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### Gelnett, Wanda B.

2007 OCT - 1 PM 3: 36

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY

REVEW COMMISSION

From:

Jewett, John H.

Sent:

Monday, October 01, 2007 3:24 PM

To:

Gelnett, Wanda B.

Cc:

Wilmarth, Fiona E.

Subject: FW: Comments to IRRC on Pre-Need Funeral Regulations

----Original Message----

From: Ernie Heffner [mailto:ernieheffner@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** Monday, October 01, 2007 3:19 PM

To: IRRC

Cc: Jewett, John H.; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Emery, Heather; msturla@pahouse.net; mtremmel@pahouse.net; cline@pahousegop.com; dmorabito@state.pa.us; ssaylor@pahousegop.com; rvirag@ameriservfinancial.com;

epetersen@ameriservfinancial.com; jkutz@postschell.com Subject: Comments to IRRC on Pre-Need Funeral Regulations

Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman Independent Regulatory Review Commission 333 Market Street, 14th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Chairman Coccodrilli,

Attached are my comments and supporting documentation [references "a" through "h"] in opposition to Proposed Pre-Need Regulations # 16A-4815 (Pre-Need Funeral Arrangements) published 8.25.07 and # 16A-4816 (Pre-Need activities of unlicensed employees) published 9.29.07, both proposed regulations, which I and others perceive to be anti-consumer, anti-trust and protectionist.

There exists and intricate web of players, relationships, history and financial motivations that range from a nonprofit trade association to its for profit subsidiary to members of the State Board of Funeral Directors to a member of the House Professional Licensure Committee.

Chairman Coccodrilli, I would sincerely appreciate your consideration of not approving either of the proposed pre-need regulations. Mr. Chairman, tomorrow you can expect to receive the hard copy of this attachment via FedEx. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ernie Heffner

Ernie Heffner Heffner Funeral Chapels & Crematory 1551 Kenneth Road, York, PA 17408 Ph. 717-767-1551



# PENNSYLVANIA <u>AFFILIATES</u>

RED LION
Olewiler & Heffner

YORK Everhart-Jackson-Heffner

> LEWISBERRY Beaver Urich

POTTSVILLE Schlitzer-Allen-Pugh

> TROY Vickery

MILL HALL Helt Chapel

RENOVO Maxwell

WILLIAMSPORT

WILKES-BARRE Kniffen O'Mallev

AVOCA Kniffen O'Malley

> MILTON Ranck

ADVANCE PLANNING Preneed Associates, Inc.

NEW YORK STATE
AFFILIATE

WELLSBURG Roberts

# HEFFNER Funeral Chapel & Crematory, Inc.

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INDEPENDENT REGULATION BEVIEW COMMISSION

PHONE 717-767-1551 Fax 717-764-9919 Toll Free 888-767-1551

C. Frederick Koller, Supervisor Ernie Heffner, President John Katora, Vice-President Scott Mahkovec, CPA, Controller

October 1, 2007

Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman Independent Regulatory Review Commission 333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101 Phone 717-783-5417

Submitted Via Email To: irrc@irrc.state.pa.us with FedEx Hardcopy to follow

RE: Proposed Pre-Need Regulation # 16A-4815 (Pre-Need Funeral

Arrangements) published 8.25.07;

Proposed Regulation No. 16A-4816 (Pre-Need activities of unlicensed

employees) published 9.29.07

Dear Chairman Coccodrilli,

My name is Ernie Heffner. I am a licensed funeral director and I am opposed to both Proposed Pre-Need Regulation #16A-4815 (Pre-Need Funeral Arrangements) published 8.25.07 and its companion Proposed Pre-Need Regulation #16A-4816 (Pre-Need Activities of Unlicensed Employees) published 9.29.07.

The purpose of expressing my opinion in this letter is to provide questions and documentation that I believe will offer insight as to the motivations of the proponents of these proposed regulations, both proposed regulations of which I and others perceive to be anti-consumer, anti-trust and protectionist.

There exists and intricate web of players, relationships, history and financial motivations that range from a non-profit trade association to its for profit subsidiary to members of the State Board of Funeral Directors to a member of the House Professional Licensure Committee. I would sincerely appreciate your consideration of not approving either of the proposed pre-need regulations. Attachments [a. through h.] are provided for your reference in considering the following questions.

If these proposed regulations are anti-consumer, why would the State Board of Funeral Directors and certain members of the industry be in favor of these proposed regulations? Many perceive the Pennsylvania State Board of Funeral Directors to be the alter-ego of the Pennsylvania Funeral Directors Association (PFDA) by virtue of regulatory capture. The PFDA is a non-profit organization that has a wholly owned for-profit subsidiary d.b.a. Pennsylvania Funeral Services Corp, Unichoice and/or SecureChoice. The for-profit company and the non-profit trade association operate a scheme whereby consumer pre-need funds, those monies paid for pre-planning, are channeled to the for-profit entity by participating funeral director members of PFDA. These pre-need funds are then annually charged trust fees exponentially greater than standard market rates resulting in astounding income to the participants. [See 1997 tax return attachment "a" reflecting over one million dollars in revenue in 1997 alone!]

1551 Kenneth Rd., York, PA 17408

October 1, 2007 Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman Independent Regulatory Review Commission

What happens to that revenue? A portion of the income is annually kicked back to the participating funeral directors.

[See September 28, 2001 PFDA president's letter attachment "b" touting \$600,000 in kickbacks to participating member funeral directors.]

As you know, PFDA benefits directly from the profits and business administrated by the Unichoice Cooperative. PFDA receives financial benefits from office rent, pre-need program royalties and royalties on the sale of marketing materials. Your continued use of the pre-need trust program is vital to the success of PFDA. In addition, Unichoice has paid out more than \$600,000 in dividends to Unichoice participants and PFDA members in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

[See October 2001 PFDA News Letter attachment "c" touting \$600,000 in kickbacks to participating members.]

As you know, PFDA benefits directly from the profits and business administrated by the Unichoice Cooperative.

Your confidued use of the pre-need trust program is vital to the success of PFDA. In addition, Unichoice has paid out in more than \$600,000 in dividends to Unichoice has participants and PFDA members in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

What is a current "standard market rate" for trust administration fees? While the fees may vary somewhat, it is my experience that approximately 70 basis points would be competitive, reasonable and appropriate. You could confirm that with Ameriserv Trust by contacting Ernie Peterson at <a href="mailto:epetersen@ameriserv.com">epetersen@ameriserv.com</a>. You might also seek to know the exact charges by PFDA et al that enable them to pay PNC a trust fee AND kick back more than \$600,000 to participating funeral director members.

Where are these trust fees drawn from? While in theory they should be drawn from earnings of the trust, they have on occasion been paid by invading the corpus of what was supposed to be and is promoted as a 100% funded trust. In years with losses, as referenced in their 2001 news letter, there were member participants that realized losses of as much as 40% of the original deposit and yet fees beyond standard market rates were drawn from the trust and kicked back to participating members.

Who are examples of the participants in the PFDA/Unichoice/SecureChoice Trust? According to their funeral home websites as of this date, participants include at <u>least one</u> legislator, Representative Harry Readshaw, vice-chairman of the Professional Licensure Committee and <u>at least one</u> funeral board member, Joseph A. Fluehr, III. Here are quotes direct from their websites today.

Harry Readshaw: <a href="http://www.readshawfuneralhome.com/pre-payment.php">http://www.readshawfuneralhome.com/pre-payment.php</a> "The Trust Program we offer uses PNC Bank which is through the Pennsylvania Funeral Directors Association"

Joseph Fluehr, III: <a href="http://www.fluehr.net/preneed.php">http://www.fluehr.net/preneed.php</a> "Through the Pennsylvania Funeral Directors Association, we are able to offer you several options of funding for your pre-planned funeral services."

**NOTE:** While these two proponents of the proposed regulations profess to be pro-consumer, there is no price information whatsoever on their websites, not for services, caskets or any other merchandise.

October 1, 2007 Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman Independent Regulatory Review Commission

Are there other members of the State Board of Funeral Directors who have a relationship with PFDA et al? Donald Murphy serves on the State Board as an alleged Public Member which is interesting in that pre-retirement he served as counsel to PFDA. One might ponder his qualifications to serve as an unbiased Public Member.

Are all board members in lock-step with PFDA? While the record indicates that the board members voted unanimously to promote the proposed regulations, in the funeral home website question and answer section of Professional Member, Bennett Goldstein, there appears to be a contradiction to his vote. <a href="http://goldsteinsfuneral.com/prefuneralarrangements.html">http://goldsteinsfuneral.com/prefuneralarrangements.html</a>

"What happens to the money for the funeral I have pre-arranged?

The monies are placed in an <u>irrevocable trust</u> in an FDIC insured banking institution. Also, just as a related aside, <u>all licensed nursing homes in the state now require funeral pre-arrangements for residents covered under its Medicaid benefits program."</u>

Who are some of the "others" that would be opposed to the regulations? Although there are numerous individuals and provider organizations, here are four examples for which I am providing written objections from the referenced organization or individual.

- 1. The Pennsylvania Cemetery Cremation and Funeral Association (PCCFA) has gone on record as being opposed to this regulation. Please see 9.25.07 PCCFA letter [attachment "d"] that includes the letter dated 9.24.07 from PCCFA counsel, James J. Kutz, Post & Schell to the State Board of Funeral Directors.
- 2. Also in opposition is a letter dated 9.25.07 from Ron Virag, President and CEO of Ameriserv Trust and Financial Services Company, a bank trustee [see attachment "e"].
- 3. Additional letters in opposition sent to the State Board of Funeral Directors include a 9.20.07 letter from provider Harry C. Neel, President of Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home [see attachment "f"] and a 9.24.07 letter from me [see attachment "g"].

How much income and subsequent kickbacks are currently involved in the scheme involving PFDA et al? This question is difficult to determine. [See 2003 PFDA Tax Return attachment "h"]. It appears that employee expense for PFDA has been moved to the for-profit subsidiary and that only required excerpts from the for-profit entity's tax return are now included with the non-profit's tax return. Thus, information regarding the for-profit is incomplete.

Are there any other comments not previously included in attachment "g" referenced above?

This regulation is motivated by the potential to increase deposits to the PFDA et al trust funds for the benefit of the highest compensated individuals at the top of the organization [the executive director of PFDA and the in house counsel] and to perpetuate the kick backs to the participating members.

Also noteworthy is the fact that when PFDA is requested to transfer monies from their profitable

October 1, 2007 Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman Independent Regulatory Review Commission

trust scheme to a competitive bank trustee, PFDA inserts language into the release that indemnifies them from any wrong doing including fraud and criminal acts! Fraud and criminal acts by a self professed pro-consumer group?

Summary: I stand by my comments in my 9.24.07 letter to the Funeral Board and the 9.24.07 critically important comments of Attorney Jim Kutz on behalf of PCCFA. In my opinion, neither of these regulations is motivated by a legitimate consumer need but is rather a shameful protectionist effort by a trade group, the funeral board of which it has regulatory capture and those legislative participants to establish an anti-consumer, anti-trust and unconstitutional pair of regulations,

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ernest F. Heffner

Licensed Funeral Director

#### Copies via Email To:

John H. Jewett, Regulatory Analyst, IRRC, jjewett@irrc.state.pa.us

Fiona E. Wilmarth, Director of Regulatory Review, IRRC, fwilmarth@irrc.state.pa.us

Heather Wimbush Emery, Assistant Counsel, IRRC, hemery@irrc.state.pa.us

Representative P. Michael Sturla, Chairman, House Professional Licensure Committee, msturla@pahouse.net

Marlene Tremmel, Executive Director, House Professional Licensure Committee mtremmel@pahouse.net

Christine Line, Counsel, House Professional Licensure Committee, cline@pahousegop.com

Donald F. Morabito, D. Ed, Office of Public Liaison, dmorabito@state.pa.us

Representative Stanley Saylor, House Professional Licensure Committee, ssaylor@pahousegop.com

Ron Virag, President and CEO, Ameriserv Trust and Financial Services Company, <a href="mailto:rvirag@ameriservfinancial.com">rvirag@ameriservfinancial.com</a>

Ernie Peterson, Ameriserv Trust and Financial Services Company, epetersen@ameriserv.com

James J. Kutz, Esquire, ikutz@postschell.com

**PCCFA** 

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## Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax

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Form 990 is available for public respection and, for some people, serves as the primary or sole source of information about a perificular organization. How the public perceives an organization in such cases may be determined by the information presented on its return. Therefore, please make sure the return is complete and accurate and fully describes, in Port III, the organization's programs and accomplishments.

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Rart V. List of Officers, Directors, Trustee	s, and Key Em	ployee	5 (List each one even	l not compensated:	412,300
Hartavi List of Officers, Directors, Trustes	(P) This area average	ployee	5 (List each one even i see Specific Instruct (C)Contamation	i not compensated; Jone on page 20.)	PENNY apaning
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CHN F. HARRISON DISTRICT #5 RCHBALD, PA 18403 REGORY P. ROHANNA DISTRICT #3 EFFERSON, PA 15344 AMES D. HAHN DISTRICT #2  LLLIAM C. WILLIAMS, JR  OHN W. BIRKSON 441 ALLENTOWN BLVD. LARRISBURG, PA 17112	(B) THE MESSER ASSESSED BY A SECUTIVE BY A S	ployee herrer menta T PR  BLE	1) List each one even see Specific Instruct (13) Companyation (11) and poor, code - 2-3  O	i not compensateri; tons on page 20.)  (P) Contribution (a steptove benefit plans a corperat compensation  O	C C C
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CHN F. HARRISON DISTRICT #5 RCHBALD, PA 18403 REGORY P. ROHANNA DISTRICT #3 EFFERSON, PA 15344 AMES D. HAHN DISTRICT #2  LLLIAM C. WILLIAMS, JR  OHN W. BIRKSON 441 ALLENTOWN BLVD. LARRISBURG, PA 17112	(B) THE MASS STATES AND WEST DEVISED FAST DENT 1 PRESIDENT 1 PRESIDENT 1 MEMBER AT 1 EXECUTIVE 40	herren semen TPR	Dist each one even see Specific Instruct (13 Company Nov.)	pol compensateri; loris on pige 20.)  (p) Co-ir full loss (a ship love benefit plans a corperat compensation  O  O  4,917	C C C

Form	23-0607	nee
LP	art VI: Other Information (See Specific Instructions on page 21.)	
76	Old the organization organic in any activity not previously reported to the IRS? If "Yes," attach a detailed description of	Yea No
77	Were any charges made in the arguming or governing documents but not reported to the IRS?	77   X
78 a b	Old the argunization have unraisted business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year envered by this return?	
78	Was livere a Equidation, dissolution, lermination, or substantial contraction during the year?	785 X
	II You Bulling and the same was a sale and sale and a contract and	79 T X
	is the organization related (other than by especiation with a sistewide or national de organization) through constant translate the governing badies, business, allow to any other exempt of nancomplianguisation?	BOAL XI
b	e Yos, where he have of the organization > PENNEYLVANIA FUNERAL SERVICES, CORP.	
	and chack whalles it is [] example N in nonexempt.	10 (E) (E)
e ja	Enter the amount of political expanditures, direct or indirect, as described in the instructions for the B1. sta O Oid the organization file Form (129-PO), for this year?	
	分割には、 (magnitude allowed in the angle Eromona, London and Miller State (セストゥトゥル・ルコススインスはロロイロファッチャンとはインス・アンドル・ロング・アンドル・ロング・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル・アンドル	arb X
	Old the organization receive domaind services or the use of metarlate, equipment, or lacilities at no charge or at substantially less than left rentel value?	35 X
	N "Yes," you may indicate the value of these listes here. Do not include this amount as revenue to Part II. (See instructions for reporting in Part III.)	
93 9	Cod the organization comply with the public inspection requirements for returns and exemption applications?	83a X
D. DA =	Old the argunization comply with the disclosure requirements relating to quid pro que combibutions?	SJb X
		ada X
10	if "Yes," did the organization include with every solicitation an express statement that such contributions or gifts were not less deductible?	
65	501(c)(d), (5), or (5) organizations a Ware substantially all dues popularities by members?	85a X
ħ	Did the organization make only in-house labbying expanditures of \$2,000 or least	86b X
~	If "Yes" was enswered to either 85s or 85b, do not correlate 85c through 65b before unions the presentation received	
	a walver for proxy lax owed for the prior year.	
C	Ouse, assessments, and similar amounts from members	
4	Section 162(e) jobbying and political expenditures.	
8	Aggregate nondeductible amount of section 6003(a)(1)(A) dues notices	
#	Texable sendent of lebbying and pulikal expenditures (the 85d lass 65s)	
Q	Does the organization elect to pay the section \$000(a) tax on the exposent in Bai?	esq N/A
	If adultin 6023(a)(1)(A) dues notices were sent, does the organization agree to add the amount in 85° to its reasonable estimate of dues allocable to nondeductible to-boding and political expenditures for the following tax year?	85h N/A
88	501(c)(7) organizations Enlar:	
	Irritation less and capital contributions included on the 12	<b>F</b>
	Grass receipts, included on line 12, for public use of club facilities	
47	501(c)(12) organizations Enter: a Gross income from members or shareholders	
	Gross income from other sources. (De not net emounts due or paid to other sources against emounts due or received from them.)	
	At any time during the year, did the organization own a 50% or greater interest in a lexable corporation or partnership?  If "Yes," complete Part IX	an X
89 a	501(cN3) organizations. — Eiglen: Amount of tax imposed during the year under: N/A section 4911 >; section 4912 >; section 4916 >	
b	501(a)(3) and 501(a)(4) organizations. — Old the organization engage in any section 4956 excess benefit (paracolon during the year) if You," attach a statement explaining each barracolon	1
c	Enter: Amount of factimposed on the organization managers or disqualified persons during the year under sections 4912, 4655, and 4865.	N/A
d	Enter: Amount of lax in 890, shows, religious and by the organization	- <del>N/A</del>
	List the status with which a copy of this return is filled >	*4.
		10b
97	The books are in care of ▶ BOOKKEEPER Telephone no. ▶ 717-54	were a work of the second seco
	Localed at > 7441 ALLENTOWN BLVD, HBG, PA ZF+4 > 17112	
92	Scotion 4947(a)(1) nonexampli cheritable involo filing Form 590 in lieu of Form 1941 - Check tyre	
	and enter the emount of tex-exempt intersel received or accrued during the tex year	

Novey & Ritter, CPA's

Camp Hill,

25 Morth 21St Street)

PRESENT

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yourgil self-employed) and address

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Preparer's

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-	1997	Federal Statements	Page 1
-			
***************************************	Client 06-23855	PA FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION	23-0607055
1			

Statement 1 Form 990, Part I, Line 1d Contributions, Gifts, and Grants

Not Open to Public Inspection

No single contributor gave \$5,000 or more during the year.

997	Fe	deral Stater	ıents		Page 2
lant 08-23865	PA FUNER	AL DIRECTORS	ISSOCIATIO	V	23-0007055
Statement 2 Form 980, Part II, Line 43 Other Expenses		(A)	(B)	(c)	(D)
Other Expen	laca	• • • • •		m Management	Fundraising
PRESIDENT'S EXPENSE BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S INSURANCE DURS AND SUBSCRIPTI	RXPENSE	\$ 6,218 17,631 51 3,998	<b>\$</b> k	2006 Ark - 1916 110g Sills care vann van 1906 Sills Spa vann	749 (306 Sec von. 440 (406 SEE SEE von. 440
STAFF EXPENSES CONTRIBUTIONS MISCELLANEOUS		9,893 2,025 6,61	i		
	Total	\$ 46,426		•	
Statement 3 Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi	ce Aocompliahm	ents			
Form 990, Part III, Line a	ce Accompliahm			Crarke and	Program
Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi  ACTIVITIES INCLUDE EDUCATION OF MEMBEL ANNUAL CONVENTIONS	Description PROMOTION (	ents OF THE INDU: HE PUBLIC TO	etry and	Grants and Allocations	Service
Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi  ACTIVITIES INCLUDE EDUCATION OF MEMBER	Description PROMOTION ( RSHIP AND TO	ents OF THE INDU: HE PUBLIC TO	etry and		Service
Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi  ACTIVITIES INCLUDE EDUCATION OF MEMBEL ANNUAL CONVENTIONS	Description PROMOTION ( RSHIP AND TO	ents OF THE INDU: HE PUBLIC TO	etry and	Allocations	Service
Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi ACTIVITIES INCLUDE EDUCATION OF MEMBEL ANNUAL CONVENTIONS	Description PROMOTION RSHIP AND TO PUBLICATION	ents OF THE INDU HE FUBLIC TO ONS AND PUB	etry and	Allocations	Service
Form 990, Part III, Line a Statement of Program Servi ACTIVITIES INCLUDE EDUCATION OF MEMBEL ANNUAL CONVENTIONS AWARENESS  Statement 4 Form 990, Part IV, Line 55 Investments—Land, Building	Description PROMOTION RSHIP AND TO PUBLICATION	ents  OF THE INDUSTRIBLE TO ONS AND PUBI	TRY AND ROUGH	Allocations	Service

997	Feder	al Statements		Page 3
lient 06-23655	PA FUNEHAL D	IRECTORS ASSOCIATIO	111	23-0607055
Stalement 4 (Continued) Form 990, Part IV, Line : Investments-Land, Build	<b>.</b>			
,	Asset	Baeis	Accumulated Depreciation	o Value
Land		\$ 139.810		าวจะคาก
	Total	\$ 758,992	217,950	521.042
Statement 5 Form 990, Part IV, Line S Other Assets	50	And the second s	<b>-</b>	
*				Ending
ADVANCE	************	************************************	**********	\$ 543 718
			Total	\$ 1,261 
Statement 6 Form 990, Part IV, Line 6 Other Liebilities	35			
	`			<b>Endi</b> ng
				***************************************
REPUNDS DUE MEMB	TIONAL & LOCAL) . ERS	***********		\$ 14,339
REFUNDS DUE MEMB	TIONAL & LOCAL) . ERS	***********		\$ 14,339
REFUNDS DUE MEMB	ers	***********	**********	\$ 14,339 1,751 1,500
REPUNDS DUE MEMB	ers	***********	**********	\$ 14,339 1,751 1,500
REFUNDS DUB MEMB	ers	***********	**********	\$ 14,339 1,751 1,500
REFUNDS DUB MEMB	ers	***********	**********	\$ 14,339 1,751 1,500

1997 **Federal Statements** Page 4 Client 06-23855 PA FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION 23-0607058 Statement 7 Form 990, Part IV-A, Line d(2) Other Amounts NET BARNINGS IN SUBSIDIARY (EQUITY MET) ...... Total 63,380 Statement 8 Form 990, Part V, Line 75 List of Officers, Directors, Trustees, and Key Employees Employee Expense Ben. Plan Account/ Expense Name and Related Organization Compensation Contrib. JOHN W. BIRKSON 80,250 25,083 PA FUNERAL SERVICES CORP. 129,864 30,000 + 159,864 ANTO + MISC.

1997 Supplemental Information Page 1 '
Client 05-23855 PA FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION 23-0607055

PART III - STATEMENT OF PROGRAM SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The improvement of business conditions within the Funeral Service profession.