

Developing the next generation

ICFA to launch mentoring program



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ICFA WOMEN'S FORUM SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, the ICFA Women's Forum presents a scholarship to one or more members of the profession to attend ICFA University in Memphis, Tennessee. For more information on the scholarship and to apply, see page 78.

For many of us, having mentors is essential to our professional development. We may not realize the effect these role models have had on us until years after their counsel, or we might eagerly seek out mentors to help us take the next step in our careers. Regardless of how these relationships are formed, mentors can have a life-altering impact.

Mentors help the up-and-coming generation maximize opportunities and potential; they help them understand the unspoken culture of their profession and offer advice and personal experience on what it truly takes to thrive in the business world.

Unfortunately, many people in the cemetery and funeral service profession do not have access to quality mentors. This is particularly true for women. As a result, young professionals in our industry may have a harder time stepping into executive roles, and companies miss out on developing talent and intelligence that could ensure their continued growth and success.

The ICFA Women's Forum is launching a volunteer mentoring program that is designed to fulfill this need and benefit mentors, "mentees" and the companies they work for, as well as the profession as a whole.

What's in It for Me?

Why should you or your staff participate in the ICFA Women's Forum Mentoring Program? The benefits are far-reaching.

Mentors will benefit by:

- sharing their knowledge and experiences;
- supporting and assisting a promising, career-minded individual;
- giving back to their profession;
- expanding and developing their own leadership and coaching skills;
- gaining insights into the challenges facing today's incoming generation of leaders;
- obtaining recognition from colleagues;
- becoming part of a network of like-minded individuals interested in furthering the cemetery and funeral service profession; and
- having a meaningful volunteer activity to include in their professional biography.

Mentees will benefit by:

- obtaining a broader understanding of the cemetery and funeral service profession;
- gaining insights into professional codes of conduct;

- being able to discuss challenges, goals and career development with a knowledgeable individual in a confidential manner;
- having access to an impartial figure who can act as a sounding board or adviser in setting goals, planning career strategies, solving problems and achieving objectives; and
- receiving encouragement and advice in developing leadership skills and potential.

Companies will benefit by:

- developing staff professionalism and leadership;
- grooming potential staff for management and ownership succession;
- being recognized among employees and potential hires as an organization that encourages professional development;
- increasing retention of career-minded staff; and
- having new ideas and solutions brought into the organization.

The cemetery and funeral service profession will benefit by:

- grooming new leaders to manage and administer cemeteries and funeral homes;
- grooming talent for potential leadership roles in professional associations;
- developing a generation of leaders who are aware of the issues facing the profession and can participate responsibly in relevant legislative and legal activities; and
- promoting a cross-pollination of ideas to ensure continual improvement in industry-wide practices.

The program will be open to all individuals employed by ICFA-member cemeteries, funeral homes and related businesses.

The ICFA Women's Forum is currently seeking women and men who are interested in becoming mentors. Whether you would like to assist with being a role model, a coach, a counselor or simply be a champion for helping develop success, your abilities can contribute in some way. If you would like to get involved, please contact Christine Toson Hentges at (262) 367-9991 or christieh@tributeinc.com.

Members also are invited to learn more about the mentoring program and to provide their ideas and feedback at the Women's Forum Welcome Booth at the ICFA Annual Convention, March 13-16 at The Venetian in Las Vegas. □