



# 2017

## National Association of Medical Examiners

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Greetings from the NAME Foundation. As we look forward to the Spring, it is a good time to reflect a bit on the past year and to look forward to what lies ahead regarding NAME and the NAME Foundation. As always, there are continual challenges which face forensic pathologists and the death investigation community. NAME and the NAME Foundation are committed to assisting as much as possible as we all attempt to successfully address these challenges. In this issue, we provide a brief report of the recent NAME Interim Meeting which was held in conjunction with the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting, in New Orleans, Louisiana. We also highlight the fact that, within the NAME Foundation, there exists a Corporate/Institutional Membership category. As always, past issues of this newsletter are available on the NAME Foundation webpage, which exists on the NAME website ([www.thename.org](http://www.thename.org)). Thank you for your support, and please continue to support the NAME Foundation.

## NAME Foundation Corporate/ Institutional Membership

Recently, the NAME Foundation approved the acceptance of non-NAME members within two categories: individuals as well as corporations/institutions. The idea is to provide a means of membership for those persons and entities who/which interact or are associated with, benefit from, or otherwise support death investigation and forensic pathology. Regarding the

corporate/institutional members, 3 levels of annual membership contributions are recognized, at \$250, \$500, and \$1000 levels. To date, we have very few corporate/institutional members, but we hope to change this during 2017. We will begin this effort by inviting those who routinely exhibit at our Annual Meeting to consider joining the Foundation. If you are aware of any

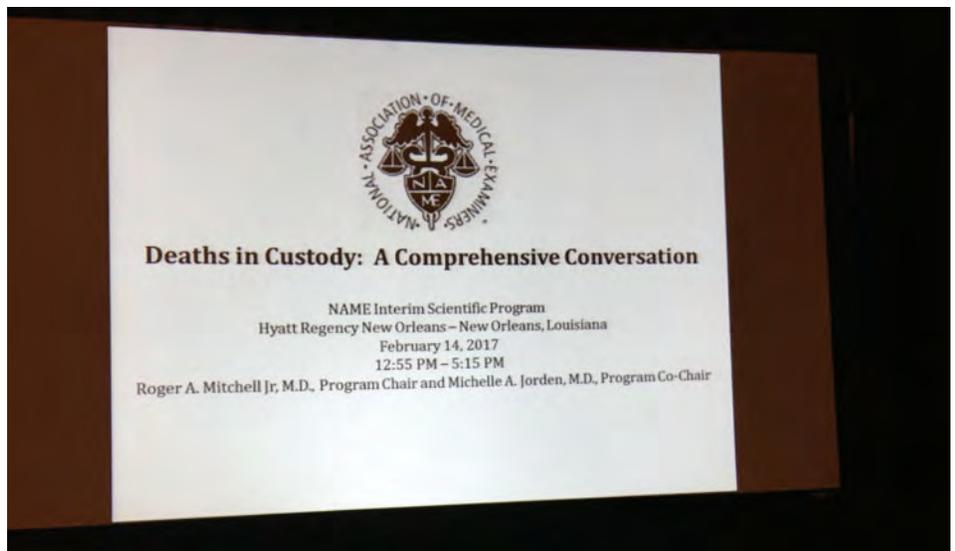
entity, including but not limited to companies/corporations, academic institutions, and foundations, which interacts with or otherwise supports or benefits from the death investigation community, please encourage those within those institutions to consider becoming a corporate/institutional member of the NAME Foundation.

## NAME Interim Scientific Meeting – New Orleans

Moderated and organized by Drs. Roger Mitchell and Michelle Jordan, the title of the Tuesday afternoon event was “Deaths in Custody: A Comprehensive Conversation.” There was a standing-room-only crowd for this very successful academic program. Discussion included a variety of topics, including police shootings, excited delirium, barricade/suicide, and deaths while incarcerated, and the importance in each of proper investigation, autopsy protocol, death certification and surveillance, and media and public relations. The program included two panels of four speakers each. The presentation was well-received and timely. Kudos to Drs. Mitchell and Jordan and all of the speakers and participants. The program provided 3.5 hours of CME as well as SAMs for MOC purposes.



New Orleans, the site of the 2017 Interim NAME Meeting.



The NAME Interim Scientific Meeting was a huge success in New Orleans.



Roger Mitchell moderating the session.



One of the 4-member panels which participated in the session.



Attendees enjoying some socializing during the Interim meeting.

## NAME Board of Directors Meeting – New Orleans

The BOD met on Tuesday morning. Unfortunately, our President, Dr. Brian Peterson, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness, but as the meeting is traditionally run by the Chair of the Board (immediate past President...Dave Fowler this year), the meeting went as planned, despite everyone missing Brian and wishing him a speedy recovery. Reports from officers, committees, the journal, and others, filled the morning. Several motions and issues were addressed, including the following:

- A motion was made and approved by the BOD to accept the Mission, Vision,

and Values Statement document, which can be accessed here: <https://netforum.avectra.com/public/temp/ClientImages/NAME/23167593-1174-4171-bb72-7206b5390cc6.pdf>

- Following a good deal of discussion, a motion was made and approved by the BOD to support in concept the legislation proposed by the CFSO (Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations, of which NAME is a member) for the creation of a federal “office of forensic science” within the Department of Justice, and an “office of death investigation” within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- An update on the continued successful transition of our accreditation and inspection program to comply with ISO accreditation.
- A positive update regarding the status of our journal, Academic Forensic Pathology



N A M E  
FOUNDATION

## Message from the NAME President



(The following message includes language which was included in Dr. Peterson's report to the BOD, which was included in the BOD material for the interim meeting, followed by additional commentary specifically related to the NAME Foundation.)

Report to the BOD:

It strikes me as rather odd to be writing a report for St. Valentine's Day, 2017, on Inauguration Day, January 20 – an unfortunate confluence of events, perhaps? However, this will be a very busy year for NAME, so perhaps like the new administration in Washington, D.C., it is best to just get started.

This early in the year, we are already struggling with the ramifications of the severe shortage of forensic pathologists. We have all seen the data. Annual retirements, deaths, and other exits from our beleaguered subspecialty

exceed the number of those finishing never-filled fellowships. A few finish fellowship with no intention of practicing forensic pathology, or they are lured away to the halcyon fields of cytology, surgical pathology, or any other related field away from basements, poor lighting, and court. In any event, our numbers appear to be dwindling.

At the same time, case load appears to be somewhere between massive and overwhelming, due largely to the tsunami of overdose deaths. In my county alone, overdose deaths have about doubled since 2011; deaths due to fentanyl and analogs have quintupled. These are generally not "difficult" autopsies, but they are autopsies none the less, with commensurate burdens on staff, laboratories struggling with volume and novel drugs, and ultimately, office budgets.

The collision between these two issues, shortage of forensic pathologists and increase in case numbers, leads directly to our third major challenge; inspection and accreditation. This is the year of the big switch; the inspection process will now be managed by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) as we anticipate transitioning from the NAME accreditation process to NAME-ISO, for those offices so desiring. While so doing, we acknowledge the outstanding work done by Steve Clark; without him, the inspection process that has served us so

well for so long simply would not exist. Meanwhile, though, the intersection of staff shortage and increased workload has served to highlight standard G.2.i (Is the medical staff of sufficient size that no autopsy physician is required to perform more than 325 autopsies/year?), a Phase II deficiency if "no." As I type, several offices either have moved or are moving from full to provisional accreditation due solely to this standard. As this ripple continues to grow, we will all be challenged so support and defend the necessity of full accreditation. I believe that given the aggressive, contentious defense bar that most of us face, the shift from full to provisional accreditation, or the loss of accreditation entirely, would have dire consequences. The importance of accreditation to medicolegal death investigation has been emphasized at the highest levels; that NAME owns and maintains a simply outstanding process is not just a credit to our organization, but also a bulwark against those with no understanding of forensic pathology attempting to take control of our practice. If your office is not accredited, this would be a great time to join the majority that are. If you have not taken the (free!) inspector training, please consider doing so. Truly, the more of us that become active in the inspection process, the better.

On the brighter side, the unfortunate collision of staff shortage with increased workload has captured attention

at many levels. We may soon be seeing the creation of an office of forensic science (or maybe more than one) at the federal level, and professional organizations including the AAFS and CAP acknowledge the need for more forensic pathologists. Sadly, given the length of the pipeline from medical school to graduate fellow, there is no quick fix to be had. As various solutions are considered and proposed, it will be critical for us to emphasize that forensic pathology is the practice of medicine with all that entails; we can be replaced neither with paraprofessionals nor DaVinci robots. Ultimately, funding, facilities, and regionalization of services will all play a part in getting us through this crisis.

Finally, on a personal note, I must express my most heartfelt gratitude to you, my colleagues and friends, who have been so amazingly supportive to Jeanne and me as we have dealt with the death of our son Adam, September 12, 2016, the very day that you honored me with this presidency. Your kindness and support has been overwhelming. I look forward to seeing you in Scottsdale!

Further Commentary:

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

Gandalf’s comment above, from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, seems a good fit with the situation that we as forensic pathologists and affiliates are currently facing. Our caseload, driven by the tsunami of opioid-fueled overdose deaths, has become overwhelming, and there is no end in sight. In my county alone, overdose deaths have about doubled since 2011; deaths due to fentanyl and analogs have quintupled. These are generally not “difficult” autopsies, but they are autopsies none the less, with commensurate burdens on staff, laboratories struggling with volume and novel drugs, and ultimately, office budgets.

At the same time, staff shortage is a pressing issue, as usual. We have insufficient medical students choosing pathology as a career. Insufficient pathology residents are attracted to forensic pathology. For those that are, the number of fellowship programs is limited, and even the positions available go unfilled. Those successfully finishing fellowship do not all pick forensic pathology as a career; the blandishments of higher income and more pleasant working conditions draw some away, every year.

While solutions to the first issue are proposed at about every level, from federal to local, it is my contention that our NAME Foundation is uniquely positioned to affect the second. Clearly, there is a need to expose more students at an earlier

stage to forensic pathology as a career. At our 2016 meeting in Minneapolis, we saw just how well this can be done. In Jan Garavaglia, we have a winsome, articulate advocate, gifted in communication, who through the Foundation can reach an ever-increasing audience of impressionable students. Meanwhile, for those in medical school through fellowship attending and participating in our meetings, the Foundation provides support, encouragement, and best of all, awards.

The Foundation, then, can play a “corporate” role in addressing the shortage in our field, just as we all attempt to play individual roles. Said work is neither easy nor inexpensive. We have marvelous corporate support (thanks, Mike!) and many NAME members are also Foundation members. If you are not, I encourage you to join. Become involved. Support the silent auction. And in October, come to Scottsdale!

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## NAME Foundation Board of



## Trustees Meeting

The NAME Foundation Board of Trustees also met on Tuesday morning in New Orleans. As per usual, we heard and discussed reports from the various committees within the Foundation, including Membership/Nominating, Bylaws/Policies and Procedures, Finance/Investment, Fundraising, Advocacy, Newsletter, Silent Auction/Meeting, Education, Research, History, and Long-Range Planning committees. Highlights and issues of importance that deserve special mention include the following:

- The total funds of the Foundation are currently just over the \$350,000 level. With continued successful fundraising campaigns,

as well as increased membership, we hope to increase this amount significantly over the next several years.

- The Foundation continues to “give back” to the community we serve, with special emphasis on attempting to “build up the next generation” of forensic pathologists and death investigators. The Foundation provides the awards for the best student, resident, and affiliate papers/posters at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the Foundation plans to continue to provide travel stipends to students and residents who present papers/posters at the NAME Annual Meeting.

- With the huge success of the Saturday event at the NAME Annual Meeting last fall in Minneapolis, featuring the NAME Foundation Advocate, Dr. G, plans are ongoing regarding the second annual Saturday evening fundraising event. It promises to be an excellent event, and, like the inaugural event, will feature a well-known celebrity and will be advertised to the general public. Stay-tuned for further details.

As always, we on the BoT welcome ideas and input from all NAME and NAME Foundation members. For those NAME members who have not yet joined the Foundation, please consider doing so.

**Do you have an idea,  
question or concern?**

[name@thename.org](mailto:name@thename.org)

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

## NAME Foundation Board of Trustees

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**Vice Chair** – Margaret S. Greenwald

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**Ex-Officio:** Brian Peterson, David Fowler, Kim Collins

## NAME Foundation Membership Criteria

The NAME Foundation is proud to offer membership to any member of the National Association of Medical Examiners who makes an annual contribution to the NAME Foundation. The following minimal annual contribution qualifies membership in the NAME Foundation:

<b>NAME Members:</b>	\$50.00
<b>NAME Affiliates:</b>	\$20.00
<b>Non-NAME Individual:</b>	\$50.00
<b>Corporate/Institution:</b>	\$250, 500, 1000



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