



New Book on Service Corporation International Relates Growth, Changes Inside Industry's Largest Company; Robert L. Waltrip 'Transformed Funeral Service Industry'

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HOUSTON, May 5 /PRNewswire/ -- A history of the funeral service business, a chronicle of the development of a major corporation, and the story of the transformation of a family funeral firm into the largest death care company in the world are the key ingredients of a new publication now available.

The new book, "Service Corporation International: The Creation of the Modern Death Care Industry", was co-authored by Dr. William Kellar and Dr. Elisabeth O'Kane, both noted PhD historians from the University of Houston.

"We set out to tell the story of the phenomenal growth of SCI during the past few years," said Dr. Kellar. "SCI opened its doors to us to help us tell how the modern business practices the company introduced transformed the industry. I found it a fascinating subject. I believe funeral directors and all others associated with the industry will find it particularly informative and instructive."

"R. L. Waltrip, through his ingenuity, knowledge and drive revolutionized a world wide industry for the better," said Rice University MBA management professor Terry Hemeyer. "This book gives a clear picture of how the management team at SCI was able to build a modern corporation for the benefit of shareholders, customers, and employees."

"As SCI's corporate leaders and funeral service professionals look to a promising future, the lessons of the past are clear," conclude Drs. Kellar and O'Kane. "...SCI has tenaciously led the way in what has become a global revolution. The result has been the creation of the modern death care industry -- a transformation from the 'mom and pop' enterprises of the 1800s to the efficiently managed, corporately-owned, international funeral service providers of today. That early stubborn conviction, a deeply felt dedication to the funeral service profession, and on occasion 'guts and good sense,' have carried SCI to the position of industry leader."

The book begins with a history of the funeral business in and around Houston during the 19th century and chronicles the birth of the service center or "cluster" concept that led to the success of SCI's acquisition and growth program. Photos taken from SCI corporate archives and other sources illustrate the book.

Chapters in the book detail the early days of the Waltrip family business, Heights Funeral Home, the formation of the predecessor of SCI and the expansion of SCI across Texas, the U.S., and to international locations. By the end of 1998 SCI had grown from one initial funeral home to more than 3,400 funeral service locations, 433 cemeteries and 191 crematoria. SCI currently provides funeral and cemetery services in 20 countries on five continents.

"The story of SCI is a complex one that I believe will interest a diverse audience," said Dr. Kellar. "On one level it's like a business school case study of the intricate financial and management skills required to construct a modern corporation. On yet another level it provides a cultural and historical description of the development of the funeral service industry."

"We are extremely proud of this book," said William R. Barrett, director of advertising and public relations for SCI. "We've received excellent comments from our employees and friends in the industry and we are pleased to make the book available to the general public."

"Service Corporation International: The Creation of the Modern Death Care Industry" is available for \$24.95 plus \$4.95 handling charges by calling 800-394-4546.

SOURCE Service Corporation International

Web site: <http://www.sci-corp.com>

CONTACT: Mickey Gentry of Pierpont Communications, 713-627-2223, or email, mgentry@piercom.com, for Service Corporation International

NOTE TO EDITORS: A review copy of the book is available by calling Mickey Gentry, 713-627-2223 or via e-mail at mgentry@piercom.com.