**Death Docent Program & Certification**

**Indigent Burial**

This one-of-a-kind program provides burial services for individuals in our community who do not have resources or family to provide them Every individual that qualifies for the Indigent Burial Program receives a dignified and respectful service surrounded by compassionate volunteers and community members.

Our mission is to make sure every individual receives a personalized and respectful service that memorializes their life on earth.  We want to ensure, as a community, that everyone who exits this life and enters the next, is surrounded by people that care about them.

**What is a Docent?**

A docent is and individual that has some form of training or insight into specific topics and act as guides or educators to help others learn.

Historically the phrase “mortui viventes docent” or the dead teach the living, has been used in reference to anatomy labs or mortuary schools. Those that die and go through our program continue to help us work and learn from one another.

**Purpose of Program**

There are two reasons for this program. The first is the fact that Indigent Burial has many individuals that volunteer and advocate for our program. We want a way to formally certify those that are acting as ambassador to the program.

Secondly, death is a difficult subject to talk about and it is often stigmatized. If we had more natural conversations or even had an openness to such conversations, individuals and families may be more informed about their rights, how they can prepare, and find resources before and after a death. This is also a way for us to open up a pathway for individuals interested in the death field to get a crash course in some of the most important and vital materials.

We have dozens of community partners that can give insight into the death care industry and speak more specifically on special topics within death and dying such, as crime scene investigations, the embalming process, the grieving process, and mortuary law just to name a few. It makes sense for us to use our communities’ resources and individuals’ willingness to teach in order to make information more accessible and provide a forum for healthy discussions.

**Curriculum**

Listed below is the current curriculum for the certification program. There is not cost for any classes or services, but individuals may be required to find their own transportation to events. After completion of all courses and services the certificate is awarded. Students interested in obtaining certification must write a 1-page summary from each of the six events.

**Indigent Burials at Meadow View**

Indigent Burial Services are conducted every Thursday at 10am, 12pm, and 2pm. Individuals are required to attend 3 individuals services. This means an individual can attend one day or 3 separate days. Services are contingent upon how mean clients we have needing our services.

**KY Veteran Military Service**

The Veterans Administration provides services, markers, and plots for qualified veterans. Indigent burial buries at KY Veteran State Cemeteries and National Cemeteries. Individuals are required to attend 1 Veteran service

**Funeral Home Class**

Thee death care industry in the United States includes companies and organizations that provide services related to [death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death): [funerals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funeral), [cremation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cremation) or [burial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial), and [memorials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial). This includes for example [funeral homes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funeral_home), [coffins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffin), [crematoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crematorium), [cemeteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cemetery), and [headstones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headstone). Individuals must attend a course that is put on by a licensed funeral director. Dates will be provided.

**Coroner Class**

The coroner's primary duty in contemporary times is to make inquiry into the death and complete the certificate of death. The Jefferson County Coroner’s office routinely holds courses on special topics. Deputies and the Coroner also routinely give lectures at local universities. Any of these courses or lectures are acceptable for use. Dates for specific classes will be provided.

**Death Café**

A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. Café are held virtually or in person regularly in the Metro area. Individuals are required to attend one session. Dates can be provided

**Special Topic**

This can be anything you want or have interest in. Examples could be events, courses, or ceremonies. This could include something like the Festival of the Faiths, oral history symposium, memorial service, religious ceremonies, etc.

For more information or clarification please reach out to Matt Whisman the Indigent Burial Coordinator at mwhisman@archlou.org or call 502-637-9786 x340. We look forward to having individuals involved, promoting death education, and helping open up the dialogue about death and dying in our community.