



Embracing Change with Respect

Lionel J. Lessard Jr, CFSP
2023 - 2024 CFDA President

2024 CFDA

Membership

Dues Application

Please send your
dues payment no
later than Friday,
February 16, 2024.

Lionel J. Lessard, Jr., CFSP, 2023-2024 CFDA President

A Review of the First Year of the Presidency of Lionel J. Lessard, Jr., CFSP



CFDA President Lionel J. Lessard, Jr., CFSP led the CFDA, along with the Officers, Executive Board, CFDA staff and Consultants through a smooth 2023. In a recent conversation with President Lessard, he affirmed, “I am so honored and grateful to be able to have the opportunity to serve as the CFDA President for another year.” Additionally, in his President’s Message in the July Issue of *The Associate*, he reminded us, “Remember, we will all be successful if we continue to change with the new ways of our industry.” Reinforcing the theme for his presidency, *Embracing Change with Respect*, 2023 was filled with progressive conversation and positive outcomes. CFDA is fortunate to also have a High-Energy and Professional Group of Officers and Executive Board that serve alongside Lionel.

Reflected in articles featured in CFDA’s bimonthly magazine *The Associate*, were reoccurring themes of Strategic Planning, Succession, Business Practices, Ethics, Remarketing, Buying and Selling your Funeral Home, and the ever-present examination of the FTC Funeral Rule, as well as how well-informed funeral directors evolve in the age of the internet, including online pricing. In late February, CFDA’s Legislative Chairperson, Nicole Paquette, testified before the Human Services Committee regarding *HB 6701 – An Act Concerning Funeral Assistance for Persons of Limited Income*. Nicole Paquette and Jonathan Green, along with CFDA Lobbyists at Capitol Consulting (*continued on back*)

2024 Officers & Executive Board



Back Row: **Jesse Gomes**, Assistant Executive Director; **Robert Hansen**, Board Member; **David MacDonald**, Past President; **Michael Introvigne**, Board Member; **John Cascio**, Executive Director.

Front Row: **Edward Sheehy**, Treasurer; **Melissa Melin-Miles**, Vice President; **Lionel Lessard**, President; **Lissa Lovetere-Stone**, Board Member; **June Williams**, Board Member;

Not Pictured:

Jonathan Green, Secretary;
Jessica Mercuri, Board Member

Your state and national associations are your partners, ready to assist you whenever needed in facing the issues and questions that sometimes seem overwhelming in today’s small-business environment. These professionals are on-hand to assist you . . .

Back Row: **John Cascio**, Executive Director; **Beverly Matthews**, Graphic Design; **Laura Soll**, Public Relations; **Jesse Gomes**, Assistant Executive Director.

Front Row: **Michael Dugan**, Lobbyist; **Noelle Frechette**, Administrative Assistant; **Tim Rooney**, Accountant.

Not Pictured:

Jennifer DiBella, Attorney;
Liz Connelly, Lobbyist.



Code of Ethics

"To The Public We Pledge:

Proper legal regulations for the members of our profession.
Devotion to high moral and service standards. Honesty in all offerings of service.

To Those We Serve We Pledge:

Confidential business and professional relationships.
Respect for the creed and customs of every man.
Competence and dignity in the conduct of all services.

To Our Profession We Pledge:

Support of high educational standards. Encouragement of scientific research.
Adherence to sound business practices.

Having received the honor of membership in the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, I accept the obligation of the professional creed."

Our Commitment

To provide our client-families with those funeral services and products that are appropriate to the needs and wishes of the deceased and family.

To share with our client-families full and accurate information on any of the services or products we provide.

To fully detail and document our understanding of those services and products required of or requested by a client-family.

To answer and respond to any questions pertaining to our agreement.

To attempt to answer and resolve any problems efficiently and fairly with fair consideration given to the views and concerns of all parties.

Where a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be agreed upon, we further commit to seeking the arbitration services of The Funeral Service Consumer Arbitration Program.

Our commitment is to serve our client-families and our confidence in our services and products allows us to make this pre-commitment to the fair and timely resolution of any dispute.



Connecticut Funeral Directors Association

364 Silas Deane Highway • Wethersfield, CT 06109
toll free: 800 919-CFDA • phone 860 721-0234 • fax 860 257-3617
website: www.ctfda.org • e-mail: john@connfda.com

CFDA Mission Statement

To advance the profession of funeral service in Connecticut through Public Awareness, Education, Advocacy and High Ethical Standards.

In 2024 our focus remains on **Embracing the Changes** in our Association, our state, the country and the world. I suppose there are many ways to Embrace Change. Do we meet it head-on at breakneck speed with no holds barred? Maybe. But NOT in this Business.

The only way we can effectively face the future, with unforeseen and ever changing health crises, looming financial uncertainties, and political and cultural upheaval is with RESPECT. Also KINDNESS and a healthy dose of FLEXIBILITY.

Now we are entering into a new year with our personal and professional fortunes teetering on chance and the whims of every person who comes into our lives, both literally and figuratively. My quote from last year by an unknown (at least to me) scribe still rings true, "The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people." We are in the business of showing the world, one family at a time, a measure of beauty and respect with every call we receive. I'd like to think that respect extends to every person, whether they are employee, client, acquaintance or family member.

I am hopeful that you will continue your commitment to CFDA as we **Embrace All of the Changes** that will inevitably become our new normal.

— John F. Cascio, CFDA Executive Director

CFDA 2024 Membership Structure

CFDA is a firm-based membership Base Fee \$475.00

- With the payment of one membership fee, the main location, all the additional locations and all licensed personnel at all locations will be considered members.
- We are maintaining separate membership categories for retired licensees, apprentices, and students.
- We are asking for the license numbers of all licensed personnel from a dues-paying firm.

Retired Licensee Member \$200.00

Ideal for the funeral director no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of a business but still interested in the profession.

Apprentice Member \$150.00

Transition from student to practicing funeral director.

Student Member \$100.00

A great way for students who are enrolled in a mortuary science program or apprentices to get involved in their future profession.

Associate Licensee Member \$475.00

Not currently employed in a funeral home. No vote.

Music License per location \$311.00

A separate application will be sent out by NFDA.

Webcasting License per website \$61.00

NFDA has finalized agreements with BMI, ASCAP and SESAC to a webcasting license that enables you to legally broadcast funeral services that include copyrighted music over the internet.

Notice Regarding Tax Deductibility of CFDA Dues

Generally, funeral homes that pay dues are able to deduct 100% of those dues as ordinary business expenses for federal tax purposes. However, due to the recently enacted Budget Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993 (the "Act"), any dues revenues utilized by a professional or trade association for lobbying purposes cannot be deducted by the member who paid the dues.

In accordance with the Act, the CFDA is hereby notifying its membership that it estimates that 20.4% of 2024 CFDA dues paid by a member will not be deductible as ordinary business expenses for federal tax purposes. These estimates are to be used by members in determining what portion of their dues are deductible. Please provide a copy of this notice to your accountant or other tax preparer.

Please note that CFDA dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes, but continue to be deductible as a business expense.



2024 Members Benefits

You are welcome to join NFDA separately. Please note that you DO NOT NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF NFDA TO RECEIVE YOUR MUSIC LICENSE or WEBCAST LICENSING which will come to you from NFDA as a separate billing.

As a member of CFDA here are just some of the benefits you receive . . .

- Pride in your Industry & Association by displaying the CFDA logo on your website and promotional material
- Consumer Brochure: "Funeral Trust & Contracts: Regarding Medicaid Title 19" available with your funeral home imprint in English and Spanish
- Endorsed Connecticut Funeral Trust Program, Interment Trust Services/Access Financial
- Membership Manual & Resource Guide on CFDA Website
- One hour of Legal Counsel
- Employment and job postings in The Associate and 24/7 emails
- Northeast Funeral Service Partnership which includes "Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania"
- Partnership with Federated Insurance for Property/Liability, Workers' Compensation and Financial Protection Services
- Partnership with TJB Financial Services, Inc.: Investments, Comprehensive Financial Planning, and Future Retirement/**401k Benefit Program.**
- Partnership with Chamber Insurance Trust/Healthcare & Supplemental Insurance
- Digital Communication through The Associate Newsletter, Website and 24/7 Email Blasts.
- Educational Seminars designed to qualify for Continuing Education Credits/OSHA
- Representation in State Legislature for CFDA Issues / Political Action Committee (PAC)
- Public Relations Consultant
- Advertising & Graphic Design Services Available
- **Dues payable by MasterCard, VISA, and AMEX**
- Professional group of volunteers serving on our Executive Board and Committees
- Executive Director John Cascio and his staff in the Wethersfield office take every opportunity to keep you informed of Association activities. He welcomes your suggestions and works closely with the Officers and Executive Committee to ensure that your concerns are addressed.

The CFDA Membership Booklet and Dues Application is also on the CFDA Website: www.ctfda.org. Payments must be made after January 1, 2024.

CFD-PAC Total Member Contributions as of December 2023 - \$9,725

Why do we need a Political Action Committee (PAC)?

The CFD-PAC helps us keep members of the General Assembly who support our state interests in office. Virtually every other professional group in the country is trying to do the same thing, and their interests may be very different than ours.

How can I support the CFD-PAC?

We need your voluntary, personal financial contribution each year.

Why doesn't CFDA use general funds for this purpose?

Associations and corporations are prohibited by law from making state campaign contributions. All CFDA contributions to political campaigns are derived exclusively from personal CFD-PAC contributions. We cannot accept contributions from your firm.

How will my personal contribution be used?

Contributions to the CFD-PAC are polled and used to support candidates running for the State Senate and House of Representatives.

Who decides which candidates to support?

The CFD-PAC Committee and Lobbyist makes this determination. The Committee evaluates candidate positions on issues, committee interests, seniority and leadership potential.

Why should I join the CFD-PAC?

Together, we send these important messages to the State of Connecticut.

- CFDA is sustained by a politically aware and active membership base.
- We hold our elected officials accountable for their actions.
- We are active participants in the election process.

At each CFDA Annual Convention, Summer Gathering and Executive Board Meeting our Attorney Jennifer DiBella, Lobbyists Michael Dugan and Liz Connelly, along with the Legislative Committee Chair Jonathan Green, Co-Chair Nicole Paquette and 2024 CFDA President Lionel J. Lessard, Jr. prepare, present, and review the ever-changing landscape of politics in Connecticut. Their efforts keep our members informed and elected officials accountable to the issues the funeral industry faces daily.

Gold Club, Contributions of \$500 to \$750

Silver Club, Contributions of \$250 to \$499

Bronze Club, Contributions of \$50 to \$249

Up to date contributions are reported in each issue of The Associate and in the Year End Annual Report.



Annual Events & Special Occasions

As we progress through the events of the year ahead members look forward to gathering together learning, celebrating, and honoring our members, clients, and our communities. Spending this time together builds a remarkable bond of civic purpose and industry pride among our funeral directors.



CFDA Summer Meeting

Each summer our members enjoy a day at the shore attending seminars for CEUs and celebrating the Milestones of Member's Years of Licensing and Service in Connecticut.

The Burial of Unclaimed Veterans' Cremains

For a decade CFDA has partnered annually with the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a dignified and solemn ceremony for veterans who's cremains have been unclaimed.



Annual Golf Tournament Held each Fall at one of Connecticut's premier Country Clubs for a day out while filling a hearse with much needed supplies for Connecticut Foodshare.



Northeast Funeral Service Partnership

The NFSP, which is made up of the Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania funeral directors associations, recognizes the untapped strength of collaboration.

Over the past three years the NFSP has dedicated itself to crafting and developing programming aimed at helping funeral home owners and managers reimagine their approach to funeral home employment and aspire to become better employers.



The 135th Annual Meeting of CFDA • December 7, 2023 at the Bristol Event Center, Bristol, Connecticut



Toys, Funds and Gift Cards were collected for the Annual Drive to benefit the Connecticut National Guard's Operation ELF (Embracing Lonely Families) program and The Toy Closet at Yale New Haven Hospital Auxiliary. L to R: CFDA Member Samuel Green; Melissa Melin-Miles; Billye Bradley; Hymie Glick from The Toy Closet; CFDA Assistant Executive Director Jesse Gomes; CFDA Secretary Jonathan Green.

Honored to have Past Presidents of CFDA in Attendance:

Back Row: Jesse Gomes; Assistant Executive Director, Lionel Lessard, 2023-2024; Edward Sheehy, 2018-2019; Robert Muccino, 2017; Dan Ford, 2009; John Zaleski, 2005; Art Erickson, 2003; Franklyn Hull, 1999; John Cascio, CFDA Executive Director;
Front Row: Howard Hill, 2015-2016 Nicole Paquette, 2011; Randy Molloy, 2002; John Carmon, 1992; David MacDonald, 2021-2022.



▼ **L to R: NFDA Attorney Chris Farmer on FTC Compliance in Today's Market; Mr. Dominick Astorino on The Relevance of Restorative Art**



Our experts filled the afternoon presentations with images, charts, graphs, facts and illustrative stories. Followed by a celebration of Funeral Service and the installation of Lionel J. Lessard, Jr. as the 2024 CFDA President by NFDA Treasurer and 2009 Past CFDA President, Daniel J. Ford and the Officers and Executive Board.

Review of 2023 (Continued)

were pro-active regarding this legislation. Through a review of the proposed budget, and negotiations with the Appropriations and the Human Service Committees there was a unanimous vote to restore that allowance back to \$1,800. *This will take effect on July 1, 2024.*

CFDA and its members participated in a host of seminars and events at the June Leadership Conference, the September NFDA Annual Convention where we celebrated the election of Daniel J. Ford to the office of NFDA Treasurer, and several webinars. Our Annual Summer Gathering not only offered educational seminars but honored members with longevity in funeral service. The monthly **OSHA Web Series** continued in 2023 to satisfy the mandatory CEUs and accommodate the busy schedules of funeral directors statewide.

In November, we honored **Veterans in our 10th year** for unclaimed cremains with the CT Department of Veterans Affairs. CFDA also attended the **Northeast Funeral Service Partnership** where we collectively held a ground-breaking symposium, the **"Funeral Forward Summit,"** which focused on Transforming Funeral Home Employment and strong communication within your funeral home. CFDA was and will continue to be involved with **Career Days, CT Food Share, the Toy Closet, Operation ELF, and our Annual Golf Tournament.** In 2024, there will be continued progress [legislation, workforce, and our website]. While these are welcomed, others may be the unexpected moment where we hold our collective breath, rally our membership to face it together, and prepare in earnest for the road ahead always *Embracing Change with Respect.*