

THE THANA GRAM

Winter 2024

Official Publication of the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

President's Message



Greetings and Happy Holidays to all our TFDA membership,

As we have begun to celebrate the holiday season with family and friends, I am reminded that it truly takes a team to serve in the capacity that we do, as funeral professionals. In following up with a family that I served last week, they remarked how smoothly things went together in a short time, with several variables in play. I shared my thought that what we offer is not any one or two large things, but rather a collection of small details that we collect and implement to make sure their service is a true celebration of their loved one's life. It would not be possible to do this as one person. It takes our entire staff, using their individual strengths, to complement each other and work together for the best outcome.

In the same way, our association is working together for the best in what we do together. Recently, our Convention Committee met to begin planning our gathering for next summer. I appreciate the experience they bring to the table and their knowledge of the many aspects of planning. I look forward to the time to gather with all of you from across the state to celebrate our successes and support each other in growing as funeral service professionals. Our Board of Directors also met and discussed the operations of the association. As a group with various backgrounds and experience, we can look at things from several viewpoints and share ideas. This enables us to make decisions for the benefit of the association and membership.

These meetings and interactions all serve as reminders of the simple, but important saying:

TEAM: Together Everyone Accomplishes More.

Let's all work together to provide families with the best service that we can, from our individual firm staff to our local network of ministers and caregivers, up to our state and national associations. We're all in this together!

Taylor Moore

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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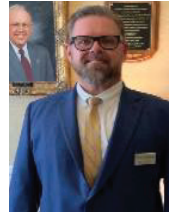
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Merry
CHRISTMAS
and
Happy New Year

from the TFDA President, Board of Directors and Staff

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A message of Gratitude

Thank you for the recognition and heartfelt messages in honor of my 60 years of funeral service. It was an honor to be recognized in such a way. Thank you to those who attended and shared stories and memories and to those who planned the event on my behalf. I am humbled to be recognized.

Jim Brewer





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Obituaries



Mrs. Sarah Haynes Cox, London Funeral Home, Lewisburg, TN (TFDA member)

Mrs. Sarah Dunnivant Haynes Cox died peacefully at NHC Oakwood Saturday, September 28, 2024. She was born April 23, 1942 in Marshall County, TN and was a graduate of MCHS.

She worked as Office Manager and Funeral Director for London and Cornersville Funeral Homes for 41 years. This was definitely her calling and ministry to grieving families. Sarah had a passion and dedication to her job like no other.

She was a member and Sunday School teacher of Cornersville First Baptist Church for over 40 years. Sarah also taught VBS and was the Women's Missions Director for several years. She had a green thumb and the flowers around her home were always gorgeous. Sarah enjoyed going out to eat and to Walmart shopping with her sister, Faye. She also enjoyed going to her brother, Bobby's annual fish fry.

Her 2 grandchildren were her pride and joy and she would get a gleam in her eye when they were around. She adored the Christmas season and had the biggest time picking out gifts for her children and grandchildren. She loved attending their sports events and cheering them on.

She was a fabulous cook and baker, thoroughly enjoying preparing holiday meals and hosting her Sunday School class (Amazing Grace), friends from Smyrna Church of Christ, and other numerous friends and family over the years.

Her children were her greatest gift and she loved them fiercely. Sarah enjoyed supporting them in any endeavor.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, Lawrence Haynes, her parents, John Henry Dunnivant and Nancy Elizabeth Southerland Dunnivant, as well as beloved nephews, Troy Dunnivant and Bill Haynes.

She is survived by her husband, Jim Cox of Lewisburg, TN; her daughter, Carrie King of Cornersville, TN; son, Larry (Deb) Haynes of Cornersville, TN; brother, Bobby (Ann) Dunnivant of Lewisburg, TN; sister, Linda Faye Kracke of Cornersville, TN; grandson, Brandon Haynes and granddaughter, Gabriel King, 2 step-daughters, Bonnie Freeman of Lewisburg, TN and Jamie Cox of Florence, AL. She is also survived by a brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Morris and Gerrell Haynes of Shelbyville, TN, as well as many nieces and nephews.



Jerry Johnson Griffey

Jerry Johnson Griffey, age 90, of Fountain City, peacefully departed this life and reunited with his beloved wife, Joan, on Tuesday, October 7, 2024. He was a member of Fountain City United Methodist Church for 53 years where he sang in the Chancel Choir for 47 years and was a member of the Christian Homebuilders Sunday School Class. He served the church in many leadership roles through the years.

Jerry was a charter member of North Knoxville Rotary Club serving as secretary for 37 years. He was an active Rotarian for 63 years and was honored to receive the Paul Harris Fellow from his club. He was in the first graduating class of Fulton High School in 1952 then earned a degree from Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science – Class of 1954. Jerry was a member of The Greater Knoxville Funeral Directors Association, Tennessee Funeral Directors Association, National Funeral Directors Association, and a member by invitation of National Selected Morticians. He served on many boards of professional and charitable agencies. At the age of 15, Jerry began his life-long ministry of serving families through his work in the funeral business. Jerry and his wife owned Gentry Griffey Funeral Chapel for 40 years.

He served two years in the United States Army Medical Corps. In recent years, he enjoyed being a historical re-enactor at Ramsey House portraying Colonel Francis Alexander Ramsey.

He was preceded in death by the love of his life, Joan Bostick Griffey, his wife of 56 years. He was also preceded in death by Grace Pickle, Ruby Pickle Carpenter, and William Andrew Carpenter, the aunts and uncle who raised him.

He is survived by daughters and sons-in-law, Karen and Mike Todd (Kingsport) and Becky and Ed Ripley (Knoxville); grandchildren, Ethan Todd, Katie Todd, Will Ripley and wife, Makayla, and Anna Ripley; great-grandson, Caden Andrew Ripley; sister, Charlotte Griffey Kolbe and brother-in-law, Bob Kolbe; sister-in-law, Phyllis Bostick; and many other beloved extended family members and dear friends.

His daughters want to thank Jerry's lunch buddies and drivers over the past several years that allowed Jerry to fulfill his wish to remain in his home: the late Charlie Robbins, Ron Jones, Dylan Karnes, Gary Gibson, Craig Holtzclaw, David Smith, Truman Sweet, and Mahan Archer. Jerry's family would like to express their gratitude to the medical professionals at Ft. Sanders Regional Medical Center who lovingly cared for him during his final days.



James Stone Kyker, MD, brother of Bob and Paul Kyker, uncle of Neil Kyker and great uncle of Mitchell Kyker, Kyker Funeral Home, Sweetwater, Harriman and Kingston, TN

James S. Kyker, MD., age 82, of Sweetwater, formerly of Panama City, FL., passed away on Friday, November 22, 2024. Preceded in death by his parents: Paul G. and Mary Annis Lambdin Kyker. Born and raised in the mountains of East Tennessee; Jim attended the Tennessee Military Institute for high school. His path then took him to the University of Tennessee for both his undergraduate and doctorate degrees. Once he became an MD, Jim volunteered in the Vietnam War, taking part in 2 tours with commendations. After returning, Jim continued to dedicate his life to helping others as a beloved urologist in Tallahassee, FL. He then moved

his urology practice to Panama City, FL, where he also helped in law enforcement and served on the SWAT team. He always strived to help people without expecting recognition. Jim loved living his life to the fullest. At a young age, it was flying planes, scuba diving, and driving fast cars. Later in life, his passions turned towards hunting, enjoying the beach, and attending FSU football games. One thing he'd implore in everyone is that nothing is more important than taking a second to watch a good sunset.

Survivors include his son: Stone Kyker, Jr. of Miami, FL., daughter: Mary Catherine Kyker, of Ft. Myers, FL., brothers: Paul G. Kyker Jr., of Raleigh, NC., Robert N. Kyker, of Harriman, TN. Several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the Wounded Warrior Project www.woundedwarriorproject.org. Kyker Funeral Homes, Sweetwater, in charge of arrangements. www.kykerfuneralhomes.com

Age is a number...
and at TFDA,
It's \$20 !



How old is your funeral home?

The PAC Auction Committee is looking to jump-start our 2025 PAC donations by giving you a fun way to give. We recognize that not all of our members are 'winners' during our Silent and Live Auction at the Convention and that not everyone donates something for the auction. So to start our 2025 campaign, we're asking our members to donate \$20 for every year your funeral home has been in business.

Are you 20? That's \$400! Are you 35? That's 700!
Are you 50? That's \$1,000!!

All donations received will be added to the Silent and Live Auction totals and announced at the Convention in June and all our contributing funeral homes will be recognized and honored for their years of service.

The donation window opens January 1, 2025. Help the PAC Fund have another record-breaking year! Send your PAC Fund donation to:

PAC Age Donation, c/o TFDA
1616 Church Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37203



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT!

Alison Shackelford retired from Shackelford Funeral Directors of Selmer on July 27, 2024, with forty years of service. Alison began working for Shackelford Funeral Directors of Savannah in July of 1984 but shortly thereafter was asked to be the bookkeeper for the Selmer location, driving back and forth every day until she and her husband Robert moved to Selmer in the fall of 1987. Before accepting the position with Shackelford, Alison was employed as an internal auditor for what was then First National Bank in Savannah. While in school, she worked as a mail carrier during the summers for Tennessee River Pulp & Paper, now PCA, in Counce. Alison held the office of Corporate Secretary for Shackelford Funeral Directors of Selmer, Inc. Her duties included keeping the accounting records, payroll

processing, accounts payable, making deposits, balancing cash accounts, and filing annual reports. She also served as the payroll administrator for all employees of the Shackelford Corporation from 2017 until September of 2022. When Alison began her career with Shackelford, there were no computers – every accounting entry was made by hand in a paper journal. Her only technology was a calculator. Speaking of her retirement, her husband and co-worker Robert said, “Her impact on the success of this business cannot be overstated. She is largely responsible for the financial soundness and security of the organization for the last 40 years and will be greatly missed by myself and all her fellow employees.”

Alison graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from David Lipscomb College. She is the daughter of the late Windell W. and Margaret Davis Vickery and is married to Robert Shackelford. Together they have two children, Preston Shackelford and wife Micah and Autumn Shackelford, and a granddaughter, Ella Louise Shackelford.

NOTE FROM THE TFDA PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

During our recent TFDA Board Meeting and review of financial reports, the decision was made to implement a 4% surcharge for any, and all credit card transactions processed by the association, including memberships, registrations, contributions, etc. Any payment made by cash or check will not incur an additional fee. This decision was made based on the fiscal responsibility of the board, after consideration of the suggestions of our accounting group. This surcharge will go into effect February 1, 2025. WE appreciate your understanding and want to be good stewards of the finances of our association.

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Happy Due Date!

We anticipated this day for months; however, we were lucky enough to meet our precious baby boy at 37 weeks due to my cholestasis.

Holland Leon White

September 7, 2024

4:10 PM

7.8 pounds

Beyond blessed to have Dr. Utley guide us through every step and never leaving my side until she safely brought Holland into this world alongside CRNA Justin Harrison. I had the ultimate team- God's timing is always perfect!

Holland is doing well and officially has his SS card so he can start going to work with daddy at Replogle-Lawrence Funeral Home, Medina, TN.



It's a BOY!



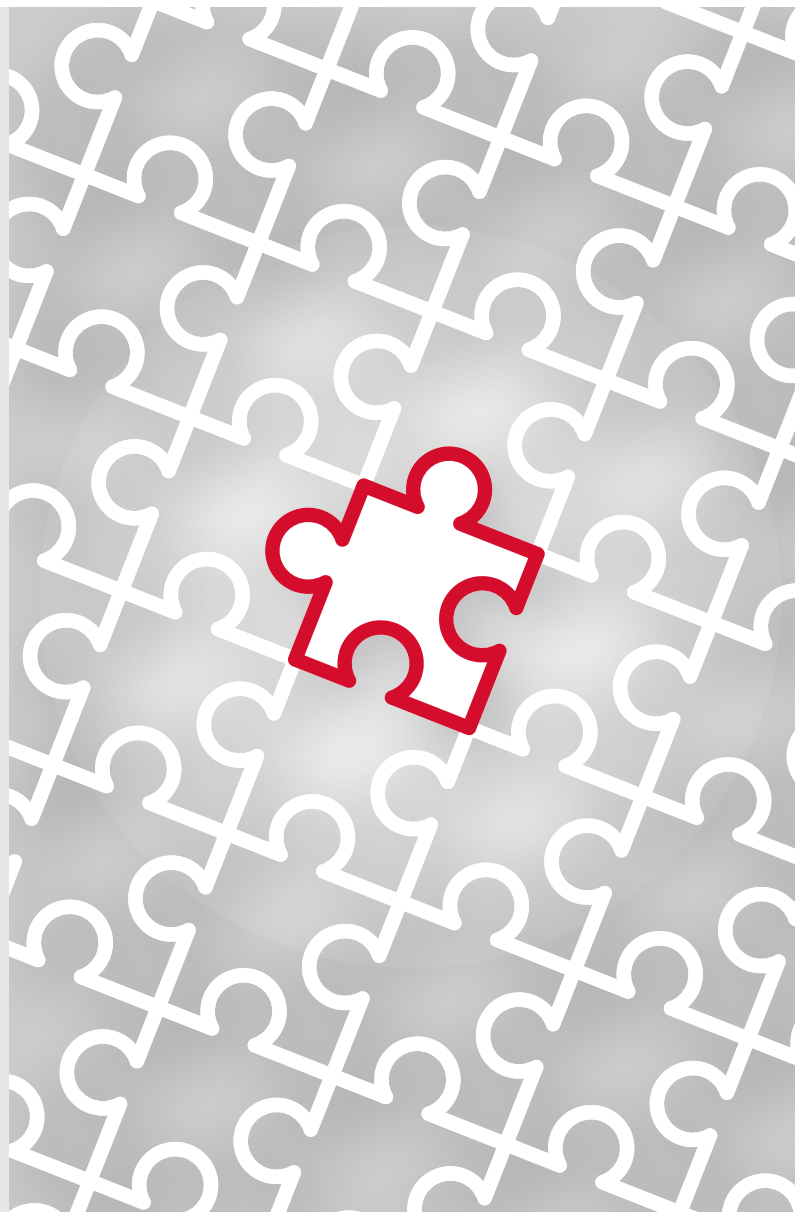


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Please contact us at 1.800.457.1111 to be connected with your Matthews Aurora
Funeral Service Consultant.

Mark Your Calendars

Ways you can earn in-person Continuing Education Credits:

2025 TFDA Spring District Seminar and District Meetings Scheduled

Monday, March 17th, 2025

MIDDLE DISTRICT MEETING, FARM BUREAU, LEBANON, TN

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm Seminar

6:30 pm dinner served and TFDA District meeting to 8:30 pm

Tuesday, March 18th, 2025

EAST DISTRICT MEETING, CHOP HOUSE, KODAK, TN

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm Seminar

6:30 pm dinner served and TFDA District meeting to 8:30 pm

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

WEST DISTRICT MEETING, JACKSON COUNTRY CLUB, JACKSON, TN

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm Seminar

6:30 pm dinner served and TFDA District meeting to 8:30 pm



June 8th – 10th, 2025

Marriott Cool Springs Hotel

Franklin, TN

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

Taylor and Montrey Moore have some surprises up their sleeves and information will be sent out regarding the inventive way you can earn continuing education credits and have fun at the same time!

Dear TFDA/ TFSSC Members & Exhibitors/Sponsors:

The TFDA Government Affairs and Convention Committees are once again hosting a Silent and Live Auction at the TFDA Convention in Franklin. Like in the past, this is a wonderful way for you to support the TFDA PAC.

Last year's auction was record-setting ... and we need your help to keep it going in 2025! Let's make the auction worthwhile and FUN again this year. Over the past years, we have noted that themed baskets, sports items, gift certificates, framed prints, tools, funeral related collectables, and electronic items have been very popular... with the top money makers being **wine-themed baskets** and **Yeti** items! Be creative! Remember... we need items for EVERYONE; the funeral director... the ladies... the kids... and our pets! This year we hope to make the live auction even more exciting with some unique, larger items that will bring in even more money for this cause. Tickets for sporting events, concerts, vacations, and time shares are GREAT ideas. Remember the Vice Gill and Randy Travis signed guitars last year?? Well, we hope to have some more autographed memorabilia from your favorite artists again in June! This is the main fundraiser for our PAC Fund. Please give TFDA the ability to help us all by participating and making this year's auction even a larger success than last year!

Please remember that winning bids will need to be paid the night of the auction (*cash, check, or credit card*) and that a 4% service charge is applied to all credit card payments.

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

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

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

The Undertaker

This is for the Undertaker,
Whose story is sad to tell.
For what he does is never mentioned,
And often overlooked as well.

He's not at all what you might picture,
He's not wrinkled, old and grey.
His face is not pasty white,
Like storybooks portray.

Some people laugh and make their jokes,
And some turn up their nose,
And many think that he is strange,
For the life that he chose.

But there are many things that they don't see,
And even more that they don't know.
Like all the nights he gets no rest,
But never lets it show.

I have seen him work both day and night,
With no time to eat or sleep.
To care for those in mourning,
and comfort those who weep.

The load he carries on his shoulders,
Is more than you or I could bear.
But he always seems to find the time,
To show you that he cares.

So when you see the undertaker,
Make sure you see the man,
That does the job that no one wants,
And that no one understands.

Take the time to shake his hand,
And a moment to just say "hi",
I think you'll find the undertaker,
Is just an ordinary guy.



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

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

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

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

The benefits of this new partnership include.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Contact:

Stephanie Wagner, 262-814-1524, swagner@nfda.org

Jessica Koth, 262-814-1536, jkoth@nfda.org

NFDA Champions Veterans' Burial Benefit Access in Congressional Hearing

Brookfield, Wis. – The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) was invited to testify before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs at an oversight hearing titled "Our Nation's Hallowed Grounds: A Review of America's National Cemetery Funeral Operations for Veterans and Servicemembers."

The hearing focused on assessing and improving the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) efforts to meet the needs of military families. NFDA was called upon to testify due to its critical role in ensuring that veterans receive dignified funerals and burials, and in advocating for the high standards of funeral service that are vital in honoring their sacrifice.

NFDA's Senior Vice President of Advocacy, Lesley Witter, MPA, CAE, who has built a strong legacy of advocating as the voice of funeral service and veterans on Capitol Hill, testified before the Subcommittee on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

Acknowledging the strong partnership between NFDA, the VA, and the DoD, Witter pointed out that while the VA and DoD are responsible for providing funeral and burial benefits, as well as ensuring proper military honors, it is funeral directors who assist families in organizing personalized services that both celebrate the life of their loved one and honor their service to our country. She elaborated that funeral directors coordinate with the VA and DoD to schedule funeral and burial services, educate and assist families in filing benefit claims, ensure veterans receive the proper grave markers, and collaborate with the DoD and veteran service organizations (VSOs) to provide the appropriate military honors.

In preparation for the testimony, NFDA conducted a comprehensive survey of funeral service providers to gather insights into the accessibility of funeral and burial benefits for veterans and their families. The findings from this survey were presented by Witter to Congress, offering valuable data to inform the discussion on improving these services.

While NFDA and the VA collaborate closely to educate funeral directors about funeral and burial benefits, the NFDA survey indicates a discrepancy between knowledge of government resources (81.4%) and ease of use with only 11.6% of respondents finding it easy to locate information on the VA/NCA website.

NFDA urged the VA to strengthen its educational outreach to veterans and their families well before they are in immediate need, ensuring that expectations were clearly communicated and understood from the outset.

Furthermore, Witter stated that funeral directors who assist families in filing benefit claims are the ones who see firsthand the real-world impact of the VA's educational efforts. She noted that the 2024 NFDA veteran survey highlighted confusion among veteran families about which funeral and burial benefits they are entitled to and what is covered by the VA. Among those who experienced

challenges, several recurring themes emerged, particularly a lack of education and understanding among veteran families regarding the funeral and burial benefits they are entitled to. And, while NFDA is encouraged that less than 25% of families have problems accessing benefits, it is funeral directors who spend a great deal of time working with families to help them through a tiresome and burdensome process. Witter stressed NFDA's desire to see the VA improve the speed and ease of receiving funeral and burial benefits.

Witter raised another area of concern. Funeral directors and families have experienced significant problems with delays when trying to schedule burials in Arlington National Cemetery. Almost half (46.3%) of respondents have arranged a funeral at Arlington in the past five years. Of those only one-third (33.8%) of respondents said it was either "very easy" or "easy" to schedule services at Arlington. NFDA encouraged the DoD to review and refine its processes for scheduling burials at Arlington National Cemetery and urged Arlington to collaborate and work closely with funeral directors to address the challenges faced by both funeral professionals and grieving families.

"Having just had the honor of hosting a Veterans Day Ceremony at our Veterans Garden of Honor November 11 in South Carolina, I am reminded of the sacrifices all veterans have made to protect us and allow us the freedom we enjoy in the USA," said NFDA President Christopher P. Robinson, CFSP, CCO, president and general manager of Robinson Funeral Home in Easley, South Carolina. "Freedom is not free, and I am truly grateful for the men and women answering the call to serve and serving with honor all across the globe."

"We as funeral directors are honored to make sure that all deceased veterans receive the military rites to which they are entitled as well as the benefits they deserve," added Robinson. "I am so thankful that NFDA has a strong voice in Washington, D.C., and that our full-time lobbyist, Lesley Witter, testified before Congress on what we believe so strongly as funeral service professionals."

A recording of Witter's testimony will be available here:
<https://veterans.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=6577>

About NFDA

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving 20,000 individual members who represent nearly 11,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit NFDA.org.

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2018

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2019

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2019

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2019

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2018

Platinum Limo | 24,646 Miles

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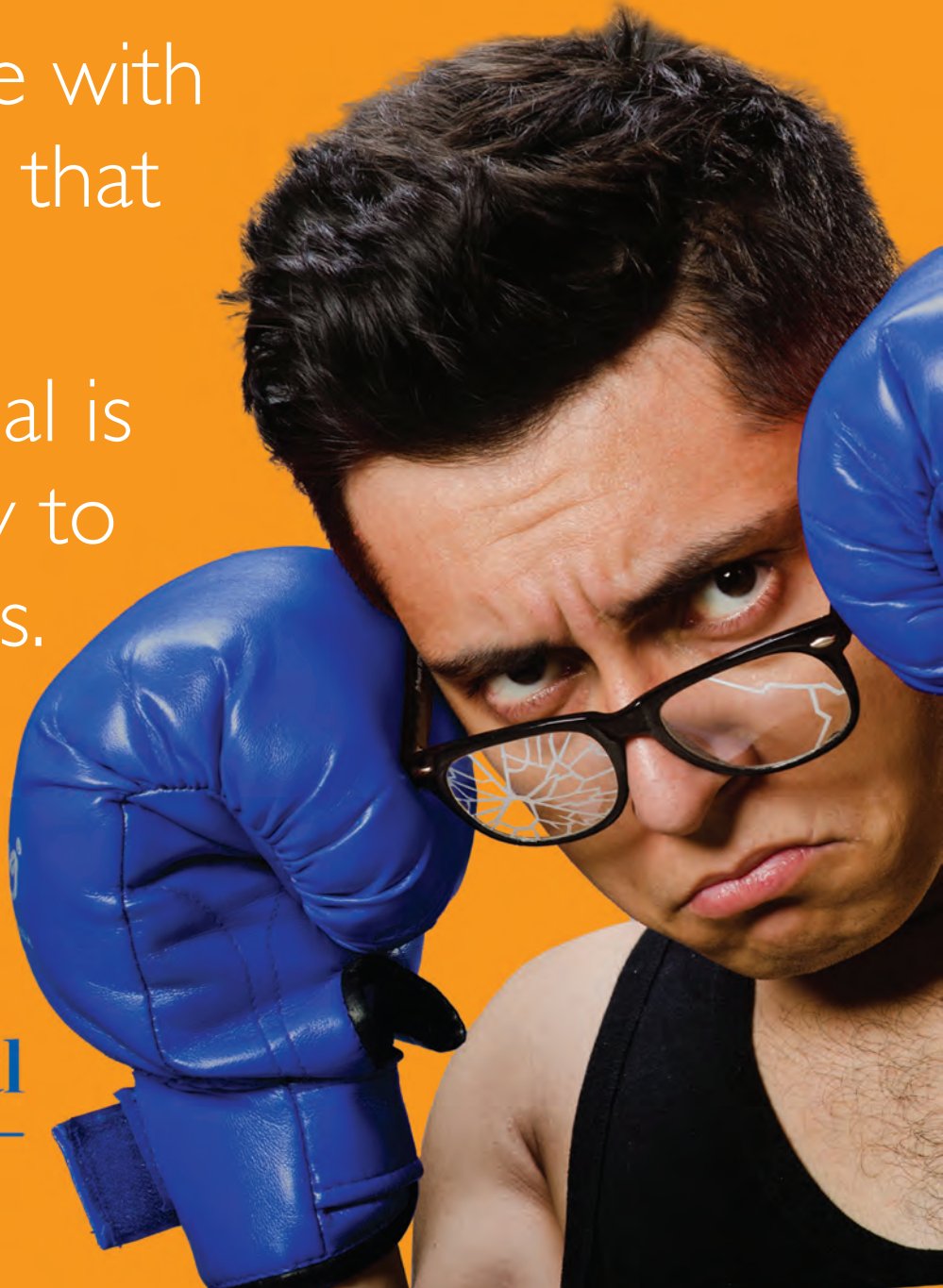
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