

THE THANAGRAM

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope and trust that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and that your business was where you could spend time with your families!

Coming to the end of another year, it's amazing to me how fast time goes anymore! I wanted to give you some updates on the search to find a replacement for our Executive Director, Bob Batson. The Task Force has been meeting, and they have sent out notification that we are searching for applicants to fill the position. They started with the State of Tennessee and with TFDA's Board direction will expand their search to include the surrounding States with Tennessee. They are working hard to see about filling this very important position for our Association. Bob Batson's commitment and expertise to our Association will be hard to replace but we owe it to the future of our Association to seek all avenues for a replacement! Also, our Government Affairs Committee is also very active in staying on top of any changes to our rules and laws and any future changes. With all the changes coming for our Association, all the work being done for our future and the work each of you do to service your families, let's not forget the reason for the season, and that's the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I hope and pray that each one of you has a wonderful Christmas and Blessings for a New Year!

Together in Service
J. Greg Rush

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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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Seasoned Professionals

by Steve Spann, President of John A. Gupton College

Serving as President of a Mortuary College for the past 31 years, I have had the privilege of seeing the future of our profession from a slightly different perspective. There have been many changes in this great profession, and this is evident in the educational component and the student population. First, let me say that I am very excited about how the young people hold the key to our profession's future. It has been 43 years since I attended mortuary college, and often, I hear seasoned professionals' gripe that it is hard to find good, dedicated young people as funeral service employees. During these times, I think back on the ones who attended mortuary college with me, and how the "seasoned professionals" back then said the same thing about us! There were students in college with me who should not have been in the funeral service, and many of them did not stay. However, just because some of the students today do not look or act the way "seasoned professionals" think they should look, that does not always reflect the commitment of the student. We must look carefully at our attitude and our patience in developing these young professionals, just as our ancestors did with us. So, yes, there are students today, just like in 1980, who probably should not be in this profession. Nonetheless, I have witnessed many times the metaphorical "light bulb" turns on, and a particular student gets the chance to excel as a student and a future professional. Honestly, that is the goal of many of these students today. Many times, the switch that flips in a young professionals mind and turns that light bulb on is the opportunity to have some sense of responsibility and some sense of worth and accomplishment that does not come with it being solely a job. It can be a simple task or responsibility that they are in charge of, where they receive continuous feedback and appreciation that is worth more than financial gain.

Today's professionals will not be satisfied with menial tasks, washing the car, mowing the lawn, and being on call 24/7. I know these tasks are also a part of the profession, but we, as "seasoned professionals," must make this experience more of a responsibility for these young professionals to maintain their attention. From time to time, I have funeral homes call me in desperate need of help, but they only want a white male.

Now, have you looked at or read any funeral service journals in the past 10 years? Almost 80 percent of the student population is female. Usually, their reply is that "I tried a female a few years ago and it did not work out." Be that as it may, I know of several males that did not work out at that location, also. Therefore, why stop at one female? The other comment that I hear often is, "I cannot send a lady out at night to remove a person larger than she." However, that specific person was likely carried to the hospital by a female! **So, I ask, does the future of funeral service rest with the preconceived notions of seasoned professionals, or does it rest on the younger professional that we MUST give a chance to develop into the future of funeral service.**



Understanding Funeral Service Licensing

Funeral Service Education - National Board Exam – Funeral Professionals

by Steve Spann, President of John A. Gupton College

Universal licensure in Funeral Service that would allow a funeral professional to reciprocate a license from one state to another would be a miraculous accomplishment for the funeral service profession. Universal licensure would allow a licensee in good standing to become licensed in any state where the licensee moves. Thus, a very valiant goal for the future of the funeral service profession. But that is not where we are today! Currently, some states require no education to be a funeral director, some states require a certificate program for a funeral director, many states require an associate degree for the embalmers license, but a few states require a baccalaureate degree (usually a baccalaureate degree in funeral service or any baccalaureate degree with the associate degree in funeral service). If you do not meet a state's requirements, it isn't easy to reciprocate the license. Hopefully, this will change in the future. Until then, could we consider UNIVERSAL RECIPROCITY? An example would be a person who has a current, good-standing license in any state, has been licensed and has been practicing for more than XX years (maybe 5 years), would be able to reciprocate a license.

Where are we today? Almost every funeral home in the nation is looking for help. Sometimes, we think this is unique to funeral service, and we have never faced this problem before. But looking around, almost every segment of society needs good employees. Therefore, this problem is not unique to the funeral profession.

How did we get to where we are today? Who is to blame for this situation? Some people blame:

1. FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION (the Colleges) for not providing a realistic curriculum for today's marketplace,
2. National Board Exam, the Conference for being too hard and trying to fail people,
3. Licensed Funeral Professionals require too many hours for too little pay.

You may have your opinion, and that will not change; I will give you what I know to be true.

1. FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION: There are currently 58 funeral service programs accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE). There are approximately 3400 students enrolled in funeral service in 2022, one of the largest enrollments in history, but only 2% more than 2021. The Department of Education accredits the ABFSE annually to govern all accredited funeral service programs. The ABFSE meets annually to review the accreditation of each program and to review, update, and revise the curriculum taught in all funeral service programs. The ABFSE provides each program with a curriculum outline for each course taught. Some say the curriculum is not relevant to today's funeral service, you're not teaching cremation, you're not teaching hospitality, difficult families, etc. I realize that if you are in small town USA, and never had an Orthodox Jewish service or an Amish service, that material is not relevant in your area, today, but what about tomorrow? Cremation is a significant part of the funeral service curriculum, even if there is not a class called cremation, there is not a class called interment, but that does not mean that it is not taught. We need the curriculum to be broad-based and relevant to all subject areas for different populations. The funeral service education programs are not going to make every student a great funeral director or great embalmer! Funeral service education gives the student the skills to LEARN to be great funeral directors and embalmers. They become great by practicing their skills over time with a seasoned licensee.

WHAT COULD THE ABFSE DO TO FIX THIS PROBLEM? ABFSE programs could pass every student who enrolls in funeral service education, but I do not think that is what we want. Just because a student enrolls does not mean they should get a license. The ABFSE should continue to keep the curriculum up-to-date and relevant. The ABFSE should continue to hold accountable programs that are not producing graduates who are successfully obtaining a license. Student accountability also plays a part in this process. Students who have difficulty reading or writing and are not willing to study will struggle to graduate and pass a licensure exam.

2. NATIONAL BOARD EXAM: It seems that the National Board Exam has taken the brunt of the criticism for the lack of available personnel in funeral service. The exam is often seen as the last step in licensure, which is holding me back from getting a license. Is that the case? Student accountability plays a major role in exam success. Students who barely pass courses or a program and wait a period before taking an exam will have difficulty passing an exam. If a student fails the NBE and does not do some remediation, it is almost certain that they will not pass the exam the next time! Is this the fault of the exam? There are a significant number of funeral service programs that have a very high pass rate

on the NBE. So, is there a problem with the NBE? If there is a problem with the exam, I would think that every program would have low pass rates. As with anything, there can always be improvements. This is why the Conference continuously reviews each exam and makes improvements as needed. Currently, the NBE is the only nationally recognized exam for funeral service licensure. An exam that is universally used across the nation for funeral service licensure and possibly for UNIVERSAL LICENSURE.

How valid is this exam? The exam is developed and maintained by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (The Conference) in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Conference is an organization whose members are the Boards of Funeral Directors and Embalmers in each state. The exam is developed and based on the Task Analysis Survey (a survey review of the tasks performed by entry-level Funeral Directors and Embalmers) sent to every licensee in the United States. The Task Analysis provides a blueprint for the NBE exam. Therefore, funeral professionals across the nation design the blueprint for the exam.

1. Every question on the exam MUST relate to the Task Analysis Blueprint for the test.
2. Every question on the exam MUST relate to the curriculum outlines produced by the ABFSE.
3. Every question on the exam MUST come from a textbook used by the ABFSE programs.

These questions are developed and reviewed by licensed funeral directors and embalmers across the nation. The Conference periodically has a question writing workshop. The Conference asks for volunteers from licensed professionals and educators. These questions are designed, written, and reviewed by these funeral service professionals. These professionals then determine the level of difficulty (the scale score) of each question. As with any exam, some questions are more complex, and some are simpler. Therefore, each question does not carry the same weight. Thus, the exam score is based on a scaled score rather than a percentage score.

To explain scaled score: Most people are accustomed to exams being graded on a percentage basis, meaning a score of 75% means that 75% of the exam answers are correct. This might be good if all questions were equal, but we just stated that all questions are not the same; some are hard, some are easier. So, for example, Test #1 has a lot of hard questions and Exam # 2 has a lot of easy questions. The percentage grade would not be fair if you got the most challenging test, and I got the easier test. License exams are not based on a percentage; they are based on a scaled score. There are also different versions of the exam. Therefore, the scaled score allows for the number of hard vs simple questions. An exam with more hard questions will have a different scale score than an exam with fewer hard questions. The scaled score for a test is set when the test is produced.

1. Licensed professionals review every question on the exam,
2. Licensed professionals approve every question,
3. Every question is “scaled” (given a scale number based on hard or easy) by licensed professionals,
4. Every exam is then given a scaled number for passing the exam.

Every question is then pre-tested on a live exam before it is deemed valid. To be a valid question, it must perform (per that scale rating) on an exam in the same manner as the funeral professional provided to that question. If the question does not perform properly, the question is pulled and reviewed again. The Conference reviews the performance of each exam and each question on every exam to ensure the exam is performing as required. The required passing score on the NBE is 75. When a person states that they made a 74 on the exam and failed by one point, or one question, that is not correct. If the test were a percentage, that might be correct, but it is a scaled score. So, depending on the scaled score requirement of that exam, the person may have needed several questions to achieve a scaled score of 75. Therefore, the statement “I only missed it by one question” is false.

WHAT COULD THE CONFERENCE DO TO FIX THIS PROBLEM: The Conference could set the scaled score so low that everyone who takes the exam passes. They could make every question on the exam easy. Do we want this type of exam? Do we want everyone who wants to be a Funeral Director or Embalmer to be one, even if they lack the necessary knowledge of the funeral profession? Remember, the NBE is only testing basic entry-level knowledge. Do we want to do away with the exam totally and issue everyone a license who wants one? I DO NOT THINK SO.

3. LICENSED FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS: Does the licensed funeral service professional have a part to play in this situation? Currently, I have found no concrete data to prove that approximately 50% of licenses leave the profession after five years. I am not sure that is correct, but I am confident, and most would agree that the percentage of leave from the funeral service is very high. Then who is to blame for this mass exodus of newly licensed professionals? I am sure that cannot be blamed on the NBE! It could be blamed on the Colleges for not providing a realistic enough picture of the

day-to-day life of the funeral profession. It could be that the profession has not adjusted to the needs of the new workforce. The days of working every weekend and being on call every night are not acceptable to the latest generation. I believe there are still very dedicated individuals entering this great profession, but they are not willing to work in the same manner as our ancestors. Most, but not all, are willing to dedicate the hours needed to accomplish the task, provided they can see some value and accomplishment in the work. They need to feel appreciated and have a sense of accomplishment with their work. Family satisfaction with a job well performed needs to be shared with the new licensee rather than kept as a secret for management only!

Lastly, just because a funeral home needs help and there is a Community College in town, does not mean there is a need for a new funeral service program. The number of funeral service education programs in the last 20 years has increased. Still, the number of students entering funeral service has stayed relatively the same, with the exception of 2022, which did see a slight increase (about 2%) in enrollment. Some funeral service programs start with just a few students and one program coordinator to oversee all the elements of teaching, accreditation, and exam preparation. The programs that have the highest pass rates have multiple faculty and staff to try and stay ahead of the changes in certification, curriculum, examination, and professional changes. Having a successful funeral service program is much more than “I need help, so let’s start a program at the local college”. The local college may start a program, but where do they get qualified students, can they produce successful students, and can they pass a universally recognized exam for entry-level employment?

WHAT COULD THE LICENSED PROFESSIONALS DO TO FIX THE PROBLEM: Management could pay everyone a large salary and only work 40 hours per week. We all know that is not possible in this great profession. But there are changes within our reach that could make a difference. Management must adjust to accommodate the new workforce, provide better incentives to remain in the profession, employee reward programs that keep licensees engaged, and provide even the newest employee some manner of responsibility (put them in charge of something, no matter how small). This will give them a sense of purpose and involvement in the operation rather than just a job. The funeral professional **MUST** develop a means to meet today’s newly licensed professionals “where they are and not try to fit them into YESTERDAY’S mold”. Yes, the profession still requires night calls and weekends, but they are not going to stay if it is every night and every weekend. The number one complaint I hear from students is not the money, although that is very important; it is time off and some responsibility (a sense of belonging and contribution) to the business. We all want to hear from time to time whether you did a great job or whether the family loved the work you did. Take time to show appreciation for a job well done. Buy your staff lunch, clothes, gas for their car, or anything else to show your appreciation. Most importantly, when a family member has a compliment for the work that was done, get the license and let the family tell the licensee rather than management taking the credit for the good job.

In conclusion, this great profession that we all love so dearly is not broken, but it does have its ups and downs, and it is ever-changing. Funeral Service Education is not broken, but needs to continually review the curriculum and standard requirements to ensure that the education offered by all programs is relevant to funeral service today. The National Board Exam is not broken, but it needs to continue to review the exam and ensure each question is appropriate to the profession. The Conference, which is an organization of state funeral boards that owns and administers the NBE, needs to continue to push for some manner of Universal Licensure or reciprocity to allow licensees to reciprocate their license from state to state. The Licensed Funeral Professionals are not broken, but **MUST** be willing to adapt to the newer and younger license and provide a more adaptable work environment to maintain employees. It is these licensed funeral professionals that are graduates of funeral service programs, these licensed professionals are members of each state’s licensing board (the Conference), these licensed professionals are members of a committee that develops the NBE, and these licensed professionals are the ones that create the laws, the rules and the regulations that prevent a licensee from Universal Licensure or Reciprocity. Therefore, I ask that every licensed professional in this great nation and this great profession open our minds and think outside the box to find a solution that works for every state for universal licensure or reciprocity.





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Kaylee Skinner
Nashville, TN

Molly Wilson
Oak Ridge, TN

To be eligible, you must be enrolled full-time (12+ hours) and have a semester GPA that is in the top 10% of the total enrollment for that semester.

Congratulations to these students for their accomplishment!

Please let me know if you know anyone who has 50 years of Funeral Service to be recognized at the 2026 TFDA Convention.



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Obituaries



Bobby Ray Hysmith, age 89, passed away Monday evening, September 29, 2025 at Henderson Healthcare.

He was born February 20, 1936, in McNairy County, the son of the late Daniel Tommy and Luna Mae Wardlow Hysmith. His family sharecropped in the Estes community of Chester County during his childhood. He attended Chester County schools and married Lurlene Carroll, July 3rd, 1955.

He worked as a milk delivery boy and in various groceries in Henderson. He began his career with Wonder Bread company in August 1956 as a delivery man in the Alamo area before taking the delivery route in Chester County, south Madison and part of McNairy counties. He advanced in management and served as branch supervisor in Haiti, MO, followed by Dyersburg, TN, Jackson, TN, and Mayfield, KY where he expanded the sales of Wonder Bread and Hostess Cakes in each market. He served as Regional Thrift Store supervisor for the Memphis Bakery. Bobby and Lurlene moved to Stone Mountain, GA where he opened thrift stores in the Atlanta area. They later moved to Chattanooga where he started route delivery of Hostess Cakes in the Chattanooga and Knoxville areas. Afterward they returned to Henderson and he served as Regional Sales Supervisor covering west Tennessee, eastern Arkansas, Missouri, western Kentucky, northern Alabama and Mississippi. He was inducted to the Continental Baking Company's prestigious Number One Club

in 1981 and enjoyed many trips across the states for annual gatherings. At his retirement dinner in 1999 he was saluted for 43 years of accident-free driving and was recognized for his emphasis on safety and customer service.

After retiring they enjoyed traveling to Branson, MO and Pigeon Forge, TN multiple times a year.

He began his "second" career with Casey Funeral Home as a funeral assistant in 2002. He enjoyed 23 years working with Shackelford Funeral Directors-Casey Chapel.

He served two terms as a Chester County commissioner. He was elected by his fellow commissioners to serve as chairman Pro Tem. He was a member of the Chester County Lions Club, and served as King Lion and was a recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award. He served on the walking horse show committee for several years. He served on the Board of Directors of Chester County Bank, served on the Board of Directors of Quinco Mental Health, where he also acted as chairman of the board for a period of time. He served on the Southwest Tennessee Area Council for the Aging and had served as board chairman. He served as a member of the inaugural Freed-Hardeman University President's Advancement Council.

Hysmith served in the Tennessee National Guard for twelve years where he received the rank of Sergeant First Class. He and Lulene were active members of the Church of Christ wherever they lived. He had served as a deacon at three congregations. They were both members of the Henderson Church of Christ until their deaths.

During their semi-retirement years, they enjoyed following their four grandsons around the country supporting them in various activities.

Bobby was a survivor of the deadly EF-4 tornado of 1952 in Henderson. His family's home was destroyed in the tornado, scattering his family over a several block area near Sixth Street in Henderson. He spearheaded an effort in 2019 to establish a monument on the courthouse lawn to honor the twenty-three lives that were lost that Friday night, March 21st 1952.

He was preceded by his wife of 63 years in January 2018. He is survived by two sons: Randy and Angelia Hysmith of Jackson along with their two sons Nathan (Laura) and Joel (Lindsey) Hysmith of the Nashville area and their families, and Tony and Rebecca Hysmith of Henderson and their two sons: Ross and Ryan (Abby) Hysmith and family all of Henderson. He has twelve great grandchildren, Brody, Wyatt, Nolan, Shepard, McCoy, Peter, James, Foster, Hoyt, Harper, Henry, and Hazel.

He is also survived by a brother, Larry Hysmith and a sister, Tommie Jean Faulkner, both of Henderson and 13 nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be 10:00 AM Friday, October 3rd at Shackelford Funeral Directors- Crook Avenue Chapel with Randy Hysmith, Tony Hysmith, and four grandsons officiating. Burial will follow at Chester County Memory Gardens. The family will receive friends at the funeral home from 5:00 PM until 8:00pm Thursday.

Memorials may be made to Freed-Hardeman University's Mid-South Youth Camp, 158 East Main Street, Henderson, TN 38340, or the university's athletic department.



Dorothy “Dot” Leathers peacefully passed away on Friday, September 12, 2025, at Regency Retirement Village of Jackson, where she lived for the last nine months. Born at home on September 11, 1933, in Brownsville, TN, she was one of eight children born to the late Calvin and Pearl Sullivan. Dot’s legacy is one marked by unwavering love, faith, and a commitment to family, friends, and her church, making a significant impact on the lives of all who knew her.

Dot was a pillar of strength and grace, known for her strong-willed nature and independent spirit, and never accepting “no” as an answer. She navigated life’s challenges with quiet, persistent strength and composure, leaving those around her in awe of her resilience. She approached all things prayerfully and demonstrated her steadfast faith.

A true embodiment of Southern charm, her friends and family fondly remember the laughter she could bring into every room. Dot always looked and acted younger than her age, and was known for her impeccable sense of style, always fashionably dressed and radiating confidence and flair, which is epitomized in her famous motto, “It’s not how you feel, it’s how you look!”

She was introduced to her late husband, Kenneth, by a mutual friend, and together they built a legacy rooted in love and service that inspired many. Devoted to her faith, Dot was a prayer warrior dedicated to the Lord and her church community. Her dedication was palpable through her years of service at West Jackson Baptist Church, where she and Kenneth

became members in 1960.

For decades, she lovingly taught 1st grade Sunday School, nurturing countless young hearts. She held numerous leadership roles, including Director of the Woman’s Missionary Union and leading the GROW Outreach “R” Team alongside Kenneth. Dot served as a Trustee and was an active member in several church committees, including two pastoral search committees. Her dedication to her church family was evident as her own family was faithfully present whenever the church doors were open. She was a beloved member of the Legacy Bible Study class. A supporter of Union University, she was former member of the Women’s Auxiliary and could be seen cheering at the Lady Bulldogs basketball games and making friends.

Throughout her life, Dot embraced her role as a homemaker, finding joy in entertaining friends and family, often hosting gatherings that became cherished memories. Her passion for hospitality knew no bounds; friends, church family, and many brides-to-be were touched by her warmth and generosity. Dot’s love for family was apparent in her annual beach trips with her sister, niece, and daughters, where laughter and joy were abundant. She had a passion for working in her yard and planting colorful flowers which reflected her personality.

Those to forever cherish her memory are her children, Judy Arrington and her husband Bob of Jackson, TN, Kenny Leathers and wife Melissa of Mason, OH, and Janet Leathers of Jackson, TN. She was lovingly known as Mama Dot to her grandchildren, Will Leathers and wife Kaylee, Scott Leathers, and Kate Leathers, and soon-to-be great-grandchild William Kenneth Leathers IV, who is expected to arrive in a few weeks.

Dot shared a special bond with her youngest sister, Shirley Wallace of Brownsville, TN and a beloved niece Gwen Harden and husband Bo, along with many other nieces, nephews, and countless friends and family who adored her. She will also be greatly missed by Ken Luckett, of Jackson, TN, who has been a loyal companion to Dot for the last 4 years, bringing her joy and encouragement.

Those preceding her in death are her loving husband of 62 years, Kenneth Leathers, brothers, James Sullivan, Bobby Sullivan, Bo Sullivan, and Billy Sullivan, along with her sisters, Ruth Davis and Margaret Schoffner.

SERVICE: The funeral service celebrating Dorothy’s life will be held on Friday, September 19, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel of Arrington Funeral Directors, with Rev. Andy Neeley and Dr. Maurice Hollingsworth officiating. Visitation with friends and family will be prior to the service from 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Following the service, she will be laid to rest next to Kenneth at Ridgecrest Cemetery.

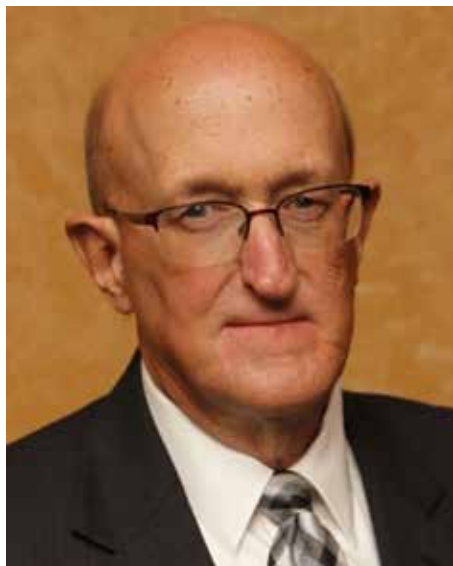
Pallbearers to serve are Carroll Griffin, Mark Yates, Mike Tankersley, Bob Bond, Levoy Castellaw, Scott Leathers, Will Leathers, and Bob Arrington.

The family asks that any memorials be directed to West Jackson Baptist Church, 580 Oil Well Road, Jackson, TN 38305 or online at www.westjacksonbc.org or to the charity of one’s choice.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Regency Retirement Village and AseraCare Hospice for their kindness and care shown over the past months.

Dorothy Leathers touched many lives during her time on earth. A gentle reminder of the beauty of a life well-lived, her legacy of love, strength, and unwavering faith will linger in the hearts of all who knew her.

Please make sure the TFDA has your email or if you know anyone not receiving messages from the TFDA, please have them contact Lauren Marshall at lauren.oandn@gmail.com or 931-626-4316.



Rev. Timothy Wright Ferrell, age 69, of Woodlawn, TN went to be with his Lord and Savior on Wednesday, November 5, 2025 while surrounded by his family.

Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, November 8, 2025 at McReynolds-Nave & Larson Funeral Home with Rev. Jimmie Edwards and Rev. David Mackens officiating. Burial will follow at Dotsonville Baptist Church Cemetery.

The family will receive friends on Friday, November 7, 2025 from 3 to 6 p.m. and again on Saturday from 11 a.m. until the hour of service at the funeral home.

Tim entered this life on March 1, 1956, in Clarksville, TN to the late Mamie Ruth Jackson and Andy Calvin Ferrell. He was raised by his loving grandparents, Claude and Idell Jackson. He was a 1974 graduate of Northwest High School and married Etta Bowles in 1976. He completed the Program of Alternate Studies at Memphis Theological Seminary, which paved the way for a life dedicated to pastoral service. Tim loved his Lord and Savior and dedicated his years to teaching and guiding others in their faith. He was a member of the Nashville Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbytery Church and had served as the pastor for Cumberland Valley Cumberland Presbyterian Church in McEwen, TN, Erin Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Locust Grove Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and most recently Dotsonville Baptist Church. A devoted Funeral Director and Pre-Need Counselor at McReynolds-Nave & Larson Funeral Home, Tim was a steadfast presence in the community, having served thousands of families with compassion and dignity throughout his

50 years in the funeral business. He earned his funeral director's license in 1983, marking the beginning of a lifelong commitment to supporting those in their times of need. He was a devoted servant of God and respected member of his community. In addition to his work in the many churches he served and the funeral profession, Tim was also a member of the Downtown Civitan Club, a loving husband, father, grandfather, and soon to be great-grandfather. In addition to his parents, and grandparents, Tim is preceded in death by his brother, Andy Steven Ferrell.

Survivors include his wife of 49 years, Etta Bowles Ferrell; son, Shannon Ferrell, and his wife, Christie Ferrell; daughter, Charli Beth Hill, and her husband, Jacob Hill; grandchildren, Tori Giles (Cole), Carson Ferrell (Lauren Britt), and Jackson Hill, and sister, Tammy Massey. Tim was also eagerly awaiting the arrival of his first great-granddaughter who is expected to make her arrival in March. He also leaves behind special family members, Darrell, Nicole, Gracie, and Anna Holt.

Serving as pallbearers will be Dr. James Darrell Holt, Carson Ferrell, Larry Meek, Joe Meek, Cole Giles, Jacob Hill, and Richard Collins. Honorary pallbearers will be the staff of McReynolds-Nave & Larson Funeral Home.

Memorial donations may be made to Dotsonville Baptist Church Cemetery fund. Online condolences may be made at www.NaveFuneralHomes.com.



Robert Marcus Caldwell, Jr., age 55, passed away suddenly on November 11, 2025 at UT Medical Center. Rob was employed as a funeral director and embalmer for Smith Funeral and Cremation Service for over 23 years. He took special care to make sure families received professional attention during their time of need. It was a calling he took seriously and in which he excelled. He was a past president of The Greater Knoxville Funeral Service Association. In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing and being on the lake. He was also an accomplished woodworker and loved to make projects in his shop while feeding the birds and other creatures that visited each day. Rob was a loving husband, son, brother, friend and colleague who will be missed deeply by all who knew him. Preceded in death by: father, Mark Caldwell; mother, Kathy Waddell; brother, Scott Caldwell; grandparents, Jesse & Hazel Caldwell, William & Alvilda Anderson, and Betty Mills; mother-in-law, Evelyn Macht. Survivors include: wife of 20 years, Susan; mother, Shelia Caldwell; brother, Jess & wife Tamara Caldwell and their children Ian and Lillian; nieces and nephew, Kayla Lindsey, Megan Benzi, and Christopher Caldwell and their families; father-in-law, George Macht; brother-in-law, Mark Macht; several aunts, uncles, cousins, and a host of colleagues and friends in the funeral industry, especially Tuck. Family will receive friends from 4:00 until 6:00 PM, Friday, November 14, 2025 at Smith Trinity Chapel. Funeral service will be at 6:00 PM with Rev. Gary Thomas and

Dr. C. Lynn Gibson officiating. Family and friends will assemble for graveside service and interment at 11:00 AM, Saturday, November 15, 2025 at Grandview Pavilion. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to: Friends of the Blount County Animal Center, P.O. Box 1099 Alcoa, TN 37701-1099. Condolences may be shared at Smith Funeral and Cremation Service, Maryville, 865-983-1000, www.SmithFuneralandCremation.com.



It is with profound sadness that we share the death of our co-worker and friend, **Billy Edward Parmenter**, who died Thursday, November 13, 2025 at his residence surrounded by his loving family. Born July 28, 1938, he was preceded in death by his parents, Bill and Sarah Lucille Dyer Parmenter. Bill retired as textile manager at Dyersburg Fabrics and has been employed as a licensed funeral director at Curry Funeral Home since his retirement.

Bill was born in Lenox, TN and was the oldest of six children. He was also the only boy of the family. He attended Lenox Grammar School and Dyersburg High School, where he graduated in 1956. After graduating high school, he began his career at Dyersburg Fabrics, where he worked in the Dye House, later becoming the Dye House Manager. While working there, he taught Safety Classes to the employees, and participated in many activities, such as the bowling league, where his team was Tournament Champions, and Breakfast with Santa. He worked there for 45 years. While working full-time he began attending Dyersburg State Community College, where he earned his Associate of Science Degree with highest honors in 1974. Then in 1978, he completed a Dale Carnegie Course in Effective Speaking and Human Relations. In addition to his busy work schedule with Dyersburg Fabrics, he also was a D.J. for WTRO Radio Station and a part time actor with different acting groups like Stage Door Players and Night Lite Theater, and the Newbern Depot. He will be remembered for some of the characters he played such as Mr. Potter from "It's A Wonderful Life," Teddy Roosevelt from "Arsenic and Old Lace," Snoopy from the play "Snoopy," and

Jacob from "Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." He had a special gift of interacting with people and making them laugh. Even though his life was busy, he proudly served his country in The Tennessee National Guard. Later in life, he would join the Dyersburg Choral Society and become the President of it from 2005 – 2006. He was an active member of Dyersburg First Cumberland Presbyterian Church where he served as an Elder and a Sunday School teacher.

In November 1963, he went on a blind date, where he fell in love and later on October 3, 1964, he married the love of his life, Janie Lavon Lay. They began their life together on Victory Street, where they made wonderful friendships that have lasted a lifetime. Even after moving from Victory Street to their present-day home, they continued to treasure the memories they made there. On September 7, 1966, their one and only daughter, Kym, was born. Bill was a wonderful father who always supported Kym in everything. He was the Dyersburg High School Band Booster President from 1981 - 1984, and attended many competitions, worked many fundraisers and supported not only his daughter, but many other band students throughout his years. Later, after Kym married, he loved and supported his son-in-law, Carey Allen Sanders, in everything. He loved him like a son. But his precious granddaughter, Kaitlyn was his pride and joy. He supported her and loved her with all his heart. He shared a love of music with her and so enjoyed listening to her play the piano.

Funeral services will be at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at Dyersburg First Cumberland Presbyterian Church officiated by Reverend Victor Hassell and Reverend Jerry Powell with interment to follow in Fairview Cemetery.

The family will receive friends Monday, November 17th from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the church and Tuesday, November 18th beginning at 10:00 a.m. until service time in the Parlor of the church.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Janie Lay Parmenter; his daughter, Kym Sanders and husband, Carey of Greenfield; his granddaughter, Kaitlyn Sanders of Greenfield; and two sisters, Patsye Jones and her husband Shelton of Dyersburg and Dianna Flatt of Newbern.

Landon Carroll, Jim Ennis, Jake Gregson, Jim Joyner, Terry McCreight, and Bill VanSant will serve as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers will be Kenneth Alford, Danny Fowlkes, Shelton Jones, and the Employees of Curry Funeral Home.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his three sisters, Shirley Gibson, Doris Karlgaard and Linda Foster.

The family requests memorials be directed to Dyersburg First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 2280 Parr Avenue, Dyersburg, TN 38024 or to charity of the donor's choice.

Bill will be deeply missed by all who knew him – his co-workers, friends, and family alike. His legacy of kindness and dedication will continue to inspire us.

We are privileged and honored to serve the family of Billy E. Parmenter. You may share your condolences and your memories with the family at www.curryfuneral.com.

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Joyce Evangeline Haar, age 96, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, November 30, 2025. She was born on May 11, 1929, in Burlington, North Dakota, to Oscar Brostrom and Alma Larson Brostrom. She lived in Minot, North Dakota, with 6 sisters and 3 brothers. This Brostrom clan was known for telling stories and having lots of fun, and it was hard for anyone else to get a word in edgewise!

Joyce met the love of her life at a church camp meeting for North and South Dakota. She had her eye on this hard working, muscular, and handsome farm boy named Lester Haar. They were married for 72 years. After they married, they moved to South Dakota and lived on the farm. She grew to love the Haar family where they taught this city slicker how to survive on a farm. They moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Lester got a job with the railroad. She along with her husband faithfully served in church work and helped to plant a church. They also led worship services at a nursing home for several years before going to their church's Sunday morning service. Lester would speak and Joyce would sing. Joyce's desire was to be a homemaker who kept a tidy home and cared for her children. They lived there for 50 years until they moved to Cleveland, Tennessee. She became involved at Westmore Church of God where the Focus Sunday School

class became like family. She volunteered at The Caring Place for several years.

Joyce was a bright light and encourager to all who knew her. She was a woman of deep faith and prayer. Her name speaks for her nature. Joyce means "Joyous", and Evangeline means "Bearer of Good News." Her purpose on this earth was to live out the calling contained in her name. And she did just that. She was silly and lighthearted, until it came to prayer. She was very serious about prayer and always let her children and grandchildren know that she called their names in prayer every day. People were drawn to her through her smile and love for others because she carried the Lord's light and presence within her.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lester Haar: grandson, Darryl Isaacs; parents; 5 sisters; 3 brothers; and several nieces and nephews. She is survived by 3 daughters, Charlene (David) Isaacs, Sharon (Douglas) Bauman, Darla (Greg) Rush; 1 son, Randy (Becki) Haar; grandchildren, Derek (Alanna) Isaacs, Dan (Crystal) Isaacs, Lindsay (Dustin) May, Brent (Natalie) Bauman, Jen (Shane) Hooker, Brock (Kayla) Rush, Tyler (Maddy) Haar, Kristyn (Jake) Loukinen, and Larissa Haar; great grandchildren, Gavin Isaacs, Grady Isaacs, Gracyn Isaacs, Georgia Grace Isaacs, Elam Isaacs, Elias Isaacs, Ezraha Isaacs, Brynlee May, Samuel May, Hannah Bauman, Lewis Bauman, Ellen Bauman, Baylor Rush, Lawson Rush, Ava Hooker, Ana Gray Rush, and Hallie Haar. Her sister, Darlene Holmgren of Estevan, Saskatchewan, Canada and several nieces and nephews also survive.

A Remembrance of Life Service will be held on Monday, December 8 at 10:00 am EST at Jim Rush Funeral & Cremation Services North Ocoee Chapel in Cleveland, Tennessee with Pastor Kelvin Page and Dr. Henry Smith officiating. Family will also share. Visitation will be from 9:00-10:00 at the funeral home. You may share your memories and condolences with the Haar family at www.jimrushfuneralhomes.com.



Eugene M. Pike Jr., President of Chattanooga Funeral Home, died December 1, 2025, at the age of 87.

Mr. Pike graduated from the John A. Gupton Mortuary School in Nashville in 1959 and had served as Chairman of the Board since November 12, 1979.

Mr. Pike is survived by his wife of 67 years, Patricia Gail Pike of Chattanooga; son, Stephen (Lea) Pike of Ooltewah; granddaughter, Mary (Keshun) Gentry of Ooltewah; great-grandchild, Kingston James Gentry; brother, Bill (Ellen) Pike of Huntsville, Alabama; nephew, Ernie (Linda) Brown of Chattanooga; and niece, Cindy (John) Cagle of Chattanooga.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Thursday, December 11th, at 11 AM at Ridgedale Baptist Church with Dr. Doug Plumlee and Dr. Bill Owens officiating.

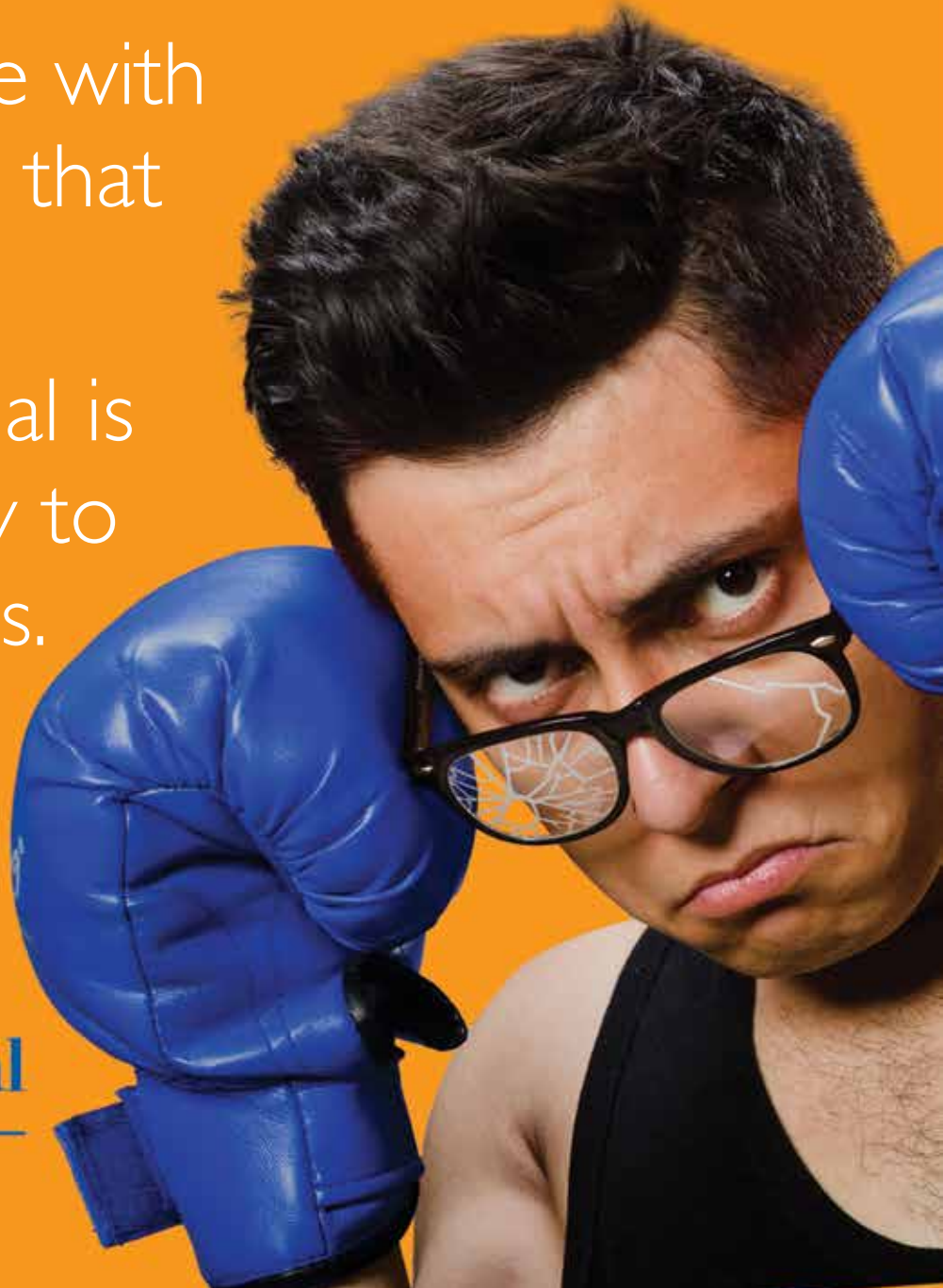
The family will receive friends on Wednesday, December 10th, from 4 PM to 7 PM and on Thursday, December 11th, from 9 AM to 11 AM at Ridgedale Baptist Church. Entombment will be in Hamilton Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Hixson, TN.



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

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- 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



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