

2001 ANNUAL REPORT



Board of
Funeral Services

Board Membership

The Board of Funeral Services was established by the *Funeral Services Act* in 1976 to succeed the Board of Administration, which had a history dating back to 1914.

The current legislation, the *Funeral Directors and Establishments Act*, requires that the Board be composed of thirteen members, eight funeral directors and five public persons. All members are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICES

	2001		2002	
Chair	Scott Doney	Shelburne	Bill Steadmam*	Sudbury
Vice-Chair	Bill Steadmam*	Sudbury	Carl Compton*	Toronto
Executive Member	Bruce Humphrey	Toronto	Scott Doney	Shelburne
	Carl Compton*	Toronto	Kirk Elliott	North Bay
	Allan Lee	Harriston	Bruce Humphrey	Toronto
	Patrick McGarry	Ottawa	Allan Lee	Harriston
	Bill Maguire*	Cobourg	Patrick McGarry	Ottawa
	Scott Miller	Pembroke	Bill Maguire*	Cobourg
	Brian Parent	Windsor	Rick Pedder	Toronto
	Rick Pedder	Toronto	Thomas Preston*	Oakville
	Thomas Preston*	Oakville	Joe Salini	Thunder Bay
	Joe Salini	Thunder Bay	Wayne Smith	Peterborough
	Harold Wilson*	Belleville	Sarah Walker*	Sudbury

* Denotes Public Member

BOARD STAFF

Registrar
Joseph Richer

Manager, Inspections & Investigations
René Brakel

Manager, Licensing & Administration
Susan Beck

Inspectors
Randy Balon
Ken Singh
James Wingate

Administrative Bookkeeper
Marlen Weiler

Bilingual Administrative Assistant
Camie Lefebvre

AUDITOR
Harris & Wright

LEGAL COUNSEL
Steinecke Maciura LeBlanc
Donald Posluns – Barrister & Solicitor



Board of Directors 2001

Back Row Parick McGarry, Rick Pedder, Bill Maguire, Tom Preston, Scott Miller, Allan Lee.
Front Row Bruce Humphrey, Brian Parent, Bill Steadman, Scott Doney(Chair), Carl Compton, Joe Salini
Absent Harold Wilson

Managing Uncertainty

2001 was probably one of the most exciting, fast paced years in the history of the Board of Funeral Services – not that most years are ever dull! The Government's creation of the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee (BSAC) to review the activities in the sector and to return recommendations, created an enormous amount of uncertainty for the Board as we anticipate legislative reform – all the while working diligently to maintain the current high standards of consumer protection. While at times this has created drains on time and resources, the Board members continued to work as a very dedicated, cohesive group.

We worked hard to continue to plan and prepare for the future – even going so far as to develop a formal business plan for 2002/2003. More than ever, we must maintain focus on our responsibilities in regulating the profession, which exist to fulfill our mandate of vigilant consumer protection. To that end, we embarked on a series of highly visible public awareness bulletins informing funeral service consumers of their rights and options – including their need to deal with properly licensed providers.

In 2001 the completion of another important Board initiative was achieved – the presentation of the Report on the Goals and Objectives of Funeral Service Education in Ontario. This has been greeted as an incredibly forward-thinking, innovative review and copies of it are already being requested by other jurisdictions across North America.

At no time during the BSAC process has anyone suggested that Ontario consumers should not (or would not) benefit from the services of well-trained, formally educated, duly licensed funeral directors and transfer service operators. We are therefore continuing our dedication to improving funeral service education, professional development and regulation. In April I promised that this report would not "sit on the corner of a desk somewhere – it will be implemented". I am proud to report that the Implementation Committee is actively working to institute the recommendations in a timely fashion; we ARE moving ahead!

The activities of the Board Office in this difficult year were capably executed by our dedicated Registrar, Jos Richer and the highly effective Board staff and they should be congratulated for their perseverance.

To summarize, 2001 was not always easy, but we continually strove to ensure that the best aspects of the present Ontario regulatory system will be carried forward into the future, no matter what the future holds. We will continue to steadfastly "manage the uncertainty" in the coming year.


 Scott Doney
 Chair

Rising to the occasion

We achieved many goals in 2001 and are anxious to continue to pursue other new initiatives. The Board has been around for many years and has established itself as a strong, dependable organization. While the Board has carried out its mandate with diligence for several decades, now is not a time for us to rest on our laurels. We are at the dawn of a new era in the bereavement sector in Ontario, the Board has the opportunity to take a leadership role and it is prepared to rise to the occasion.

The Review of the Delegated Administrative Authority (DAA) Model commissioned by the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services (MCBS) shed positive light on the Board and the DAA model currently used in Ontario. The consulting firm engaged by MCBS to conduct the independent review made several recommendations that would enhance the Board in many ways. The DAA Report, which was released in September 2001, is available to the public through the MCBS website. We will put a plan in place to act, wherever possible, on the recommendations made in the report. However, some recommendations require legislative and regulatory changes and are therefore outside of the Board's control.

The Board has also been involved in meetings to address the complex issues facing the bereavement sector in Ontario. The Minister of Consumer and Business Services charged the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee (BSAC) with the daunting task of providing recommendations for enhanced consumer protection, the creation of a single regulatory regime and the leveling of the playing field for participants. The Committee, which is made up of sector participants and consumer representatives, rose to the challenge and returned recommendations by the imposed deadline, November 30, 2001.

While the BSAC report has just been submitted to the Minister, the Board and staff have already acted on some of the recommendations made by the consumer representatives in the BSAC process. For instance, for the past few years, we have worked on raising consumer awareness of the Board and educating consumers of their rights. The Board has dedicated additional resources to this initiative for 2002. We have also created a new information piece regarding the Board's complaint mechanism along with a new complaint form. The complaint information sheet and complaint form will be available both on the Board's web site and in hard copy from the Board office. The form is designed to assist the consumer to provide the necessary information on the issues and accelerating the investigation and adjudication of complaints. These are things that we can and will do to assist consumers.

We are dedicated to providing quality service to both consumers and licensees and have implemented several initiatives to this end. In 2001, for the first time, we surveyed licensees on the quality of service provided by the inspection team and gave the licensees an opportunity to provide feedback. The survey provides licensees with another avenue to express themselves and the inspection team with information that will allow them to better understand the needs of licensees. The information will be used to enhance the inspection programme to ensure that the highest level of consumer protection is provided and the Board's resources are optimized. The survey results showed that there is very positive support for the existing programme.

The Board's 2002-2003 Business Plan provides direction and focus for the next few years and the staff is committed to pursuing the direction set by the Board.



A recent death in my own family has provided me with an opportunity to deal with a licensee as a grieving consumer. This allowed me to experience the professional service that funeral directors and transfer service operators can provide as well as to see how vulnerable a grieving family really feels. This has renewed my faith in the high professional standards that are enjoyed by consumers of Ontario, but has also given me a better insight into a consumer's vulnerability and hence renewed my resolve to ensure that these standards are maintained and that abuses are dealt with effectively and swiftly.

I continue to be amazed by the tremendous commitment and dedication demonstrated by the members of the Board and staff. Their commitment to consumer protection is admirable. I would also like to thank Scott Doney for his hard work and commitment as Chair of the Board in 2001.

Joseph Richer
Registrar

Complaints Committee Report

The purpose of the Complaints Committee is to consider and adjudicate consumer complaints regarding the action and conduct of any licensee.

The Board of Funeral Service received 38 complaints between November 1, 2000 and October 31, 2001. Of these, 30 were dealt with in 2001 and 8 will be carried forward into 2002.

Of the 41 complaints reviewed by the Committee between November 2000 and October 2001, 11 were received in 2000 and 30 in 2001. The following is the breakdown of their dispositions.

In favour of the licensee 16

In favour of the complainant 13
(Of these, two were referred to the
Discipline Committee for a hearing.)

Complaints withdrawn 2

Complaints mediated by staff 10

8 of the 41 complaints reviewed by the Committee were made by someone within or closely related to the profession.

The Committee is encouraged by the fact that 10 resulted in mediated resolutions this year. Of the 10 mediated resolutions, 6 resulted in refunds or price reductions to the consumer. Two of the complaints that were mediated were made by individuals within the profession.

Either party may appeal the Complaints Committee's decision to the Licence Appeal Tribunal (LAT). Two complaints that were appealed to LAT in 2000 were scheduled to be heard in 2001. In both cases, the dispute was resolved thereby eliminating the need for a hearing. At the end of October 2001, one decision of the Complaints Committee had been appealed and a hearing was scheduled for December 2001.

In order to assist licensees to gain a good understanding of the types of issues that result in complaints, the Committee explains significant decisions in the newsletter. The Complaints Committee prepared 3 articles for educational purposes in 2001.

The Committee is devoted to the Board's mandate of consumer protection and to this end has created a complaint form that it

hopes will help complainants to submit their complaint and to focus on the issues of concern. Also, to increase public awareness, information packages about the complaint process and the complaint form will be available from the Board office and can be downloaded from the Board's website.

Generally, licensees continue to be prompt and thorough when responding to complaints. Many licensees go above and beyond what is necessary to satisfy the concerns of the consumer. This is demonstrated by the high number of mediated resolutions. Licensees who are well-versed in statutory and regulatory requirements, especially in regards to professional conduct, price lists, contracts, documentation and disclosure, can minimize the risk of complaints.

On average, the Committee made decisions about complaints within 101 days from the date they were received. While the Committee was not able to achieve its target of a 90 day turnaround time, it did review the highest number of complaints in many years. The Committee is committed to reducing the time that it takes and will do its utmost to process complaints within the 90 day target set in the Business Plan.

The number of complaints received in 2001 was about average for the Board but is still a very low number considering that Ontario licensees handle approximately 80,000 deaths each year.

Respectfully submitted

Harold Wilson
Chair



Complaints Committee

Harold Wilson(Chair), Scott Miller, Brian Parent

Moving Forward in Uncertain Times

The Licensing Committee considers all matters that are referred to it from the Registrar regarding the eligibility of applicants for licences or licence renewals. The Committee also considers any other matters related to licensing such as examinations, internship programs and professional development. The Licensing Committee is committed to improving the licensing processes and education of funeral directors in the Province.

Over the past year, the Committee met at minimum monthly and dealt with a number of important issues in addition to its regular responsibilities.

This was an extremely busy year in part due to the educational review, with which the Committee was heavily involved. The Committee began implementing the recommendations from the Education Review Report wherever it could do so. The Committee conducted a workshop to draft a competency profile for a funeral director in Ontario. Sixteen funeral directors from around the Province were invited to attend the workshop. The final competency profile will be used as a benchmark to measure the funeral service education programmes offered by the Colleges, professional development programmes and to assess the education of applicants applying from out-of-province.

The Committee also met to pursue the accreditation of Humber College and Collège Boréal by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), a recommendation in the Education Review Report. This process would see both colleges become accredited by the ABFSE and allow all graduates of these programmes to be eligible to write the American National Board Exam and hopefully increase employment opportunities. The Committee also felt that this would help further our position of creating a national exam in Canada. By starting the process, other provinces may also wish to become accredited, thereby creating a clear standard. The Committee maintains the position that a national exam would help establish consistency in funeral service throughout the country.

The Committee was pleased to present awards to Claudia Nolan of Collège Boréal and Maria Andreacchi of Humber College for achieving the highest marks on the Licensing exams for their respective colleges.

Professional Development 2001 was held in April at the Toronto Marriott Eaton's Centre. Students from both colleges were invited to attend. However, due to scheduling conflicts they were unable to attend, but it is hoped they will be able to attend in 2002.

The licence renewal applications were reviewed by the Committee and the declaration which has been a part of the applications for some time was revised.

Members of the Committee and staff are to be congratulated for their hard work and many contributions to the issues that the Licensing Committee faced this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Miller,
Chair



Licensing Committee

Scott Miller(Chair), Carl Compton, Patrick McGarry



Report of the Discipline Committee

The Discipline Committee hears cases involving allegations of professional misconduct against funeral directors. Cases are referred to the Discipline Committee by the Complaints Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Board itself.

The Discipline Committee follows the established procedures for hearings and independent legal counsel advises the Committee. The Board of Funeral Services is represented by legal counsel, and the member also has the right to be represented by legal counsel. Decisions rendered by the Discipline Committee can be appealed to the Licence Appeal Tribunal (LAT).

The decisions of the Discipline Committee are published in the Board's newsletter and occasionally the Committee publishes articles that are intended to assist licensees in avoiding conduct that can lead to disciplinary action.

In 2001, there were five cases heard by the Discipline Committee, all leading to findings of professional misconduct. An undertaking was entered into by another funeral director, thus avoiding a discipline hearing. No cases were carried forward from 2001 to 2002.

In the first hearing, the funeral director was found guilty of professional misconduct as a result of having been convicted of an offence that was relevant to the licensee's suitability to practise as a funeral director. The funeral director was convicted of two counts of Sexual Assault and one count of Common Assault in the Superior Court of Justice. The Discipline Committee ordered that the funeral director's licence be suspended for four months, that the funeral director be reprimanded and pay a fine of \$1000.

In the second hearing, the funeral director was found guilty of professional misconduct for being in a conflict of interest. The funeral director acted as both the purchaser (as he had held the power of attorney for the person) and the responsible funeral director in making funeral arrangements for the person. The Discipline Committee ordered that the funeral director be reprimanded and pay a fine of \$6000. Further, the Committee ordered that \$5000 of the fine would be suspended if the funeral director signed an undertaking in which the funeral director agreed: (a) not to act as a funeral director for a person if it is known that he has been appointed executor of their estate or for whom he holds their power of attorney; (b) if funeral arrangements are being entered into for a person, as mentioned in (a) at a funeral home at which he is employed, he must advise the managing director of the funeral home of the appointment or position which he holds for the person prior to the arrangements being made; and (c) if the funeral director breaches the undertaking, the funeral director will pay the suspended portion of the fine and the details of the breach and the original finding of professional misconduct would be published by the Board with the funeral director's name included.

The third hearing involved a funeral director who had a purchaser sign a prepaid funeral service agreement and then failed to deliver a copy of the agreement to the client. The licensee also accepted a \$500 deposit, which the purchaser believed would be placed in trust and would be applied

toward the future cost of disbursements and to guarantee the quoted costs of services and merchandise. Instead of placing the money in trust, the funeral director used the \$500 as a down payment on an insurance funded funeral service contract. By failing to put the funds in trust, the funeral director contravened the Act. The funeral director pleaded guilty and was found guilty by the Discipline Committee of professional misconduct. The Discipline Committee accepted the joint submission of the parties and ordered that the funeral director be reprimanded, that he pay a fine of \$1000 and that he write a letter of apology to the complainant.

The fourth hearing involved a funeral director who was operating a transfer service. In this case, the funeral director pleaded guilty and was found guilty by the Discipline Committee of professional misconduct. The licensee advised the family of a deceased person for whom she was making arrangements that embalming was necessary when it was not, arranged with a third party to perform the embalming, directly contacted a bank regarding the payment of the account without the permission of the Executrix, and failed to advise the family that they were responsible for arranging the transportation of the deceased from winter storage to the gravesite. The Discipline Committee ordered that the funeral director's licence be suspended for one week but that the suspension be remitted if certain conditions were met. If the funeral director failed to comply with the conditions, the Discipline Committee ordered that the licensee serve the full suspension. Considering all of the circumstances, the Discipline Committee also ordered a nominal fine of \$100.

In the fifth hearing, a funeral director pleaded guilty and was found guilty by the Discipline Committee of professional misconduct for unprofessional conduct. When applying for a licence in 1996, the funeral director failed to disclose a criminal conviction for which a pardon had not been granted. The licensee admitted the fact of the conviction, but would not disclose the details of the conviction to the Board. Her refusal to fully disclose the information and the failure to disclose the conviction on her application resulted in the referral of the allegations to the Committee and the finding of professional misconduct. The Discipline Committee accepted the joint submission of the parties and ordered that the funeral director's licence be suspended for a period of two weeks but that the suspension be deemed remitted if the licensee met certain conditions. The Committee also ordered that the funeral director be reprimanded. It was made clear in the reasons for decision that the purpose of the order was to address the licensee's failure to be open and forthright with the Board about the criminal record and not to discipline her for the prior criminal conviction for which she had already been penalized.

In a discipline related matter, the Registrar revoked a funeral director's licence and the licence of the funeral home that he owned and operated. The revocations were issued because the Registrar had evidence that some prepayment funds, which were held in trust for purchasers of prepaid funerals, had been mishandled. The funeral home's records showed that the trust accounts had been collapsed because the beneficiaries of the contracts had died when in fact they were alive. The licensee undertook to repay all trust monies. The licensee further undertook to never reapply for any type of



licence with the Board, or to be an officer, director or shareholder of a funeral establishment or transfer service.

All fines that are ordered by the Discipline Committee are paid into the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Discipline Committee contributed two articles to the newsletter in 2001. The topics of the articles arose as a result of two of the above noted hearings and the Committee felt that funeral directors could benefit from further information about them. In the first article, the Committee explained the issue of conflict of interest as it relates to a funeral director acting as both the funeral director and the purchaser in respect of a funeral service contract. In the second article, the Discipline Committee sent a strong warning to all licensees that any licensees found guilty of putting their own financial interests ahead of the interests of consumers may face lengthy suspensions of their licences or other significant sanctions.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Pedder
Chair

Compensation Fund Committee

The Compensation Fund Committee administers the affairs of the Prepaid Funeral Services Compensation Fund, which provides compensation to consumers when prepayment funds are mishandled.

In 2001, the Committee approved eleven of twelve claims on the fund and paid out a total of \$54,866. Ten of the approved claims resulted from the misappropriation of prepayment funds by one licensee. The Registrar revoked the licences granted to the funeral home and the funeral director, who owned and managed the business.

One claim is still pending because additional documentation was required from the purchaser. The Committee will render its decision in early 2002. In all cases, claimants must support their claims to the Committee by providing sufficient documentation.

The Committee strongly supports the public awareness campaign that the Board has been running for the past few years, particularly those advertisements that encourage consumers to deal only with licensed providers.

The Board also continues to educate consumers about prearranged funeral services. The Board urges consumers who enter into prepaid contracts for services and/or merchandise with a licensed funeral establishment or transfer service to obtain a contract and written evidence from the financial institution or insurance provider. The Board's annual inspection of prepaid funds and required documentation ensures that the high level of consumer protection is maintained.

Consumers have the right to know on an annual basis where their funds are held, as well as the type of investment vehicle in which the funds are maintained. The Compensation Fund



Discipline Committee

Joe Salini, Tom Preston, Rick Pedder(Chair), Bill Maguire, Carl Compton

Committee encourages all consumers to check periodically with their service provider to ensure that their file is current and reflects their wishes.

During the year, the Committee reviewed the fund finances with the Trustee to ensure the Fund is fully diversified and secured.

On behalf of the Committee, we would like to thank the staff for their excellent work, and the Board for their support.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas (Tom) Preston
Chair



Compensation Fund Committee

Bill Steadman, Tom Preston(Chair), Allan Lee



Long Range Planning Committee

The Long-Range Planning Committee continued its effort to increase public awareness through the outreach advertising plan. This was done by increasing the number of advisory-type publications during the year and running radio advertisements in July, August and early September.

The Committee is currently reviewing the outreach advertising plan to measure its success. First, the Committee is seeking feedback on how well the information is being communicated to the public and other stakeholders. Second, because the Board has dedicated more money towards public awareness in 2002, the Committee must also determine how to best use the expanded budget to increase public awareness.

The Committee is proud to announce that it achieved its goal of developing a business plan for 2002 and 2003.

During the coming year, the Committee will continue to review the outreach advertising plan, revisit the business plan, and look at future goals and tasks, as developments in the bereavement sector change.

The Committee would like to thank the staff and the Board for their support.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas (Tom) Preston
Chair



Long Range Planning Committee

Scott Doney, Carl Compton, Tom Preston(Chair), Allan Lee, Bruce Humphrey



Licensing and Professional Service Delivery 2001

The Licensing and Administrative staff consists of the Bilingual Administrative Assistant, Administrative Bookkeeper, and the Manager of Licensing and Administration. In addition to being the first point of contact for the public and profession and fulfilling licensing duties, the administrative staff carries out a variety of functions to support the daily operation of the Board.

Independent Review Gives Glowing Report of Process and Publications

- The Staff is proud to report that the Delegated Administrative Authorities Review (DAA) conducted by PSTG Consulting Inc. gave the Board's licensing and renewal process a very positive review. It said that the "procedures are clear, well documented and understood by students and licensees. The functions work well. Turnaround times time for renewals is good and the staff continues to strive to improve the processing of licences."
- The Staff completed all the licensing renewal forms by February 8, this is the earliest date for completion since implementing the new pre-printed forms which allow us to maintain a higher level of accuracy in our records and a method of allowing licensees to review their records annually.
- The DAA Review also made positive comments about the Board's website. Notwithstanding these comments, the website was made even better. A new section was added for Special Publications such as the Education Review Summary and the Board's business plan. The Annual Report and the Board's newsletters and any other appropriate documents will also be made available on the website.
- The DAA Review wrote that the Board "should be acknowledged for the quality of its newsletter." We will continue to work diligently to maintain the level of information and the timely production of newsletters.

Licensing/Registration

Despite the DAA's compliments about our process, we continue to review the licensing forms and procedures for efficiency and accuracy. Some changes were made this year to make the process for licensing and renewal even better, by responding to input both internally and from the profession.

Each year a few out-of-province licensees apply to the Board for a licence and 2001 was no exception, with nine candidates attempting the examination. Nine is an unusually high number of such candidates.

In response to the Federal Government's Labour Mobility initiative, the Board is revising the procedure for out-of-province licensees and will implement an operational plan. The formal procedure should be finalized in 2002. Regulatory changes aimed at removing barriers to Labour Mobility were effected in June 2001.

Goals and Objectives

The Licensing and Administrative Staff has set the following goals for 2002:

- Continue to present a diverse and interesting program of Professional Development while investigating new methods of delivery.
- Continue ongoing communication with the profession to keep them aware of upcoming issues through publication of the newsletter and the Annual Report.
- Assess the needs of consumers and the profession for more information.
- Continue to improve the website to optimize its value in promoting consumer awareness and communication with licensees.
- Ensure that all publications include the Board's mail, email and website addresses along with the Board's toll free number.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Beck

Manager, Licensing and Administration



Statistics for 2000-2001

Licences for 2000-2001

<i>Funeral Directors.</i>	<i>2483</i>
<i>Active Funeral Directors.</i>	<i>1780</i>
<i>Inactive Funeral Directors</i>	<i>703</i>
<i>Conditional licences issued</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Licence Resigned</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Licence Revoked.</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Licence Suspended.</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Funeral Directors with Emeritus Status</i>	<i>49</i>
 <i>Registered Transfer Service Operators</i>	 <i>5</i>
<i>Licensed Funeral Establishments offering funeral services to the public</i>	<i>575</i>
<i>Licensed Funeral Establishment not offering funeral services to the public</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Licensed Transfer Services</i>	<i>27</i>

Thirteen new funeral establishments were licensed in 2001 and nine funeral establishments ceased operation. Four new transfer services were registered in 2001 and one transfer service ceased operation.

As stated in the DAA Review, "the funeral industry in Ontario is highly professional and the vast majority of renewals are approved without issue." However, in order to maintain the high level of consumer protection and compliance within the profession, the Registrar must sometimes suspend or revoke licences.

Proposals & Orders in 2001

<i>Proposals to revoke funeral establishment licence.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Proposals of conditions on a funeral establishment licence.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Proposals to revoke a funeral director's licence.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Proposals to refuse to issue a funeral director's licence.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Proposals of conditions on a funeral director's licence.....</i>	<i>9</i>
 <i>Order to suspend a funeral establishment licence.....</i>	 <i>4</i>
<i>Order to suspend a funeral director's licence.....</i>	<i>1</i>

- The Registrar proposed to impose conditions on nine funeral directors' licences and each of the licensees accepted the conditions. Proposals and orders may be appealed to the Licence Appeal Tribunal (LAT).
- Five previously licensed funeral directors signed an Acknowledgement and Undertaking to re-instate their licences.

Interns

In 2001, 105 students registered with the Board for their internship year.

Licensing Exams

Eligible candidates may attempt the licensing exams in June and December. 12 candidates attempted the examinations in December 2000 and 98 candidates in June 2001. Of the 110 who attempted the exam, 90 were first time candidates. Candidates may attempt the examinations a maximum of three times within a two year period.



Enforcement in 2001

The Inspection Staff

The Inspection Staff has had a busy and productive year. We surpassed our goal of 210 inspections set last year. We also completed a review of the Board of Funeral Services inspection guide, and contributed to the Board's newsletter and professional development programme.

The Inspection Staff is committed to educating the profession, which is critical to consumer protection. To this end, the inspection staff contributed articles for "Inspectors Corner", a regular section in the newsletter. This year, the articles focused on the inspection process and giving tips to licensees on how to maintain a high level of compliance. The checklists provided in the articles allow licensees to do a self-test to see how they would fare in an inspection. This series will continue in 2002. The seminar presented by the inspection staff in the professional development programme focuses on compliance and is a detailed review of the records and processes that are required by the legislation. The evaluations from participants gave the seminar very positive reviews. The inspection staff will present their seminar again in 2003.

The number of inquiries from licensees and the public is significant and the inspection staff continues to play a significant role in assisting and informing licensees and the public of their rights and obligations under the *Funeral Directors and Establishments Act*.

Inspections

The inspection staff completed 219 inspections in 2001, which comprised 188 funeral establishment and transfer service inspections, 17 new business inspections, 3 new or renovated preparation room inspections, and 9 business closing inspections. In addition, the staff reviewed 16 sets of plans for proposed new establishments and renovation projects. The staff fulfils a very important function and is committed to strong consumer protection.

Most inspections are generally satisfactory with a relatively small number of non-compliance items. Over the past year, our statistics show that the average number of non-compliance items per inspection has decreased from 10 to 8.5 and the number of days it has taken to prepare and send the inspection letters has decreased from 18 to 12.

This year the Board surveyed the profession to evaluate the quality of inspections and the inspection programme. The results of the survey were extremely positive: inspections were found to be thorough and useful, and the inspectors to be highly professional, knowledgeable and helpful. The 72 percent response rate was taken as a clear message that licensees appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback. The survey will continue to be conducted and will assist in ensuring the quality of the programme.

Investigations

In addition to inspections, the inspection staff also conducted 25 investigations into matters involving a variety of problems from a minor to a serious nature. In some cases, the investigations resulted in the allegations being unfounded. In others, caution letters were sent to the involved parties, and ended up before the Discipline Committee.

Goals & Objectives

Our goal for 2002 will be to complete 200 routine inspections and to evaluate and implement a risk based inspection programme. Such a programme will further encourage compliance and make the most effective use of our resources. Such a programme will target those licensees who demonstrate a lower level of compliance, and therefore potentially pose a greater risk to consumers, to be inspected more frequently than those who demonstrate higher levels of compliance. The inspection staff would like to maintain a three-year inspection cycle for most licensees in the province. The Staff is also committed to implementing many of the recommendations made in the Review of the Delegated Administrative Authority Model, commissioned by the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services.

The Board's inspectors are also being encouraged to attend their respective district and annual association meetings, which will allow them continued communication with the profession and allow the profession to deal with the inspection staff on a less formal basis.

The Board of Funeral Services is committed to providing the citizens of Ontario with the highest level of consumer protection and service quality. Our inspection staff works diligently to provide timely and courteous service and to maintain the very highest standard of work quality. This will not change as we move forward into 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

René Brakel

Manager, Inspections & Investigations



Financial Outlook

Harris & Wright audited the Board of Funeral Services and the Prepaid Funeral Services Compensation Fund. They reported that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Board as of October 31, 2001. Complete financial statements are available upon request.

