



**For Immediate Release
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KEYSTONE AND FUNERAL SERVICE FOUNDATION AWARD FIVE KEY MEMORIES SCHOLARSHIPS

Tampa, Fla. – Five future funeral directors were awarded Key Memories Scholarships of \$1,000 each for their education, by Keystone Group Holdings and the Funeral Service Foundation. Each recipient submitted a top-scoring essay on their view of funeral service as either a job or a career.

The 2007 Key Memories Scholarship program attracted 60 students representing 25 mortuary science schools. To be eligible to participate, students must be accepted to or currently enrolled in a mortuary science school program.

“This year we asked students to explain the passion, creativity, and innovation they possess for funeral service,” said Keystone CEO and Funeral Service Foundation Chairman Bob Horn. “Then, taking those things into consideration, they were asked if they viewed funeral service as a job or a career.”

For many students who entered the contest, funeral service was considered a career, and for some, even a calling. Winning essays may be read in their entirety at www.keymemories.com or www.funeralservicefoundation.org.

“We were delighted to read about the enthusiasm these students have for funeral service,” explained Dick Fox, Chairman of Keystone’s Scholarship Committee. “It is so important that this profession attracts individuals that have a passion for what they do every day. “

The 2007 panel of judges included Keystone Advisory Board members Merrie Burley, David Dormedy, Dick Fox, Stephanie Hurt, Gary Nathan, James Odham, and Bob Shank, as well as Melinda Mueller of the Funeral Service Foundation. After careful review, the winning essays were chosen during a Keystone meeting in Birmingham, Mich. on April 23.

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Thoughts from the Winning Essays

Recipients of the 2007 Key Memories Scholarships include Stephen Nichols of Cypress College, Cypress, Calif.; Anna Zvirman of the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Brockton Shaffer of the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Giselle Wynia of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; and Reverend James Jacob of Mercer County Community College, Trenton, N.J.

As portrayed in his essay, Stephen Nichols believes that funeral service practitioners need to daily remind themselves that families' needs come first. He truly believes that once someone looks at their occupation in this light, it will no longer be just a job, but will become a career; one they can be proud of, and hopefully one that will endure.

Anna Zvirman sees her journey into the funeral industry as a life-long commitment with unlimited potential. To her there are countless opportunities which include not only serving families, but also contributing to the profession by teaching others about it and writing about funeral service experiences and concerns.

In Brockton Shaffer's words, "funeral service can not be thought of as a job, but rather a career, with each service being paragraphs in a book that takes a lifetime to write. From first-call to after-care, funeral service is faced with many tasks, which when performed in the eyes of legality, ethics, and professionalism, can not only ease the pain of the family, but therapeutically help all involved."

Giselle Wynia explains that funeral directors not only help with planning funerals, but also assist with grief. As the first people families call when a death has occurred or is eminent, if funeral directors choose only to serve those families with the attitude that it's a "job", it will be negative to the families. She believes that to provide service to families with warmth, care, and concern, as if they were one's own family, takes a professional who respects their career.

In Reverend James Jacob's opinion, spirituality is a major part of funeral service. He writes that leading by example, funeral directors walk side by side with those in pain, drawing strength, shaping lives, creating experiences and being a channel for the healing spirit of compassion. In his own words, "We are the agent for the bereaved, and for what is eternal, for funeral direction, is a calling."

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About Keystone and the Funeral Service Foundation

Keystone Group Holdings is a Tampa, Florida-based company that operates 181 funeral homes, 23 crematories, and 14 cemeteries throughout the United States. The company established its Key Memories Scholarship Program several years ago and partnered with the Funeral Service Foundation on the project in 2005 to support the studies of young people who wish to pursue the funeral profession. For more information, visit www.keystonegroup.com.

The Funeral Service Foundation is a national public grantmaking organization that provides resources for career and professional development, the support of funeral service and allied professions, public awareness and education, and the improvement of children's lives. A 15-member Board of Trustees representing both funeral directors and allied professions oversees Foundation activities. To learn more, visit www.funeralservicefoundation.org.

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