

22nd December, 1996

Dear Colleague Funeral Director/Arranger,

Funeral Celebrant Guideline Fee for 1997

This is not an inflation rise.

The difference is this. A purely ritual funeral is half an hour's work. A prepared funeral is 5 to 15 hours work. If a ritual funeral is worth \$100, a prepared funeral, on the figures, is worth \$1000 - steady on, I hear you say.

The bottom line for you as a business person is that repeat business comes from a previously satisfactory ceremony. I didn't say the trappings and trimmings - I said the ceremony. Your own professional associations have done the market research - check it out. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction primarily depends on the quality of the ceremony. There is no such thing as a quality ceremony without preparation. Our advice - go for quality - that which remains long after price is forgotten.

The bottom line for you as a professional is that the pursuit of excellence comes, can only come in fact, from a properly prepared ceremony. Of what use are your facilities, your efficiency, your attention to detail, your professionalism, if the celebrant lets you down in the most significant central event - the ceremony itself. Our advice - go for quality - that which remains long after price is forgotten.

The bottom line for you as a human being is that your responsibility is a serious one. Are your clients numbers or people? "People" - I hear you say indignantly. Yes, the people whose earthly remains are entrusted to you have a lifetime of struggles, achievements, loves, relationships - "touched flowers, and furs and cheeks" - what are they going to get from your arranging - 15 minutes of waffle or drivel - or a genuine tribute? The latter only comes with proper research, hard work, painstaking composition, sincere delivery. Our advice - go for quality - that which remains long after price is forgotten.

And what is this price I am talking about - is it \$2000? (What you would pay a lawyer or accountant without a blink). Is it \$1000 (what you would pay a builder, a plumber or a tradesman). No, it is \$220.00 - a small rise, so that we move a little closer to have our professionalism acknowledged, recognised and

rewarded - a professionalism, by the way, which I beg to remind you has no equal in the world.

The Committee has set the guideline fee as \$220.00 for 1997 - not nearly enough in my opinion - but that's democracy for you.

I thank all Funeral Directors and arrangers who have used Federation members in 1996 - and who have encouraged us in maintaining standards. I ask you again to be aware of those who imitate us in a half-baked way. and say they do what we do!

I enclose our list of Approved Funeral Celebrants, and wish you all a prosperous 1997.

With good wishes,

Dally Messenger  
National President and Administrator