

DON'T BURY THE LEAD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OREGON MORTUARY & CEMETERY BOARD (OMCB)



Canyon City Cemetery
Canyon City, Oregon

OMCB MISSION

The mission of the Board is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by fairly and efficiently performing its licensing, inspection, and enforcement duties; by promoting professional behaviour and standards in all facets of the Oregon death care industry; and, by maintaining constructive relationships with licensees, those they serve and others with an interest in the Board's activities. In order to protect the public, it is the Board's responsibility to ensure that all of Oregon's death care facilities are properly licensed. The Board is self-supporting and derives its financing from licensing, examination, and a portion of the death certificate filing fee (not the fees derived from the purchase of a certified copy of a death certificate).

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Revised Request for Transfer of Apprenticeship

OFDA Convention Recap

Meet OMCB's Executive Board

Administrative Rulemaking Update: Amended
Apprentice Embalmer/Funeral Service Practitioner
Requirements

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday, July 8th, 2025

- General Session will begin at 9am
- Portland State Office Building, Room 1D
800 NE Oregon Street
Portland, OR 97232
- For a link to join the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams, email mortuary.board@omcb.oregon.gov

2025 OMCB BOARD MEMBERS

Ruggiero Canizares, President
Public Member | Eugene

Rob Gaskill, Vice President
Embalmer / Funeral Service Practitioner |
Estacada

Melissa Porter, Secretary/Treasurer
Cemetery Operator | Pendleton

Craig Collins
Crematory Operator | Portland

Nancy Felton
Cemetery Operator | Tigard

Debra C. Harris
Public Member | Portland

Holly Houston
Embalmer / Funeral Service Practitioner | St.
Helens

Kevin Loveland
Embalmer / Funeral Service Practitioner |
La Grande

Angela McKenzie-Tucker
Cemetery Operator | Portland

Neal Naigus
Public Member | Portland

Elizabeth Pacheco
Public Member | Merrill

REVISED REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF APPRENTICESHIP

We recently revised our Request for Transfer of Apprenticeship form. This form can be found on the OMCB website under Forms. The revisions include clearer language about transferring an apprenticeship to a new supervisor. Note that a Transfer of Apprenticeship is not valid until approved by OMCB. The effective date will be based on the date the completed Request for Transfer form and payment are received, and the eligibility of the supervisor has been confirmed by Board staff.

If an apprentice intends to change the licensee to whom they are apprenticed, the apprentice must immediately file a request for approval of the transfer with the Board and pay the required fee (\$25 for Apprentice Funeral Service Practitioner; \$25 for Apprentice Embalmer).

When an apprentice ceases to work under a specific licensee, the apprenticeship certificate becomes null and void. It is the responsibility of the supervising licensee to notify the Board's office of any termination in employment or supervision of the apprentice.



OFDA CONVENTION RECAP

The Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA) held their annual state convention in Hood River from May 5th-7th. The weather was fantastic, and about 100 funeral directors, vendors, and other interested parties had a wonderful three days to connect with other industry professionals, relax, and learn.

On Monday, networking events of wine tasting at the Analemma winery and the Rick Harvey Memorial Golf Scramble took place at the Indian Creek Golf Course.

On Tuesday, the convention session kicked off with a welcome by Chris Robinson, NFDA President, followed by presentations by Chuck Gallagher with American Funeral Financial, Jason Buchbinder with Service Corporation International, FSI Trust representatives, and the Oregon Honor Guard.

Additionally, a new slate of OFDA executive officers was elected to serve for the 2025-26 term:

- OFDA President – Angela McKenzie-Tucker of SCI Oregon;
- OFDA Business Administrative Chair – Holly Houston-Nabers of Columbia Funeral Home;
- OFDA Vice President – Elizabeth Johnson of Keizer Funeral Chapel; and
- OFDA Treasurer – Travis Sandusky of Cascade Funeral and Cremation.

After the installation of officers, some special recognition transpired. Joe Sharps was recognized for his tenure as the OFDA President for the 2024-25 term. The OFDA Funeral Director of the Year was announced to be Rob Gaskill of Estacada Funeral Home, and the OFDA Funeral Home of the Year was presented to Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Home, with Owner/Operator Marc Lund accepting the award.

On Wednesday, the convention continued with a dynamic presentation from Kristy Owens of Embalming Lab Inc., who shared her patent-pending skull restoration techniques and a Q&A segment with the Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board (OMCB) and Oregon Vital Records, which is the state agency that administers OVERS.

Throughout the entire convention, vendors had full table displays with the latest updates in all funeral home products and services.

The OFDA board is currently working on the 2025-26 meeting schedule and is already planning for the 2026 convention that will take place at the end of April in Eugene.



Mark Lund
OFDA Funeral Home of the Year



Rob Gaskill
OFDA Funeral Director of the Year

MEET OMCB'S EXECUTIVE BOARD



Ruggie Canizares, President

Ruggiero (Ruggie) S. Canizares, PT, MS, MBA, CMPT, is a practicing physical therapist and received his PT degree from University of Santo Tomas, his Master's in Exercise Physiology from Southern Connecticut State University, his Master's in Business Administration from Northwest Christian University (MBA Sigma Beta Delta International Honor Society), and his Certified Manual Physical Therapist (CMPT – certified “with distinction”) from The North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy. Ruggie practiced in various clinical settings including acute care, in-patient rehabilitation, nursing home and long-term care, and in-school pediatrics. He currently owns a private practice that has been operational since 2008 and works per diem as a Home Health

Physical Therapist in a local regional hospital.

In 2011, Ruggie was appointed to the Oregon Physical Therapy Licensing Board and completed his second four-year term in 2019. Ruggie served as Board Vice-chair from 2014 to 2018, and as Board Chair from 2018 to 2019. Ruggie has been active in regulation nationally, actively involved with The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) since 2014 as a delegate/alternate delegate and served two terms on the Finance Committee. Ruggie was elected in October 2018 and is currently serving his second term as FSBPT Treasurer. Ruggie continues to pursue excellence in regulation, being involved in learning current challenges and leading practices in regulation in other professions through participating in national and international conferences such as CLEAR, WCPT, FSBPT, and INPTA



Rob Gaskill, Vice President

Rob began working in the funeral service profession in 1984. At the age of 19, he was the youngest licensed funeral director in the entire State of Oregon. Rob has spent most of his career in Portland and then went to work for Estacada Funeral Chapel and Sandy Funeral Home in 2002. He moved his family to Estacada in 2005 and purchased Estacada Funeral Chapel in 2016. He has immersed himself in the community by serving in various capacities including the City Council, the City Budget Committee, the Arts Commission, and two retirement housing facilities. Rob also served as the Chairman of Mt. Hood Hospice Board and is the former Chamber of Commerce President. Rob also enjoys playing bass guitar with a country music band. He is really enjoying serving as an OMCB

board member and finds it a great learning experience and feels like he has a good grasp on being an advocate for the public and the profession.



Melissa Porter, Secretary/Treasurer

Melissa is the Office Specialist for the City of Pendleton Parks, Recreation & Olney Cemetery. She began her career in June 2013 as a temp employee, moving into a full-time position in October 2013. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in June 2002 from Eastern Oregon University. She is a born and raised Oregonian, having spent her entire life in Umatilla County. She is the proud mother to two children and resides in Adams, Oregon. She has served on the CAO Board since 2020.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULEMAKING UPDATE: AMENDED APPRENTICE EMBALMER/FUNERAL SERVICE PRACTITIONER REQUIREMENTS

The Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board (OMCB) completed administrative rulemaking that amended licensing requirements for Apprentice Embalmers and Apprentice Funeral Service Practitioners by amending sections of Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 830. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the January Oregon Bulletin and went into effect in February 2025.

The requirements for apprentice embalmers have been updated to include at least 35 arterial embalmings under the supervision of a licensed embalmer. The definition of "supervision" has been updated to mean that each task shall be performed by an apprentice embalmer only after receiving direction from a licensed embalmer. Updates were also made to how apprentice embalmers should complete their log books and can be found in more detail in [OAR 830-011-0020\(2\)\(c\)](#).

The requirements for apprentice funeral service practitioners have been updated to include at least 25 arrangements that include tasks listed in [OAR 830-030-0004](#) under the supervision of a licensed funeral service practitioner. "Arrangement" is defined as funeral services or final dispositions for at need persons, fully from the initial contact through the disposition of remains. The definition of "supervision" has been updated to mean that each arrangement shall be performed by an apprentice funeral service practitioner only after receiving direction from a licensed funeral service practitioner. Updates were also made to how apprentice funeral service practitioners should complete their log books and can be found in more detail in [OAR 830-011-0020\(3\)\(d\)](#).

The newly amended rule can be reviewed in full on the [Oregon Secretary of State website](#).

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Please note: The OMCB office, which is located in the Portland State Office Building (PSOB), is secured at all times and requires badge access to enter. To ensure that the appropriate staff member is available, please contact us in advance to schedule a visit.

