

THE THANAGRAM

Spring 2024

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

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President's Message

Mandi Goodrich



To all of you amazing Funeral Professionals out there....Thank You.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Tennessee Funeral Director's Association President. I look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming District Meetings. It's hard to believe that this is my last President's letter for the Thanagram. As I reflect back on my time with TFDA, I'm reminded of how lucky I am to be a part of such an amazing organization. It's funny looking back now that my theme this year has been "Catching waves, while keeping up with the change of the tide." Because that truly is what I personally have been

doing professionally these past few years. The friendships and connections I have made these past several years serving as an officer with the TFDA have prepared me for all of those changes that have occurred. Our profession is constantly changing, and trying to keep up with those changes can sometimes be somewhat challenging. Being able to lean on my fellow TFDA members for advice and guidance has been priceless and extremely helpful. This guidance alone is one of the most convincing reasons for funeral professionals to be part of TFDA.

I have been most fortunate to learn from my grandparents, Clyde & Nellie Stephens and my parents, Pam Stephens & Tim Kalthoff that TFDA and TFSSC play such a vital role in how we connect and grow in such an amazing profession. Without these two organizations we are simply an industry. The connections and memories we have made over the years together are examples for many generations to come. My hope is to see this association continue to thrive and grow for years to come.

Thank you for the support you all have shown me over the years, and I look forward to being a part of the growth of this association and our profession for the foreseeable future. I am most grateful to my husband, Clarke and our children, Stirlin & Langley for allowing me to spend time away from them to serve the TFDA.

With Sincere Gratitude,
Mandi Goodrich



hello spring

TFDA TENNESSEE
FUNERAL DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION

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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Email: office@tnfda.org
Web: www.tnfda.org

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Email: mandi@williamsonmemorial.com



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420 Highway 51 Bypass
Dyersburg, TN 38024
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Email: dyersburgfh@gmail.com



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Phone: 423-472-4555
Email: golfingfd@gmail.com



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Brent McNealey
Walters Funeral Home, LLC
509 E Central Ave
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Phone: 423-562-2424
Email: Brentmcnealey@bellsouth.net



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McCreight Funeral
Home
160 Hornbrook Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024
Phone: (731) 286-4810
Email: tmccreight2000@yahoo.com



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



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& Cremation Services
163 Arrants Avenue
P.O. Box 605
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Email: Decaturfuneralhome@gmail.com



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



DIRECTOR WEST
Joseph Thomas
Shackelford Funeral
Directors
340B Monroe Avenue
Memphis, TN 38103
Phone: (731) 607-0549
Email: joseph.thomas@shackelfordfuneraldirectors.com



DIRECTOR MIDDLE
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Moore-Cortner
Funeral Home
300 1st Avenue
North West
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Phone: (931) 967-2222
Email: jim@moorecortner.com



DIRECTOR EAST
Dennis Bridges
Bridges Funeral Home
5430 Rutledge Pike
Knoxville, TN 37924
Phone: (865) 523-4999
Email: dbridges@bridgesfuneralhome.com



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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

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CAPITOL & 5TH PUBLIC STRATEGIES
615-417-3826

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

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Farrar Funeral Homes
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Phone (865) 397-2711
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Henderson, TN 38340-0066
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Fax (731) 989-9213
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Brad Ridgeway

Ridgeway Funeral Home
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Paris, TN 38242
Phone (731) 642-2121
Fax (731) 642-4833
Ridgewayfh@gmail.com

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2024 Tennessee Funeral Directors Association 121st 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 2024 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.

Lester Haar	Robert “Bob” Hart	William P. “Bill” McNeeley
Judd Ray Smalley	Billy Clark McKinney	Josie McNeeley
Phyllis Goodrich	Martha Holly Parkes	Don-Michael Allen Slack
Robert Willard Hayes	Nathan Norris Kreidenweis	Don Ridgeway
Todd Van Beck	Mark William Friedman	Doris Hickman
John Bradford “Brad” Ray	Estelle “Stella” Ferguson Smith	Thomas Bryant Click
Marcia Austin Echols	James Lee Fox, Sr.	Jerry Dallan Mitchell, Sr.
John David “Dave” Cortner	Shirley Ruth Freels King	Lois Witty Gilley Larimer
Joseph Randall Harrison	Susan Tippitt Ronk	
Andrea “Andy” Brewer	Hoyt Maberry	

50 Years of Service

If you have 50 years of service, the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association would like to honor you at the 2024 TFDA 121st Annual Convention, Monday June 10, 2024, at the TFDA Business Meeting, Marriott Cool Springs Hotel, Franklin, TN.

Please contact the TFDA office so that you can be honored.

**2024
TFDA &
TFSSC
121st
ANNUAL
CONVENTION**

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WHILE KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGE OF THE TIDE

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TFDA will lose it's room block May 17th and the price will change.

Be prepared to show your TFDA membership card.
ALL CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS ARE PENDING APPROVAL OF THE
TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND EMABLMERS

Convention Schedule

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2024

10:00 am - 10:30 am

Jim Taylor, 2024 Convention Chaplain
Interfaith Service



12:00 noon - 1:00 pm

Tiffany Gleason, Park Lawn Corp Vice President
of Pre-need Sales and Marketing
(Pending TN State Approval for 1 CEU)



1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Joseph Thomas, Improv for Funeral Directors
(Pending TN State Approval for 1 CEU)



2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Valerie Wages, "Getting Your Team Successful at
Answering the Telephone"
Sponsored by Heritage Family
(Pending TN State Approval for 2 CEUs)



5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Memorial Service



Jim Taylor, Convention Chaplain
Williamson Memorial



Joe Copolo, Williamson Memorial
Musical Guest



Scott Fowler, Williamson Memorial
Musical Guest

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Grand Opening of the Exhibit Hall
(Pending TN State Board for 1 CEU)

MONDAY, JUNE 10TH, 2024

9:00 am – 11:00 am
TFDA Business Meeting



State Representative **Sam Whitson**, District 65



Brandy Blanton, Alderman At Large for the
City of Franklin, TN

TFDA Installation of New Officers Directors
50 Years of Service Plaques Honorees

11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Mike Keith, “Voice of the Titans”
“Lasting Success”
(Pending Approval of TN State Board 1 CEU)



5:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Monday Night Event
Live & Silent Auction
Buffet Meal
Steel Drums



Auctioneer: **Robbie Beal**



DJ Brent Elliott

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024

8:00 am Golf Tournament- Franklin Bridge Golf Course
The Wilbert Group: Astral Casket Company, Pierce
Chemicals, Wilbert Vaults of TN sponsoring Golf
Tournament Luncheon

**GOLF PACKET INCLUDED WITH CONVENTION
REGISTRATION**

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Embalming Seminar

Matt Smith, “Embalming- Difficult Cases”
(Pending TN State Approval of 3 CEUs)



5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Past President's Reception

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Grand Banquet

Honoring One of Our Own



Entertainment: Top Tier Band



TFDA Live and Silent Auction

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.

Our legislative efforts are critical to our continuing to serve the families of Tennessee in the most professional manner and with the most benefits possible... and this is one of the reasons why having a strong PAC fund is so important to our Association. We need the ability to strongly voice our concerns at the General Assembly – so we need your help in 2024!

Please help us make the auction worthwhile and FUN again this year. In previous years, we have noted that themed baskets, sports items, gift certificates, framed prints, tools, funeral related collectables, and electronic items have been very popular in our silent auction. We need these again... but don't forget big-ticket items! We need larger donations for the Live Auction to bring in even more money for this cause. Be creative! Tickets for sporting events, concerts, vacations, airline tickets, or time shares are GREAT ideas.

And remember... we need items for the funeral director... the ladies... the kids... our pets... EVERY-ONE!

Last year was a record setting event – but we want this year's auction to be bigger and better; so PLEASE go see / call those places of business in your town that you know support you – and ask them to do it once more... because the support for this PAC absolutely supports every funeral director in the State!

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

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.

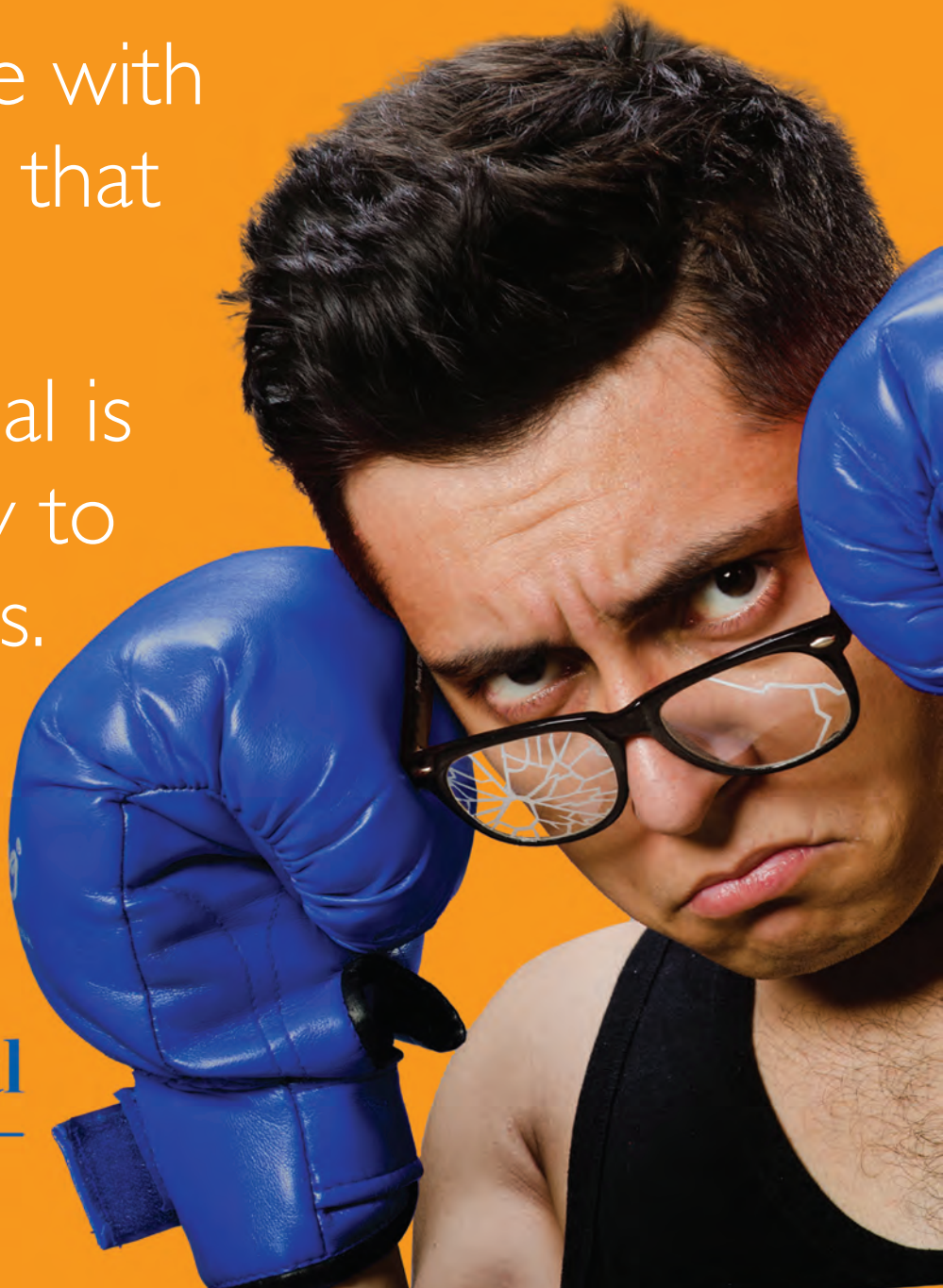
Thank you very much for your support... and I'll see you in Franklin!

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

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2024 TFDA & TFSSC 121st Annual Convention

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OBITUARYSHARE.COM: THE DIGITAL CONNECTION

With the changing landscape of communication, social media has become the primary means for families to share news and information about the passing of their loved ones. The decline in the popularity of newsprint led to the birth of ObituaryShare.com, a revolutionary platform designed to help families honor their departed in a more effective and targeted way, especially through Facebook.

ObituaryShare operates by receiving obituaries through its portal, analyzing the content, and determining the most relevant audience for each obituary. The platform then actively targets and promotes the obituary to that specific audience, ensuring maximum visibility. Unlike traditional methods where viewers have to search for obituaries, ObituaryShare takes the proactive approach of sending the obituary to interested potential readers.

The success of ObituaryShare.com is evident in its exceptional engagement and click-through rates. While the average rate from Facebook to corresponding websites hovers between 1%-2%, ObituaryShare boasts an impressive **13%-15%**. Additionally, the platform encourages longer stays on funeral home websites, with an **average visit duration of 56 seconds** compared to the industry average of 42 seconds.

The platform's continual improvement is evidenced by incorporating user feedback and offering features like a text notification service. ObituaryShare's commitment to evolving with technology has garnered a significant increase in followers over the past three years.

Since implementing ObituaryShare.com, Arrington Funeral Directors has experienced remarkable growth, with website traffic more than doubling. Their **overall market share has increased by 8%**. ObituaryShare.com not only benefits families and communities by disseminating information effectively but also aids funeral homes in building their brand and expanding services.



TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND EMBALMERS

Good afternoon:

The Governor has made new appointments to the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. These appointments are effective immediately and expire December 31, 2027.

Randolph R. (Randy) Nash, Jr., a funeral director and embalmer from Gallatin, has been appointed by Governor Bill Lee to the Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers representing the Middle Grand Division. Mr. Nash replaces Tonya Scales Haynes.

Donald S. Haynes, a funeral director and embalmer from Knoxville, has been appointed by Governor Bill Lee to the Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers representing the East Grand Division. Mr. Haynes replaces Fred O. Berry, III.

Timothy W. (Tim) Wheeler, a funeral director and embalmer from Corryton, has been appointed by Governor Bill Lee to the Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers representing the East Grand Division. Mr. Wheeler replaces Anthony Harris.

Congratulations to the three new members on their appointments. We welcome them and look forward to working with each of them.

We are grateful to Ms. Haynes, Mr. Berry, and Mr. Harris for their years of insightful and valuable service to the Board of Funeral Directors & Embalmers and the citizens of Tennessee.

Regards,
Robert Gribble

Robert Gribble | Executive Director
Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers | Burial Services Section
Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance
500 James Robertson Parkway | Nashville, TN 37243-1144
Office: (615) 741-5062 | Fax: (615) 532-1903
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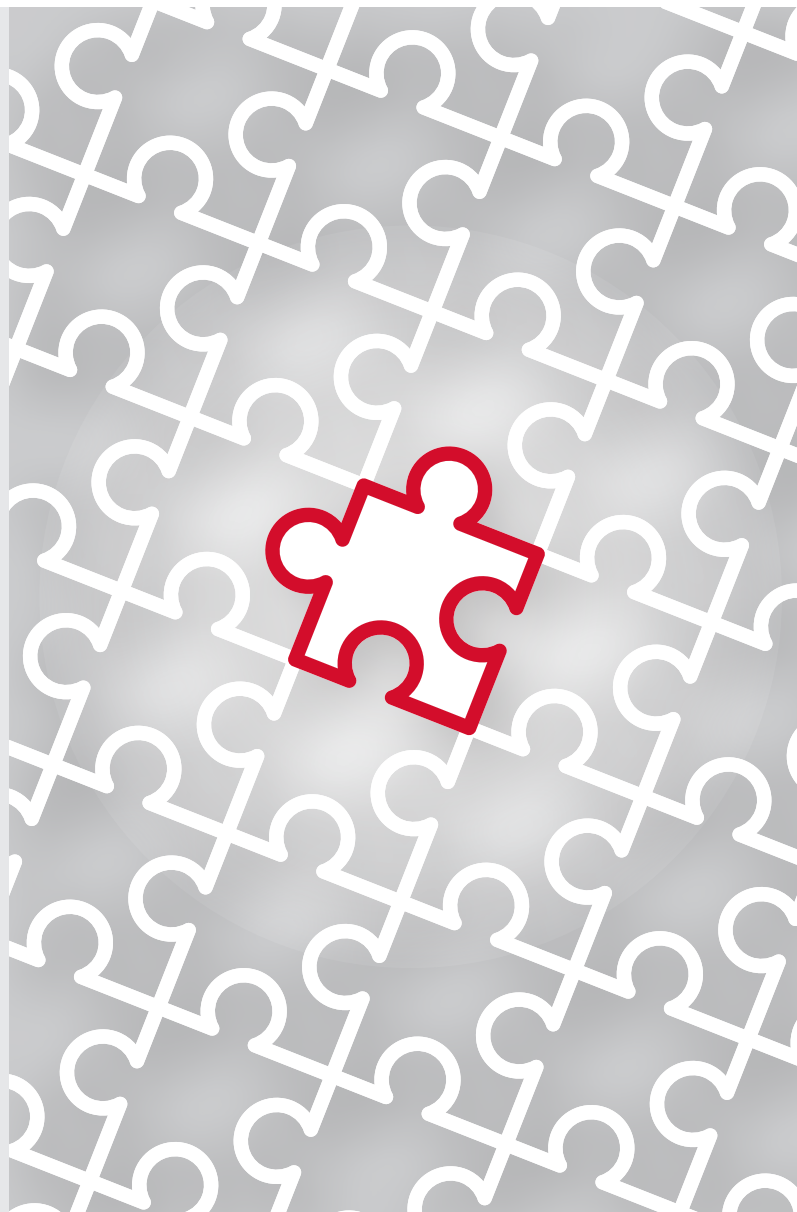


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Obituaries



Don-Michael Allen Slack, son of Michael Slack, funeral director with Cole & Garrett Funeral Homes from 1981-1995 and Biereley-Hale Funeral Home, Madisonville, TN

Don-Michael Allen Slack, age 30, of Madisonville, passed away 1:12 A.M. Thursday, February 1, 2024 at Sweetwater Hospital. Veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. Don-Michael was saved at an early age and was an avid Tennessee Vol and Tennessee Titan fan.

Survivors, wife, Jenna Lynn Slack, Daughter, Aubrianna, Son, Xavier, Parents, Michael & Teri Slack, Grandparents, Bobby Andrews, Don & Wanda Slack, Sisters & brothers-in-law, Michaela & Nick Carson, Danielle & Zach Burnette, Brother & sister-in-law, Marcus & Kayla Adams, Several aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, Special friends, Justin & Stephanie Hensley. Preceded in death by grandmother, Janie Andrews.



Mr. Don Ridgeway, the brother of Leon Ridgeway and uncle of Brad Ridgeway, Ridgeway Funeral Home and longtime Legislative supporter for funeral services in Tennessee.

Don Ridgeway, 76 of Paris, TN, passed away Saturday, March 2, 2024.

Don was a proud graduate of the Grove High School class of 1966 where he was voted "Friendliest" in his class, a trait he carried throughout his entire life. He graduated in 1970 from The University of Tennessee at Martin with a bachelor's degree in education with an emphasis in history and later served as UTM Alumni Council President. Don then taught reading and history at Grove Junior High for a while before going into the insurance business working at Balch and Reynolds in Paris. He was a member and former chairman of the Henry County Board of Education.

In 1984, Don was elected to the Tennessee Legislature House of Representatives where he served for 18 years. Over the course of those years, he represented the people of Henry, Benton, Stewart, Houston, and part of Dickson counties. He served as Majority Caucus Chairman, and Chairman of Transportation, and Conservation and Environment Committees. Don was a delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

After his legislative service, Don began work with the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council where he served as Director for 21 years and was always referred to as "Mr. Don" by his co-workers. He was an avid UT Vols and Tennessee Titans supporter and held season tickets to both for many years. An avid golfer, he was a former member of Puryear Country Club, and a 50-year member of Paris Country Club. He was also a licensed funeral director for almost 50 years. Don was a longtime voting member of the Country Music Association. His love for music helped promote many other colleagues in their music careers. He was a former member of the Optimist Club, Rotary, Masons, Shriners, and Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity at UTM. Don was a recipient of numerous awards and accolades during his life-long career of service to others.

Don was born February 29, 1948, in Paris, TN to the late John T. Ridgeway and the late Lillie Ruth Call Ridgeway. He was married on June 8, 1969, to Mary Kate Penn Ridgeway who survives of Paris. He is also survived by one son, John Penn (Melissa) Ridgeway of Paris; one brother, T. Leon (Carol) Ridgeway of Paris; two grandsons, Walker Ridgeway, and Jackson Ridgeway; and several other extended family members.

Memorials may be made to: Henry County Helping Hand - 2025 Auction, PO Box 22, Paris, TN 38242 or Todd Latta Junior Golf League, c/o Andy Collins, 204 W. Washington St, Paris, TN 38242.



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Doris Marie Carney Hickman is the grandmother of Brandi Ray, funeral director at Williamson Memorial, Franklin, TN

Doris Marie Carney Hickman, a beacon of unwavering love and youthful spirit, passed away peacefully on March 2, 2024, at the Williamson Medical Center. Born on October 21, 1934, in Newsom Station, Davidson County Tennessee, Doris's life was a tapestry of devotion to her family, a testament to her adventurous spirit, and a celebration of her passionate soul.

A proud graduate who completed her 12th-grade education, Doris spent her professional years nourishing the minds and bodies of countless students as a cook for Battle Ground Academy. Her warm presence in the kitchen was matched only by the warmth of the meals she lovingly prepared. Doris was also a dedicated member of Mt. Carmel Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where she found strength and fellowship.

Doris's zest for life shone brightly through her interests. She was a fervent supporter of Tennessee sports, and while she cheered for the Braves, her heart truly belonged to the athletic endeavors of

her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Her passionate cheers could fill a stadium, and she was known to have been thrown out of a game when she fiercely disagreed with a call against her family. This fiery spirit was paralleled by her love for clogging with her beloved husband, Doug Hickman, in their younger days—a dance they shared for 59 years until his passing.

She relished the thrill of shopping, the excitement of a good gamble at the casino, and the simple joy of cooking for her family, who were the center of her universe. Doris's cooking was not merely about food; it was about gathering, sharing, and expressing her love—a love that she had in abundance.

Survived by her adoring family, Doris's legacy lives on through her daughter, Sherry (Phillip) Unguren of Antioch; sons, Ricky (Rachel) Hickman of the Bethesda community, Randy (Pam) Hickman, Jeff (Donna) Hickman, and Kenny (Angie) Hickman, all of Bethesda Community. Her grandchildren, Lindsey (Felipe Rosario) Hickman of Boston, MA, Cale (Ashley) of Bethesda Community, Brandi (Brandon) Ray of Thompson Station, Katie Hickman of Bethesda Community, Jake (Caitlin) Cravens of Rockvale, along with her great-grandchildren, Brayten and Brodie Ray, Addy and Ellie Hickman, Luna Rosario, and Bodhi Cravens, will cherish her memory and continue to be inspired by her love.

Doris also leaves behind her sister, Jo Evelyn (Tommy) Cotton of the Arrington Community, her special niece Joyce Bush of the Cane Ridge Community, her sister and brother and sister in law Harry (Jane) Hickman of the Harpeth Community, and brother and sister in law Linda (Melvin) Gray of Franklin and many other loving nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Woodford Carney and Edna Pauline Bagget Carney, her sister, Dorothy Russell, her brother, Jimmy Carney, and her cherished husband, Doug Hickman.

Doris's life was a reflection of the well-known quote by Helen Keller, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt with the heart." She embodied this sentiment every day, touching the hearts of all who knew her with her loving, adventurous, and passionate nature.

As we bid farewell to Doris Marie Hickman, we celebrate a life lived to the fullest, a life rich with love and laughter, and a life that left an indelible mark on the hearts of many. Her vivacious spirit and the echoes of her joy will continue to resonate within the lives of her family and friends, as they carry forward her legacy of love and passion. Doris will be dearly missed, but her memory will forever be treasured and kept alive in the stories and the love she shared so freely.

Memorials may be made to the Pat Summitt Foundation or Mt. Carmel Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Visitation will be 4-8PM Wednesday and one hour prior to the service at WILLIAMSON MEMORIAL.



Thomas Bryant Click age 89 of Maryville died Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at Morningview Assisted Living. He was a member of Maryville First United Methodist Church. He was the owner of McCammon-Ammons-Click Funeral Home and a longtime member of Maryville Kiwanis Club. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Helen R. Click; parents, A.L. and Mattie Click; two sisters; three brothers. Survivors include his children, Michael (Moe) and Suzanne Click, Katherine and Donnie Poteet; grandchildren, Logan and Rachel Click, Ryan and Maggie Click, Ashley and Will Weber, Patrick and Laura Poteet; great-grandchildren, Emmaline and Sonnie Kate Click, Harper Lynn Poteet and Meyer Perri Click; sister-in-law, Quida Click; several nieces and nephews. The family would like to extend a special thanks to the staff at Morningview for their excellent care and Charlie Barton for bringing monthly communion. www.mccammonammonslick.com



Lois Witty Gilley Larimer, mother of Kenny Gilley, Woodbury Funeral Home, Woodbury, TN

Lois Witty Gilley Larimer, 91, of Woodbury passed away Thursday, March 21, 2024 at St. Thomas Rutherford. She was born in the Sugar Tree Knob community of Cannon Co on September 13, 1932 to Dibrell and Ruby Melton Witty.

She is survived by her sons, Kenny (Debbie) Gilley and Bob Gilley (Daffy Self) both of Woodbury; grandchildren, Korie Gilley (Shannon DeBerry), Rebecca (Matt) Alexander, Katie (Dylan) Miller, Nicole (Jeff) Hogg and Emily Gilley (Travis Miles); great grandchildren, Hunter and Luke Blanton, Delaney Aycock, Hayden Smith and Anna Graden Hogg, Mason Tramel, Cam Crawford, Colt, Hattie and Walker Alexander, Briggs and Banks Miller. Several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, J.H. "Hal" Larimer; her grandsons, James Gilley and John Gilley and her brother, Carl Witty.

A member of the Woodbury church of Christ, she was retired from Cannon Co. Courthouse where she served as Clerk and Master for 25 years. She previously worked for 10 years in General Sessions and Circuit court.

Lois had a servants heart and enjoyed volunteering her time to help others. She volunteered at Stones River Hospital for the Ladies Auxiliary, American Cancer Society where she started Relay for Life of Cannon Co and the Cancer Basketball tournaments every year. She also gave her time to the Cannon Co. Food Bank, American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association. For many years, she was a foster mom to so many children, some of whom to this day she still considered her family.

She always had a love for her community. Lois was currently an Alderman for the Town of Woodbury. She was sworn in on December 2, 2008 and has held many positions in the Woodbury Lions Club where she has been a member since 1987 and was the first Woman President. She sat as Board of Director on several boards including Cannon Co Food Bank, First National Bank, CapStar Bank and Stones River Hospital.

Affectionately known as Mema, her passion was her family but her joy came from playing Rook or any type of card game. She helped form the Cannon Co. Rook Club and looked forward to the Saturday nights she got to spend with young and old alike to play Rook in her home. Her "Rook Girls" met every Tuesday and she would cook for them and they would play all afternoon. If you walked through her door, she considered you family and most likely she would try to feed you. Her saying was "We will eat what we have and if that isn't enough we will go to Hardee's and get some chicken"

For those wishing to do so, donations may be made to the Riverside Gardens Cemetery, Cannon Co. Food Bank or the Cannon Christian Academy.

Woodbury Funeral Home, 615-563-2311 or to leave condolences and memories for her family, please visit www.woodburyfuneralhome.net

Jerry worked for Pre Need Insurances companies for several years until he retired. He was a member of the TFDA through the companies he worked with. He also worked at Martin Oak Ridge Funeral Home after his retirement.



Jerry Dallan Mitchell, Sr., age 77 passed away unexpectedly at home on March 20, 2024. Jerry was born in Clinton, Tennessee on January 25, 1947 to the late Arthur and Bessie Mitchell. He graduated from Clinton High School and enlisted into the United States Army serving from 1967-1969. He was ranked as a SP5 Army Aviation Crew Chief. He married the love of his life, Patsy Louise Mitchell, on May 5, 1967. Jerry was a God fearing man who loved to read his Bible, spend time with family, and work in his garden. Jerry believed in hard work and he passed that belief on to his children of whom he took deep pride in.

Jerry was preceded in death by siblings Ronnie Mitchell, Gail Mitchell, and Janice Kay Mitchell.

Jerry is survived by his loving wife of 57 years Patsy, who will surely miss him dearly in the coming days. Jerry is also survived by his brother Vestal Mitchell (Pat Mitchell) and sisters Joyce Dag-

ley and Phyllis Mitchell.

He leaves behind his children Jerry Dallan Mitchell, Jr. (JoeyAnn Mitchell), Cynthia Kitts (Gary Kitts), Daniel Scott Mitchell, Sr. (Roya Mitchell). Grandchildren include Ashely Brennan (Joe Brennan), Stephanie Mitchell, Jessica Benson (Kyle Benson), Daniel Scott Mitchell, Jr., and Abby Kitts. Great Grandchildren include Emma Bardill, Maddie Brennan, and Ben Brennan.

Jerry leaves behind a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

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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.

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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