

NORMA M. VODANOVICH  
1341 Focis Street  
Metairie, LA 70005-1719

P934407  
B2583340026

Secretary  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room H-159  
Washington, DC 20580

Subject: 16 CFR Part 453

In November 1991, I made arrangements for a family member who lived and died in New Roads, Louisiana. I went to a Funeral Director in New Roads and was quoted \$5,000 for the arrangements. I went to Rabinhorst Funeral Director in Baton Rouge that is approximately a 45-minute drive from New Roads. I selected an expensive casket and was charged \$2,500. There was no basic funeral fee. Rabinhorst picked up the body in New Roads, transported it to Baton Rouge, prepared the body, and transported it back to St. Mary's Church for the two hour wake and funeral mass. They transported the body to the cemetery.

In March 1996, my husband had a heart attack and triple by-pass surgery. Five days after my husband's heart attack my mother had a stroke and died. I was quite distraught and overwhelmed. I had to make arrangements for my mother's funeral while my husband was still in ICU.

I went to Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Directors and was ushered into a conference room and was seated at a mahogany conference table with a salesman. I was given a price list that included a standard casket, the use of a parlor in the funeral home and the basics. The list had a basic fee of approximately \$5,000. I told the salesman that I wanted the body prepared, taken to my church in Metairie for a two-hour wake and a funeral mass, then to Greenwood Cemetery. I was told that the price was the same. Selecting a more expensive casket would make the only change in price.

I called other funeral directors in the area and was given the same information. I called Rabinhorst in Baton Rouge and was told that they had a Basic Fee of \$5,000. When I told them about the arrangements that I had received in 1991, they said sorry the Basic Fee was \$5000.

I began calling Funeral Directors who specialized in African-American arrangements. They all quoted me prices in the \$1,000 range up. They said nothing about Basic Fee. I could arrange for the type funeral I wanted and did not have to pay for their funeral home parlor. Was I paying the \$5,000 basic fee to sit at a mahogany conference table? Was I paying for the funeral home parlor regardless of whether I used it or not? Sound like price fixing to me.

When I called Greenwood Cemetery to ask what they would charge to open the tomb for the burial, I told the lady who was there to take calls that I did not know when we would have the funeral because I was shopping for a funeral director that I could afford. She told me to call Professional Funeral Service at 1620 Elysian Fields in New Orleans. I made an appointment and went to get a price. You can imagine my surprise when I was Quoted a price of \$2,500 for the type of arrangements I wanted and had selected a much more expensive casket than I was offered at the other funeral directors with the Mahogany conference table.

Also, the owner of Professional Funeral Service told me that he was refused a license because he did not have a funeral parlor, but he fought the refusal and won.

I have since learned that so many people are choosing to wake their family members in church that it has caused funeral directors to charge for the parlor regardless whether you use it or not.

If disgust would kill my family would have to make funeral arrangements for me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Norma M. Vodanovich".

Norma M. Vodanovich