursuit of Excellence recognition from Pursuit of Excellence Chair Lynn E. Ochiltree, CFSP; get your picture taken with NFDA President John D. Reed Sr., CFSP, CPC; and pick up your funeral home's promotional materials. ***(NFDA is pleased to add a 60-second radio ad script to the award recipient promotional package!)***

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Before You Submit

The Pursuit of Excellence entry deadline of July 15, 2009, will be here before you know it. Even if you're a seasoned Pursuit of Excellence pro, there are a few things to keep in mind before you submit.

For several years, it was encouraged that participants include a photograph of their funeral home with their entry. These photographs were then incorporated into a slideshow that was featured in the "NFDA Central" area at convention. While some found it interesting to view the exterior of their colleagues' funeral homes, these photographs didn't fully capture the essence of what being a Pursuit of Excellence Award recipient is all about. For this year's program, participants are asked to submit a photograph that captures a program or service described in any of the criteria (e.g., a picture from a holiday program, unique advertisement, community presentation or event). Photos can be mailed as color prints or emailed as a JPEG file to pursuit@nfda.org. Please include a one-sentence description of what your photo depicts.



Many funeral homes took advantage of the 2008-09 early bird registration special. Over 100 firms saved

nearly 10 percent on the participation fee! If you were one of these early bird registrants, but did not submit *all* of the registration materials (merchandise orders, signed Pledge of Ethical Practices and funeral home information requested on the registration form), please be sure to submit this information to NFDA by July 15. Email pursuit@nfda.org or call 800-228-6332 if you have any questions regarding your registration materials.

If you did not take advantage of the early bird registration special, you can still join this year's Pursuit of Excellence program. Just fill out the [registration form](#) and submit all required entry materials to NFDA by July 15.

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New Resources to Educate Your Staff, Fulfill Pursuit Criteria

NFDA recently released its [2009 Resources Catalog](#). This year's catalog is packed with essential tools to assist funeral directors in strengthening their business operations, educating staff and enhancing service to families. Check out these new NFDA resources that will help you fulfill Pursuit of Excellence criteria, keep you and your staff up-to-date on topics relevant to funeral service, and increase family support.

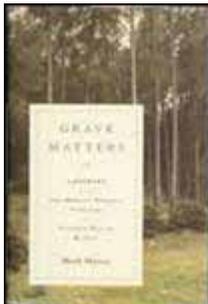
Books



Customer Service in an Instant: 60 Ways to Win Customers and Keep Them Coming Back (10 CE hours)

Authors: Keith Bailey and Karen Leland

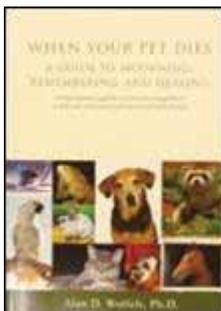
**Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion B:
Training on a communication skill.**



Grave Matters: A Journey Through the Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial (12 CE hours)

Author: Mark Harris

**Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C:
Training on funeral home operations.**



When Your Pet Dies: A Guide to Mourning, Remembering and Healing (8 CE hours)

Author: Alan D. Wolfelt

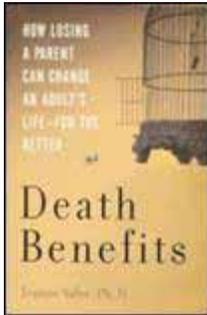
**Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion D:
Training on bereavement and family support.**



Samantha Jane's Missing Smile □ A Story About Coping with the Loss of a Parent

Authors: Julie Kaplow and Donna Pincus

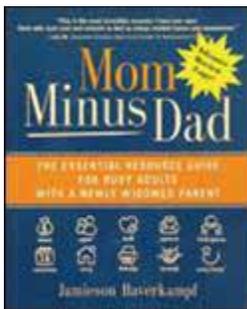
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



Death Benefits: How Losing a Parent Can Change an Adult's Life for the Better

Author: Jeanne Safer, Ph.D.

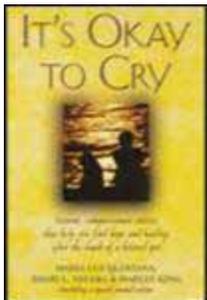
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



Mom Minus Dad: The Essential Resource Guide for Busy Adults with a Newly Widowed Parent

Author: Jamieson Haverkamp

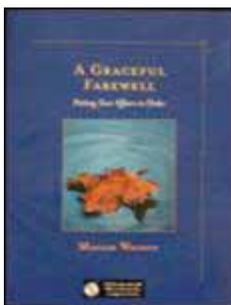
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



It's Okay to Cry: Healing After the Death of a Beloved Pet

Authors: Maria Luz Quintana, Shari L. Veleba and Harley King

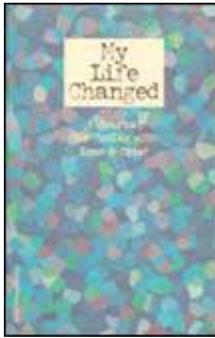
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



A Graceful Farewell □ Putting Your Affairs in Order

Author: Maggie Watson

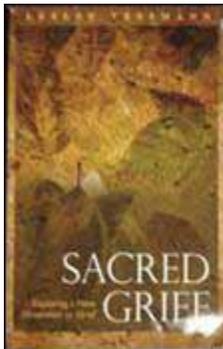
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



My Life Changed □ *A Journal for Coping with Loss & Grief*

Authors: Amy, Allie and David Dennison

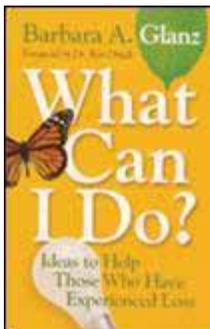
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



Sacred Grief: Exploring a New Dimension to Grief

Author: Leslee Tessmann

Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.

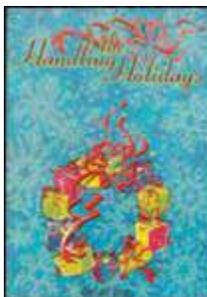


What Can I Do? Ideas to Help Those Who Have Experienced Loss

Author: Barbara A. Glanz

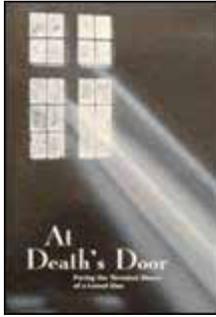
Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.

DVD



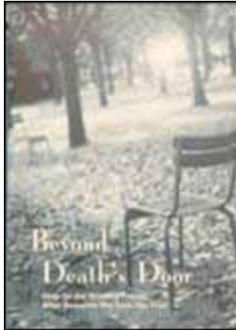
Handling the Holidays

Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



At Death's Door: Facing the Terminal Illness of a Loved One

Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.



Beyond Death's Door: Help for the Grieving Process After Someone You Love Has Died

Fulfillment for Family Outreach and Support, Criterion F: Add new materials to your resource library.

Audio CD

- *FTC Compliance Update: 2008* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: T. Scott Gilligan
Fulfillment for Basic Requirements, Criterion B: Training on FTC Funeral Rule.
- *People, I Just Don't Understand Them: Resolving Workplace Generational Conflicts* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Shira Harrington
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion B: Training on communication skill.
- *The Internet Age vs. Your Funeral Home: Legal Issues Created by Technology* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Michael Daney
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.
- *Preneed Ethics in Demanding Times* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Christopher Kuhnen
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.
- *Secrets of Cremation Profitability* (4 CE hours)
Presenters: William B. McQueen and John T. McQueen
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.
- *The Future of Funeral Service: Practical Survival Steps for the Independent Funeral Home* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Alan Creedy
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.

- *If You're Buying or Selling a Funeral Home, Timing is Everything* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Steven Tidwell
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.
- *Tips for Marketing a Pet Funeral Business* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Coleen Ellis
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion C: Training on funeral home operations.
- *What to Do When Families Say, "No Religion, Please"* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: JoAnn Baldwin
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion D: Training on bereavement and family support.
- *Hispanic Funerals: Need-to-Know Insights* (4 CE hours)
Presenter: Felix Gonzales
Fulfillment for Continuing Education and Staff Development, Criterion D: Training on bereavement and family support.

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Become an NFDA CPC Partner!



NFDA is inviting Pursuit of Excellence participants to host a **Certified Preplanning Consultant (CPC) Seminar**. As a host, your funeral home is entitled to a *substantial discount* on seminar registrations for your entire qualified staff. An added benefit: The CPC Seminar is approved for up to 16 CE hours by most state licensing boards and will help you fulfill Pursuit of Excellence criteria.

The [NFDA CPC designation](#) is the only national certification for preplanning professionals. If you have at least seven staff members who qualify, NFDA can make the seminar exclusive to your firm. Alternatively, NFDA can open up the seminar to a larger audience. All that is required is a training room for three days during which candidates will prepare for the certification exam, which is given on the final morning of the seminar.

In today's uncertain economic times, the CPC designation is more valued than ever as a way to set your funeral home staff apart from the competition. Here is an opportunity, at great savings, to certify your entire preneed team!

Learn more about the NFDA CPC Program at www.nfda.org/cpc.php, or call Colleen Murphy Klein or Faye Bonini at 800-228-6332 to schedule your firm's CPC Seminar.

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