

THE THANAGRAM

Fall 2025

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE

**2025 Convention
Highlights**

Obituaries

President's Message



Dear Friends and Colleagues,
Wow, another convention has come and gone! It seems that the years just fly by anymore. I want to say thank you to our Convention Planning Team for another wonderful convention. Thank you to our Immediate Past President, Taylor Moore and his wife Montre for a great job planning the convention this past June and for their hard work this past year. We know how important it is to continue to move T.F.D.A. forward, working as a team! This year will be a year of change for our association. It was an honor to celebrate Dawn Elliott, our long-time secretary with 32 years of service for our association at this past convention. It will be hard to replace her going forward. Our long-time Accountant, Ruth Ford, retired this year and we have had to replace her for our accountant work. And finally, our long-time executive director, Bob Batson, is nearing retirement. The T. F. D. A. leadership has some work to do this year.

The best advice I have heard when it comes to change is it needs to be “Embraced”. So, we will embrace the changes coming and move T. F. D. A. forward. I am excited that younger folks are getting involved with our association in leadership positions! I look forward to seeing what they have to say. That is why this year we will **“Honor the old and Welcome in the new”**!! It is truly an honor to serve our association as President for the second time! I am excited to see what we can get done this year! Thank you for being a member of this great association and together, we will continue to move our association forward!

Together in Service,
J. Greg Rush



Our Mission:

To be the Tennessee Funeral Professional leadership advocate, through communication, education and legislation, thereby empowering the licensed funeral professional the ability to serve at the highest level.

1616 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone (615) 321-8792
Email: office@tnfda.org
Web: www.tnfda.org

 Find us on Facebook

2025–2026 TFDA Board of Directors



PRESIDENT
Greg Rush
Jim Rush Funeral Home
220 Wildwood Avenue
Cleveland, TN 37311
(423) 472-4555
Email: Greg@jimrushfh.com



VICE PRESIDENT
Matt Sowell
Oakes & Nichols, Inc.
P.O. Box 1015
Columbia, TN 38402
(931) 388-4711
Email: matthewsowell6@yahoo.com



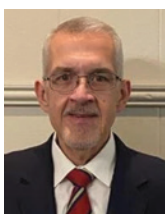
SECRETARY-TREASURER
Terry McCreight
McCreight Funeral Home
160 Hornbrook Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024
(731) 286-4810
Email: Tmccreight2000@yahoo.com



IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
Taylor Moore
Dyersburg Funeral Home
420 Hwy 51 ByPass
Dyersburg, TN 38024
(731) 285-3021
Email: dyersburgfh@gmail.com



DIRECTOR WEST
Clayton White
303 E. Church Avenue
Medina, TN
(731) 783-3026
Email: repluglelawrence@gmail.com



DIRECTOR MIDDLE
Todd Yates
Austin Bell Funeral Home
509 Walnut Street
Springfield, TN 37172
(615) 384-1000



DIRECTOR EAST
James Staton
Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services
163 Arrants Avenue
Decatur, TN 37322
Email: Tmccreightfuneralhome@gmail.com



NFDA-SECRETARY
Chris Christian
Christian Sells Funeral Home
P.O. Box 775
Rogersville, TN 37857
Phone: 423-272-0555
Email: chris@christiansells.com



DIRECTOR WEST
Brandon Yarbrough
252 Gordon Street
Jackson, TN 38301
(731) 664-2802



DIRECTOR MIDDLE
Tom Creech
Nave Funeral Home
Clarksville/ Erin, TN
(931) 647-3371
Email: TC.NaveFH@gmail.com



DIRECTOR EAST
Jennie Bryant, CFSP, CCO
Smith Life & Legacy
Maryville, TN
(865) 983-1000
Email: jenni@smithlifeandlegacy.com



NFDA AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVE
Bobby Steven Spann
Spann Funeral Home
1961 Highway 48 North
Dickson, TN 37055
(615) 446-1123
Email: spann@guptoncollege.edu

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bob Batson
Tennessee Funeral Director Association
1616 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: (615) 321-8792
Bob@tnfda.org
Office@tnfda.org

TFDA EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Dawn Elliott

TFDA LOBBYIST

J.A. Bucy
CAPITOL & 5TH PUBLIC STRATEGIES
615-417-3826

TFSI Board of Directors



PRESIDENT

Daniel Ownby
Weaver Funeral Home
630 Locust Street
P.O. Box 324
Bristol, TN 37620
Phone (423) 968-2111
Fax (423) 968-5475
Weaverfh@aol.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Jack Farrar, CFSP
Farrar Funeral Homes
162 East Meeting Street
P.O. Box 1025
Dandridge, TN 37725
Phone (865) 397-2711
farrar3000@bellsouth.net

Tony W. Hysmith, CFSP

Shackelford Funeral Directors - Casey Chapel
P.O. Box 66
Henderson, TN 38340-0066
Phone (731) 989-2421
Fax (731) 989-9213
twysmith@bellsouth.net

Brad Ridgeway

Ridgeway Funeral Home
201 Dunlap Street
P.O. Box 788
Paris, TN 38242
Phone (731) 642-2121
Fax (731) 642-4833
Ridgewayfh@gmail.com

TFDA GENERAL COUNCIL

J. Russell "Russ" Farrar
Farrar & Bates, LLP
(615) 321-8792

TFDA LOBBYIST

J.A. "Jay" Bucy
Capitol and 5th Public Strategies
(615) 417-5826

Funeral Fund Financing
Security National



Exclusive Premier Partner



The Thanagram is an official Newsletter published by the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association. Individual written contributions and advertisements appearing in The Thanagram do not necessarily reflect either the opinion or the endorsement of the Tennessee Funeral Director's Association.



Proud supporter of

TFDA

Ellis Galyon 615-481-8021

Randy Garner 479-459-3641



MK COACH

Grand Legacy Limited *Allure*



Check our Website for New and Pre-Owned Inventory ready for delivery



1212 Jo Johnston Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203

888-336-8421 • ambulanceandcoach.com

New • Pre-Owned • Leasing • In-House Financing • Parts

2025 122nd Annual Convention Highlights

JUNE 8 – 10, 2025



The convention began on Sunday with the Interfaith Service with Jim Ennis, as Convention Chaplain and Todd Bosell, Bagpiper.

The seminars began at noon with "The First Call (It All Starts There)" by Marc Sims of Karens & Sons Funeral Home, followed by Taylor Moore, TFDA President and Dyersburg Funeral Home with "Team Building in Funeral Service", on best practices to work together in funeral service.



The late afternoon seminars were held with Tom Haviland over "Worldwide Embalmers Clot Survey", he shared the information over studies for the past two years on the white fibroid clots being seen. Followed by Corp. Joseph Thomas a motivational speaker exhibiting a comical presentation of "Grief, Humor, and Healing."

Later in the evening Rosemary Harrison helped lead the Memorial Service.

The TFDA Business meeting was held honoring members of funeral service for 50 years. The new TFDA Board of Directors were Installed Greg Rush, TFDA President; Matt Sowell, Vice President; Terry McCreight, Secretary-Treasurer; Taylor Moore, Immediate Past President; James Sutton, Director East; Jenni Bryant, Director East; Tom Creech, Director Middle; Todd Yates, Director Middle; Clayton White, Director West; and Brandon Yarbrough, Director West.





Rebecca Alexander entertained everyone at the Joint Luncheon with her wonderful story telling, making you feel like you were there when they happened. Having everyone laughing and crying all at the same time.

The exhibit hall opened Sunday and after the luncheon and was very well attended.

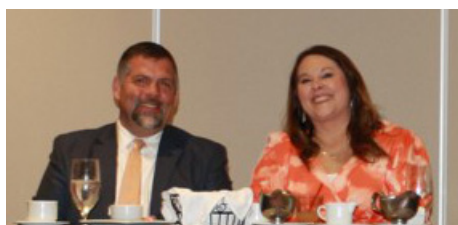
The Tailgate Party and Silent Auction was held with wearing your favorite team colors. Fun was had by all from eating walking tacos, cheeseburgers, finger foods, and playing good ol' corn hole matches. The Live Auction had everyone laughing with our "world renowned" auctioneer, Randy Nash, and the help of his loyal bid catchers.

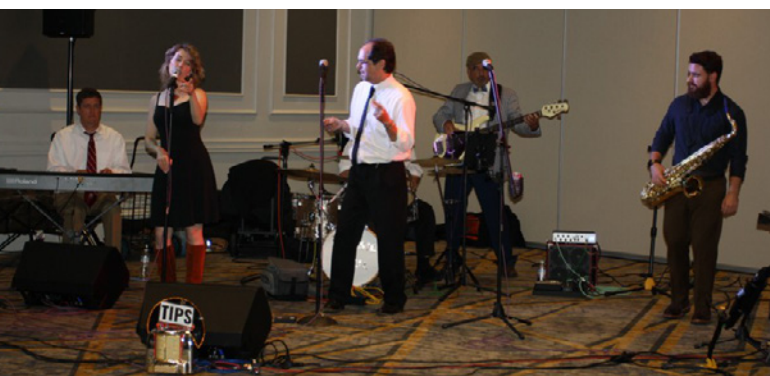
Tuesday was the annual Golf Tournament and final seminar, where Special Operations Captain Rick Clouse, SWAT Team, Dive Team and Crisis Negotiations with Williamson County Sherri's office and Adele Lewis, State Chief Medical Examiner gave in sight on "Funeral Home Preparedness".

Following the Past President's Reception was the All-Star Banquet where the Classic Vinyl Band filled the night with wonderful music. Dawn Elliott was recognized for all of her hard work into the TFDA over the years and congratulated on her retirement with TFDA.

Bob Arrington was awarded as the TFDA Funeral Director of the Year and Kim "Peck" Peckenpaugh was recognized at TFSSC Member of the Year.









Want to Own that

FUNERAL

VEHICLE?

We're here to Walk
you through the
PROCESS



www.mustercoaches.com

CONTACT US TODAY

Muster Associates, Inc
270-273-3619



Experience the Matthews Aurora™ **DIFFERENCE.**



IF you want to
generate more
revenue with each
cremation.

What is the Matthews Aurora™ Difference?

We are committed to providing the tools and training to help funeral professionals educate families about all of their choices for cremation. Our industry-leading cremation program, I'll Remember You®, has proven success growing cremation revenue by promoting the value of funeral service along with a flexible, wide-ranging merchandise selection to build a memorable farewell. Contact us today to learn how I'll Remember You® can help grow your business while better serving your families.

Discover Matthews Aurora™ Funeral Solutions.

Please contact us at 1.800.457.1111 to be connected with your Matthews Aurora Funeral Service Consultant.

Mark Your Calendars

2025 District Meetings

TFDA Members: \$60.00 per person

Non TFDA Members: \$120.00 per person

All programs will begin at 3:00pm in their respective time zone.

6:00 PM-8:00 PM – TFDA District Meeting.

TN approved for two CEU's.

5:00 PM-6:00 PM

Debbie Holmes, Vice President Trust Officer for Argent Trust, will explain the when's and the when not's, when considering preneed options. TN approved for one CEU.

3:00 PM-5:00 PM – Tennessee Donor Services Update

Kraig Markland, of TN Donor Services, will update issues regarding new techniques and procedures. Kraig will also have a question and answer as time permits. TN approved for two CEU's.

East District

Monday September 15, 2025

The Chop House
3609 Outdoor Sportsman
Kodak, TN 37764

West District

Tuesday September 23, 2025

Jackson County Club
31 Jackson CC Ln.
Jackson, TN 38305

Middle District

Tuesday September 16, 2025

Farm Bureau Expo Center
945 E Baddour Pkwy
Lebanon, TN 37087



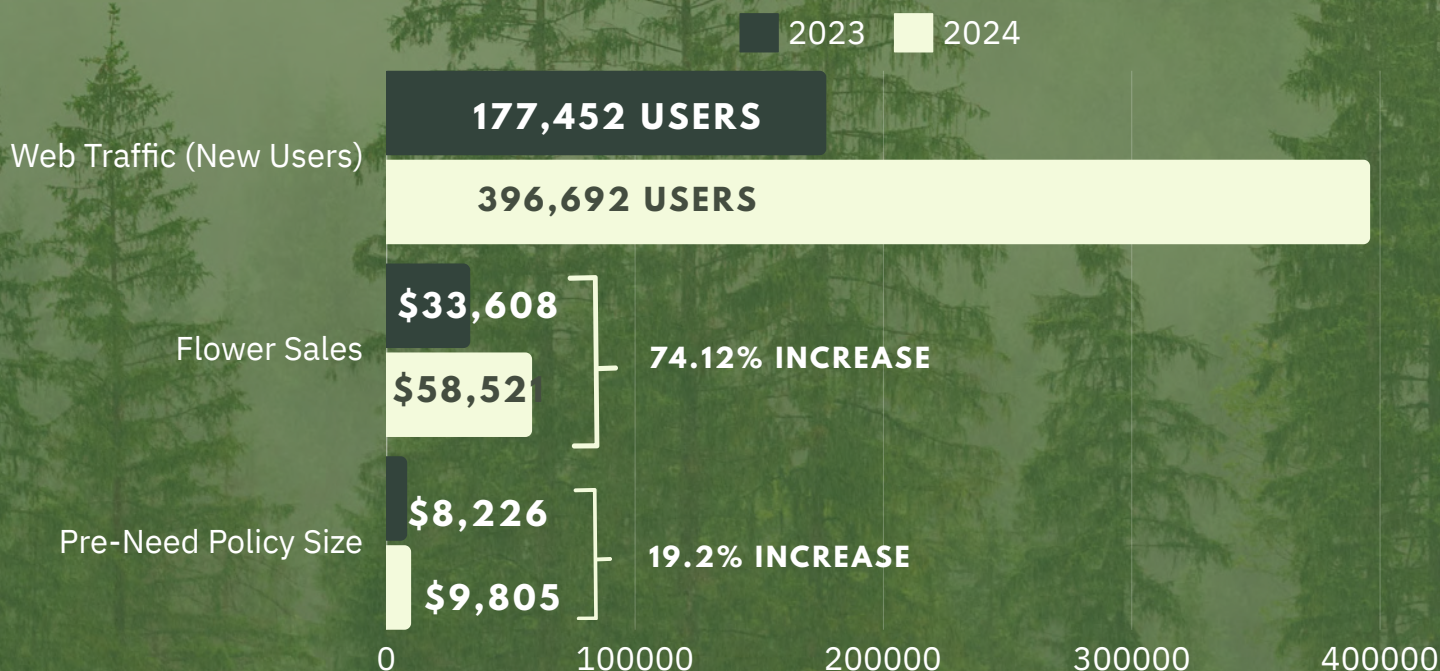


SHARING OBITUARIES LIKE NEVER BEFORE

TIME TO GROW YOUR FUNERAL HOME JUST LIKE

ARRINGTON

FUNERAL DIRECTORS & CREMATORY



SCAN
ME



INFO@OBITUARYSHARE.COM



GREG RUSH
TFDA PRESIDENT 2025 – 26

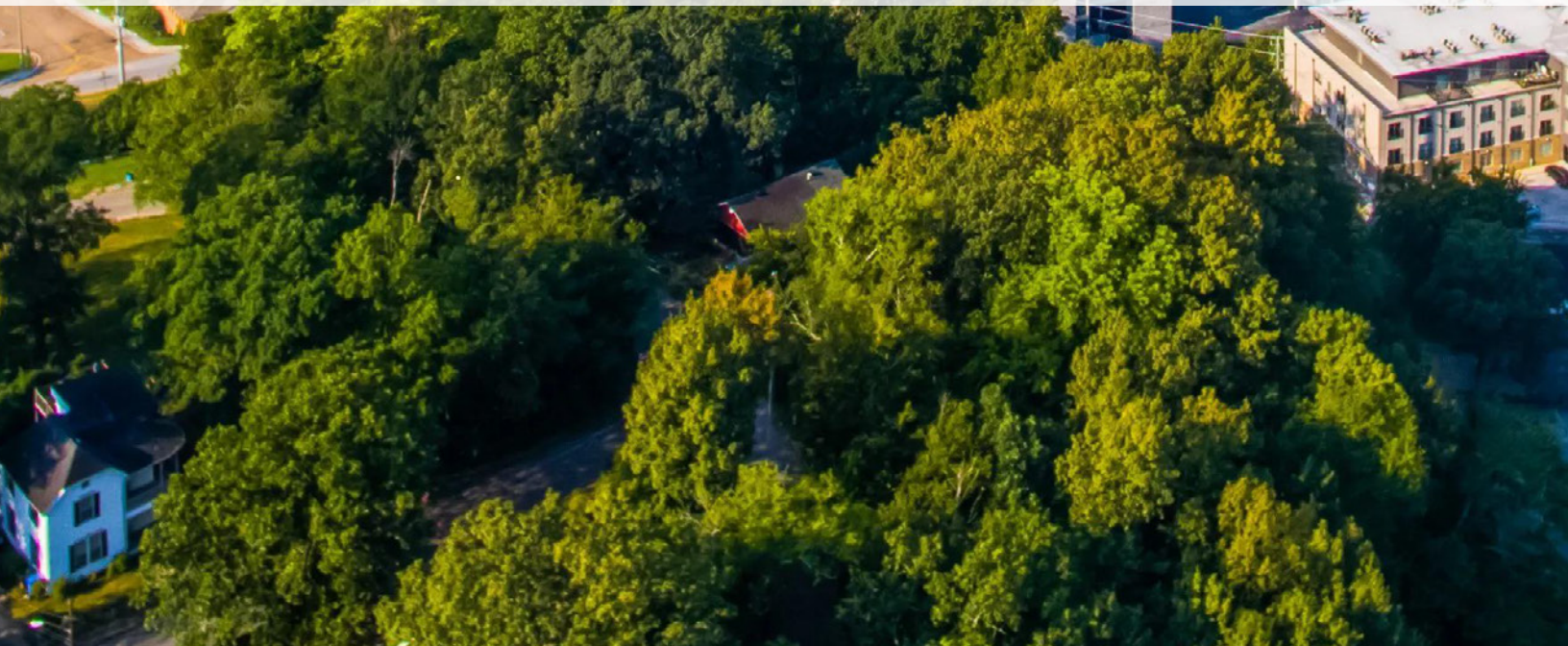
INVITES YOU
TO THE 123RD TFDA
2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION



MAY 30- JUNE 3

2026

CHATTANOOGA
CONVENTION CENTER
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE



Obituaries



Katherine "Kay" Shannon Woodfin, age 88, of Murfreesboro, TN, passed peacefully at home on Friday, August 15, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. A native of Greenbrier, TN, Kay was the daughter of the late Lena Margaret Cotton and James Stanley Shannon. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 61 years, John Benton "Bubba" Woodfin, and sisters, Margaret Ann Hodges and Betty Shannon Cloyd.

She was a 1954 graduate of Greenbrier High School and attended Tennessee Tech and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work from Middle Tennessee State University in 1959. Kay was crowned Miss Murfreesboro in 1958. She met and married the love of her life on June 13, 1959, at Greenbrier United Methodist Church. Together, they shared many joyful years raising their four daughters at their cherished homes in Scotland Acres and on Clark Boulevard. Kay was a community leader and served as a member Charity Circle of Murfreesboro, the Oakland Association, and Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford Foundation. Kay enjoyed volunteering with the Wesley Foundation and St. Jude Children's Hospital. She was also an Elder at Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) where she sang beautifully in the choir for over 40 years. In recognition of their generous philanthropic contributions, Kay and Bubba were named the 2009 Heart Ball Honorees by the American Heart Association and the 2014 Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford Philanthropists of the Year.

Kay lived a full and gracious life, marked by elegance, warmth, and love. She lived the virtues of a woman as described in Proverbs 31: generous, compassionate, and strong. She was a natural-born athlete, having played basketball in high school as well as golf and tennis for many years. As the devoted matriarch of the Woodfin family, her greatest joys came from vacationing with Bubba and the girls and spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Whether tending her beautiful garden, hosting family and community gatherings, or singing along to country music played by her family, Kay's legacy of hospitality, kindness, and charm will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

She is survived by her daughters, Shannon Parsons and her husband David, Katherine "Kit" Ramsay and her husband Chuck, Melissa Combs and her husband Ron, and Ashley Backer and her husband John. She is also survived by her brother, Pat Shannon and his wife Pati. Affectionately known as "KaKa," Kay also leaves a legacy through her grandchildren, Kati Ramsay and her wife Katie, Charlie Ramsay and his wife Amanda, Hannah Margaret Allen and her husband Grant Schumacher, Grace Combs, Meg Combs, Ann Frances Killebrew and her husband Douglas, Katherine Backer, and Jack Backer; great grandchildren, Ramsay Kate, Oliver, Addison, Ella, Lucy, and Woodfin. She will also be fondly remembered by many nieces, nephews, dear friends, and caretakers.

The family wishes to express a special thank you to Jenni Curtis for her years of love and devotion.

Memorials may be made in Kay's honor to Central Christian Church, the Ascension St. Thomas Rutherford Foundation, or the Charity Circle of Murfreesboro.

Visitation with the family was on Thursday, August 21, 2025 at Woodfin Memorial Chapel, with Rev. Suzanne Cloyd Hultman and Rev. Dr. John Hinkle officiating. Burial followed at Evergreen Cemetery with family members and staff members of Woodfin Funeral Chapels serving as pallbearers.

Do you have information you would like added to the Thanagram?
Please email **Lauren Marshall** at lmmarshall@plcorp.com.

Director's Answering Service; We allow you
TIME to enjoy life outside of the funeral home.

Cindy Hutchinson
Director of Sales

877-452-3857
cindy@1eca.com
www.directorsanswering.net



Dodge

HELPING YOU MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

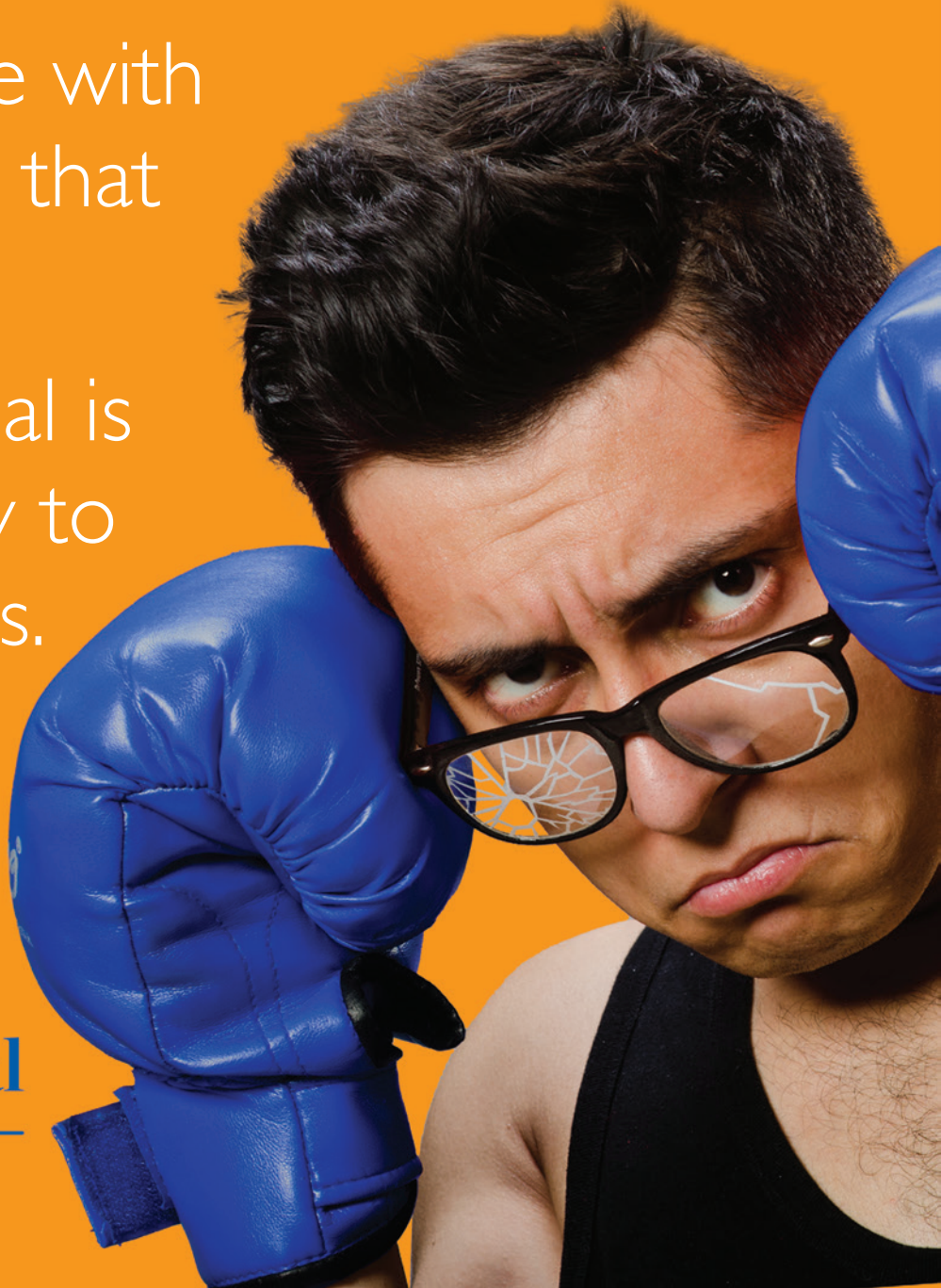
Ken Collins
931-510-5015
kcollins@dodgeco.com

shop.dodgeco.com 800-443-6343
Connect with us   

WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

Get in the game with Preneed results that pack a punch.

Security National is your better way to preneed success.



Security National

Family of Life Companies



LET SNL SHOW YOU A BETTER WAY.

Visit PreneedSuccess.com



Security National Life Insurance Company Endorsed by the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association (TFDA) as Preferred Preneed Provider.

Security National Life Insurance Company is pleased to announce its new relationship with the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association. This endorsement aims to provide funeral professionals across Tennessee with access to Security National's preferred preneed insurance products and services.

"I'm excited about our endorsement opportunity with the great funeral professionals in Tennessee! We are equally as excited about the ability to partner with the TFDA to continue to provide unparalleled insurance funded prepaid funeral products and marketing support solutions to fit each potential funeral home's wants and needs."

- Guy V. Winstead, VP of Sales, Security National Life Insurance Company.

The benefits of this new partnership include.

- Preneed products and services tailored for TFDA Membership
- Customized marketing solutions for partner funeral homes
- Exclusive C&J Financial funding rate

"C&J Financial is thrilled to partner with the TFDA as the endorsed supplier for insurance assignment funding. With Security National's pre-paid funeral products, with C&J's Quick Claim™ assignment funding and TFDA exclusive discount rates, this partnership provides the ultimate funding solutions for its members."

- Jamie Meredith, Executive Vice President, C&J Financial

Security National Life Insurance Company is a market leader in preneed insurance products and services. We are a publicly traded company (NASDAQ: SNFCA) that provides strength and security for more profitable prepaid funerals. Our company has enjoyed impressive growth over the past few years and is ahead of last year's record-breaking sales. Let's share our success together. More information available at www.snlprenneed.com.

Jay Slatton is the Area Sales Manager for Tennessee. Jay lives in Gordonsville, Tennessee with his wife, Leann, and two daughters, Ally Beth, and Ava Grace. Jay is a funeral director, embalmer, and licensed insurance producer. He has been very active in the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association and a Past President of the Upper Cumberland Funeral Directors Association. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for Tennessee Funeral Sales and Supply Club. Jay is active in his community through youth sports with his daughters and has served on the City Council for 6 years. He is a member of the Carthage Masonic Lodge #14 and attends Grant Missionary Baptist Church. Jay and his family are avid Vanderbilt Commodore fans and enjoy camping in their free time.

The Tennessee Funeral Directors Association is a nonprofit organization that seeks to provide Funeral Professionals advocacy through communication, education, and legislation; thereby empowering the licensed funeral professional the ability to serve at the highest level.

For more information, please contact Jay Slatton by email JayS@snlprenneed.com or by calling (615) 418-6276

Security National Life Insurance Company

MAIN 801.264.1060 | TOLL FREE 1.800.574.7117 | WWW.SECURITYNATIONALLIFE.COM

433 ASCENSION WAY, SUITE 600, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84123 | PO BOX 57220, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84123

Please visit www.SecurityNationalLife.com/privacy for a complete copy of our privacy statement.