

2022 YFD Annual Distinguished Service Award  
Candidate #5

**Describe in 150 words or less how the nominee has demonstrated outstanding citizenship in the community. This answer should reflect previous or ongoing contributions of service to the community in which he/she lives and provide examples of involvement within activities or organizations that strengthen and improve the community.**

<NAME REMOVED> has been very active in our community as President of the <CITY REMOVED> American Legion Post 615 Ladies Auxiliary for the past 9 years and a member for 16 years, providing Christmas baskets for the needy during the Christmas season among other things. With our local veterans, regardless of whether we have served the family or not, she walks them through their benefits and ensures that they receive all the benefits that they are entitled to, often going way out of her way to be certain that they don't miss out on something. Where our local VA provides similar support, and it would be very easy to send someone an address and/or phone number, she goes out of her way to assist in filling out forms, ordering misplaced DD214s, reordering damaged military markers already installed, arranging Purple Heart ceremonies for living and deceased veterans, and more. She also assists with the annual Memorial Day service and celebration, and places hundreds of flags on headstones each year. For the past 7 years, she has helped host the <CITY REMOVED> Community Fourth of July Festival and sponsored a silent auction booth to raise money for the local food pantry. Last year, she brought the community back together by putting together the 4th of July parade and festival, as well as raising at the silent auction close to \$7,000 for the food pantry. She is her happiest when helping others and creating events for the community to come together.

**Describe in 150 words or less how the nominee has displayed an exceptional level of professionalism and leadership qualities within funeral service and has maintained the confidence of the personal and business relationships with those he/she serves.**

In addition to her celebrant work, managing the office, and meeting with families as a funeral director, she takes the information gathered during the arrangement conference from all families and comes up with personalization options that surprises and wow our clients. Some of her work includes driving on her day off to a country club 45 minutes away and taking photos of a golf course where a gentleman scored a hole in one, creating a beach scene with real sand where guests could write their names in the sand for someone who loved visiting the beach each year, creating a live vegetable and flower garden where guest could sit on a bench among the live plants and feel the rich dirt around the stepping stones, creating themed scenes from hobbies and interests that include golfing, gardening, camping, cooking, military, farming, movies, casino, and many more. For each scene representing a person's life, she takes photos provided by the family for the video tribute and has them enlarged and sometimes collaged, framed, and displayed behind the scenes. She creates giveaways that accompany most of the scenes in the form of bookmakers, keepsake golf balls and tees, keepsake fishing lures, etc. While promoting the funeral home and setting us apart from other firms throughout this process, she is adding tremendous value to funeral service in general. Families walk away feeling that their loved ones are thoroughly honored and celebrated. She does a great deal of this work on her own time and greatly enjoys the satisfaction of making our families feel special. She does not hesitate to share her ideas and past work with other directors, feeling that our entire industry needs to reinvent how we honor and provide service while maintaining the integrity of our traditional values and history.

**Describe in 150 words or less how the nominee supports professional organizations in their efforts to improve the standards of funeral service and lends his/her voice in censure against those who deter these efforts, citing specific examples and/or situations.**

<NAME REMOVED> is a member of OFDA, <OFDA COMMITTEE NAME REMOVED>, Insight Life Celebrants, ICCFA, and NFDA. For the past four years, she has been a member of the Ohio <OFDA COMMITTEE NAME REMOVED> committee. Every year she looks forward to accelerating her knowledge and taking additional classes to expand her ability to serve our families in the best, most efficient, and most comforting manner. In an age where more and more families do not see the value of having funeral services for their loved ones, < NAME REMOVED> reminds families that there is value in these services and is an important step in grieving. At our firm, < NAME REMOVED> ensures that every part of the funeral service is meaningful and comforting. Her commitment to our office, her celebrant work, personalizing the services, and creating custom scenes and experiences for our families are incomparable to most in this field. She lives and breathes to give our families peace and comfort during such a trying time and ensure our firm is successful. < NAME REMOVED> has even expanded our after-care plan to help support and guide our families, which has led her to help many families understand the value of preplanning their final wishes and requests. She constantly has a vision and commitment that no family will walk out of our firm without being given options, guidance, and assistance in helping them plan a healthy and healing experience. She firmly believes that if we can help our families find meaning and value in their experience at our firm, they will return and be willing to pay for that experience again.

**Describe in 150 words or less any additional supporting information that you believe important when reviewing this nominee for consideration for this award.**

During a world pandemic that held many unknowns, the average person would probably want their hours cut or work from home< NAME REMOVED> constantly studied so she could learn how to protect our staff from the pandemic and work safely on the front lines. Instead of cutting hours, she was on call 24-7, putting in a minimum of 96 hours a week. Our firm had two of the busiest years in the 51 years we have been in business, and < NAME REMOVED> didn't back down to any task. She ensured that everyone was always kept up to date, that our firm ran efficiently, that every family was treated as though they were our only case. She has dedicated the last nine years to this profession to ensure that our community is cared for. She is always willing to learn and try new things while keeping the integrity of traditional funerals in mind. She has allowed our firm to enter a modern era while keeping the family-owned distinction and personalization. You won't find a more dedicated and professional young lady in our industry.