

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
EMBALMERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS**

IN THE MATTER OF WILFRED FIELDS and the entity operating as FIELDS FUNERAL HOME, L.L.C. NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA and MIKE COLLADO	COMPLAINT NO. 24.25.0013 <u>FINAL ORDER</u>
---	--

FILED: MAY 15, 2026

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND BOARD ORDER

The above-captioned matter came before the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors (the “LSBEFD” or “Board”) for a formal hearing on April 21, 2026. The hearing was held pursuant to La. R.S. 37:840(A)(4) to determine whether the Board’s rules and regulations with respect to embalming and funeral directing were violated, and, if so, what sanctions, if any, are appropriate. Chanel Robinson Debose, Prosecuting Attorney, represented the LSBEFD. Respondents Wilfred Fields, Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C., and Mike Collado appeared in proper person and were not represented by counsel.

APPEARANCES

A quorum of the Board was present:

**BOARD MEMBERS: ANNA WILBERT BREAUX, TROY DENNARD,
CHARLES JOSEPH “JOE” EAGAN, III, TERRY LUNEAU, AND
GREGORY MCKNEELY.**

Others present included:

Kim Michel, Executive Director, for and on behalf of the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors;

R. DeMale Bowden, Jr., Deputy Executive Director/Inspector, for and on behalf of the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors;

Carrie L. Jones, General Counsel, was present to advise the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors; and

John Becknell, Hearing Officer.

WITNESSES AND EXHIBITS¹

The LSBEFD called the following witnesses:

1. R. DeMale Bowden, Jr.
2. Veronica Branch
3. Shasta Keys

Respondents cross-examined the witnesses.

Respondents did not call any witnesses.

The following exhibits were introduced by the Prosecuting Attorney.

1. Complaint Subpoena and Notice of Hearing (*in globo*)
2. Affidavit and Complaint of Ms. Veronica Branch (*in globo*)
3. Answer to Complaint
4. Statutes and Rules
5. Internship Application & Registration Slip for Wilfred Fields Intern No. 0893 (*in globo*)
6. Internship Application & Registration Slip for Richard Williams, Jr. Intern No. 0688 (*in globo*)
7. Fields Funeral Home Embalming Log Sheet
8. Statement of Funeral Goods and Selected Services (*in globo*)
9. Fields Funeral Home Website showing Richard Williams as Operations Manager/Funeral Director

Respondents did not introduce any exhibits.

FINDINGS OF FACT

After considering the testimony of the witnesses, the evidence submitted and made a part of the record, together with the entire record of these proceedings, and considering the applicable laws, rules, and regulations, together with the statements of the parties, the Board finds as follows:

1. Respondent, Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C., was licensed as a funeral establishment in Louisiana on September 6, 2022, holding Establishment License # 2974, and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Board.
2. Respondent, Wilfred Fields, is the unlicensed owner of Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C., and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Board.
3. Respondent, Wilfred Fields, obtained his Funeral Director Intern Registration (No. 0893) on July 25, 2024, which was subsequent to the actions that gave rise to the complaint in this matter. Accordingly, Mr. Fields was not a licensed funeral director or registered intern at the time of the funeral arrangement and funeral service in question.
4. Respondent, Mike Collado, was licensed as an embalmer and funeral director in Louisiana on or about December 13, 1989, holding License #E-2173, and as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Board.
5. Mike Collado was the licensed manager at Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C., at all relevant times that give rise to the complaint in this matter.
6. Richard Williams, Jr., a former employee of Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C, obtained his Funeral Director Intern Registration (No. 0688) on or about September 10, 2022, and worked as a registered intern at Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C, at all relevant times that give rise to the complaint in this matter. As such, he is subject to the jurisdiction of this Board.

¹ Exhibits referenced herein were identified and admitted into evidence for the Board's consideration during the administrative hearing but are not attached hereto.

7. On or around September 10, 2024, the Board received a complaint from Ms. Veronica Branch alleging that Fields Funeral Home/Associates/Employees:

My sons body was intrusted by Fields Funeral Home and my sons body was imbalbed by a unlicensed individual/worker, my sons services were directed w/o his licensed funeral director for Fields Funeral Home on May 12, 2024 my son Daiquan Jahiem Branch was murdered, on Approx 5/15 I agreed to intrust my sons services w/ Fields Funeral Services with stipulations that my son would be imbalbed dressed by a licensed director and imbalmer if one family he agreed to those arrangements "Shasta Keys" My son was imbalbed by a Fields associate Richard which I later found out was not isnt licensed. My info was given after the services, but I was told by Richard himself he imbalbed my son on 5/17 on my first viewing of my son after his body was released from the coroners office. Richard stated to me when I said my friend was in route to come to do the imbalming he stated to me "oh hes done we just got finished"! @ the time I wasn't aware he wasn't imbalmed licenced on my so many other things that occurred including filling out all of my paperwork unlicenced when addressed by the coroner after finding out all the mishaps during the services, I was told Richard doesn't touch bodies. We given the Fields Funeral Home 4 months to bring their rights w/me and my family. No formal apologies reimbursements offers of apologies credits or even simple "sorry"

This is my formal complaint.

[errors in original]

8. The LSBEFD is statutorily charged to administer and enforce the provisions of the Embalming and Funeral Directors Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:840, including but not limited to making of such investigations and holding hearing as may be found necessary.
9. On or about September 23, 2024, Respondents, Wilfred Fields, Fields Funeral Home, L.L.C, and Mike Collado were notified of the complaint and provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
10. On September 25, 2024, Respondent, Mike Collado, responded to the alleged violations in writing via email and stated:

In response to the complaint by the Daiquen Branch family, I embalmed Mr. Branch and my intern, Richard, assisted me. Richard was a licensed intern with the State and also met with the family and took care of the arrangements for Mr. Branch while I was on premise. At the direction of the family, they requested Mr. Shasta Keys E-2704 to be present and assist with the funeral service.
11. On February 12, 2025, at a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Complaint Review Committee ("CRC") submitted a report recommending a formal hearing in Case No. 24.25.0013 without disclosing the Respondents' identities. The Board accepted the recommendation without knowledge of Respondents' identities.
12. On March 19, 2026, the LSBEFD filed an Administrative Complaint and Notice of Hearing setting forth formal charges against the Respondents and noticing an administrative hearing for Tuesday, April 21, 2026.
13. Respondents were properly notified of the hearing via USPS Priority Mail, delivery confirmation.
14. Respondents were present at the hearing without legal counsel.
15. Ms. Veronica Branch entered into a contractual agreement with Fields Funeral Home on May 16, 2024, for embalming and funeral services for the late Daiquan Branch. Richard Williams, Jr., a registered intern, signed the Statement of Funeral Goods and Services on behalf of Fields Funeral Home.

16. Mike Collado's written statement to the Board indicated that he embalmed Mr. Branch with the assistance of his licensed intern, Richard Williams.
17. The embalming log reflects that Mr. Branch was embalmed on May 16, 2024, by Mike Collado.
18. Mike Collado's statements at the administrative hearing were consistent with his written statement and the embalming log. He further explained that Richard Williams' assistance was limited to tasks that can be performed by a registered funeral director intern.
19. Ms. Veronica Branch testified that there was a not a licensed funeral director present at the funeral.
20. Mike Collado stated on the record that Wilfred Fields advised him in a text message that Ms. Shasta Keys (E-2704) would serve as the funeral director; therefore, he did not attend the service.
21. Wilfred Fields stated on the record that Ms. Shasta Keys was at the funeral service in her capacity as a funeral director.
22. Ms. Shasta Keys testified that she was present at Mr. Branch's funeral service as a friend/relative to the family for moral support. Ms. Keys was not at the funeral in an official capacity as a licensed funeral director. She further testified that she was not contacted by anyone with Fields Funeral Home to work at the funeral service nor was she offered any compensation to do so.
23. Fields Funeral Home failed to provide a licensed funeral director at the funeral service of Mr. Daiquan Branch.
24. Ms. Veronica Branch testified that there was supposed to be a final viewing of the late Daiquan Branch at the church; however, she was advised by Wildred Fields that the casket would not be opened because the casket key was not available.
25. Wilfred Fields stated at the hearing that he told Ms. Veronica Branch that the casket key was not available because he was concerned about the smell if the casket were to be opened in the church.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. La. R.S. 37:840 provides that the responsibility for the enforcement of the provisions of the Embalming and Funeral Directors Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:831, *et seq.*, is vested in the Board, which shall have all the powers necessary for administering and enforcing the Act, including:
 - (A)(1) Making reasonable rules and regulations for the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this Chapter.
...
 - (A)(3) Prescribing requirements, in accordance with the provisions and intent of this Chapter, for funeral homes and other establishments engaged in the care and disposition of dead human bodies, including but not limited to rules relating to personnel, sanitation and disinfection and the making of inspections in connection therewith, and the issuance of licenses to those found to be qualified and eligible therefor.
 - (A)(4) Holding of such hearings and the making of such investigations as may be found necessary in carrying out the purposes and intent of this Chapter, with the right to subpoena licensees, their records, books and accounts and others from whom

information is needed, and to administer oaths and issue commissions to take depositions of witnesses, within and outside the state. Oaths may be administered and subpoenas issued by any member of the board in connection with such hearings and investigations.

...

2. La. R.S. 37:831(42) defines “funeral directing” as:

The operation of a funeral home, or, by way of illustration and not limitation, any service whatsoever connected with the management of funerals, or the supervision of hearses or funeral cars, the purchase of caskets or other funeral merchandise, and retail sale and display thereof, the cleaning or dressing of dead human bodies for burial, and the performance or supervision of any service or act connected with the management of funerals from time of death until the body or bodies are delivered to the cemetery, crematory, or other agent for the purpose of disposition.

3. LAC 46:XXXVII.1105. Charge to Funeral Establishment provides:

All funeral establishments shall have a licensed funeral designated as the manager of the facility and in charge of the day to day operations of the funeral home. The manager shall be available to perform all of the routine functions of the licensed establishment as provide within the provisions of R.S. Title 37, Chapter 10, Section 831 et seq., within normal business hours...

4. La. R.S. 37:846(A)(5) provides:

The board may refuse to grant, refuse to renew, suspend, or revoke any license or impose a sanction or fine in keeping with the penalty provision of this Part for any licensee or registrant when the licensee or registrant is found guilty of unprofessional, unethical or dishonest conduct.

5. La. R.S. 37:831(85) defines “unethical or unprofessional conduct” as:

a standard of personal behavior by a funeral director, or embalmer, or both, or intern, or individual working under the authority of a temporary license not conforming to accepted, professional principles of the funeral service profession.

6. La. R.S. 37:831(31) defines “dishonest conduct” as:

a standard of personal behavior by a funeral director, or embalmer, or both, characterized by a willful distortion of the truth in an attempt to deceive, cheat or defraud.

7. La. R.S. 37:831(87) defines “untruthful” as:

false, inaccurate, or dishonest

8. La. R.S. 37: 848 (A) provides:

A. No person, not certified and registered under the provisions of this Chapter, shall embalm, or pretend to practice the science of embalming, or conduct the business of funeral directing; however, a licensed funeral director shall not be required to supervise the disinterment of a dead human body when disinterment and reburial is made in the same cemetery by its designated sexton who shall be

responsible to supervise the disinterment and reburial.

9. La. R.S. 37:831(42) defines “funeral directing” to mean:

The operation of a funeral home, or, by way of illustration and not limitation, any service whatsoever connected with the management of funerals, or the supervision of hearses or funeral cars, the purchase of caskets or other funeral merchandise, and retail sale and display thereof, the cleaning or dressing of dead human bodies for burial, and the performance or supervision of any service or act connected with the management of funerals from time of death until the body or bodies are delivered to the cemetery, crematory, or other agent for the purpose of disposition.

10. Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home engaged in unprofessional, unethical, or dishonest conduct by failing to have a licensed funeral director available who was employed by the firm or contracted by the firm to direct the funeral of the late Daiquan Jahiem Branch despite the fact that Ms. Veronica Branch paid for use of facilities and staff which were to include the funeral director and staff.

11. Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home engaged in unprofessional, unethical, or dishonest conduct when Mr. Fields untruthful as to the reason for why the final viewing of the late Daiquan Jahiem Branch could not occur at the church despite the fact that Ms. Veronica Branch paid for use of facilities and staff for viewing at the church.

BOARD ORDER

After considering the evidence and testimony and upon motion, the LSBEFD affirmed, by majority vote of those present, the following Order:

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that no violations are found against Mike Collado and all charges are dismissed with prejudice.

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home violated La. R.S. 37:846(A)(5) for unprofessional, unethical, or dishonest conduct by Mr. Fields’s misrepresentations communicated to the family with respect to the late Daiquan Jahiem Branch’s final viewing at the church. It was stated at the funeral that the casket key was not available; however, testimony at the hearing provided that Mr. Fields was concerned about the smell.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home is fined \$500.00 plus attorney fees and costs to be paid within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Board Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home violated La. R.S. 37:846(A)(5) for unprofessional, unethical, or dishonest conduct by failing to have a licensed embalmer and funeral director or a licensed funeral director present at the funeral of the late Daiquan Jahiem Branch.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Wilfred Fields and the entity operating as Fields Funeral Home is fined \$1,000.00 plus attorney fees and costs to be paid within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Board Order.

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that the total fines, attorney fees, and costs assessed are \$19,401.78 and are due within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Board Order.

- Total fines: \$1,500.00.
- Total attorney fees (Prosecuting Attorney, General Counsel, and Hearing Officer): \$16,391.28.
- Total court reporter costs: \$1,510.50

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that all fines, attorney fees, and costs, in the amount of \$19,401.78 shall be paid by cashier's check or money order **and** failure to pay may result in automatic suspension of the establishment license, which shall be imposed by the Executive Director and subject to ratification by the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Metairie, Louisiana

Order rendered on April 21, 2026, and memorialized in writing on May 15, 2026.

BY ORDER OF THE LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
EMBALMERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS



Charles Joseph Eagan, III
LSBEFD Board Treasurer/April 21, 2026, Board Meeting Presiding Officer