
METRO

ME 'stiffed' mortuary school on supply of fresh bodies: petition

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Medical Examiner's office.

Photo: Paul Martinka

The New York City's only mortuary school claims its been stiffed by the Medical Examiner's Office — on a steady supply of fresh corpses.

American Academy McAllister Institute of Funeral Service, or AAMI, filed a Manhattan

Supreme Court petition this week saying the ME's Office is violating city law, which requires it to release unclaimed bodies to the school 14 days after death.

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The Hell's Kitchen school is asking that a judge order the ME's Office to start providing corpses again – as it's done for the last 50 years.

The dearth of the dearly departed began in June 2014 “without any warning or formal notice,” AAMI's president Mary Margaret Dunn wrote in court papers.

Dunn said the school's national accreditation is in jeopardy and that students' degrees are being put on ice because they must perform at least 10 clinical embalmings in order to graduate.

More than 450 students are currently enrolled at AAMI to become funeral directors or professional embalmers.

In the interim, the school has been relying on the “haphazard availability of bodies” from private funeral homes.

“Notice that a body is available can be as short as two hours,” the petition said. “A suddenly available body could require a clinical embalming on an evening or on a weekend, with short notice to faculty and student alike.”

Brian S. Sokoloff, the attorney representing AAMI, said the lack of bodies is a dead serious matter.

“The tendency might be giggle at a story like this but it creates a hardship,” he said. “AAMI is the only mortuary school in the five boroughs. It's got a great reputation. [But] it's becoming a problem for them.”

Sokoloff said it's a “mystery” as to why the flow of bodies suddenly stopped.

But one insider told The Post Thursday that it was likely because “the bodies are being released incorrectly.”

Last June, [The Post exclusively reported that the ME's Office shipped the body of a Bronx man to AAMI for embalming – without the family's permission.](#)

The city Department of Investigation had probed the agency for a series of earlier blunders, including losing a body, accidentally cremating another one and mistakenly donating a third to science.