



Photo: Patti Muldoon

2024 Board Nominees

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE the 2024 slate of Board Nominees. FCAEM elects half the Board each year for a two-year term. Election will take place at our **Annual Meeting, 2pm, Saturday, October 19, 2024.**

The slate to be voted is:

Claire McNeill..... Treasurer
Ruth Faas Director
Frank Singleton Director

Continuing Board members whose term extends another year are:

Patricia MuldoonPresident
Paula Chasan.....Membership Secretary
Fred Hapgood..... Secretary/Clerk
Eva Moseley Director

Two Board members, Lindsay Mahoney and David Blumenthal, stepped down this year.

Additional nominations to the FCAEM Board are welcome and may be submitted via e-mail to info@fcaemass.org, or by leaving a message on our phone line, 617.859.7990. Please include name, contact information, and relevant interests and experience.

A Word from the President



Patti Muldoon

AS WE JOURNEY through the fall season, I want to express my appreciation to the FCAEM Board, our other member-volunteers, and our allies. Your dedication and efforts enable

what FCAEM does for our members and the general public, keeping us as a reliable resource for those preparing for end of life and deathcare.

Whether sharing your knowledge, volunteering your time, making a financial gift, you each play a vital role in strengthening our community. Through our shared efforts we grow and make a meaningful difference in caring for the living who care for the dead.

Today Massachusetts has few options for earth-friendly, reliable body disposition. Crematories use fossil fuels, releasing toxic gases. The search is still on to find land for a "green" cemetery. Potential donors for medical research may be discouraged by the thefts at Harvard's

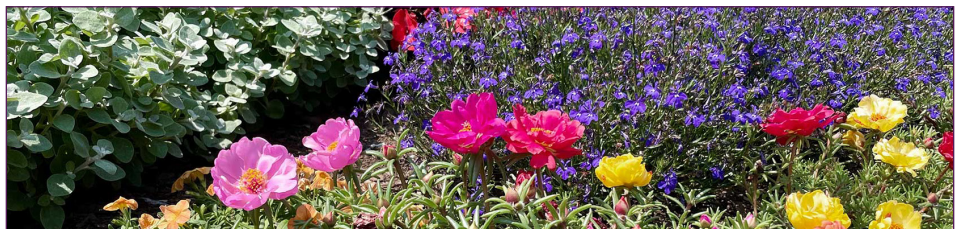
morgue. A bill to expand climate neutral deathcare options stalled again this year in the legislature.

With your help we will succeed as funeral consumer advocates in expanding available deathcare choices. We continue to educate the public and support individuals making final decisions.

Join our informative FREE fall events. Make sure we have your email address to learn about upcoming events in 2025. See you then!

Death Registration Changes

For the last several years the MA Department of Public Health has attempted to implement a fully electronic system for vital records. Different systems cause difficulties for expedited burials and tracking of deaths. The current system for death registration and certificates includes paper and partial electronic. The process includes pronouncers, physician certifiers, town clerks and funeral directors. The new system is expected to go into effect in November after the election.



A Wealth of Planning Resources

Are you planning ahead? Do you wonder how to begin?



Clair McNeil

WE ARE PART OF a network of 50 funeral consumer advocate organizations across the US. The national Funeral Consumers Alliance website funerals.org/affiliate-resources/pamphlets can start you off with "How to arrange a home funeral," or "How to read a funeral home price list."

As the FCA for eastern and central Massachusetts, we work with our sister affiliate for the western counties. In addition to our own website, fcaemass.org, we recommend FCAWM's website for excellent articles such as "What to do

when a death occurs" funeralconsumer-swmass.org/when-death-occurs.

In 2021 Massachusetts was one of only seven states to receive a flunking grade in "An Evaluation of Consumer Information Provided by State Funeral Regulators." This report came from a study by the Funeral Consumers Alliance and the Consumer Federation of America funerals.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-June-CFA-FCA-Report-State-Board-Websites.pdf. Since then real progress has been made.

FCAEM and FCAWM representatives used this report to foment change. We worked cooperatively with the Massachusetts Registration Board of Embalm-

ing and Funeral Directing and the Mass. Funeral Directors Association to develop and publish a new funeral guide for the public. The multi-page **Consumer Fact Sheet for Funeral Planning** is now accessible through the state's website, mass.gov/doc/embalming-funeral-directors-consumer-fact-sheet/download. It provides information to help people get the services they want, learn how the funeral home business works in Massachusetts, and how to file a complaint. FCAEM is now listed on the fact sheet by [MASS.GOV](https://mass.gov) as their first additional resource for consumers.



"Planning Ahead" A Virtual Workshop



Join us this fall to create your personal funeral plan with the FCAEM "Planning Ahead" workshop series!

This informative workshop series will meet on the **first three Wednesdays of November** (11/6/24, 11/13/24, and 11/20/24) **from 3pm to 4:30pm**, and **FREE to members only***.

Ruth Faas and Paula Chasan, experienced FCAEM board members, will share new options and guide you through the national Funeral Consumers Alliance workbook "Before I Go, You Should Know." (a gift when you become a member)

To sign up for these workshops, go to: fcaemass.org/get-involved and sign up.
***For non-members** who wish to attend: fcaemass.org/get-involved/join

For additional support and/or questions, please fill out our contact form at the bottom of this webpage: fcaemass.org/contact

THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER FOR THESE WORKSHOPS IS OCTOBER 30, 2024



Funeral Decision-Making Recommendations from FCAEM

FIRST: Consider all your options, including how involved you and other loved ones want to be in the deathcare. Know that in Massachusetts it is legal for you to choose not to use a funeral home at all; to see how: fcaemass.org/resources/caring-for-your-own-dead.

NEXT: FCAEM recommends you plan ahead, but not pay ahead, except in certain circumstances. Shop around. Price differences may vary by thousands between one funeral establishment and another for the same services. If considering a funeral home, ask for their General Price List (GPL) to be emailed to you so you have the current prices. GPLs can be hard to understand, so narrow your

choices, then get a verbal quote for what you want confirmed in writing. Know that some prices may be negotiable, just as with any other major purchase.

Find out who the owner is—a local independent business or one that might look local, but is owned by a behemoth corporation, such as Service Corp International, based in Houston. SCI's brand name used most often here is Dignity Memorial. *For more information about SCI, see our website article.*

When you are ready to meet a funeral director, especially if you are already grieving, take an ally with you who can be more objective and help you stay within your budget.

CREMATIONS: In Massachusetts funeral homes and crematories can't be held by the same owner, so buyer beware: **sometimes the price a funeral director may offer for a cremation may not actually include the cost of the cremation!** Make sure. Even if the business name includes "cremation," it is likely still a funeral home.

If choosing cremation, discuss with the funeral director which crematory to use. A few crematories have the best filters to reduce toxic gases released into the air. The more efficient ones use less fossil fuels. If this is a concern of yours, tell the funeral director that you want the most efficient, low emission crematory. *Contact FCAEM for additional guidance.*

MOLST Is about to Change — Here Is What You Need to Know



Fred Hapgood

Medical care has been evolving to include legally-binding ways in which people can control the care they receive when not able to communicate their instructions. Advance directives such as health care proxies are often signed when a person is well.

A **Medical Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)** on the other hand is usually filled out when a person with a serious advanced condition or frailty may want to avoid certain medical treatments. It is not usually needed if healthy or if

the patient wants to be kept alive by all available means. Based on individuals' rights to accept or refuse treatment, this medical directive is discussed then signed by both the medical provider and the patient.

Examples of choices include:

- 1) whether to be given cardiopulmonary resuscitation,
- 2) whether to be intubated, and
- 3) whether to be transferred to a hospital.

Of course, so long as adult patients are conscious and competent, they can change their minds at any time.

Massachusetts currently uses the MOLST form on bright pink paper, but is converting to POLST, which will be

online. POLST is now becoming known as **Portable Medical Orders**.

The POLST form is already in use in many states. By being online and portable, it will be easier for people using a POLST to travel across state lines and still have their decisions respected. It also allows Massachusetts to create a statewide POLST registry as part of an individual's medical record.

Massachusetts is expected to gradually transition during 2025. Until that happens, continue to use the MOLST form provided by your doctor, which you can see here: molst-ma.org. POLST has a national website where you can learn more: polst.org.

Remembering John Anderson



John Anderson

Many of us at FCAEM who knew him felt a strong sense of sadness and loss when in November 2023 we learned that John Anderson—that exemplary Funeral Director—had died. John supported FCAEM for many years, going back to when we were The Memorial Society, before we became known as the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Eastern Massachusetts. He had

served bereaved families for so many years that he knew all about the problems and questions that can complicate a seemingly simple funeral. Many a time I, as the person answering the FCAEM phone line, called John to ask for information or for help understanding a problem that had baffled a distressed caller. He would be there, giving calm, sure responses based on his deep knowledge of funeral issues.

John gave support to families who wanted to care for their own dead,

going above and beyond to help these home-funeral families. More than once, he traveled from Stoneham to Cape Cod to assist where he was needed for a home funeral. He was a strong supporter of green burial and chose that option for himself.

In his practice of funeral directing, he exemplified our own mission: to support and promote the right of all people to have the dignified and affordable funerals they desire.

—Paula Chasan



Funeral Consumers Alliance of

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

fcaemass.org

66 Marlborough Street, Boston, MA 02116

FTC Consumer Alert

The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC's) Funeral Rule gives us the right to get accurate information over the phone. This year FTC investigators discovered many violations of the Funeral Rule, including some funeral homes that didn't give accurate price information and others that didn't give out any price information over the phone. If a funeral provider won't give information about prices, services, and merchandise, look elsewhere. Scan the QR codes to learn more.



When Consumers Call Funeral Homes



Shopping for Funeral Services

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2024 Annual Meeting

2pm Saturday, October 19th

Online and at Friends Meeting at Cambridge, 5 Longfellow Park

Join us for a brief business meeting followed by a presentation on

Living in the Shadow of Death

TylaAnn Burger, RN, CHPN, will share her expertise on hospice and serious illness care. TylaAnn just retired as Director of Clinical Services for a large hospice and palliative care program in central and eastern Massachusetts. She coordinated care for patients coping with

end-stage disease, a pandemic, and major challenges in delivering healthcare. She was the founding director of Friends Hospice in inner-city Philadelphia, serving many non-English speaking, unhoused, disabled and mentally ill people.

All are welcome!

Bring your questions and concerns. Refreshments served on site.

Please register in advance at fcaemass.org/fcaem-events to receive updates or the Zoom link.

