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## **REBUILDING TOGETHER ORANGE COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECEIVES O'CONNOR MORTUARY HEART & SOUL AWARD**

**SANTA ANA, Calif. – Oct. 24, 2011** – Mission Viejo resident Steve Carpenter has dedicated his life's work to rebuilding Orange County with a hammer, nails, some dry wall and a huge stockpile of compassion. As executive director of [Rebuilding Together Orange County](#), Carpenter has led thousands of volunteers in the revitalization of more than 1,300 low-income residences, community centers and nonprofit headquarters. For his incredible leadership and dedication, Carpenter has been honored as the October 2011 recipient of the O'Connor Mortuary Heart & Soul Award.

Created by [O'Connor Mortuary](#), the Heart & Soul Awards program is designed to recognize Orange County citizens for their passion for life and their dedication to making a difference, whether they possess a lifetime of endeavors or for a one-time inspirational achievement. One Orange County citizen is presented the award each month.

"Steve's handiwork can be found in both the structures he has helped build and the countless residents who have benefited from them," said Neil O'Connor, president and CEO of O'Connor Mortuary. "Steve's extensive contributions stem from a simple desire to use his natural talent to help others in any way possible."

After a successful 20-year career in the automotive and entertainment industries, Carpenter decided to pursue his passion for helping others. This passion would change both his life and the lives of thousands of Orange County residents.

Carpenter now oversees the rebuilding and refurbishing of buildings throughout Orange County, all of which have a direct tie to the health and vitality of the community. Notable projects include refurbishing multiple Boys & Girls Clubs, a full rebuild of the Southwest Community Center following a fire, renovating the Blind Children's Learning Center and tripling the capacity of Mary's Kitchen.

Carpenter also participated in construction projects in New Orleans following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Carpenter credits volunteerism as a key driver to the organization's success. "So many people have a desire to do something tangible that they know is making a difference, and Rebuilding Together Orange County gives them that opportunity," said Carpenter. "I'm honored to provide an outlet for their compassion and to help people who are really in need."

Carpenter's previous nonprofit experience included work with the Southern California Special Olympics and various organizations dedicated to helping mentally challenged individuals.

Carpenter also co-chairs the Down with Falls Coalition of Orange County, a group of professionals that strives to safeguard homes for seniors with a focus on fall prevention to reduce the risk of at-home injuries.

As a winner of the Heart & Soul Award, O'Connor Mortuary will present Carpenter with an official plaque, and a donation will be made in his name to Rebuilding Together Orange County.

### **ABOUT THE HEART & SOUL AWARDS**

Created by O'Connor Mortuary in February 2010, the Heart & Soul Award honors Orange County individuals each month for their exemplary and inspiring roles within the community. In celebrating the human spirit, the award recognizes OC residents for pouring their heart and soul into making a difference, whether for a life filled with dedicated endeavors or for a one-time inspirational achievement. One recipient is honored each month with an award plaque, a one-time donation to a local nonprofit organization in his/her name and recognition at a quarterly award reception. To nominate an outstanding Orange County citizen, email Patricia Kolstad at [patricia@oconnormortuary.com](mailto:patricia@oconnormortuary.com).

### **ABOUT O'CONNOR MORTUARY**

[O'Connor Mortuary](#) is the oldest family owned and operated mortuary in California. With offices in Laguna Hills, San Juan Capistrano and Irvine, Calif., it is the leading "stand alone" mortuary in Orange County. Founded in 1898 by Patrick J. O'Connor, and succeeded by his son Joseph and grandson Joseph Jr., the company today is managed by fourth generation CEO, Neil P. O'Connor and his two brother-in-laws, Joseph Fitzgerald, CFO and Charles Ricciardi, COO; as well as 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 has received the Leatherby Award for Ethics in America.

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