

February 27, 2009

Committee on Public Health

Connecticut General Assembly

**Re: Supporting An Act Concerning Facilities of Colleges That Offer Mortuary Sciences – Bill No. 6049**

Dear Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for raising the mortuary science bill.

As a licensed embalmer and funeral director for the past 35 years, owner of two funeral homes in Danbury and Ridgefield and a 9 year member of the State of Connecticut Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors (the State Board), I feel compelled to support this bill.

The landscape of funeral service has changed over the years in many ways. We have gone from family owned and operated funeral homes to corporate owned establishments. Ownership and staffing are no longer family members who grew up in and around funeral homes. Therefore, the opportunities which existed years prior are no longer available to students of mortuary science who are not connected to old family rooted funeral homes. They have no chance of that type of learning experience which came with being a part of a family operated business.

As time has passed, more and more students of mortuary science have come forth that have no connection to a funeral home family and have not had the experiences of those growing up in the business and had many opportunities to observe and assist when permitted.

Today, when a mortuary graduate comes knocking, one will ask about their background and more of their technical experience. Unfortunately, many have very little or none and are looking for a position to practice (be the apprentice) what they learned in mortuary school if they attended a mortuary school or community college that teaches mortuary science in the State of Connecticut.

Connecticut law only permits an operating embalming room within a licensed funeral home premises. No other place can one be other than a funeral home. Not even the school that instructs the students and desires to prepare them to a level we as licensed embalmers need them to be to start.

Today, our mortuary schools are scrutinized by the American Board of Funeral Service Education which accredits schools and in order to sit for one's licensing examination, a candidate must have successfully graduated from an accredited school of mortuary science by the ABFSE.

The ABFSE has placed schools on notice of forfeiting their accreditation based on a new policy that requires a college of mortuary science to have an embalming preparation room by 2010.

As a member of Connecticut's State Board, it is the interest of all of our members to ask to have the way paved to prepare our new mortuary science graduates to be the best possible.

Therefore, to prevent the sole school of mortuary science in Connecticut to continue as an accredited program and also insure their ability to train candidates with the best technical skills, new language must be passed and become part of Connecticut General Statute.

I respectfully request your concerns and interest in this matter and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Jowdy

Licensed Embalmer and Funeral Director

Member, CT Board of Examiners of Embalmers and Funeral Directors