



**NFDA**

# CONVENTION PLANNING GUIDE



**Charlotte's Calling  
Let's Hit the Gas!**

**NFDA**

NATIONAL  
FUNERAL  
DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION

[NFDA.org/Convention](https://NFDA.org/Convention)



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# 2026 NFDA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & EXPO

OCTOBER 25-28  
CHARLOTTE, NC

Join thousands of the world's top funeral professionals and suppliers to network and learn skills that will help you, your business and the families you serve.

The NFDA Convention offers a great team-building opportunity, and group registration discounts are available. Contact us at 262-789-1880 for details.

## REGISTRATION TYPES

### Full Convention: First Registrant

Register for your all-access, full-convention pass and take advantage of everything NFDA's International Convention & Expo has to offer, including the Welcome Party, all of the general sessions, every workshop, the Expo Hall, the Service of Remembrance and the All-star Recognition Ceremony. Plus, you can earn up to 13 CE credits.\*

### Full Convention: Additional Registrant

Invite colleagues from the same firm to join you and they will have the same full access to everything the convention has to offer, including up to 13 CE credits.\*

### Expo Only

If you're on a mission to discover what's new in funeral service, NFDA's Expo Only pass is your ticket to see it all. Every year, more than 300 vendors gather to showcase the most innovative products and services in funeral service. Join us and find out what's new in 2026. Bonus: you'll receive 1 CE credit just for walking the Expo floor!

### Expo Plus

Come for the largest funeral service exposition in the world and stay for the fun! Your Expo Plus registration includes the Welcome Party, Monday's Opening Session, the Service of Remembrance and, of course, the Expo Hall. Plus, earn up to 3 CE credits. (Does not include access to workshops or pre-convention seminars.)

### Student

NFDA's student registration is one of the most valuable (and inexpensive!) investments you can make as you pursue your mortuary science education. With it, you can access everything available to a full-convention registrant, including invaluable networking opportunities that will give you the edge when looking for your first job in funeral service.\*

## REGISTER EARLY AND SAVE!

You know you don't want to miss this year's convention in Charlotte, so register early (by August 13) for less.



**FUNERAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

## ACT FAST: SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

All funeral directors licensed in the U.S. or Canada are invited to apply for a scholarship to attend the NFDA International Convention & Expo this October. The Funeral Service Foundation will award up to 20 scholarships, each valued at \$2,200, that cover registration, three nights of lodging and up to \$500 in travel reimbursement. See the ad on page 27 for details; apply by July 23.

Preparation and collaboration will make your convention experience more enjoyable and productive. NFDA wants your experience to be a positive one, and we're sure you'll want to come back year after year!

\*Does not include pre-convention seminars.



# At a Glance

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

**7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Registration

**8 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

The Future of Deathcare\*

**Noon – 4 p.m.**

The Art & Weight of the Arrangement Conference\*

**Noon – 4 p.m.**

Cremation Conversations\*

**Noon – 4 p.m.**

NFDA Central

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

**8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic\*  
Olde Sycamore Golf Club

**7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

NFDA Central

**7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Registration

**8 – 11 a.m.**

Bridging the Gap: Strengthening Partnerships Among Funeral Professionals, End-of-life Doulas and Hospice Teams\*

**10:30 – 11:15 a.m.**

First-time Attendee Orientation\*\*

**11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

After the Unimaginable: Toolkit for Caring for Families After the Death of a Child

**11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Workshops

**1 – 4 p.m.**

International Tour\*\*

**3 – 5 p.m.**

Funny Bus and City Tour\*

**3:45 – 4:30 p.m.**

First-time Attendee Orientation\*\*

**4:30 – 6 p.m.**

ReConnect\*\*

**6 – 8 p.m.**

Welcome Party

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

NFDA Central

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

Registration

**8 – 9 a.m.**

Workshops

**9:30 – 11:45 a.m.**

Opening Session & Service of Remembrance

**11 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Community Impact Zone

**Noon – 1 p.m.**

FIAT IFTA Lunch\*\*

**Noon – 5 p.m.**

NFDA Expo

**1 – 4:30 p.m.**

FIAT IFTA ICD Meeting\*\*

**3 – 4 p.m.**

Funeral Face Off (F.F.O.)

**3 – 6 p.m.**

South End Brewery Tour

**4 – 5 p.m.**

All-Star Recognition Ceremony

**5 – 6:30 p.m.**

Funeral Service Foundation Donor Reception\*\*

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

NFDA Central

**7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

Registration

**8 – 10:45 a.m.**

Workshops

**9:15 – 10:15 a.m.**

FIAT IFTA General Assembly\*\*

**11 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Special Engagement

**11 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Community Impact Zone

**Noon – 5 p.m.**

NFDA Expo

**12:30 – 2 p.m.**

Conversation Cafés

**3 – 4 p.m.**

Funeral Face Off (F.F.O.)

**4:30 – 5 p.m.**

Installation of 2026-27

NFDA President & Board of Directors

**5 – 5:30 p.m.**

NFDA Board of Directors Installation Reception

**6 – 6:45 p.m.**

Heritage Club Reception\*\*

**7:15 – 10 p.m.**

FIAT IFTA

International Gala\*

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

**8 – 9 a.m.**

Workshops

**9 a.m. – Noon**

NFDA Central

**9 a.m. – Noon**

NFDA Expo

**12:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

Closing Session

**2 – 5 p.m.**

FIAT-IFTA Technical Tour\*

\* Additional fee required

\*\* By invitation only





# Get Ready, Queen City:

*NFDA 2026 is Rolling Into Charlotte!*

There's a reason Charlotte continues to shine as one of the fastest growing and most dynamic cities in the United States – there's truly something for everyone. Whether you're a craft beer enthusiast, a history buff, a lover of the arts or a sports fan, Charlotte delivers. From nationally recognized museums and vibrant culinary districts to the thrill of NASCAR and the energy of professional football and basketball, the Queen City offers endless ways to explore.

Beyond its bustling city center, Charlotte boasts beautiful green spaces, the scenic shores of Lake Norman, and beloved attractions such as the U.S. National Whitewater Center, Discovery Place and the Mint Museum. We're excited to gather in Charlotte for the 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo. If you've visited before, welcome back. If it's your first time, prepare to be charmed! Enjoy your stay in the Queen City and the time spent with your fellow funeral service professionals.



# Convention Guest Tours

Please note, there is an additional fee for each event, and each requires separate registration.



## Funny Bus and City Tour

**Sunday, October 25, 3 – 5 p.m.**

Feel the energy of the Queen City while laughing nonstop on a comedy bus tour built for adults who want more than ordinary sightseeing. Charlotte has a rich history, a thriving comedy scene and stories around every corner. Come see it all from the best seat in town.

## South End Brewery Tour

**Monday, October 26, 3 – 6 p.m.**

Charlotte's craft beer scene is second to none and you will get a taste of the best it has to offer. Enjoy a guided afternoon brewery tour throughout the city's historic South End, where you'll sip, socialize and sample three of the neighborhood's most iconic breweries.



## Charlotte Savings Pass

The Queen City is rolling out the red carpet for visitors.

Redeem the Charlotte Savings Pass online and get access to complimentary discounts and exclusive offerings for attractions, dining and retail.

To get your exclusive, FREE Charlotte Savings Pass, follow these steps:

- Visit [charlottestotalot.com/savings-pass](http://charlottestotalot.com/savings-pass) or use QR code at left
- Click "Get Your Pass!"
- Click "Checkout," add your information, and complete order
- Your pass will be emailed directly to you
- Show the pass at participating locations to receive discounts



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Succeed is  
What We  
Do Best



## We Are Invested in Your Legacy

Whether you're improving operations, planning for succession, or preparing for a transaction, expert guidance ensures you get the result you deserve. Step into a brighter future with Foresight.

# Tips for Convention First-timers

Attending your first NFDA International Convention & Expo? We love first-time attendees – your curiosity and fresh energy make this event so special! While the experience can feel big and bustling (in the best way!), these helpful tips will make your debut smooth, enjoyable and full of memorable moments.

## First-time Attendee Orientation

*Meet in the Registration Area*

**Sunday, October 25, 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.**

**Sunday, October 25, 3:45 – 4:30 p.m.**

Get ready to kick off your convention adventure with a session designed just for newcomers! You'll hear insider tips from seasoned NFDA convention pros, meet other first-time attendees who are diving in right alongside you and enjoy a guided tour of the Charlotte Convention Center so you can get the lay of the land before things get bustling.

Plus, we've got a little token of appreciation waiting for you because we're genuinely thrilled you're here. You'll walk out of this session feeling energized, informed and ready to enjoy your first NFDA convention like a pro.

## Plan Ahead

Think of the NFDA Convention as an adventure... you'll enjoy it way more if you map your journey! Check out any pre-conference materials, skim the session list and circle the ones that make you say, "Ooh, I need that!" Look for speakers you admire, unique insights and sessions that spark your curiosity. And don't miss our video series – it's like a mini orientation, minus the awkward icebreakers. Visit [NFDA.org/Convention](http://NFDA.org/Convention) and start planning!

## Download the Convention App

Your new best friend? The My NFDA app. It's your pocket-sized command center for the entire event: schedules, session details, maps, attendee lists – everything. You'll even use it to scan for CE credits after each session. See page 12 for more information.



## Networking

Ready to mingle? The convention is packed with receptions, socials and spontaneous "Hey, weren't you in that session?" moments. Say yes to them! Chat with fellow attendees, swap ideas, exchange business cards, and introduce yourself to speakers and exhibitors; they're there because they want to connect, too. A quick conversation could spark your next big idea... or at least earn you a new LinkedIn connection.

## Use the Buddy System

Convention buddy = instant level-up. Whether it's a colleague or someone you meet on-site, teaming up can keep you energized, help you divide and conquer sessions, and give you someone to debrief with. Plus, their connections might become your connections. Win-win!

## Ask for Help

Lost? Curious? Overwhelmed by choices? We've all been there. NFDA staff and your fellow attendees are friendly, knowledgeable and happy to lend a hand. No question is too small – seriously. You're among peers and professionals who want to see you thrive.

## Final Thoughts

A little prep, a little conversation and a little collaboration go a long way toward making your first NFDA convention unforgettable. We're thrilled to have you, and we're pretty sure you'll be counting down the days until next year's event, too!



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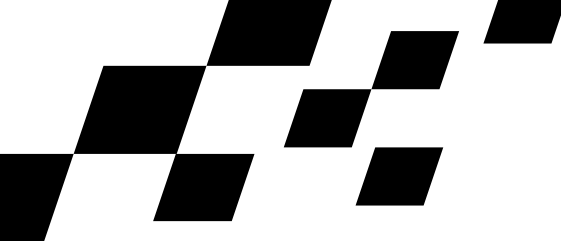
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# Stay in the Know and on the Go With the My NFDA App

Download the My NFDA app to access the full schedule, explore speaker bios, connect with fellow attendees and easily scan for CE credits – all from your phone. Get the app and make the most of your time onsite. Download the app today!



APPLE



GOOGLE

App Sponsored by  **TRIBUTE TECHNOLOGY**

## Wordly Translations Available in 60 Languages!

Get access to NFDA convention programming in 60 languages. The web-based software gives you access without needing to download an app or use special equipment. It's as easy as:

1. Scan the QR code at the table in each workshop.
2. Select your language.
3. Enjoy the workshops and keynote presentations.



# ReConnect

Save the Date  
Sunday, October 25  
4:30 – 6 p.m.

A great way for PWC attendees to continue their networking. Join us as we reconnect at the NFDA International Convention & Expo in Charlotte.

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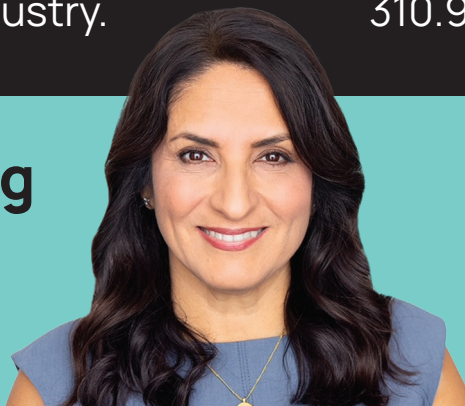


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# Keynote Speakers



## OPENING SESSION KEYNOTE

Monday, October 26  
9:30 – 11:45 a.m.

### Strategy in a World of Disruption

Shawn Kanungo  
Disruption Strategist,  
Bestselling Author

someone else does? How do we deliver better experiences to our clients, customers and teams? Today, we need to be bold, brave and experimental. In this awe-inspiring talk, Kanungo provides an optimistic roadmap for the future. He explores how we can take unexpected approaches to innovation to remain competitive and relevant.

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The business world has fundamentally changed forever. The growth and adoption of new technologies is at a dizzying pace. Customer and employee expectations have been pushed forward 10 years due to the pandemic. We are now looking for organizations to be fearless in a changing world. These drivers are forcing everyone to reimagine their entire organizations. How do we survive? How do we disrupt ourselves before



**60-Minute Session = 1 CE hour**

**90-Minute Session = 1.5 CE hours**

**120-Minute Session = 2 CE hours**

**150-Minute Session = 2.5 CE hours**



## **CLOSING SESSION KEYNOTE**

**Wednesday, October 28  
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

### **28,000 Days: What Death Teaches Us About Truly Living**

*John Kenney  
New York Times Bestselling Author*

Death is the great mystery, the great universal. And yet we don't talk about it much. It's this cognitive dissonance, this accident way down the road we know is coming but do

little to prepare for – for our loved ones and certainly for ourselves. Virginia Woolf said, "Someone has to die in order to make life important." Why don't we heed that?

We are, most of us, on a kind of auto-pilot most days. The average life expectancy in the United States is roughly 78 years. That's about 28,000 days. How many do we remember?

There is an unseen world in all of this. That of funeral directors, who daily understand in a visceral way what death is. There is a painful beauty to the work, to the caring of the death, to the concern of the living in their grief.

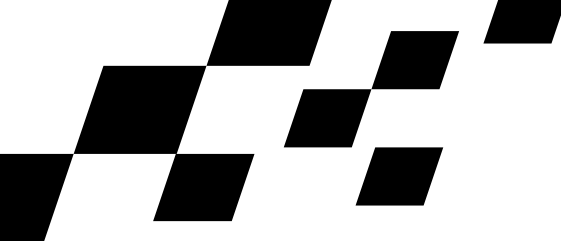
I've been writing about death – and life – for the past four years. First in my novel *I See You've Called In Dead* about an obituary writer who accidentally publishes his own

obituary and ends up going to the wakes and funerals of strangers, and then in a book I'm working on now about my mother's obituary and her sudden death at age 49. (I'm a laugh riot at parties...)

I've learned almost nothing. Except the impossible beauty that lies in every moment, if only we take the time to see it.

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# Preconvention Seminars

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24



**Professional Skills**  
**The Art & Weight of the Arrangement Conference: Navigating Complexity in Deathcare**

Lanae Strovers, LFD  
NFDA Education and Professional Development

**Registration: 7:30 a.m. – Noon at Registration Desk**  
**Seminar: Noon – 4 p.m.**

Experienced funeral directors face some of the most emotionally complex conversations in professional practice. This interactive master class explores difficult situations in the arrangement conference, legal and ethical challenges, the role of technology, cultural humility, and the power of language in deathcare. Through real-world case studies, guided discussion and reflective exercises, participants will examine the deeper emotional impact of their work while strengthening communication, leadership and professional resilience. (4 CE hours)

\$255 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$315 nonmember funeral directors; \$160 mortuary students.

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**Compliance and Legal, Cremation**  
**Cremation Conversations: Decisions, Meaning and the Future of Disposition**

Timothy Copeland, MS, LFD, CCO  
NFDA Education and Professional Development

**Registration: 7:30 a.m. – Noon at Registration Desk**  
**Seminar: Noon – 4 p.m.**

Cremation is more than a process – it is a series of decisions made by families during one of the most emotional moments of their lives. This master class explores how grief, family dynamics and cultural change influence cremation choices. Participants will discuss ways to guide meaningful remembrance, navigate complex family situations, and understand emerging disposition options that are shaping the future of funeral service. (4 CE Hours)

\$255 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$315 nonmember funeral directors; \$160 mortuary students.



## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

**Consumer Care**  
**Bridging the Gap: Strengthening Partnerships Among Funeral Professionals, End-of-life Doulas and Hospice Teams**

**Registration: 7:30 a.m. – 8 a.m. at Registration Desk**  
**Seminar: 8 – 11 a.m.**

This dynamic seminar invites funeral professionals, end-of-life doulas and hospice caregivers to explore how deeper collaboration can enhance the support families receive before, during and after a death. Through candid panel discussions featuring funeral directors, doulas and hospice clinicians, attendees will gain insight into real-world experiences, challenges and successful models of teamwork. Interactive activities will encourage participants to practice communication approaches, identify shared goals and build stronger cross disciplinary relationships. Whether you're seeking to expand your care network or refine existing partnerships, this session offers practical strategies and inspiring stories to help professionals work together more seamlessly in service of families. (3 CE Hours)

\$195 NFDA members and qualifying nonmembers; \$255 nonmember funeral directors; \$100 mortuary students.



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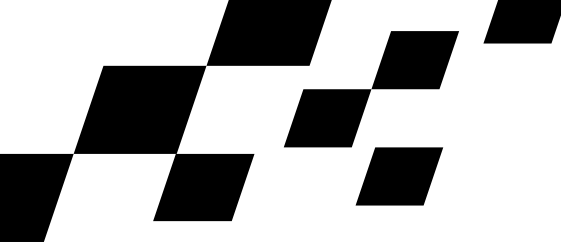
WILMINGTON, NC

Justin Wilson, J.D.  
Senior Vice  
President, Senior  
Legal Counsel



NEW ORLEANS, LA

Nikki Morgan, CRPP®  
Senior Vice President,  
Client Relationship  
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# Workshops

## Sunday, October 25



**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Marketing**  
**Preplan Without Selling**  
*Jill Flinders, Senior Living Executive, On Silver Street*

**Consumer Care**  
**The Exceptional Arranger**  
*Jill Lazar, Training CXpert, Dead Ringers*

**Professional Development**  
**Leading Through Chaos**  
*Ruth Graczkowski, Professional Encourager, Tri-S Consulting*

**Compliance and Legal**  
**Managing Conflict and Minimizing Risk in Funeral Service**  
*Christopher Farmer, NFDA General Counsel*



**11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**Consumer Care**  
**After the Unimaginable: Toolkit for Caring for Families After the Death of a Child**  
*Betsy Hawley, MA, Executive Director, Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition; Kristin James, LCPC, Grief Care Network*

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**1:15 – 2:15 p.m.**

**Embalming and Restorative Art**  
**The Funeral Directors of United 232**  
*Dana Goodell, Sales and Education Director, The Embalmers Supply Company*

**Professional Development**  
**Culture is Your Product**  
*Greg Cannon, Owner, AG Associates*



**Business Operations**  
**The Hidden KPI**  
*Cindy Rowe, Professional Speaker/Trainer, Cindy Rowe, LLC*

**Consumer Care**  
**The Aftercare Advantage**  
*Mari Dias, Director, GracePointe Grief Center*

**2:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

**Compliance and Legal**  
**Navigating Advocacy in 2026: Staying Ahead in a Rapidly Changing Washington, D.C.**  
*Lesley Witter, Senior Vice President of Advocacy, NFDA*

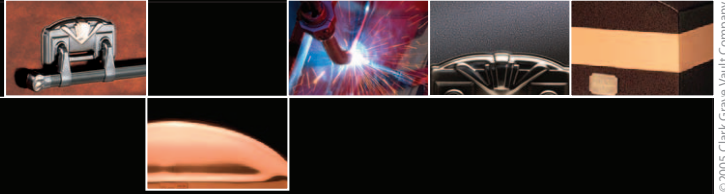
**Consumer Care**  
**Why: Embalming, Viewing and Ethics**  
*Art Pecht, Embalmer & Post-mortem Reconstructive Surgery Specialist*

**Marketing**  
**Building Connections to Your Community**  
*Nancy Weil, Director of Community Outreach, Rollings and Pinnacle Funeral Service*

**Business Operations**  
**Celebrations of Life: From Concept to GPL**  
*Christina Andreola, Founder & Principal Event Planner, New Narrative Memorials*

**Disposition**  
**Direct Cremation Service Strategy**  
*Ron Clyde, Director of Special Projects, Directors Investment Group*

D O M E   D E S I G N



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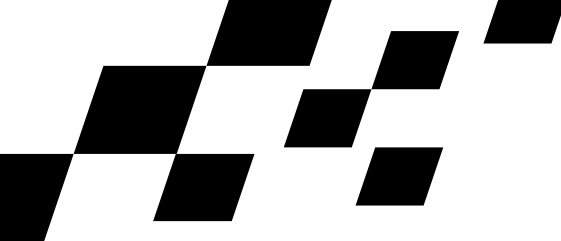


It's not a trick. Submerge an inverted glass in water, and the air pressure won't allow the water to rise more than a fraction of an inch inside. With its curved, dome-shaped design, a Clark Grave Vault protects a casket in much the same way. Thanks to its dome lid, elevated base, double-welded seams and powder-coated finish, a Clark Grave Vault is the most airtight and water-resistant vault in the world. Call us today or visit us on the web to learn more about the superior performance and value of Clark Grave Vaults.



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# Workshops

Monday, October 26

8 – 9 a.m.

### Business Operations

#### Building a Sustainable Funeral Home Brand

Jeff Smith, President, Smith Family Funeral Homes

### Embalming and Restorative Art

#### Do Your Part With Restorative Art

John Hill, Undertaker, Pierce Mortuary Colleges and James Funeral Home

### Marketing

#### Reclaiming the Narrative

Jessica Koth, Director of Public Relations, NFDA

### Professional Development

#### Leading With Clarity, Courage and Compassion

Michael Allison, Founder & CEO, Adversity Leadership Institute

\*This session is also offered on Tuesday.

### Innovation and Technology

#### Harnessing AI in Funeral Service Communication

Jay Jacobsen, Owner & Founder, Jacobson Professional Staffing




**2026 INNOVATION AWARD**  
**The top finalists will help savvy funeral pros stay ahead of the pack!**

Every year, NFDA grants its Innovation Award to the supplier that introduced the best new product/service since last year's convention. During Monday's Opening Session, we'll announce this year's top three finalists and present the winner with NFDA's Innovation Award.

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“I wish I would have known”



Together, we can give every family a  
chance they can never get again.

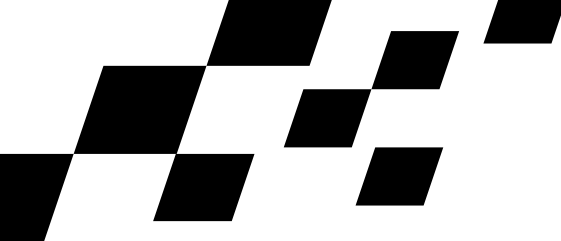
What we preserve today may become  
what they cherish tomorrow.



Impression Vault



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# Workshops

## Tuesday, October 27

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**8 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Compliance and Legal  
Honoring our Nation's Dead:  
Past Present and Future**

*Department of Defense*

**8:30 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Compliance and Legal  
Funeral Rule Update**

*Christopher Farmer, General Counsel, NFDA*

**Marketing  
Marketing to Build Your Brand**

*Damon Wenig, Director of Partner Marketing, Homesteaders Life*

**Business Operations  
Scaling With Purpose**

*Jeff Smith, President, Smith Family Funeral Home*

**Disposition  
Elevating Decedent Care**

*Amanda King, Funeral Director, Bailey Family Funeral Home and Frigid Fluid*

**Business Operations  
Why Funeral Home Teams Stay**

*Erin Cruger, Chief Sales Officer, Security National Funeral Homes & Cemeteries*

**8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

**Embalming and Restorative Art  
Decomposition Demystified**

*Glyn Tallon, CSAP, Owner, Tallon Mortuary Services*

**9:45 – 10:45 a.m.**

**Professional Development  
Leading With Clarity, Courage and Compassion**

*Michael Allison, Founder & CEO, Adversity Leadership Institute*

**Compliance and Legal  
Honoring Our Nation's Veterans: Funeral and Death Benefits for Those Who Served**

*Lesley Witter, NFDA Senior Vice President of Advocacy and Panel*

**Marketing  
The New Community Steward**

*Rehan Choudry, CEO, Chptr*

**Professional Development  
Compassion Fatigue and the Path Back to Energy**

*Sherrie Dunlevy, Author, Speaker and Podcast Host*

**Innovation and Technology  
Increase Your Call Volume**

*Welton Hong, Founder & CEO, Ring Ring Marketing*

**12:30 – 2 p.m.**

**Consumer Care  
Conversation Café:  
Connecting With Hospice in Your Community**

*William G. Hoy, Clinical Professor of Medical Humanities (Emeritus), Baylor University, and Director of Bereavement Certification, Hospice Foundation of America; Rebecca S. Lomaka, Director of Grief Support & Community Education, O'Connor Mortuary; Amy S. Tucci, President, Hospice Foundation of America, Washington, D.C.*

**Business Operations  
Conversation Café: A Seat at the Table in Your Community's Crisis Response**

*Moderator: Allan Cole, MacKinnon and Bowes; Bryant Hightower, Hightower Family Funeral Homes; Jimmy Lucas, Lucas Funeral Homes; Carmalita March-Harris, March Funeral Homes; Tim Schramm, Howe-Peterson Funeral Home and Cremation Services; Bill Wimberly, Legacy Funeral Group*



**Jake Johnson**



**Jim Price**



**David Adams**

# Make the most with Johnson Consulting Group



**Bill Cutter**



**Karen McCurdy**



**Robert Murray**



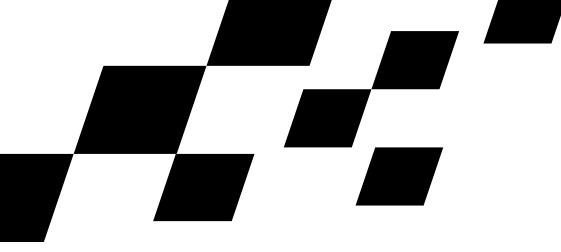
**Bob Horn**



**Johnson  
Consulting  
Group**



**David Ring**



# Workshops

Wednesday, October 28

8 – 9 a.m.

### Consumer Care

#### What Families Actually Remember

Jessica Wakefield, CFSP

### Embalming and Restorative Art

#### Black Haircare for Funeral Directors

Joél Simone Maldonado, Funeral Director, Founder, The Multicultural Death & Grief Academy

### Innovation and Technology

#### Preserving Human Connection in a Digital-First World

Bill Johnston, President, Post and Boost, Inc.

### Professional Development

#### Funerals and the Grief Experience

Carl Becker, Professor & Doctor, Kyoto University School of Medicine

### Consumer Care

#### Moments That Matter: Supporting Families After the Sudden Death of Their Child

Betsy Hawley, MA, Executive Director, Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition; Kristin James, LCPC, Grief Care Network



Sponsored by



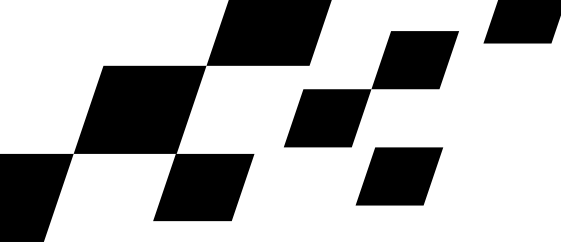


# Funeral Home Websites Made Ridiculously Easy.

Tech headaches? Not on our watch!

Learn How  
We Do This





**26th Annual Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic:  
The Queen City Classic**

**Sunday, October 25  
8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Olde Sycamore Golf Club,  
Charlotte, North Carolina

# Special Events

Now in its 26th year, the Funeral Service Foundation's golf outing has raised more than \$2.15 million in support of its mission of lifting up grieving communities by investing in people and programs that strengthen funeral service.

Join funeral directors and allied professionals of all skill levels for the Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic! Held in conjunction with the annual NFDA International Convention & Expo, the shotgun scramble-style tournament is one of the best networking opportunities in the profession and convention week's most anticipated tee time.

This year, we're heading to Olde Sycamore Golf Club, an award-winning course tucked into a majestic forest of Carolina tall pines just outside the Queen City. Designed by Carolina Hall of Fame architect Tom Jackson, and recognized as both the "Best New Course" and "Best Eastside Course" in Charlotte, Olde Sycamore offers beautifully maintained fairways and some of the best greens in the region.

Sponsorship and individual golfer registration are both available. Visit [FuneralServiceFoundation.org/Golf](http://FuneralServiceFoundation.org/Golf) to register and learn about sponsorship opportunities.



**FUNERAL SERVICE  
FOUNDATION**

The Funeral Service Foundation's work in scholarships, grants and free resources for the profession is made possible through the support of donors like you. Visit the Foundation's booth at NFDA Central to learn more and get involved.

# NFDA International Convention & Expo

October 25 – 28, 2026 • Charlotte, NC

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

When you attend the NFDA International Convention & Expo, you'll experience unparalleled education, discover industry leading innovations, and connect with funeral service professionals from around the world. Attendees value the inspiring sessions, hands-on product exploration, and meaningful networking that help them elevate their skills, strengthen their businesses, and better serve the families in their care.

The Funeral Service Foundation is offering 20 scholarships that cover:

- Full registration fees
- Three nights of lodging
- Up to \$500 travel reimbursement

Applications due July 23.

Scholarships are available to funeral directors licensed in the U.S. or Canada.

## Apply today:

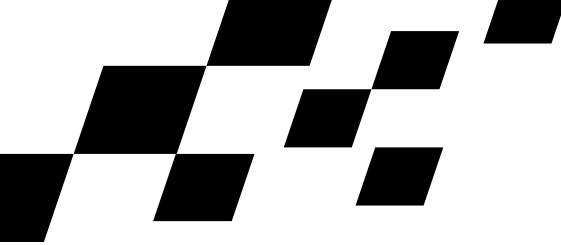
[FuneralServiceFoundation.org/Scholarship-Opportunities](https://FuneralServiceFoundation.org/Scholarship-Opportunities)



**FUNERAL SERVICE  
FOUNDATION**

**FOUNDATION  
SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM**

Building Futures & Fueling Careers



# Special Events



### Welcome Party

Sunday, October 25

6 – 8 p.m.

NASCAR Hall of Fame, 400 E Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Charlotte, North Carolina

Start your engines! Enjoy exclusive private access to the entire NASCAR Hall of Fame, offering a rare opportunity to experience this iconic destination without the crowds. Blending high-energy history with a welcoming social atmosphere, this exclusive evening sets the tone for the days ahead – bringing attendees together in a venue where competition, innovation and community come together under one roof.

### Sponsored by



### Service of Remembrance

Monday, October 26

9:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Firefighters have long stood as symbols of courage, sacrifice and unwavering service to their communities. This year's Service of Remembrance honors these everyday heroes and pays special tribute to the firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty.

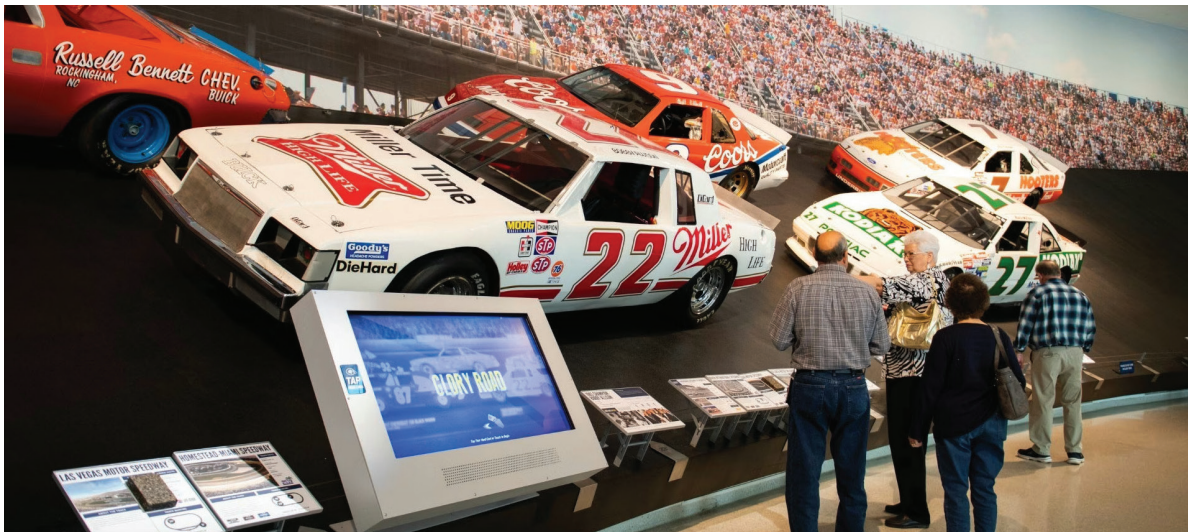
As we acknowledge the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001, we also pause to remember the hundreds of firefighters who lost their lives in the towers that day – an enduring reminder of bravery that continues to shape our nation's collective memory.

Please join us for a moving service that pays homage not only to these fallen firefighters, but also to the members of our funeral service community and their loved ones who have died during the past year. Together, we will reflect, honor and find comfort in shared remembrance. (1 CE hour)

*(Held during the Opening Session.)*

### Sponsored by

THE MESSENGER CO.





### All-Star Recognition Ceremony

Monday, October 26

4 – 5 p.m.

Join the NFDA Board of Directors as the association honors the dedication, innovation and achievements of outstanding funeral service professionals. This special event shines a spotlight on individuals and firms who demonstrated excellence in their field during the past year, including:

- 2026 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award recipients
- NFDA Green Funeral Practice certificate holders
- NFDA Cremation Certification designees
- NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultant designees
- Funeral Service Foundation scholarship recipients
- 2026-27 NFDA National Emerging Leaders Program participants
- 2026 Meet the Mentors program participants
- 2026 NFDA Inspiration Award recipient
- NFDA International Professional Achievement certificate holders
- Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice Certified Funeral Service Practitioners

Celebrate the passion and commitment that elevates your profession – see you in the winner’s circle!



### Community Impact Zone

Monday & Tuesday, October 26-27

11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

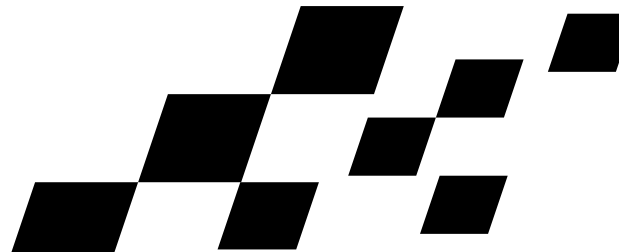
Step into the Community Impact Zone and turn your convention experience into something truly powerful! This vibrant space buzzes with hands-on service projects that uplift local organizations and strengthen the communities we’re fortunate to visit. You’ll have the opportunity to make comforting fleece blankets that provide both physical warmth and a sense of security for animals awaiting adoption. The completed blankets will be donated to local animal shelters in Charlotte, helping provide comfort and care to pets as they wait for their “forever” homes. Stay tuned for other activities, as well!

### Connection Hub

Step into the Connection Hub at the NFDA International Convention & Expo – a welcoming social area designed for authentic conversation and community building. Here, attendees can gather in small groups to connect over shared experiences, discuss professional challenges, celebrate successes, and exchange ideas that enrich both work and life.

These informal meetups offer a relaxed, come-as-you-are environment where you can learn from peers, expand your network and spark meaningful dialogue that extends beyond the convention floor. Whether you’re seeking fresh insights, new friends or simply a place to recharge through conversation, the Connection Hub is your destination.

A full schedule of meetups, including young and new, first-timers and more, will be released as the convention approaches – **stay tuned!**





# The Expo...

*That Leaves Others  
in the Dust*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 26: Noon – 5 p.m.**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27: Noon – 5 p.m.**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28: 9 a.m. – Noon**

### Step into the NFDA Expo Hall and get ready for an experience – not just a trade show.

This is the world’s largest gathering of funeral service suppliers, innovators and trendsetters, all under one roof. Whether you’re scouting cutting-edge technology, eye-catching memorial merchandise or fresh ideas to elevate your services, the NFDA Expo Hall is your one-stop destination for what’s new and what’s next.

Stroll the aisles to test-drive the latest tools, compare smart solutions and meet the teams behind the products shaping the future of the profession. And don’t forget to take advantage of exclusive, show-only deals you won’t find anywhere else.

In short: if you want inspiration, innovation and maybe a few “Wow, I didn’t know that existed” moments, the NFDA Expo Hall is where it all happens.



### NFDA-Endorsed Providers

How much time do you spend researching companies to get the best deal on products and services? How do you know which companies are worthy of your trust? NFDA helps simplify the process by curating a select group of businesses that offer valuable products and services to support your funeral home. Discover these providers and learn more about what they offer at the NFDA Expo.

### NFDA Funeral Career Hub

Whether you’re a student preparing for the next step in your funeral service journey, or the owner/manager of a firm seeking to hire the best and the brightest, discover resources and get connected at NFDA’s Funeral Career Hub – conveniently located on the NFDA Expo Hall floor. It’s so much more than a job board!



### NFDA Publications

NFDA strives to keep you informed, so please help keep us informed, too. Chat with the staff of *The Director*, *Memorial Business Journal* and *The Director.edu* about topics important to you and your business; pick up free copies of *The Director*; or ask us about *The Director* app, available exclusively for NFDA members.

### Remembering A Life

NFDA is the only funeral service association with a comprehensive consumer-education initiative, and most Remembering A Life resources are free to NFDA members. If you're looking for new content about the value of a funeral to share with families, visit the Remembering A Life booth. While you're there, pick up our free idea guides!

### NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Program

Stop by to celebrate the 2026 honorees and discover the innovative ways they're elevating funeral service. Get inspired by their commitment to serving families and communities, and start your own journey toward this prestigious recognition.

Register for the 2027 program year during the NFDA convention and take advantage of an exclusive, attendee-only discount.



### Funeral Face-off (F.F.O.)

It's the ultimate funeral service trivia challenge. Three-person teams will compete against each other during preliminary rounds this summer, but then the action heats up on the NFDA Expo Hall floor during the live Wild Card and Championship rounds. Who will walk away as champions? Participate or cheer on the teams at this year's convention to find out!

Sponsored by  PRECOA

Enter by August 24



# Get more from the floor

The Expo Hall will be packed with game-changing ideas, must-see innovations – and piles of great swag, so yes... bring that extra suitcase.

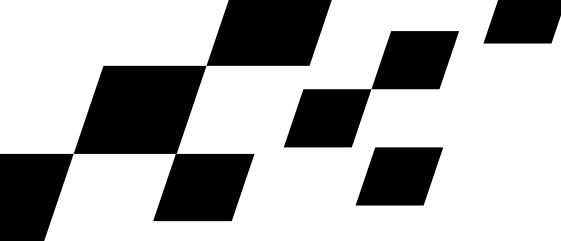
Check out our amazing exhibitors at [NFDA.org/MapMyShow](https://NFDA.org/MapMyShow).

And while you're there, create an account with My Show Planner to plan your route with the interactive floor plan.

2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo  
Charlotte • October 25-28



NFDA.org/Convention  
262-789-1880



# Thank You to Last Year's Sponsors!

## BLACK DIAMOND



## MEDALLION



## PLATINUM



## TITANIUM



## BECOME A 2026 SPONSOR

Email Anthony Kaniuk at [AKaniuk@NFDA.org](mailto:AKaniuk@NFDA.org) or Lorri Wagner at [LWagner@NFDA.org](mailto:LWagner@NFDA.org), or visit [NFDA.org/2026Sponsor](http://NFDA.org/2026Sponsor), for more information on how to be seen by thousands of attendees.

## GOLD



## SILVER



## BRONZE





# *Top Ten Reasons the NFDA Convention Is Worth Every Dollar*

Smart investments deliver lasting returns, and the NFDA Convention does exactly that. With one registration, you gain education, access, connections and inspiration that would cost far more if pursued separately. Check out our top ten reasons for joining us in Charlotte this October!

**1. Education That Would Cost More Anywhere Else**

One registration delivers dozens of high quality sessions, keynote speakers and workshops, earning CE credits that would cost significantly more if taken individually.

**2. A World Class Expo Included in Your Registration**

Explore the largest funeral service expo in the world, with hands-on access to products, services and innovations you can't experience online.

**3. Real ROI You Can Bring Back to Your Firm**

Ideas gained at convention help improve operations, enhance family service, grow revenue and reduce costs – often paying for attendance many times over.

**4. Expert Advice Without the Consulting Fee**

Learn directly from leading professionals, educators and peers who freely share strategies and insights you'd otherwise pay for through consultants or specialty training.

**5. Built-in Networking That Saves Time and Travel**

Thousands of professional connections in one place means fewer trips, fewer meetings and more meaningful conversations in a single, highly efficient experience.

**6. Exclusive Deals and Show-only Savings**

Many exhibitors offer convention-only pricing, promotions and incentives – putting real, measurable dollars back in your budget.

**7. All Access Learning for Every Stage of Your Career**

Whether you're new to the profession, growing a firm or planning for succession, the NFDA Convention & Expo offers tailored value no matter where you are in your journey.

**8. Inspiration That Reenergizes Your Work**

Stepping away from daily demands provides clarity, perspective and renewed purpose – an often overlooked return that fuels resilience and leadership.

**9. One Registration, Multiple Experiences**

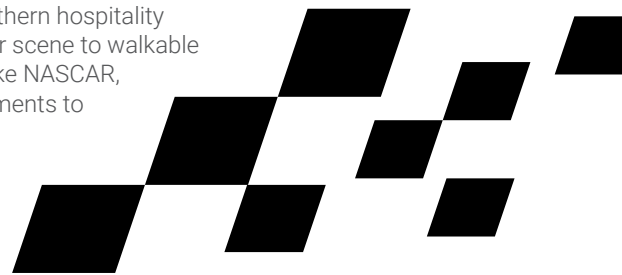
From education and the Expo to special events, networking and recognition ceremonies, your registration unlocks a full week of professional growth.

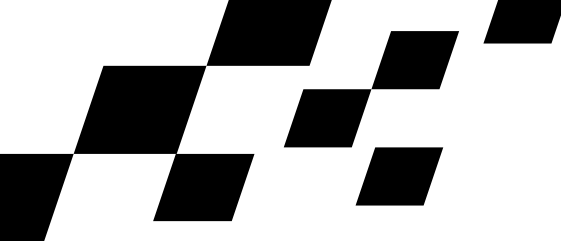
**10. An Investment in Quality, Confidence and Credibility**

Attending the NFDA Convention signals commitment to excellence – not just to yourself, but to the families, staff and communities you serve.

**Bonus: Enjoy a Destination That Delivers!**

Charlotte, North Carolina, offers the perfect blend of Southern hospitality and big city energy. From a vibrant culinary and craft beer scene to walkable attractions, cultural institutions and iconic experiences like NASCAR, the Queen City adds real enjoyment and memorable moments to your convention investment.





# NFDA Central



### NFDA Membership

If you're not already an NFDA member, this is the perfect time to join the world's largest funeral service association. Discover how NFDA can provide you with the resources you need, when you need them – including the new NFDA Social Media Hub – to help you and your firm adapt and grow in the future. And if you are an NFDA member, stop by to renew your membership and/or your performance/livestreaming license. Plus, receive a free gift when you renew your NFDA firm membership.

### NFDA Store

Looking for a perfect gift for the families you serve, or resources that will help you become more successful in work and life? The

NFDA Store offers convenient, one-stop shopping for all the resources you need, including books, community-outreach materials, NFDA merchandise and Remembering A Life items.

### Funeral Service Foundation

The Funeral Service Foundation supports the profession through academic and professional-development scholarships, resources and grants to organizations that share its mission of lifting up grieving communities by investing in people and programs that strengthen funeral service. Visit the Foundation's booth to explore scholarships and resources that support your career, as well as ways to give back to the funeral service profession.



remembering a  
**life**

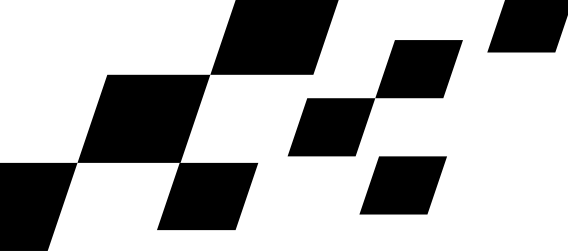
# EVERY FAMILY HAS A STORY.

Help them  
tell it.



Visit us in the NFDA Expo Hall!

[nfda.org/RememberingALife](https://nfda.org/RememberingALife)



# Rest in Peace



## Maritz Global Events®

The Official Hotel Provider of the 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo

Maritz Global Events' friendly and knowledgeable staff stands ready to assist you with all of your convention-hotel needs.

*Reserve your room early – the NFDA room block will sell out!*

### HOUSING IS NOW OPEN!

### TOP 4 REASONS TO USE MARITZ GLOBAL TO BOOK YOUR CONVENTION HOTEL

1. **Maritz lets you easily and reliably compare hotel prices/locations for Charlotte hotels.** Maritz Global Events is the official hotel provider for the 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo. While reservations made elsewhere might seem like a good option, they might be illegitimate and not actually have the rooms to sell; impose unreasonable cancellation or change penalties; or be completely non-refundable. Get the best rate at the hotel of your choice through Maritz Global Events!
2. **Stay in the heart of the city.** NFDA's room block lets you experience the culture and vibrancy of Charlotte.
3. **Stay where your friends and colleagues stay.** When you book your hotel through Maritz Global Events, you'll know you're staying where your colleagues are staying because they're using Maritz, too! Connect in the morning for coffee as you plan your day before heading to the Charlotte Convention Center.
4. **Enjoy a simple, online booking process.** Rest assured that Maritz Global Events' friendly and knowledgeable staff are prepared to assist you with all your hotel needs. After all, you're here to do business, network, learn and relax, so the last thing you need is a hotel headache. Let Maritz take care of you.



# 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo Registration Form

Charlotte, NC • October 25-28, 2026  
 NFDA.org/Convention • 262-789-1880

**Must be Received by  
 Oct. 15, 2026**

Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

**Registrant Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Badge Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **NFDA ID #** \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_  Opt-out from vendor emails Cell (used for onsite updates) \_\_\_\_\_

**Unique email required for confirmation, badge printing and event app**

License #/State \_\_\_\_\_ License #/State \_\_\_\_\_ Academy # \_\_\_\_\_

**Registrant Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Badge Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **NFDA ID #** \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_  Opt-out from vendor emails Cell (used for onsite updates) \_\_\_\_\_

**Unique email required for confirmation, badge printing and event app**

License #/State \_\_\_\_\_ License #/State \_\_\_\_\_ Academy # \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any special accommodations needed \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first NFDA Convention?  Yes  No

	Full Access 1st Registrant	Additional Registrant	Expo Plus	Student	Expo Only
Workshops	✓	✓	—	No CE	—
Sunday Welcome Party	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Monday Opening Session	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Monday All-star Recognition Ceremony	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Monday Service of Remembrance	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Wednesday Closing Session	✓	✓	—	✓	—
Expo Hall (three days)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>NFDA Member Fee</b> Early Bird (On or Before 8/13/26)	<b>\$795</b>	<b>\$465</b>	<b>\$310</b>	<b>\$75</b>	<b>\$225</b>
Standard (After 8/13/26)	<b>\$995</b>	<b>\$665</b>	<b>\$360</b>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$240</b>
<b>Nonmember Fee</b> Early Bird (On or Before 8/13/26)	<b>\$1,095</b>	<b>\$565</b>	<b>\$415</b>	<b>\$95</b>	<b>\$390</b>
Standard (After 8/13/26)	<b>\$1,295</b>	<b>\$765</b>	<b>\$465</b>	<b>\$105</b>	<b>\$405</b>
<b>Total for Your Selection</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Extras</b>	Early (On/Before 8/13)		Standard (After 8/13)	Quantity	Total
<b>Tuesday: FIAT-IFTA International Gala</b>	\$230		\$330		\$
<b>Total for Your Extras</b>					\$

**Group Discounts:**  
 Call for groups of five or more from the same firm.

**Preconvention Seminars:**  
 Visit NFDA.org/Convention

**Suppliers/Distributors:**  
 Contact Business Development at L.Karlik@NFDA.org or 262-789-1880.

Contributions	Total
Please accept my NFDA Political Action Committee contribution (Voluntary)	\$
<b>Grand Total</b>	\$

**Method of Payment:** A 3% credit card fee may be assessed on all applicable credit card transactions, governed by the card brand rules.

Check (U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. bank) payable to NFDA, 13625 Bishop's Drive, Brookfield, WI 53005-6607

Credit Card: Fax to 262-789-6977 or call your personal NFDA member services representative at 262-789-1880.

Amex  MC  VISA  Discover Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cancellations for the 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo registration and/or special events must be received in writing and faxed or postmarked on or before October 15, 2026, to receive a full refund. Cancellations received after October 15, 2026, and before October 22, 2026, will be refunded the registration fee minus a \$100 cancellation fee; special event fees/tickets will not be refunded. Cancellations received on or after October 22, 2026, and no-shows will not receive a refund. Telephone requests must be followed up in writing.



## 2026 NFDA International Convention & Expo Registration Form

Charlotte, NC • October 25-28, 2026  
NFDA.org/Convention • 262-789-1880

### Ways to Register

- **Online:** NFDA.org/Convention
- **Email form to:** NFDA@NFDA.org
- **Fax form to:** 262-789-6977
- **Mail form to:** NFDA, 13625 Bishop's Dr., Brookfield, WI 53005-6607
- **Call:** 262-789-1880

### Filling Out the Form

- Print clearly.
- Include preferred name to be printed on badge (if desired).
- **Provide unique email address for each person (used for confirmation and event app).**
- Provide cell phone number (needed for onsite updates).

### Convention Discounts for Groups of Five or More

You must call to get discounts. First registrant pays full price. Discounts good for additional registrants. Students, apprentices and youth do not count as part of the group. Expo Only or Expo Plus registrations (paid or free) do not count as part of group.

Groups of 5-9 receive a \$25 discount on each additional registrant. Groups of 10 or more receive a \$50 discount on each additional registrant.

Offer valid until September 21, 2026.

### What Happens Next?

- Registration confirmation: If you do not receive an email confirmation within two weeks of submitting your registration, call NFDA at 262-789-1880.
- Closer to the event, you will receive emails with additional information.
- When you arrive at the convention, print your badge at a self-serve kiosk at the NFDA Registration area.

### Health Advisory

Please see NFDA.org/Health-Advisory for the current information.

### Policies

**NFDA Cancellation Policy:** NFDA reserves the right to cancel the convention due to circumstances beyond its control. Should circumstances arise that result in the postponement of the convention, registrants will receive a full refund. NFDA's liability for any cancellation is limited to a refund of the registration fee and shall not extend to any other claims, including, but not limited to: travel expenses, cancellation fees, lost wages, inconvenience and other related costs.

**Attendee Behavior:** NFDA reserves the right to remove any attendee if their actions are deemed by NFDA, at its sole discretion, to be dangerous, inappropriate, in violation of NFDA's policies or disruptive to other attendees.

**Replacement (Lost) Badges:** NFDA convention badges must be worn at all times. If you lose or forget your badge, a replacement badge can be purchased for a \$70 USD fee at the NFDA Registration Desk. If you find a badge, please return it to the NFDA Registration Desk. An NFDA International Convention & Expo badge is required at all NFDA events.

**Vendor Email Policy:** Exhibitors receive pre- and post-convention lists. Those using lead-retrieval equipment receive a list of the attendees whose badges they scan in the Expo Hall. If you do not want your email address provided on these lists, please check the box labeled "Opt-out from vendor emails" on the registration form, or contact your member services representative at 262-789-1880.

**Photography/Videography Policy:** By registering for this event, you authorize and grant NFDA and its contractors the right to record your image, voice, and likeness, and your artwork or written work, on video, film, photograph, digital media, or in any other form of electronic or print medium, and to edit, use, and reproduce such media at its discretion.

You are not permitted to take photos/videos of any booths or products without permission from that exhibitor.

**Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):** NFDA only uses facilities that are in compliance with the ADA. If you require special assistance while attending the convention, please visit the NFDA Registration Desk.

### NFDA Political Action Committee (PAC) Contribution

**(voluntary):** Contributions or gifts to NFDA PAC are not tax deductible and are limited by federal law to \$5,000 per person, per year. In accordance with federal law, contributions are strictly voluntary and not a condition of NFDA membership. All personal contributions to NFDA PAC are used in support of candidates for federal office. Corporate contributions cannot be used in support of candidates for federal office and are attributed to NFDA's Political Education Fund (PEF).

**Note:** Companies scheduled to exhibit at the NFDA Expo and their booth assignments, all workshops/presenters, and all events are subject to change.



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