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**Dana Point Social Worker Receives O'Connor Mortuary Heart & Soul Award
for Service to Local Marines and Their Families**

DANA POINT, Calif., August 16, 2011 – The ideals of bravery, service and commitment are central to the U.S. Marine Corps. They also describe the unique mission of Dana Point resident and social worker Terry Rifkin. As a founding member of the Dana Point Fifth Marine Regiment Support Group, she provides invaluable and inspirational support to the Marines serving valiantly overseas and their families who remain behind at Camp Pendleton. For her true dedication to service above self, Rifkin has been chosen as the August 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.

“When the brave men and women of our armed forces are deployed overseas, their families become saddled with numerous responsibilities in their absence,” said Neil O'Connor, president and CEO of O'Connor Mortuary. “Terry has the foresight and compassion to support these individuals in both a practical and inspirational way.”

Rifkin was one of the founders of the Dana Point Fifth Marine Regiment Support Group in 2008 and currently serves as director of support and outreach. She has also brought the cause to the Monarch Beach Sunrise Rotary, where she has been a member for 23 years. Together, the organizations offer a multitude of programs lending support to troops and their families, including:

- Operation Joining Forces; a cause that allows civilians to adopt a Marine while they are deployed and support their family back home
- Gathering community volunteers and putting together care packages year round, but especially around the holidays

- Helping to plan baby showers for expectant mothers
- Organizing self-defense classes for women, taught by Marines who are experts in the Martial Arts
- Activities for children, such as a Beach Party, an Ocean Adventure and a holiday party with Santa's toyshop where children can visit Santa, give Santa their wish list, and select a toy

Service was a way of life taught to Rifkin by both of her parents.

"My father always told me that life is about living, loving and service; and his spirit of giving selflessly has resonated with me my entire life," said Rifkin. "The mission of our Support Group is to give encouragement and tangible care and comfort to our Marines who are deployed and to provide support and reassurance to their families while their loved ones are away. Just knowing there is a community of support helps with the loneliness and depression that often results in these long deployments. I am inspired by the sacrifices of our servicemen and their families. There is heroism both at home and abroad."

As a recipient of the Heart & Soul Award, O'Connor Mortuary will present Rifkin with an official plaque and a donation will be made in her name to the Monarch Beach Sunrise Rotary Club earmarked for the Dana Point Fifth Marine Regiment Support Group.

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.

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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