



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **O'CONNOR MORTUARY'S SEPTEMBER 26 SEMINAR BRIDGES THE GAP IN GRIEF COUNSELING INSTRUCTION FOR CAREGIVERS**

#### ***Local Mortuary Continues Tradition of Community Support and Education With Free Workshop on Handling the Aftermath of a Child's Death***

**IRVINE, Calif. (September 13, 2006)** – Addressing the dearth of qualified, clinical grief support training for Orange County caregivers, Laguna Hills, Calif.-based **O'Connor Mortuary** will present the latest installment in its groundbreaking seminar series on Tuesday, Sept. 26, at The University Club on the UCI campus.

Led by grief counseling expert Dr. William (Bill) Hoy, the four-hour workshop, “When a Child Dies: Supporting Family, School and Community,” qualifies for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and is free for professional and volunteer caregivers.

The September 26 seminar will teach caregivers to understand the changes that occur as a result of a child's death; provide effective, age-appropriate counseling to those affected by the death; assess complications that arise and use appropriate interventions; and access community resources to assist families and others affected individuals.

“Few experiences are as devastating in the family, school or community as the death of a child, yet the how-to's of dealing with death, dying and bereavement for caregivers are largely ignored by educational institutions,” said Neil P. O'Connor, CEO of O'Connor Mortuary and a member of the fourth generation to run the family business. “Generally, many professional caregivers only receive about one hour of grief-related instruction during their training.”

O'Connor added that with approximately 40,000 child and teen deaths occurring in the United States each year – 300 to 400 of those in Orange County – this training is urgently needed.

Unique to Orange County, O'Connor Mortuary presents free, CEU-eligible clinical seminars on “end of life” and bereavement issues three times each year – filling a hole that

currently leaves local professionals and volunteers unprepared to handle the overwhelming challenges following a death within the families they serve.

While the seminars are open to parents and concerned laypersons, they are geared toward the clinical needs of caregivers, including nurses, social workers, therapists/counselors, chaplains, and educational specialists – all of whom receive CEUs – plus clergy, crisis team coordinators, emergency responders (fire, sheriff and police departments), sports team coaches, as well as scout troop and children’s support group leaders.

For the last five years, O’Connor Mortuary has partnered with Hoy to host its ongoing series of grief-related seminars, offered approximately every four months.

Hoy, a grief counselor, speaker and teacher with more than 20 years of experience in end-of-life and bereavement care, recognizes the pioneering nature of the seminar series.

“These are free seminars, which is highly unusual for clinical education opportunities,” said Hoy. “O’Connor Mortuary is one of the few organizations in Orange County providing this CEU-qualified training as a free service.”

As a hospice bereavement and pastoral counselor, Hoy has worked with hundreds of families in the dealing with the aftermath of death, and speaks on the topic to audiences in more than 35 North American cities annually.

“I’ve worked with larger, nationally known operations, but O’Connor Mortuary’s outreach and education is by far superior,” added Hoy. “The structure, quality and frequency of their presentations, coupled with its willingness to absorb all costs in the interest of serving the community, make the company a visionary leader in this industry.”

According to CEO O’Connor, the seminar series is a way of giving back to the community and making a real difference in the lives of local families. He added that O’Connor Mortuary also donates a percentage of profits to charitable organizations in the communities where it works, particularly Irvine, where it is the only mortuary company located within city limits.

“We strive to be a dependable educational resource and support provider for all members of the community,” said O’Connor. “The spirit of education permeates all that we do, which aligns perfectly with our company values and mission.”

Through its affiliation with Hoy, O’Connor Mortuary also offers free “in-service” seminars on grief and end-of-life issues upon request by the staffs of relevant organizations, such as elder care facilities, nursing homes, hospice, hospitals, community senior centers and assisted living communities.

For more information on the upcoming seminar, “end of life” and bereavement seminar series or in-service workshops, please call (949) 296-1010.

## **ABOUT O’CONNOR MORTUARY**

O’Connor Mortuary is the oldest family owned and operated mortuary in California. With offices in Laguna Hills and Irvine, Calif., it is the leading “stand alone” mortuary (not located on cemetery grounds) in Orange County. Founded in 1898 by Patrick J. O’Connor, his son Joseph and grandson Joseph Jr., the company today is managed by the fourth generation of O’Connors, including Neil P. O’Connor, CEO; Joseph Fitzgerald, CFO; Charles Ricciardi, COO; and Jeff Turner, CAO. O’Connor Mortuary is recognized throughout Southern California for its longstanding tradition of caring, personalized service, honesty and integrity. The multi-generational company is active in numerous local charitable organizations and was honored by the California Historical Society for more than 100 years of continuous care and service to Southern California families. In addition, the company was honored in 2005 by the Family Owned Business Council for longevity and received the Leatherby Award for Ethics in America.

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