



## Charleston County News Release

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**See photo:** <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/coroner.htm>

## Charleston County's Rae Wooten Named 2012 Coroner of the Year

[Charleston County Coroner Rae H. Wooten](#) was named 2012 Coroner of the Year by the [South Carolina Coroner's Association](#) at their annual training conference last week.

"We asked for nominations for the Coroner who is proactive in their service to their county, tireless in their training and leadership for their office and employees and exemplifies our definition of the best coroner. Coroner Wooten received the most votes and was recently honored at our annual conference banquet," said [Rusty Clevenger, Coroner of Spartanburg, S.C.](#) who serves as President Elect of the S.C. Coroner's Association. "We are proud of Rae and the example she sets for other coroners to emulate. I can speak personally for Coroner Wooten's willingness to help any other coroner in the state."

Wooten said she is humbled by the honor.

"I was totally surprised and so honored to be voted Coroner of the Year," said Wooten. "I feel privileged to serve the citizens of Charleston County and alongside the other coroners of South Carolina."

Wooten was born, raised and educated in Columbia, South Carolina before moving to the Charleston area in 1973. She graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, and subsequently worked as an RN in various settings before joining the Charleston County Coroner's Office in April 1995. She became Chief Deputy Coroner in July 1996 and continued in that position until September 1, 2006 when she was appointed by the governor to complete the term of the previous coroner upon her resignation. She was subsequently elected to her first four-year term in 2008 and is a candidate for re-election in November 2012.

The Charleston County Coroner's Office conducts independent investigations of deaths in Charleston County, serving as a representative of the decedents and survivors. The investigation's purpose is to determine the manner of death and ensure that the circumstances surrounding it are thoroughly understood.

This isn't the first time the association recognized Wooten. She received the Sue Townsend Award in 2010 for her commitment to the advancement of the S.C. Coroner's Association and coroners throughout the state through her tenacity and the pursuit of excellence.

### **SIDEBAR**

#### **Charleston County Coroner's Office**

- The Coroner's Office conducts independent investigations of deaths in Charleston County, serving as a representative of the decedents and survivors. The investigation's purpose is to determine the manner of death and ensure that the circumstances surrounding it are thoroughly understood.
- **Functions:**
  - Performs independent investigations into traumatic deaths, deaths that occur outside of hospitals and deaths that occur suddenly or unexpectedly
  - Notifies families when unexpected deaths occur, such as in traffic fatalities or homicides
  - Makes positive identification of individuals who have died
  - Conducts inquests
  - Creates reports that relate to deaths investigated by the Office

- Issues burial transit permits for individuals who have died outside of a hospital
- Provides autopsy and Coroner's reports to agencies and next of kin
- Makes the final determination as to the manner of death
- Releases personal effects to the next of kin
- Acts as the central depository for all records relative to a death, including the Medical Examiner's Report, police investigative reports and any other investigative agencies' reports
- Maintains the County Coroner's Book of Inquisitions with records dating back to 1878
- Issues cremation permits
- Offers prevention programs for schools. Topics include drinking and driving, weapons awareness and alcohol and drug abuse.
- **The office does not:**
  - Perform autopsies
  - Issue death certificates
  - Provide burial services
- **History:**
  - The King of England appointed the first Coroner of South Carolina by relocating him from England to Charleston.
  - Until 1706, the only coroner in the colony lived in Charleston.
  - Beginning in 1785, Justices of the County Court selected the coroners who were commissioned by the governor for two-year terms. Since 1868, and in accordance with the S.C. Constitution, each of the state's 46 counties has elected a coroner to four-year terms.
- **For more information,** visit <http://charlestoncounty.org/elected/coroner.htm>

**South Carolina Coroner's Association** (according to <http://www.sc-coroners.org/index.htm> )

- The South Carolina Coroner's Association is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to support the Coroners of South Carolina through education and training, provide resources to assist in death investigations, develop strategies to prevent loss of life, and render support to each county coroner when requested to aid in the timely resolution of death investigations.
- This mission is accomplished with the assistance and support of a number of associate members. These organizations, Federal and State, as well as private citizens and businesses, have joined with the Coroners of South Carolina to provide additional resources necessary to complete what can be a difficult but vital task for the citizens of the counties they serve.

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