



Informs ■ Educates ■ Advocates

For Immediate Release: October 27, 2025

Contact: Jessica Koth, 262-814-1536, JKoth@NFDA.org

Afterword's "Grace" Named Winner of 2025 NFDA Innovation Award

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is proud to announce that Afterword – Grace, The First AI Assistant for Funeral Homes, has been named the winner of the prestigious 2025 NFDA Innovation Award. The award was presented on October 27 during the Opening General Session of the 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo in Chicago, Illinois. The Innovation Award is generously sponsored by ASD – Answering Service for Directors.

Now in its 16th year, the NFDA Innovation Award honors suppliers and vendors whose products and services offer innovative, practical and transformational solutions for funeral professionals and the families they serve. Grace was selected from a highly competitive field of entries for its remarkable ability to streamline operations, reduce administrative burden and support compassionate care through intuitive, AI-powered technology.

About Grace by Afterword

Grace is the funeral profession's first AI assistant designed specifically to support funeral directors in their day-to-day work. Seamlessly integrated into Afterword's software platform, Grace automates routine administrative tasks like building case files, sending personalized reminders and organizing family communications. One of her most powerful features is the ability to transform a photo of a handwritten worksheet into a complete digital case file – no double entry required.

Grace is not a generic chatbot; she is a smart, adaptive assistant shaped by the real-world workflows of funeral directors. She learns from each funeral home she supports, customizing reminders, follow-up messages and document requests to fit the team's processes. Her ability to ensure consistency, reduce human error and deliver a seamless experience for both staff and families, sets a new standard for technology in funeral service.

Grace was selected as the 2025 Innovation Award winner by a panel of esteemed judges from across the funeral service profession. Finalists were evaluated on criteria including originality, quality, design and practical application.

Healing Path Cemetery, a grief-focused engagement system designed to bring families back to the cemetery through on-site healing stations, virtual rituals and social content, came in second place. Passare – AI Scanner, a mobile tool using handwriting recognition to instantly digitize handwritten Vitals forms and streamline case entry, took third place.

All three finalists, along with more than 20 additional entrants, are being showcased in the Expo Hall during the 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo, taking place October 26–29 in Chicago.

More information about the NFDA Innovation Award is available at [NFDA.org/InnovationAwards](https://www.nfda.org/InnovationAwards).

NFDA thanks ASD – Answering Service for Directors for its continued support of the Innovation Award and extends its gratitude to the 2025 Innovation Award judges:

- Matt Bailey, Bailey Family Funeral Homes, Wallingford, Connecticut
- Chris Costello, Mothe Funeral Homes, New Orleans, Louisiana
- David Hernandez, Jersey Memorial Group, Old Bridge, New Jersey

- Leili McMurrough, President, Worsham College, Libertyville, Illinois
- Mike Burns, Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Timothy McLoone, William R. May Funeral Home Inc., New Hope, Pennsylvania
- Welton Hong, Ring Ring Marketing, Las Vegas, Nevada

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association representing 20,000 individual members who represent nearly 11,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit NFDA.org.

#