

Bay Area Funeral Society

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FUNERAL HOMES OUT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Berkeley, CA.—Many Bay Area funeral homes are out of compliance with federal regulations, according to the results of the Bay Area Funeral Society's 2009 Price Survey.

BAFS volunteers collected and analyzed General Price Lists (GPLs) from 72 funeral homes and graded them for compliance with rules set down for funeral homes by the Federal Trade Commission. The "Funeral Rule," as it's been known since its inception in 1984, requires funeral homes to give consumers itemized price lists in a specific format. This format includes important disclosures to consumers concerning their rights to buy only the goods and services they want. The Funeral Rule also prohibits funeral homes from deceiving consumers about legal requirements, a tactic sometimes used to force customers to buy services and merchandise (such as embalming and vaults) that aren't required by law.

Some of the violations BAFS found were minor and may have been errors. Others were more serious. These include:

- Failing to offer simple, lower-cost services required by the FTC
- Charging an illegal "casket handling fee" when consumers buy caskets outside the funeral home
- Making potentially misleading claims about embalming

The 2009 Price Survey is available on the BAFS website. BAFS is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that educates consumers about their burial and cremation options so that they can make early and informed end-of-life decisions. It grew out of the Berkeley Co-op movement and has been in operation for over fifty years. In the past, BAFS' membership roster included the famous author, Jessica Mitford, whose best-selling book, *The American Way of Death*, exposed the excesses and high-pressure sales tactics of the funeral industry. BAFS continues her work. For more information, visit <http://www.bafsweb.org>, email info@bafsweb.org, or call (510) 841-6653.