



2016 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Nomis Publications and the Funeral Home & Cemetery News recognize Elizabeth Roberts, Roberts & Downey Chapel Equipment for being our representative photographer throughout the Convention. Thanks to Mary Lou Cressy of Cressy Memorial for the submission of many photos as well as NFDA photographer International Center for Documentary Arts for the use of photos.

Paul Foy Wins Sich Casket Contest



Paul Foy

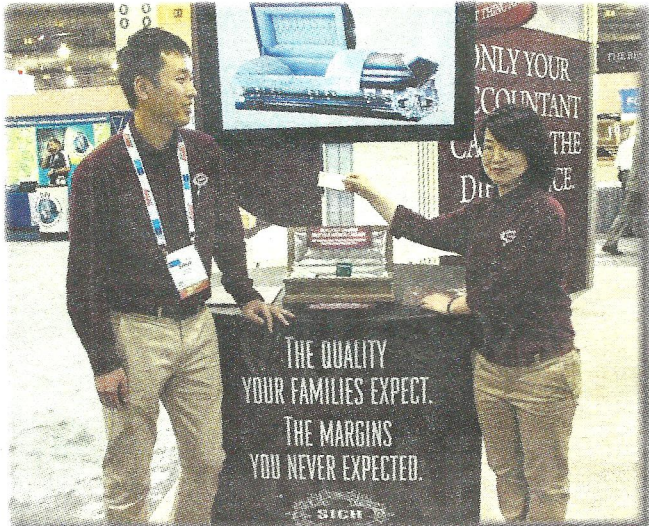
PHILADELPHIA, PA— Sich Casket has announced the winner of their Casket Giveaway at the NFDA Convention. The prize casket, Sich model "Heritage," will be delivered to Paul Foy of James Romanelli-Stephan Funeral Home, Ozone Park, New York. Mr. Foy is the manager of the funeral home.

"This was certainly an unexpected surprise. I was on the road, returning home, when I got the call," said Mr. Foy. "It's not every day you get a beautiful brand new casket for free just by dropping your card in a box." (The entry box was a miniature casket representing one of Sich's upcoming casket models.)

The "Heritage," which was one of the six caskets showcased at the Sich booth, is constructed of solid Paulownia hardwood featuring an elegant Satin Mission Brown finish with Khaki Cross Weave interior.

The Casket Giveaway was one of numerous unique activities surrounding Sich Casket's debut at the NFDA Convention. Attendees were first surprised and entertained by a flash mob just outside the exhibit hall, all wearing maroon Sich t-shirts, emerging through the waiting crowd singing "God Bless America." At the Sich booth, lovely models handed out banana and strawberry-flavored fortune cookies. Banners across the booth declared that Sich was "The best thing to come out of China since soy sauce."

"We wanted to make sure that everybody knew who we are and that ours was the booth to visit at the Convention," said Sich founder and CEO **Sirius Chan**. According to numerous sources, both within the company and outside, Sich's booth was extremely well-attended, all the more



Lala Zhang of Sich Casket selects the winning entry in the Casket Giveaway, accompanied by CEO and Founder Sirius Chan.



Sich flash mob just outside the exhibit hall singing God Bless America

unexpected given that they were a first-time exhibitor.

"We want to congratulate Paul Foy on his winning our casket. And, of course, some family in the near future will benefit from it as well, which makes this contest very worthwhile," added Mr. Chan.

Mr. Foy will take delivery of the casket from his local Sich distributor, **Pete Rezanika** of **M. Solomon Casket**, Middletown, NY, who had encouraged him to drop his card into the entry box to begin with.

Sich Casket Company is a pioneer of the Chinese casket industry. In just ten years the company has grown from a small family-run furniture factory to a significant international manufacturer of wood and metal caskets and a leading Chinese supplier of caskets in North America. Founded by company president Sirius Chan, Sich sources its materials globally to provide the finest quality and best value at every price point. With more than 250 models and styles of solid hardwood, wood veneer and metal caskets, Sich caskets are sold through a distributor network serving funeral homes throughout the United States and Canada. Their website is www.SichCasket.com.

Giving Hearts



On Saturday, October 22, NFDA volunteers shared their time and talents with Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia.

This year, 18 volunteers worked on three Habitat homes being constructed side-by-side in Chester County, about 50 minutes west of the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The three houses were in various stages of construction. The first was nearly complete and volunteers helped clear away construction debris and painted trim, doors and walls.

In the second house, volunteers cut and hung drywall and, by the end of the day, most of the first floor was complete. The third house was in its early stages of development and volunteers helped install plumbing throughout the house.

Thanks, in part, to the generosity of NFDA volunteers, three families will realize the American dream of home ownership. A collection taken up during the Service of Remembrance yielded \$2,158 for Habitat for Humanity.

NFDA Honors Funeral Service All Stars



During the All Star Recognition Ceremony, NFDA recognized funeral professionals who are Certified Crematory Operators (CCO), Certified Preplanning Consultants (CPC) and Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice (APFSP) Certified Funeral Service Practitioners (CFSP).

NFDA also recognized funeral homes that are Green Funeral Practice Certificate holders and 2016 Pursuit of Excellence Award recipients – including the Best of the Best Award

Recipients, Hall of Excellence Inductees and firms celebrating a participation milestone.

2016 marks APFSP's 40th anniversary; it was founded by NFDA officers and members. Of the very first group of funeral directors who qualified for the CFSP designation in 1976, 40 are still active members of the Academy. During the All Star Recognition Ceremony, APFSP offered a special salute to the original CFSPs who received their designation in 1976.

Homesteaders Recognized for Technology Innovation

WEST DES MOINES, IA— Homesteaders' newest digital tool, the myHomesteaders policy management app, has been recognized as a 2016 Innovation Award Finalist by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA). The mobile app was honored at the opening session of the NFDA International Convention and Expo in Philadelphia.

The myHomesteaders app was one of six finalists selected by members of the NFDA.

"The myHomesteaders app underscores our commitment to innovation by investing in technology that truly adds value to the profession," said Homesteaders chairman, president and CEO **Steve Lang**. "We are proud to be the first pre-need funding company to offer a way to manage your pre-need policies in the modern age – right on your smartphone or tablet."

Homesteaders' new mobile app offers pre-need professionals a quick view of their pre-need program status, including in force and endangered policies as well as recent claims. It's designed to take advantage of native smartphone functionality – such as in-app calling, messaging, e-mail and GPS navigation – making it easier than ever before to manage pre-need policies on the go.

"The Homesteaders tech team works closely with funeral professionals to ensure our technology solutions are just that – solutions," explained Homesteaders chief operations officer **Steve Shaffer**. "NFDA's recognition is further affirmation that our suite of digital tools is offering value to our customers."

"The myHomesteaders app isn't merely 'optimized' to work on a small screen – it's a truly native app that func-

tions seamlessly with features like fingerprint identification, push notifications, phone, email and text," explained **Travis Nelsen**, the primary app developer. "We've woven contact management and policy data with intuitive and creative design, revolutionizing the pre-need management experience and making it easy to track your pre-need program from the palm of your hand."

The myHomesteaders app is available for download through Google Play and the Apple App Store.

Celebrating its 110th year of business in 2016, Homesteaders Life Company is a national leader providing life insurance products and services to promote and support the funding of advance funeral planning and end-of-life expenses. Visit homesteaderslife.com to learn more.