

One of the most important functions of the funeral home is to assure its future. There are many opportunities to assure the future growth and viability of the funeral home. The most important way to facilitate future success is to train future funeral service professionals. Radney Funeral Home has developed an intern/apprenticeship program to maintain a functional staff for the future.

We consider our program more than an apprenticeship. Our program is designed to give the intern experience in all aspects of funeral service. The intern is not just an observer but a participant in providing burial services, cremation services, preneed services, and participating in community service opportunities.

Randy Anderson, our owner, was appointed to serve on the Model Internship Program Committee for the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards. He worked, with other funeral service professionals, to develop an internship program that would serve as a model for funeral service providers in the training and development of future funeral service professionals. This program has been endorsed by the National Funeral Directors Association and distributed to all state associations.

The intern program at Radney Funeral Home begins with a talent search for a suitable candidate. The search may include mortuary science education programs, individuals searching for a second career, or high school graduates with a desire to enter funeral service. Any interested person is encouraged to shadow our staff for a few days to determine if this is the place and the career path they would like to follow.

Once the qualified individual is chosen, they begin the program by working along side every individual in every area of the funeral home. The intern is required to receive the proper mortuary science degree and pass the National Board Exam to maintain employment at Radney Funeral Home. The education is a full scholarship with no cost to the intern. They are required to work three years after licensure as a requirement of the scholarship. Should they choose to leave the funeral home before the three years is completed, all scholarship funds must be repaid. The scholarship also includes the fees for taking both sections of the National Board Exam once.

During the two-year internship program, the intern is evaluated extensively using the Model Internship Program from the ICFSEB. The evaluation is done with the intern present and all areas are discussed. Areas that have not been experienced will be assigned for the next evaluation period. The intern will be rated in the areas they have participated in and comments will be shared on their performance.

The evaluation is done regularly throughout the internship. This allows the intern to see his/her progress and make any adjustments they need to make during the period. One final evaluation is done just prior to the taking of the National Board Exam to assure that the intern is fully trained and able to work independently once he/she receives the license to practice.

We have just completed the first cycle of our internship program. Cassie Webster, a graduate of Worsham College, is the first intern to complete our program. She came to us having graduated from the prestigious mortuary science program at Worsham and had passed both sections of the

NBE. She came in and immediately started our intern training program. She experienced regularly scheduled evaluations using the Model Internship Program. Cassie had successful evaluations at every step during the program. She has now completed our intern/apprenticeship program and is set to sit for the Alabama State Law Exam soon.

The program that we developed has been phenomenally successful and we plan to continue to utilize the ICFSEB Model Internship Program as well as the program elements we have developed. Having experienced this program has this intern, Cassie Webster, fully prepared to perform in every area of funeral service as a fully licensed funeral service professional when she passes the state law requirement. We will continue to use and improve this program with our next intern and look for ways to better prepare funeral service professionals for the future.