

THE THANA GRAM

SUMMER 2018

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE



115TH
ANNUAL
CONVENTION
HIGHLIGHTS

OBITUARIES

JOHN GUPTON
TOP 10%

TFDA
REPRESENTED
AT
NATIONAL
DISASTER
TRAINING

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JUSTIN JEFFERS, PRESIDENT • TFDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



I hope everyone is enjoying another beautiful Tennessee summer. From the lakes, rivers, mountain streams, music, and culture, we are truly blessed to live in the great state of Tennessee.

I want to personally thank everyone that attended this year's annual convention. The convention has been my favorite time of year since I was a kid. While other children looked up to professional athletes, I was in awe in the presence of Jim Andrews, Fentress Casey, Randy Bowers, and many others. As we move forward as an association, we do so with the lessons that we've learned from the great men and women that came before us. The friendships and bonds that develop at the convention every year are ones that last a life time. I have said many times that no one knows what you truly go through on a daily basis like a fellow funeral director. It is wonderful to be able to come together and share stories and ideas every year. We honored another legend in our industry this year by recognizing Mr. Jerry Smith at the banquet. Mr. Smith has been not only a pillar of his community in Athens, TN but an incredible asset to the TFDA and we all owe him our heartfelt gratitude. The amount of work that goes in to this event each year doesn't go unnoticed and we can never thank enough people like Greg Rush, Bob Batson, Dawn Elliott, and many others for their tireless efforts to make the convention a success.

I want to also thank Brad Ridgeway for his efforts this past year as president of the TFDA. Brad is a humble servant in every aspect of the word and it was an honor to serve under his leadership.

The future looks bright for TFDA. Your board of directors are a group that is full of energy and ideas. I look forward to working with them this coming year to continue to move TFDA in the right direction. These ladies and gentlemen have a passion for this industry and the work that we do. The efforts that go on behind the scenes are often overlooked. I often hear that same old rhetoric where ever I go in this great state, "what does TFDA do for me?" Well in the past year the TFDA and its committees have worked hand in hand to voice our concerns and suggestions with Tennessee Vital Records on a weekly basis, continued to improve communication between funeral directors and Tennessee Donor Services, fought legislation that would be detrimental to our member firms, quickly provided in person seminars to help members fulfill licensing renewal CEU requirements, and are always standing by to answer legal or compliance questions that may arise. Your TFDA is and will continue to be one of the best values for the investment that your funeral home can make. Please continue to support those that support us, Matthews Aurora Funeral Solutions, Investors Heritage, and State Auto. Their financial support of TFSI is imperative to what we do at TFDA.

I want you all to remember that at the end of the day, this is your association. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do for you, if you would like to become more involved, or have any questions. I speak for all of us when I say that we are here to serve you as you serve others.

In closing, I just want to say that it is truly an honor to serve as president of this association this coming year. There truly are no better people than those that choose to serve others in those most difficult times. Thank you for the trust that you've put in me and let me know if there is any way that I can be of assistance to you.

Justin Jeffers

Our Mission:

To be the Tennessee Funeral Professionals 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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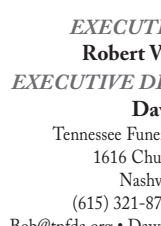
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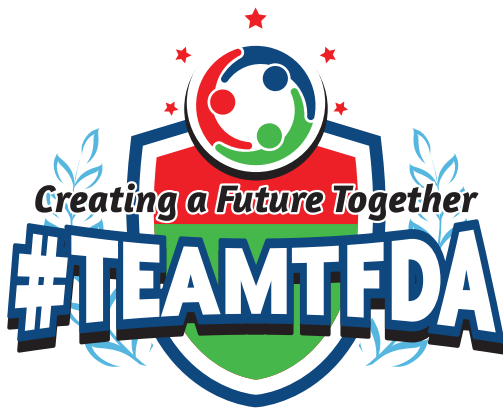
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2018 TFDA/TFSSC 115th Annual Convention

June 3 – 5, 2018

Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center, Murfreesboro, TN

The TFDA/TFSSC 115th Annual Convention was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Murfreesboro, TN June 3 – 5, 2018. There were 45 exhibitors represented along with over 140 firms represented.

If you attended the convention, you had the opportunity to earn 10 continuing education credits. It began on Sunday, June 3rd with Mr. Jack Lechner, CFSP, CT President & CEO Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, seminar “Arlington National Cemetery, Restoring the Honor”. The next informative seminar was Kenneth Howe, “The Professional Care Society & the Preservation of Funeral Service Transportation: The Golden Age of the Funeral Home Fleet- From the Horse to the Automobile”.

Thank you Mr. Todd Van Beck for putting together an informative group of presenters. Todd works hard to organize an educational program for all attendees.

TFDA/TFSSC Memorial Service

Rosemary Harrison, Memorial Service Chairperson did an absolutely outstanding job on honoring those loved ones that have we have lost this past year. Those honored this year were:

Eva Louise Seratt
Brandon Michael Teague
Jordon Mikil Cooper
Jerry Lee Denton
Maurice Alexander Moffitt
Richard Owen Tate
Freda Gott Correll
Joseph Wayne Lindsey
Kenneth Leathers
Nancy L. Rahm
Claire Ayers Teasley
Laura Marie Hayes

Gerald Douglas Fitz-Gerald
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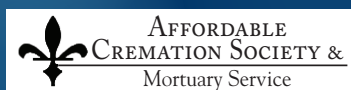
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Penny Reams
Vivian Lucille Weatherford Minish
Carolyn Moore Miles
Allan Lynn Linson
Helon Marie Gentry
Margaret Davis Vickery
Teresa June Halfacre Dicus

Thank you to  **Bass-Mollett**
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for their sponsoring the Memorial Service.



After the Memorial Service was the time to visit the exhibit hall and all the exhibitors with their new products. Thank you to all of the exhibitors that displayed. We appreciate their commitment. Please remember to support the exhibitors that help support your association:

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Sunday night is an event that everyone looks forward to every year, the Ice Cream Social! We appreciate **ATLANTIC COAST LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY** for sponsoring the social this year. They did a wonderful job providing a relaxing time for everyone to get together!

The TFDA Business Meeting was Monday morning. This is the time to get updates on the association and the installation of the new TFDA Board of Directors. The 2018 – 19 TFDA President is Justin Jeffers, Greeneville, TN; TFDA Vice President, Randy Nash, Gallatin, TN; TFDA Secretary- Treasurer, Marc Sims, Dyer, TN; TFDA Past President, Brad Ridgeway, Paris, TN; TFDA Director West, Patrick Williams, Newbern, TN; TFDA Director East, Mitchell Kyker, Harriman, TN.



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“We would like to thank Investors Heritage Life Insurance Company, Endorsed Company and Sponsor of the Monday Luncheon”. This was something different this year, having the lunch inside the exhibit hall. It was a huge success!”

Monday Night

The TFDA Auction was another success! Each year Eric Carpenter, Auction Committee Chair; Kandy Shackelford and Keith Stapleton, contact TFDA/TFSSC members, asking for donations to the Silent and Live auction. This year we raised over \$8,000 for the TFDA PAC Fund!

Thank you to the Auction Committee, all that donated and all that bid on all the items.

Silent Auction Items

donated and won:



ITEM	DONATED BY	WON	PAID
Father's Day Grill Pack	Dyersburg Funeral Home	Addison Jeffers	\$60.00
Elephant Figurine	Currie Funeral Home	Allie Ridgeway	\$50.00
Tin Serving Set	Shackelford Funeral Directors Bolivar	Angela Sims	\$110.00
Two \$100 Visa Gift Cards	TN Donor Service	Brad Ridgeway	\$195.00
Mahogany & Brass Side Table	Currie Funeral Home	Brent Sommers	\$80.00
Donate Life Gift Bag w/\$100 gift card	Andi/ TN Donor Services	Clayton White	\$175.00
Fur Baby Basket	Marc & Angela Sims, Karnes & Son	Donna Wilson	\$110.00
Vols Apparel	Southern Funeral Director Magazine	Donna Wilson	\$90.00
Thera Pure Air filter	Hamlett Dobson FH	Donny Ayers	\$100.00
Tennessee Puzzle	Jack Farrar	Emily Layne	\$190.00
Two doz Calloway golf balls	Danny Hurt/Wilbert Vaults	Glen King	\$60.00
Taste of Illinois grill and goodies	Tax & Accounting Professions	Jack Farrar	\$75.00
"Par Tee" Santa	Tony & Becky Hysmith	Jack Farrar	\$50.00
Assorted Win Tub	Jack Farrar/ Farrar FH	Jackie Purcell	\$125.00
Gardening Cart	Cindi Milam Austin & Bell	Ken Cahall	\$135.00
Girls Day Out Basket	Music City Mortuary	Mandi Marlin	\$140.00
Yeti Cooler & Tumbler	Affordable Cremation	Marc Sims	\$350.00
"In the Meadow" Santa	Tony & Becky Hysmith	Paula Lucas	\$70.00
"Day at the Beach"	Shackelford Funeral Directors Waynesboro	Randy Miliken	\$225.00
"Bourbon & BBQ" Includes cooler and tub	Williamson Memorial/ Spring Hill	Randy Nash	\$300.00
Two \$100 Visa Gift Cards	TN Donor Service	Rhonda King	\$170.00
Complete Embalmers Kit	Dodge Chemicals	Steve Spann	\$75.00
Pioneer Woman Gift Box	Dyersburg Funeral Home	Suzi Sowell	\$65.00
Large Bat	Cripple Creek Casket	Tim Plunk	\$100.00
Kitchen Basket from Laurel MS	Ansercall	Tony Hysmith	\$65.00

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Live Auction Items

donated and won:

DONATED BY	ITEM	WON	PAID
Austin & Bell FH White House	Garden House	Ken Cahall	\$135.00
Dodge Chemicals	Lotion	Jack Farrar	\$50.00
Southern Legacy Caskets	Mahogany Pedestals	Jack Farrar	\$300.00
Ambulance & Coach Sales	Church Trucks	Justin Jeffers	\$550.00
Cemetery & Funeral Solutions	CFS Casket	Steve Spann	\$450.00
Matthews Aurora	Matthews Aurora Casket	Brad Ridgeway	\$900.00
Batesville	Batesville Casket	Steve Spann	\$975.00
Justin Jeffers	CMA Tickets	Samantha Hood	\$725.00
Wilbert Vaults	Wilbert Urn Vault	Brad Ridgeway	\$220.00
Tennessee Chair Company	Rocking Chair	Danny Hurt	\$320.00
	Pressure Washer	Tony Hysmith	\$350.00



TFDA Kids Camp



The Grand Banquet

The Grand Banquet is where there is a presentation of the TFDA Wall of Fame. This year's honoree was Mr. Jerry E. Smith of Athens, TN. This is what was said about Jerry:

2018 Annual Convention of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association induction presentation of the TFDA Wall of Fame.

I read an article the other day titled *"12 Things I Wish I knew Before I Became a Funeral Director"*

Here are some of those 12:

- The job is physically and emotionally draining.
- There are many times when you will get really sad.
- You have to be good at science and business.
- You won't work regular hours.
- Sometimes, people will take their frustration out on you.
- Asking someone to pay the bill is really awkward.

Those of you in this room could add many more thoughts. Funeral directors are a rare breed. Who else shows up at work in the morning, works eight hours, then the telephone rings, and you learn your day is just starting?

Why? Because you are rare! You care about people. You want to help people during the most difficult time in their life. You want to make a difference. You want to help people walk THROUGH the valley of the shadow of death, not walk into it and get eat up by it.

Several years ago we started taking a few minutes during our annual convention to honor some of those of the rare breed that we truly respect; those who have set the mark just a little higher; those who have gone the extra mile; those who have not only had an effect on the families they serve, but have also affected us as their colleagues. We have honored those who have made a difference, those who have protected the sacred profession that we are all involved in every day.

Tonight we wish to honor one of those type people.

Our honoree has served in his community, and has been honored as a leader and a contributor in his community by no less than twenty one organizations. That tells you how



his community feels about him. He has served our profession equally well. He has not just been a "dues paying member," showing up at district meetings and the annual convention but has been a leader in our profession, an activist for those things that are right and good in our business. He has not sat back and let others do the work, but has stepped forward and spoken out for the good of our profession, and has been the voice of those we serve. He has served on behalf of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, The

National Funeral Directors Association and the Tennessee State Board of Funeral Directors.

I called a few funeral directors that are geographically located across the state just to get the viewpoint concerning him and his deeds. A colleague in middle Tennessee said our honoree is an "undertaker's undertaker" from the old school, and has worked behind the scenes for years to benefit every funeral director, embalmer, and our state association. A funeral director in west Tennessee said to be polar opposites in politics, one a 100% Democrat and the other a 100% Republican, there has not been two people that think any more alike for the common good of what we do! Our honoree has always done what was right, regardless of the political persuasion behind the request. A director from the east said our honoree has done as much or more for funeral service in Tennessee behind the scenes as any other one person.

I close by saying:

"He is a man of integrity, a man of respect, a man that is held in high esteem not only by his community but by his peers, those who he has rubbed shoulders with for nearly sixty years."

Tonight we honor a native of Athens, Tennessee:

Mr. Jerry Smith



Many Thanks.....

There are so many people that work really hard to make the convention happen and a success. Thank you Jeff Murphy, Music City Mortuary, for sending a van and two strong men, Carlton Majors and Nathaniel Parham, III, to help move the office to the hotel. This is something that has to be done. It takes a lot of time and TFDA very much appreciates Music City Mortuary!

Greg Rush is the Convention Committee Chairman. He keeps everything behind the scenes moving forward. He is in communication with the TFDA Office over 6 months in advance, making sure that every aspect of the convention events and activities are organized. If you enjoyed the convention, Greg Rush is the man that keeps it all on track.

Linda Yarbrough, TFDA Photographer, Yarbrough Mortuary Service, we appreciated you!

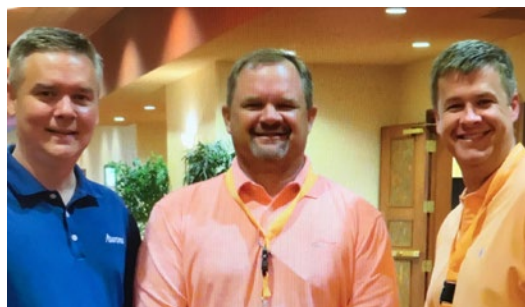
TFDA Appreciation of Support from The Independent Group

TFDA would like to say a special thank you to The Independent Group for their financial support.

TFDA Past President Richard Jeffers presented TFDA with a \$10,000.00 donation from The Independent Group at the TFDA/TFSSC Annual Convention's Grand Banquet.

The Independent Group has made this same donation for the past several years to TFDA and has been a tremendous asset to our Association.

Once again, our thanks and gratitude to Richard and the Independent Group for making this donation possible.





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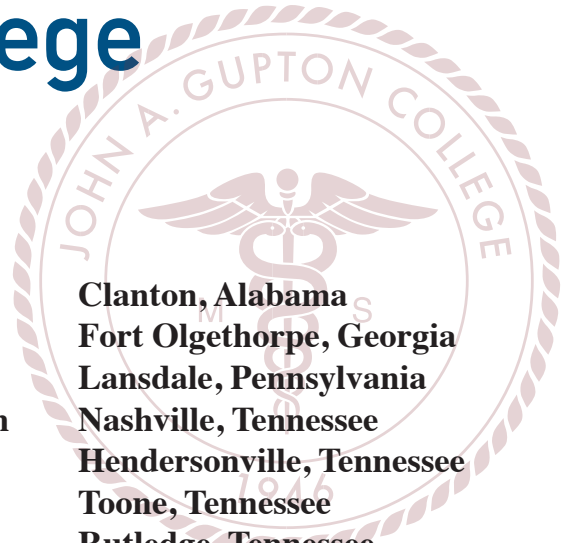
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Obituaries



NORMA JEAN FEEKIN VAN BECK

Norma Jean (Feekin) Van Beck passed away March 15, 2018 at Memorial Hermann Hospice in Houston, Texas. She was 89 years, 7 months and 13 days old. Norma Van Beck is the mother of Todd Van Beck, Director of Continuing Education for John A. Gupton College, Nashville, TN and the TFDA Education Committee Chairman.

PENNY REAMS

Penny Reams, 56, of Dyersburg, died March 21, 2018 at Tennova Healthcare Dyersburg Regional. She was the sister of Joe Moody, funeral director for Curry Funeral Home, Dyersburg, TN.



VIVIAN LUCILLE WEATHERFORD MINISH

Vivian Lucille Weatherford Minish, 88, of Oak Ridge, passed away March 22, 2018 at the Methodist Medical Center. Mrs. Minish, Owner/President of Weatherford Mortuary, Oak Ridge, TN, and longtime member of the TN Funeral Directors Association.

CAROLYN MOORE MILES

Carolyn Moore Miles age 58 of Kingston passed away April 11, 2018 at the Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville. Carolyn was the office Secretary at the Kyker Funeral Home in Kingston, also the wife of Paul H. Miles, Funeral Director and Manager of the Kyker Funeral Home in Kingston, and the Secretary/Treasurer of the Greater Knoxville Funeral Service Associates.

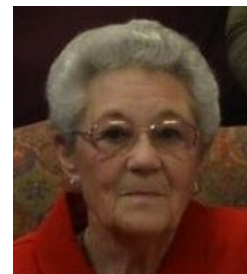


ALLAN LYNN LINSON

Mr. Linson, age 68 of Portland, TN went home to be with the Lord Monday, April 16, 2018 at St. Thomas West. Allan was a long time Funeral Assistant for Austin & Bell Funeral Home, White House, TN

MRS. HELON MARIE GENTRY

Mrs. Helon Marie Gentry, 80, of Woodbury passed away on April 22, 2018. She was born in Woodbury, TN. Mrs. Gentry was the mother of Tim Gentry, licensed funeral director and embalmer for Woodbury Funeral Home in Woodbury, TN.

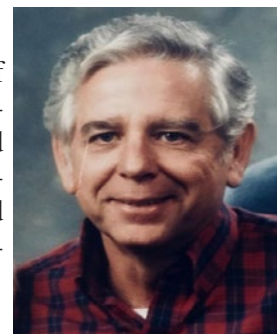


TERESA JUNE HALFACRE DICUS

Mrs. Teresa June Halfacre Dicus, age 66 of Sparta, passed away April 30, 2018 at St. Thomas Highlands Hospital. Mrs. Dicus is the mother and mother in-law of Ashley Brent Dicus & wife Amber, both with Hunter Funeral Home, Sparta, TN.

GENE L. WIDENER

Mr. Gene Lester Widener age 83 of White Bluff, Tennessee passed away Friday, June 22, 2018. He was surrounded by his family. Mr. Widener was the father and father in-law of Stephanie and Jeff Murphy both of Music City Mortuary Service, Nashville, TN.



DONNIE LYNN BIBLE

Donnie Lynn Bible age 70 of Friendsville, passed away June 21, 2018 at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge. He was the father and father in-law of Angie and Jason Chambers, of Smith Funeral and Cremation Service in Maryville, TN.

A donation has been made to the TFDA Memorial Scholarship Fund in memory of Mr. Gene L. Widener by Ansercall, Inc., Laurel, MS

A donation has been made to the TFDA Memorial Scholarship Fund in memory of Mr. Donnie Lynn Bible by Ansercall, Inc., Laurel, MS

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than
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Bob Arrington Promoting the Opioid Hearse

Created by the Madison County Sheriff's Department

The Madison County, TN (Jackson) Sheriff's Department along with Bob Arrington of Arrington Funeral Directors in Jackson have been promoting Opioid abuse with the "Opioid Hearse". TFDA has been promoting our partnership with Madison County and encouraging other TFDA member firms to reach out to your county officials for the same purpose.

Opioid abuse is still on the rise; this type of promotion is not only clever, but sends a strong message to the unaware. TFDA is proud to join forces with anyone sending this type of message.

Thanks to Bob Arrington and the Madison County Sheriff's Department for their commitment to this crisis.





*Pleased to be
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John A. Gupton College has developed online continuing education courses. These courses have been approved for CEU hours by both Tennessee and Kentucky Boards. The online subjects range from funeral service history, embalming techniques, funeral home management, grief psychology and bereavement counseling. **For information concerning cost and program call 615-327-3927, go to our website at guptoncollege.edu or email admissions@guptoncollege.edu.**



**JOHN A. GUPTON
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**1616 Church Street | Nashville, TN 37203
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TFDA Represented at National Disaster Training

TFDA members Roger Balentine of Shackelford Funeral Home in Waynesboro, Kim Plunk of Plunk Funeral Home in Camden, and TFDA Executive Director Bob Batson, recently qualified to participate in the 2018 National Disaster Medical System held in Atlanta, GA. All three were attending as members of the Region 4 Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT) Plunk serves as Administrative Specialist for Region 4, while Balentine and Batson serve as Mortuary Specialists.

As a collective effort, these TFDA representatives have served with Region 4 in several disaster situations. The 1993 floods in Missouri and other states, New York World Trade Center and Pennsylvania 9/11 terrorist attacks, Tri-State Crematory in Noble, GA, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Mississippi and Louisiana, Joplin, Missouri tornado, Haiti earthquake, and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico are some of the major events these for which they were called to service.



TFDA Membership

During the latest conference call with the Tennessee Department of Vital Records, the department was quick to commend the funeral directors across the state in what has been a successful in implementing the VRISM system thus far.

- Tennessee is now registering 90% of death certificates electronically.
(We are the fastest state to reach this mark.)
- The time elapsed from time of death to DC registration has dropped from 2 weeks to 3 Days.
(a 79.3% decrease)

The system is still not perfect and we will continue to have challenges but because of all of you we are ahead of any expectations.

We still need your help. If you have any trouble in getting a doctor to sign a death certificate, please contact the TFDA Office and provide us with the doctor's name. The department has been extremely helpful in getting in contact with these physicians and expediting this process. All you have to do is provide us with the doctor's name and we will take care of the rest. It will not only get the doctor's name to the right channels but will also save you from exhausting efforts.

I want to personally thank Kathy Seelye and her team for having an open dialogue with the TFDA on a weekly basis to get us to the point that we are today. The efforts of David Murphy, Bob Batson, and Jay Bucy has been unwavering in taking your concerns to the department and getting those concerns addressed.

Please continue to work with us to get this system where we all ultimately want it to be and thank you for your efforts thus far.

Serving you as you serve others,

Justin Jeffers

TFDA President

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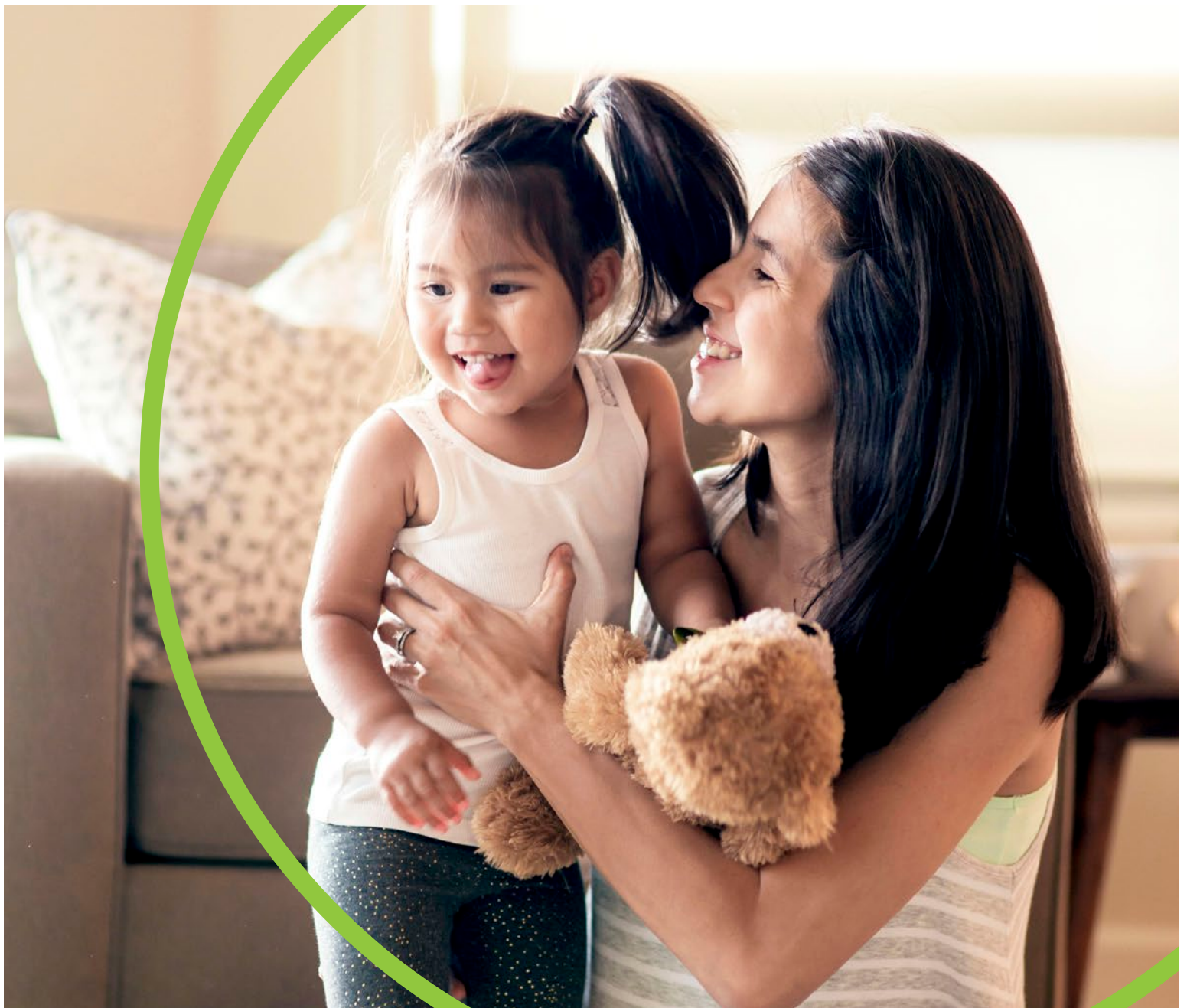
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YOU ARE INVITED
2019 TFDA/TFSSC 116TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
JUNE 2 – 3, 2019



Wilderness at the Smokies
1424 Old Knoxville Hwy | Sevierville, TN
Phone: (865) 429-0625

Mark Your Calendars:
You are invited to the 2019 TFDA/TFSSC Annual Convention
**“Putting Families First, from the ones we love to the ones we serve.
Family Fun in the Smokies”**

The 2019 TFDA Convention will be held in the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area at the Sevierville Convention Center adjacent to Wilderness at The Smokies. Wilderness at The Smokies is a Waterpark Resort with both an indoor and outdoor waterpark and is attached to both the convention center and the 36 hole Sevierville Golf Club. We hope it will be a fun filled event for the entire family. Enjoy this year’s convention and we hope to see you next year in The Smokies!



Wild WaterDome Indoor Waterpark

Located inside a massive building with a see-through roof, it feels like you’re outside, but the weather is never a factor, since it is always warm and perfect for water play!

This state-of-the-art 66,000 square foot indoor waterpark features a Foil Tech glass roof that allows sunshine in and guests the opportunity to tan year round. This new addition to the Wilderness offers even more amenities to the all-season vacationer.



Lake Wilderness Outdoor Waterpark

Located at River Lodge, this outdoor waterpark offers something for everyone. Make sure to check out the NEW splash and play water feature - Treehouse Springs or the NEW Cabana Forest! If you’re looking for some of the areas tallest and greatest slides, you'll find them at the Lake - The Wall, Wild Vortex and Cyclone Racer. Or, maybe you are just wanting to relax and catch some rays. Well, you can definitely do that on the expansive pool deck, in the wave pool or laying back on your tube in the lazy river. And if you are looking for the ultimate VIP experience, stop by Smoky Mountain Crossing at the main entrance of the waterpark to reserve your private cabana.