

THE THANA GRAM

Spring 2025

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

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President's Message

Welcome to Spring! I am excited for the longer days, sunshine and the newness that always comes with it. As we are rounding the corner in our year as an association, I appreciate the support given by the membership, volunteers and our staff. Without everyone playing a part, we cannot thrive together.



Our recent district meetings were very successful! Attendance at both the education seminars and the dinner meetings was strong, state-wide. I had the opportunity to travel to all three meetings, meeting new folks and catching up with others. At each meeting, we had good interaction and discussion on what was going on among member firms and individuals. The networking aspect of these meetings is invaluable for us as local service providers. Vendor participation was good as well. We are grateful to our Endorsed Providers: Matthews Funeral Solutions and the Security National Companies for their support. I am also thankful for the work of our Government Affairs Committee and Mr. J.A. Bucy for their work, monitoring and implementing legislation that affects our work and supports our members in running our businesses.

As we approach Summer and our Annual Convention, I want to thank our Convention Committee for working behind the scenes to plan a great gathering. This year's convention will feature interesting seminars, fun gatherings and a great time for all members and their families that can attend.

It is my hope that, over the past year, each of you have taken something away from your participation in the activities of the association that positively affects your work as a funeral service provider. I know that I sure have, both as a member and leader. Our association exists to help us learn, connect and adapt when the environment of our businesses is ever-changing. Whether it is staffing, education and training, supplier offerings, business services or just a familiar person to contact across the state to help serve a family; I know that we are truly better together! Let's all continue to support TEAM TFDA so that we can reap the benefits that the association can provide.

I look forward to seeing you all in June,

Taylor Moore



**The Tennessee Funeral Directors Association
Board of Directors and Staff are here for you.**

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.

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2025 Tennessee Funeral Directors Association 122nd Annual Convention

Memorial Service

Marriott Cool Springs Hotel, Franklin, TN

Rosemary Harrison, Memorial Service Chair, is in the process of putting together the Memorial Service for the loved ones that have left us this past year.

We need your assistance in making sure we have listed all that need to be honored at the 2025 memorial Service.

Please contact the TFDA office or email Rosemary Harrison at rosemary.mc@gmail.com if there is a loved one not listed and should be included.

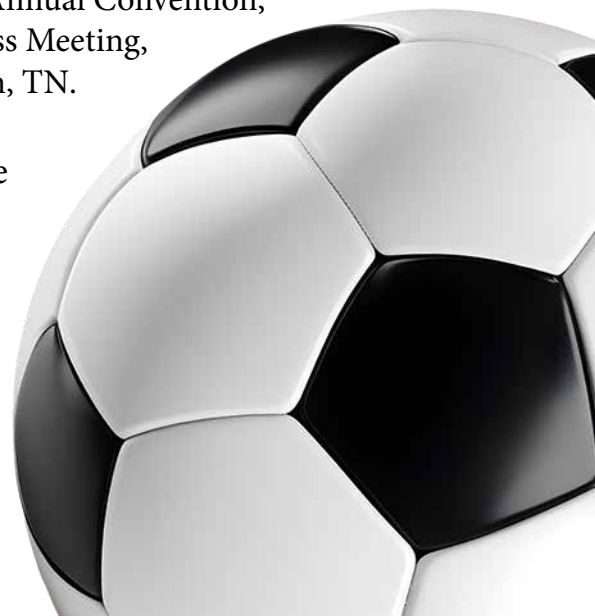
Flossie Rhodes	Clara Hunt Gibson	Lucette Shoulders Kemp
Blanche Waller Wheeler	Sarah Dunnivant Haynes Cox	Flossie Long Rhodes
William “Bill” Harrison DeBusk	Jerry Johnson Griffey	Danny Morgan
Oliver Lee Young	George Thomas “Tom” Barrett	Betty Rose Branson
Paula Annette McGuire	Clyde Lowell “Tiger” Lucken	Judith “Judy” Rush
Phillip “Phil” Anthony Bennett	John William Stanley	John Charles McNeeley
James “Jimmy” Harold Butler	William “Bill” S. McCarty, Jr.	Marty Rowland
Gary Wayne Murphy	Fred T. Bell	
Arthur Pickle	Carol Janette Garrett Jennings	

The deadline for loved ones to be listed in this year’s memorial service is April 30, 2025.

50 Years of Service

If you have 50 years of service, the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association would like to honor you at the 2025 TFDA 122nd Annual Convention, Monday June 9, 2025, at the TFDA Business Meeting, Marriott Cool Springs Hotel, Franklin, TN.

Please contact the TFDA office
so you can be honored.





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2025 Tennessee Funeral Directors Association 122nd Annual Convention



JUNE 8 - 10, 2025

Tennessee Funeral Directors Association Annual Convention

Start Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025

End Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Room Block Deadline: Sunday, May 18, 2025

Hotel(s) offering your special group rate:

Franklin Marriott Cool Springs for 193 USD per night

★ [Click Here to Book your group rate for Tennessee Funeral Directors Association](#) ★



Convention Schedule

SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2025

Sign up for Continued Education Credits at all seminars.

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Interfaith Service: Praise and Worship
Greg Rush, Jim Rush Funeral Home & Terry Cain, Messenger
Dress: Business attire

12:00 NOON – 1:00 PM



Marc Sims, Karnes & Son Funeral Homes, presents
“The First Call (It All Starts There)”
Marc will be discussing the care of the remains through preparing for the funeral until you walk away at the cemetery.
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)
Dress: Business attire

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM



Taylor Moore, Dyersburg Funeral Homes, presents
“TEAM building in Funeral Service”
Taylor will discuss and share the “Best Practices” to enhance your local services and work together as Funeral Service Professionals.
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)
Dress: Business attire

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM



Tom Haviland presents **“Worldwide Embalmer Clot Survey”**
Tom has prepared a worldwide survey of what differences embalmers have seen in the last couple of years and will discuss his findings.
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)
Dress: Business attire

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM



Joseph Thomas, Memorial Park Funeral Home, presents
“Grief, Humor and Healing”
Joseph is a motivational speaker and will have you laughing out loud with his take on loved ones attending funerals.
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)
Dress: Business attire

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Memorial Service, Rosemary Harrison, Chairman
Flowers by Michael Sims, Something Unique, Convention Florist
Dress: Business attire

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Grand Opening of the Exhibit Hall
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2025

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

TFDA Business Meeting
Chris Christian, NFDA Treasure and Steve Spann, NFDA Secretary will give a report.
The Tennessee Funeral Directors Association board of Directors will be introduced and new officers will be installed.
50 Years of Service Plaques will be honored.
(TN State Approved for 2 CEUs)
Dress: Business attire

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

TFDA Joint Luncheon
Representative Rebecca Alexander
Rebecca has been delighting audiences of all ages with her many stories. Growing up in a Christian home on a dairy farm in east Tennessee has given her the background to write and tell stories that will make you laugh and cry all in the same moment.
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)
Dress: Business attire

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Open Exhibits
(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)

5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Tailgate Party with Live & Silent Auction

Dress - We invite you to wear your favorite team colors and attire. Whether it's your beloved jersey, team cap, or anything that shows off your game-day pride, this is the time to represent your squad!

Entertainment - Not only will Monday Night feature our exciting auctions, it'll also be packed with FUN and a true Tailgate Feel. We're bringing the energy of a big game night right to the party, so get ready for an unforgettable evening.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

8:00 AM

TFDA Golf Tournament Sponsored by TENNESSEE FUNERAL SECURITY, INC.
Wilbert Group sponsoring Golf Lunch



1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Seminar “Funeral Home Preparedness”

Presentations by:



Special Operations Captain Rick Clouse,
SWAT Team, Dive Team,
Crisis Negotiations



Adele Lewis,
State Chief Medical Examiner



Bob Batson, TFDA Executive Director,
DMORT Mortuary Specialist

This 3-hour seminar is all about PREPAREDNESS. In today’s world we must all be ready for any situation, active shooter, in a disaster and effectively dealing with the Medical Examiners’ office.

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

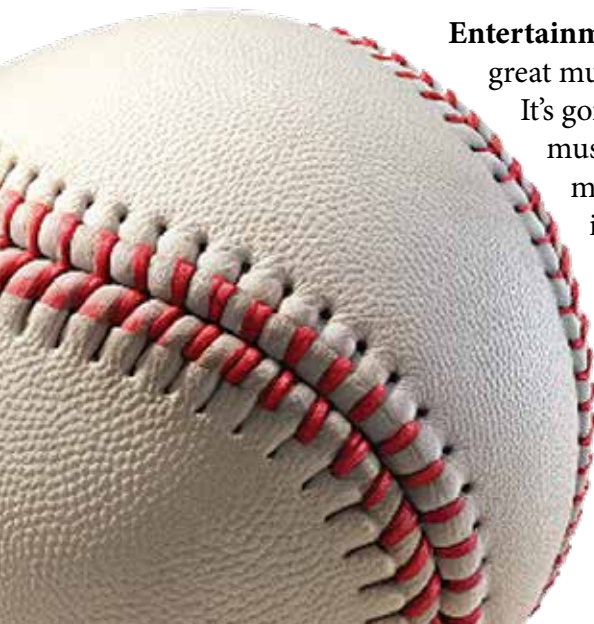
TFDA Past President’s Reception

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

All Star Banquet honoring our Leaders and MVP’s

Dress – Semi-formal bringing your best “game day” style that is sharp, polished, and ready to shine. Think of clean lines, sleek suits, and dresses with a touch of that competitive spirit!

Entertainment - It’s going to be a night filled with great music from the Classic Vinyl Band. It’s going to be a night filled with great music, fun moves, and unforgettable moments. So, lace up your dancing shoes and get ready to hit the floor!





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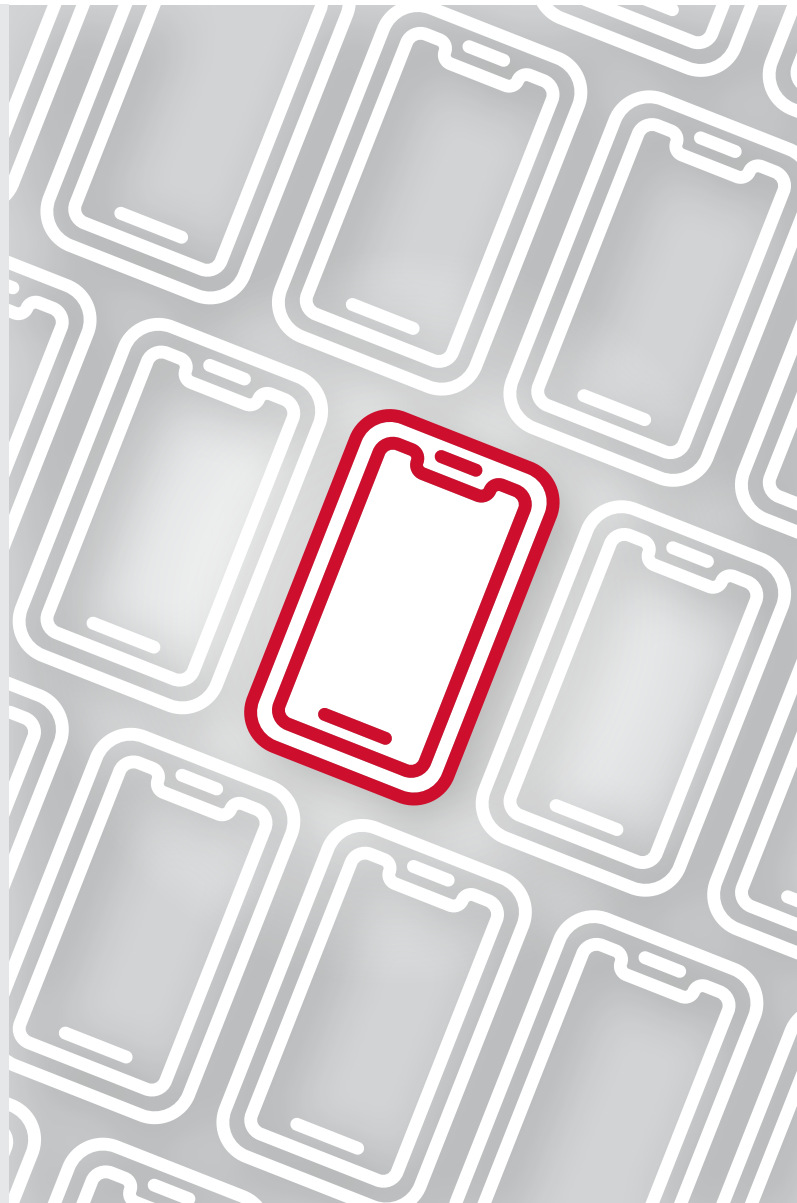


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What is the Matthews Aurora Difference?

As families' needs evolve, funeral technology needs to evolve with them. That's why Matthews Aurora is focused on creating solutions that make it easy for you to serve families in today's digital world. Our *Family Connections* technology enables your firm to help families make arrangements from anywhere. Our *Arranger* software offers a simple presentation system to educate families about all your service and merchandise options. And our Solution Center is your one-stop-shop for quick and easy online ordering, product customization, digital merchandising and much more. Contact us today for a demo and learn how our technology solutions can help you grow your business.



Discover Matthews Aurora Funeral Solutions.

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

EXHIBITORS THAT HAVE ALREADY RESERVED THEIR BOOTH SPACE AT THE 2025 CONVENTION:

Ambulance & Coach Sales - 3 Hearses

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Exhibitor

ASD – Exhibitor

Cherished Candles – Exhibitor

Cincinnati Equitable Life
Insurance Company - Exhibitor

Clark Grave Vaults - Exhibitor

Coats Clothing Co. - Exhibitor

Custom Air Trays - Exhibitor

DeathCall, LLC - Exhibitor

Digital Closure – Exhibitor

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Dodge Company - Exhibitor

Express Funeral Funding - Exhibitor

Funeral Directors Life (FDL) - Exhibitor

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John A. Gupton Mortuary College - Exhibitor

Jones Coach Sales - 3 Hearses

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Mid South Mortuary, Mountain Mortuary
& Music City Mortuary, Exhibitor

NFDA, BRONZE SPONSOR

Obituary Share – Exhibitor

PFA Tax & Accounting Professionals - Exhibitor

Precoa Insurance – Exhibitor

**SECURITY NATIONAL LIFE
INSURANCE - TFDA ENDORSED
COMPANY - GOLD SPONSOR**

**SOMETHING UNIQUE, MEMORIAL SERVICE
SPONSOR, CONVENTION FLORIST**

State of Tennessee Department of Veterans
Services Cemetery – Exhibitor

Tennessee National Guard Army
Funeral Honors, Exhibitor

TUKIOS, MEMORIAL SERVICE SPONSOR

Yarborough Mortuary Services, Inc. – Exhibitor



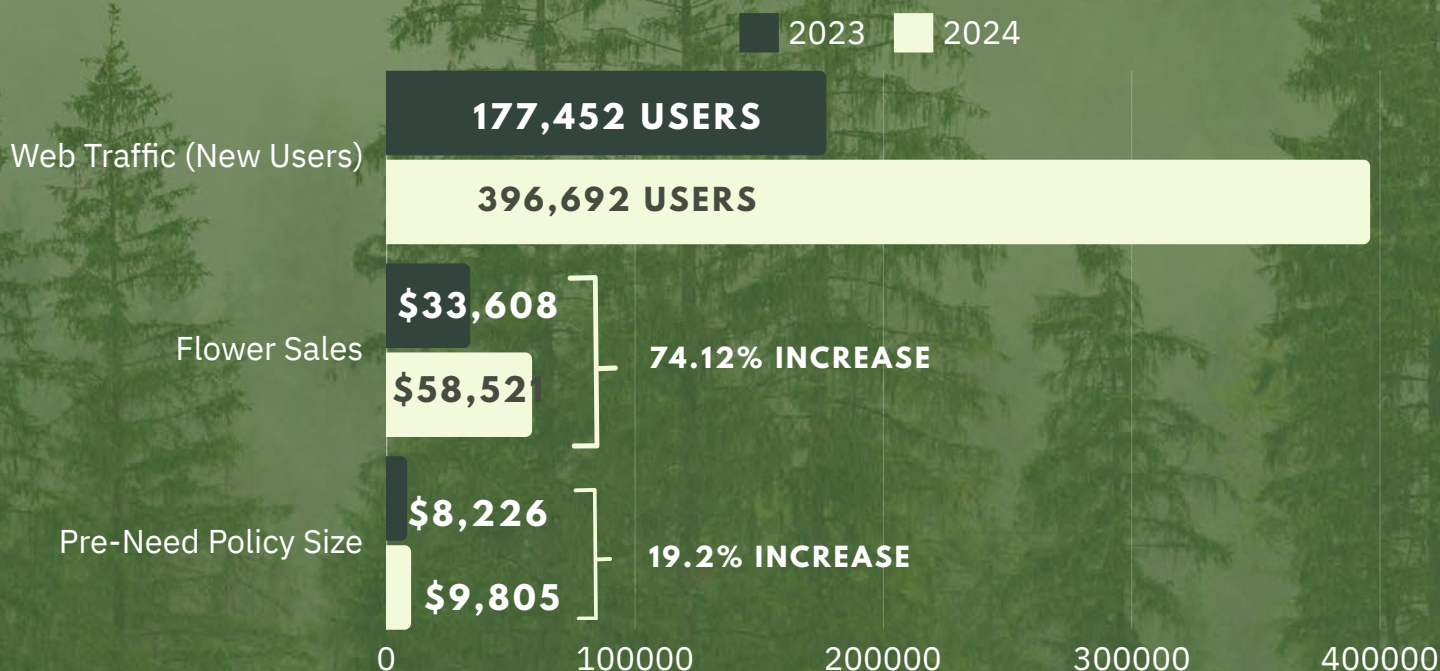


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June 8th – 10th, 2025

**Marriott Cool Springs Hotel
Franklin, TN**

The TFDA Convention Planning Committee have already met to put together the 2025 TFDA 122nd Annual Convention!

Dear TFDA/ TFSSC Members & Exhibitors/Sponsors:

The TFDA Government Affairs and Convention Committees are once again hosting a Silent and Live Auction at the TFDA Convention in Franklin. Like in the past, this is a wonderful way for you to support the TFDA PAC. Last year's auction was record-setting ... and we need your help to keep it going in 2025! Let's make the auction worthwhile and FUN again this year.

Over the past years, we have noted that themed baskets, sports items, gift certificates, framed prints, tools, funeral related collectables, and electronic items have been very popular... with the top money makers being **wine-themed baskets** and **Yeti** items! Be creative! Remember... we need items for EVERYONE; the funeral director... the ladies... the kids... and our pets!

This year we hope to make the live auction even more exciting with some unique, larger items that will bring in even more money for this cause. Tickets for sporting events, concerts, vacations, and time shares are GREAT ideas. Remember the Vice Gill and Randy Travis signed guitars last year?? Well, we hope to have some more autographed memorabilia from your favorite artists again in June!

This is the main fundraiser for our PAC Fund. Please give TFDA the ability to help us all by participating and making this year's auction even a larger success than last year!

Please remember that winning bids will need to be paid the night of the auction (*cash, check, or credit card*) and that a 3% service charge is applied to all credit card payments.

Feel free to contact me at 423-736-3473 or eric.carpenter@musfiber.com – or any of the Auction Committee members – if you have any questions or an item to donate.

Thank you very much for your support! See you in Franklin!

S. Eric Carpenter, CFSP, CCO
Auction Committee
East District

AUCTION

Obituaries



Marty Rowland

September 2, 1963 — February 7, 2025

Henderson, TN: Marty Andrew Rowland, age 61, passed away February 7, 2025, at his home.

He was born September 2, 1963, in Jackson and grew up in the West Chester Community of Chester County, the son of Larry Junior and Virginia Ann Farris Rowland. He attended West Chester Elementary and graduated from Chester County High School in 1981. He had perfect attendance all twelve years of school.

He played baseball and was most valuable player in football his senior year, the same award his father had received in 1960. He received a baseball scholarship to pitch at Freed-Hardeman College. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Freed in 1986.

He started work at Casey Funeral Home in September of 1986. He entered mortuary school and graduated from John A. Gupton College of Mortuary Science, in 1991, and worked for Casey Funeral Home and later Shackelford Funeral Directors-Casey Chapel all his professional career.

Marty was a motor-cycle enthusiast and become road Captain for the Golden Circle Harley Owners Group, where he met Melissa Martin, and they married April 17, 2010, at Bumpus Harley Davidson in Jackson. They had shared a lifetime of love in nearly 16 years of their marriage.

He enjoyed deer hunting with his dad on the Rowland Farm near Woodville. He and Larry were perfectionist in maintaining their vehicles. Marty could fix anything.

Marty is survived by his wife, Melissa Faye Martin Rowland of Henderson, his father and mother, Larry and Virginia Farris Rowland, his in-laws, Brenda and Jessie Elder of Savannah and Sherman and Myra Martin of Collinwood, brother-in-law, Jason Martin of Nashville, two nieces, Bailey Martin and Zoey Greene, a nephew, Garrett Martin and his uncle, Larry and Martha Farris.



Betty Rose Miles Branson, age 77, of Rockwood, Tennessee, passed away Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

Betty is the Aunt of Nancy Russell Office Manager of Kyker Funeral Home, and Danny Morgan Funeral Director and Manager of Kyker Funeral Home in Harriman.

Betty Rose Branson is a sister to Paul Miles, Funeral Director and Manager of Kyker Funeral Home in Kingston, TN

Betty Rose Miles Branson, age 77, of Rockwood, Tennessee, passed away Tuesday, February 11, 2025. Rose attended Riverview Baptist Church while her health permitted.

Preceded in death by her husband, Willie D. Branson, Grandson, Dustin C. Branson, Parents, Crawford and Georgia Brackett Miles, Sister, Judy C. Miles

Survived by son and daughter-in-law, Melvin and Angie Branson of Rockwood

Sisters: Emma and Ross Monroe of Tampa, FL, Wanda and Charles Shannon of Rockwood, TN, Billie Jo and Jack Lunsford of Rockwood, TN

Brothers: Richard and Sondra Miles of Rockwood, TN, Ray and Judy Miles of Harriman, TN, Jim and Pam Miles of Karns, TN, Toby and Sheila Miles of Rockwood, TN, Paul Miles of Kingston, TN

Many nieces, nephews and extended family.



John Charles McNeeley, brother of Brent (Ashlie) McNeeley, TFDA President (2022-23) and son of Debra McNeeley, Walters Funeral Home, LaFollette, TN

Mr. John Charles McNeeley, age 46 of Andersonville passed away on Tuesday, February 11, 2025. John was a 1996 graduate of Campbell County High School, and a proud member of the Cougars Basketball team during 3 straight district championships from 1994-1996. For his hard work and dedication, he earned an athletic scholarship to continue his basketball career with the Senators at Walters State Community College.

John continued his education at East Tennessee State University, where he was a member and former chapter President of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity. Upon completion at ETSU, he began a career with UPS and was employed there for several years before moving to Avex Flight Support. Since 2012, John has been a Tennessee Licensed Funeral Director where he worked alongside his family at Walters Funeral Home. He had a passion for woodworking and enjoyed crafting items to be given to family members and friends. He was also a charter member of New Horizon Baptist Church.

He is preceded in death by father, Charles E. McNeeley; grandparents, Clyde and Josie McNeeley, and Lonnie and Ruby Hobbs; uncles, Warren Gene Hobbs and William Paul "Bill" McNeeley; father-in-law, Eddie McRae; and special grandparents-in-law, Ann and Pete McRae.

He is survived by his wife, Andrea Tegan (McRae) McNeeley; beloved son, John Connor McNeeley; mother, Debra (Hobbs) McNeeley; brother, Brent McNeeley and wife, Ashlie; nieces, Ava Claire McNeeley, Abby Day, and Ella Day; nephew, Nicholas Reynolds; aunts, Doris (Hobbs) Fields and husband, Randall, and Karen (McNeeley) Brown and husband, Chris; uncle, Kenneth McNeeley and wife, Sheila; cousins, Stephen Fields (Holly), Derek McNeeley (Yessica), Cory McNeeley, Kendra St. John (Spenser), Tyler Johnson (Polly), and Adam Johnson; mother-in-law and father-in-law, Melissa and Dennis Reynolds; sister-in-law, Kyla Reynolds (Gabe Day); Brother-in-law, Elliot Reynolds (Sheena). Numerous other extended family members and friends.

Judith "Judy" Rush, 85, a resident of Cleveland, passed away Sunday, February 9, 2025, in a local health care facility. A Celebration of Judy's life will be held Friday, February 14, 2025, at 1pm at Westmore Church of God. The family will receive friends Friday from 11am until 1pm at the church.

Mrs. Judy was the wife of the late Jim Rush, owner, and operator of Jim Rush Funeral Homes. Jim Rush was the TFDA President (1994-95) and was honored by the TFDA Wall of Fame. Mrs. Judy was also the mother of Greg (Darla) Rush, Jim Rush Funeral Homes, TFDA President (2003-04), presently the TFDA Secretary/Treasurer and Chairman of the TFDA Convention Committee.

Visitation will be 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Friday, February 14, 2025, at the Westmore Church of God, 2440 Legacy Pkway NW, Cleveland, TN.

Funeral Service will be 1:00 pm, Friday, February 14, 2025, at the Westmore Church of God, 2440 Legacy Pkway NW, Cleveland, TN.

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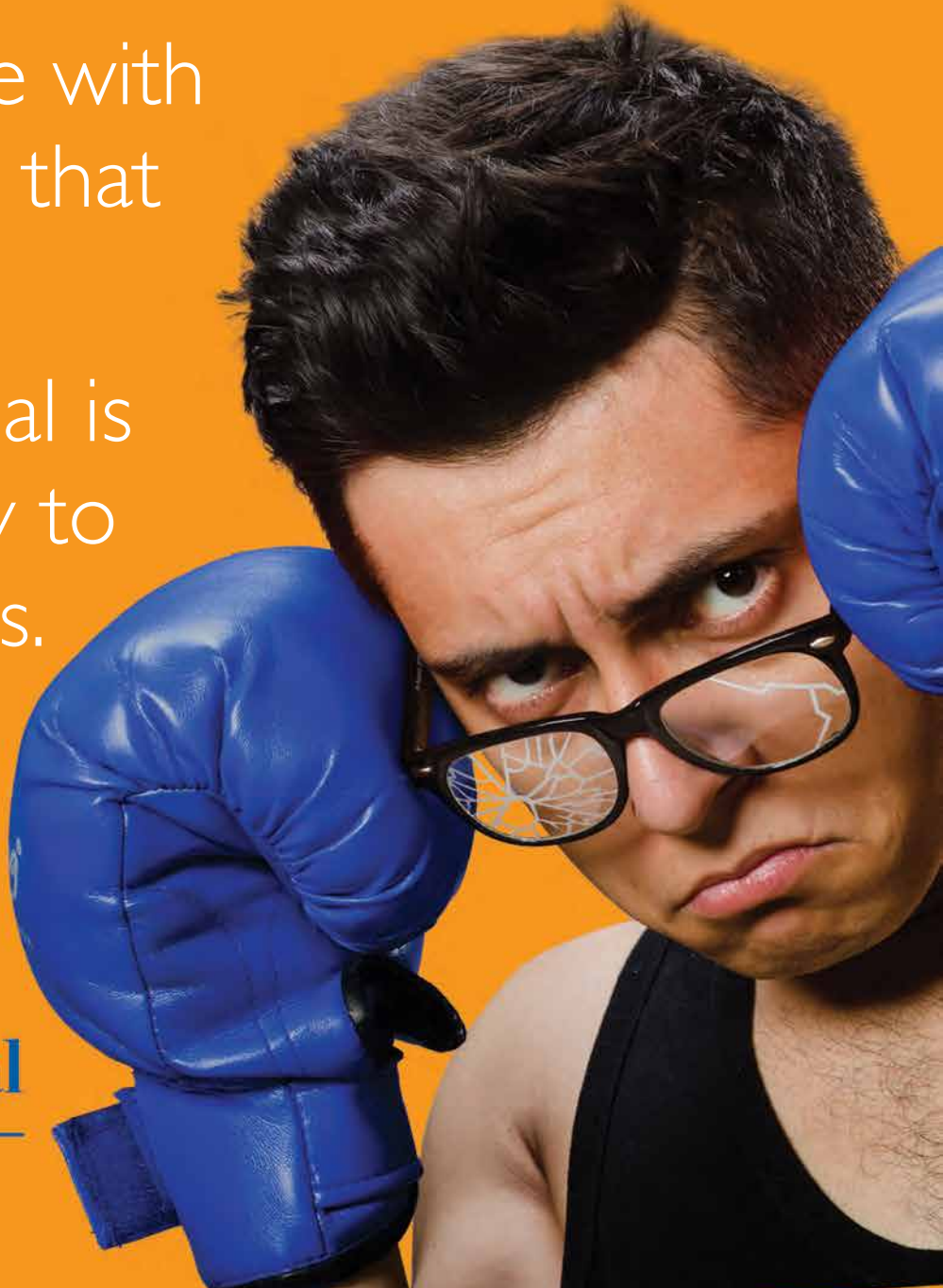
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Security National Life Insurance Company is pleased to announce its new relationship with the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association. This endorsement aims to provide funeral professionals across Tennessee with access to Security National's preferred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

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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