

THE LIGATURE

THE TIE THAT BINDS

SUMMER 2014

Official Publication of the
John A. Gupton College Alumni Association

Letter from the President

Dear Gupton Alumni,

Our annual Alumni Reunion is just a few short months away and I hope you are making plans to join me on Friday, August 1st and Saturday, August 2nd, 2014. I look forward to great fellowship with familiar faces and meeting new friends. I hope to see all of you at the meet and greet Friday evening sponsored by Wilbert Vault. We kick-off Saturday morning with a great breakfast sponsored by Batesville Casket and Aurora Casket Companies, which is followed by the annual business meeting at the college. Please stick around for Saturday night's treat of dinner with some bluegrass music and fellowship.

This year's reunion we will be honoring the Class of 1964 with 50 year pins and the Class of 1989 with their 25 year pin. I really hope that the graduates from these classes will attend to accept their pins.

In closing, I have enjoyed serving as the President of the Alumni Association and I want to express my appreciation to the other officers, faculty, and college staff for their efforts and support.

I want to remind us all to support our college and to participate in the Alumni Association. Donations are always appreciated in any fashion, either to the library funding, general support, or to the Harris O. Yates Endowment Fund.

Best Regards,

Tim Bond

Tim Bond
Class of 89'



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allen@guptoncollege.edu

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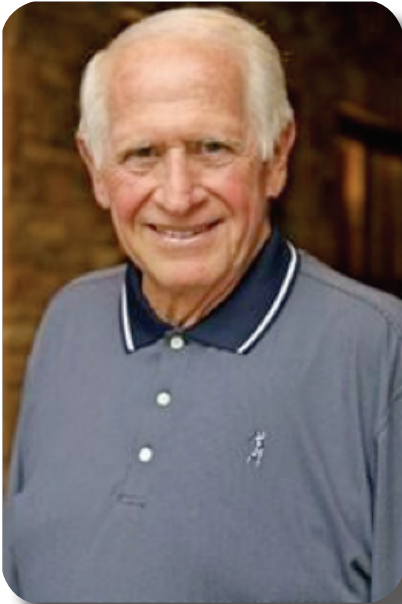
JOHN A. GUPTON
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Tag photos, leave
comments find old friends

Or check out our website:

www.guptonalumni.org

Obituaries



THEODORE "TED" CASH, September 7, 1942 - September 23, 2013

Theodore D. (Ted) Cash, age 71, of Stockbridge, Georgia, died September 23, 2013 after a long struggle with heart disease. Mr. Cash was born in Atlanta, Georgia and was a graduate of Southwest DeKalb High School and John A. Gupton School of Mortuary Science, Class of 1963. He was a member of Grace Atlanta Bible Church and an avid student of the Bible. He enjoyed playing golf, loved music and was the organizer of each Easter Sunrise Service and Memorial Day Celebration at Fairview Memorial Gardens in which he took great pride. Ted was the nephew of Horis A. Ward, founder of Horis A. Ward Funeral Homes and Fairview Memorial Gardens and worked in the family business for 54 years as a Funeral Director and Embalmer.

During those years he helped thousands of families through a very difficult time in their lives.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy Rosser Cash, Stockbridge, daughters Lana Cash, Stockbridge, Amy Cash Pritchard and husband Col. Robert W. Pritchard, Palm Springs, CA.; grandchildren Jack and Maria Pritchard, Palm Springs, CA. sister Juanita Cronic, Lawrenceville, GA. and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral services were held on Thursday September 26, 2013 at 2:00 P.M. at Mount Carmel Christian Church, Stone Mountain, GA. Interment followed at Fairview Memorial Gardens. Those desiring may make contributions to Wounded Warriors Foundation, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

JANIE HOOKS BULLARD, died March 1, 2014. She was the mother of Donnett Bullard. Donnet graduated from John A. Gupton College in 2008. She is currently an adjunct instructor for the college and also works as a funeral director and embalmer for the Family Legacy Group at West Harpeth Funeral Home in Nashville, TN.

MR. REX L. GALYON, age 60, died Friday, February 28, 2014. Mr. Gaylon was the brother of Ellis Gaylon, John A. Gupton College Class of 1959. The funeral service was held on March 5th at the Sweetwater Memorial Park Chapel in Sweetwater, TN.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

John A. Gupton recently hosted The Independent Funeral Group (TIFG) for their Spring Educational Conference on Tuesday, April 22, 2014. While visiting, Brad Kuchnicki, the Executive Director of TIFG, presented a check to John A. Gupton student, Vera Johnson. Vera won the TIFG scholarship. Also pictured is TIFG President, Albert Atchley, who is also a JAGC Board member.



Vera is a native of Ripley, TN and a proud mother of two. She received her undergraduate degree in Computer Science and Computer Engineering from Savannah State University and her Masters degree in Education from Lesley University. Vera's hobbies include riding motorcycles, four wheelers, and horseback riding.

Andrew Cole – Winner of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association Scholarship.

Andrew is from Arcadia, MO. He works with his father Tony Cole, and brother Austin Cole in their family funeral home in Ironton, MO, Cole Family Funeral Home. Andrew enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, water skiing, coaching youth sports, and playing the drums in his church praise team. After graduation, he plans to go back to Missouri and work in the funeral home and serve his community.



Elaine (Judy) Boyd – Winner of the Tennessee Funeral Supply and Sales Club (TFSSC) Scholarship

Judy currently lives in Nashville, TN. She attended high school in Selmer, TN. Her hobbies include swimming, bicycling, fishing, and cook-outs. She is entering her third semester at John A. Gupton College and has found her experience to be very fulfilling thus far. She aspires to complete her education in December and hopes to attain an apprentice position near her hometown of Selmer, TN.

SCHOLARSHIPS (continued)



Jodi Liermann – Winner of the Past President's Scholarship

Jodi lives in Fort Campbell, KY. She is married to Lt. Colonel Chris Liermann and has 3 children, 11-year old Nathan, and 9-year old twins, Olivia and Sophia. She is originally from Park City, Montana, but has been a military wife for the last 15 years and has moved every other year for the last 10 years. Her hobbies include gardening, any type of outdoor exercising, and volunteering at her children's school.

Andrew Taylor – Winner of the Herbert W. Mayes Memorial Scholarship

Andrew is from Chattanooga, TN. He is the son of John and Anita Taylor. The Taylor family own and operate Taylor Funeral Home in Chattanooga, TN.



Kaci Staggs – Winner of the Tennessee Funeral Director's Association Scholarship

Pictured with Kaci are John A. Gupton College President Steve Spann and the Tennessee Funeral Director's Association Executive Director Bob Batson. Kaci lives in Lawrenceburg, TN. Her hobbies include: volleyball, canoeing, crafting, hunting, and fishing. She stated that she was 'very honored and thankful for being chosen as the recipient of the TFDA scholarship'.

NEW ACADEMIC FRATERNITY



John A. Gupton College now has an active academic fraternity for students and alumni alike. Though the Delta Chapter (JAGC) of Sigma Phi Sigma is not a recent charter, it has been inactive for several years. As of late, Sigma Phi Sigma has had a few meetings and currently has seventeen active members. The majority of the members made their pledge at the March meeting. Each member pledges to maintain the highest standard of integrity and professionalism in the funeral service field both academically and practically. It is the mission of the fraternity to

encourage and recognize scholarship and professionalism among funeral service educators, students and professionals alike. In fulfilling the mission the fraternity will engage in community outreach projects, develop alumni relations, and encourage opportunities for fellowship among students, faculty, and local funeral service professionals. Additionally, the Delta Chapter aspires to increase public awareness of the industry thus promoting the college and the funeral service profession as a whole.

The Officers of the Delta Chapter of Sigma Phi Sigma:

Cody Martin, President • Ryan Price, Vice President

Buddy Shea, Secretary • Jodi Liermann, Treasurer • Harry Abbott, Historian

IN OTHER NEWS

Tim Bond, Class of 1989', recently visited with the Comps class at JAGC and welcomed new members to the Alumni Association as well as shared information about the importance of supporting the institution. Thanks Tim for the support and encouragement to our future!

TOP 10% SPRING 2014

John A. Gupton College Top 10% Spring 2014

Elaine Boyd.....	Nashville, Tennessee
Ariel Boyle.....	Destin, Florida
Lisa Clark	Clarksville, Tennessee
Melinda Crawford	Nashville, Tennessee
Jodi Liermann	Fort Campbell, Kentucky
Tyler Matney.....	Williamson, West Virginia
Ryan Price.....	Cleveland, Tennessee
Erwin Shea	Nashville, Tennessee
Brandy Warner.....	Sneedville, Tennessee

Special Feature

The following article was published in the ICCFA's publications blog after the TFDA Mid-Winter Conference in February where Mr. Van Beck was a guest speaker.



I met the future of our profession in Tennessee—and I liked what I saw.

Wed, 02/12/2014 - 17:27 — Todd Van Beck (TVB)

It seems now, after many years of work, that I have spent most of my career writing, speaking, and teaching about most every aspect of funeral and cemetery service. I certainly did not intend that my life should take this course, but for a variety of good reasons this is precisely the route that my life experience took. At this time I am in daily funeral management work, which almost seems now to be coming full circle. Today, however, I am inspired to write about an experience I had on February 5 with the John A. Gupton College and the Tennessee Funeral Directors Association in Nashville.

Bob Batson and Steve Spann invited me some months back to make a three-hour presentation to the association's first ever mid-winter retreat. I immediately accepted. Being a Tennessee resident, I felt an obligation to be of service, and also I was hoping to meet some of my old funeral director buddies from the beautiful Volunteer State. Truth is, I have been one blessed funeral director simply because of all the great American funeral directors I have hobnobbed with over the last 40-plus years.

To say that I was impressed with the college and the association on that fateful day would be a terrible understatement. It seemed as if Gupton was just on top of the education game, and the spirit of the Tennessee Funeral Directors was contagious. Both the Gupton College and the licensed funeral directors of the TFDA were so welcoming and supportive that it made my job of holding the attention of the group very easy. So I say thank you to both organizations. *I have, however, saved the best for last.*

In my travels, I hear veteran funeral directors grumbling about the state of the typical mortuary science student. Truth is, I suspect other veteran funeral directors (now long dead) were grumbling about TVB when I was 100 pounds lighter and had dark hair and no wrinkles. That is the way it is with all generations. My readers, I am thinking, already know that I am no Pollyanna. I am not living in a rose-colored world concerning our beloved profession, so what I am about to share is not "pie in the sky" thinking. Here is the best aspect of my trip: IT WAS THE STUDENTS.

I have operated several mortuary colleges in my career, and I was mighty discouraged at times by the lack of maturity, lack of appearance and lack of enthusiasm that I encountered on a regular basis with the "typical" student—if there are typical anythings these days. However, at John A. Gupton's, it was different, and the difference was palpable.

When I walked in, Mr. Spann, the highly competent president of John A. Gupton, told me that his students would be attending. Privately, in my soul, I was not excited. Then about 8:30 a.m. the students from John A. Gupton began to arrive, and I was just so impressed. I had known for years that Ms. Bernadine Gupton had enforced a non-negotiable dress code, but I thought that this ancient standard had probably been abandoned years ago. I could not have been more wrong.

All of the students were dressed extremely professionally. Their hair was styled and groomed, there were no visible tattoos, no visible piercings, their shoes were polished, their clothing was pressed and neat and the students were polite—all of them.

I tried to introduce myself to as many of them as I could, and not one looked the other way with no eye contact. They all announced their names in an audible tone of voice, and most of them actually smiled—none of that "goth" appearance, with the constant expressionless face and blank stare. None of that, which was a great relief to me as the speaker, for it is a distraction when someone in the group looks like a prop from a Halloween party!

Then on top of all this great stuff, the students seemed interested and engaged, and they even asked questions, which made this old grumpy undertaker feel 30 years younger. It inspired me, and hence I gave them 1,000 percent of my feeble efforts at public speaking. I told some of my corny stories and jokes, and the students smiled and laughed. It was a great experience. Here in one room were veterans and novices all sharing their mutual love of our great profession. It was a good day!

I believe that no matter what, this is true: The future of our great and beloved profession rests on every breath that the students in the mortuary colleges in the world are taking right now. I know that I have a lot more years behind me than I have in front of me, so TVB is the past in funeral service.

I was looking at the future during my entire visit to TFDA headquarters and John A. Gupton College, and, my friends, after what I saw and, more importantly, experienced, I now believe that funeral service is in good hands, no matter what the grumblers say. TFDA and John A. Gupton College, well, my friends, I take my hat off to both your leaders and your organizations. The dynamics been carved out in Nashville involve a synergy that is mighty attractive to the enhancement of our great profession.

Anyway, that's one old undertaker's opinion. TVB

2014 John A. Gupton College Alumni Association Reunion



The annual Alumni Reunion is planned for the weekend of Friday, August 1 and Saturday, August 2, 2014. In order to make reservations to stay in town at the Nashville Marriott - Vanderbilt location, please call (800) 228-9290 or (615) 321-1300 BEFORE Tuesday, **July 1, 2014** to get the Gupton group rate of \$159.00 per night. The Nashville Marriott - Vanderbilt is located at 2555 West End Avenue in Nashville.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- On Friday, August 1st, the annual meet and greet reception begins at 6:00 pm at the Nashville Marriott - Vanderbilt, and is sponsored by *Wilbert* Vault.

- On Saturday, August 2nd, a breakfast will be held at the Marriott from 8:00 - 9:30 am. The breakfast is sponsored by *Aurora* and



- On Saturday, following the breakfast, the annual Alumni Business Meeting will be held at 10:00 am at John A. Gupton College, in the Harris O. Yates Lecture Hall.

- Saturday evening, a dinner will be held at the Caney Fork River Valley Grille. They are located at 2400 Music Valley Drive in Nashville near the Opryland Hotel. The cost for dinner will be \$30 per guest, and includes live music.



To reserve your place, please send a check and the name(s) of those attending to Tracy Hamm Allen *before July 1, 2014* to: 1616 Church Street Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

For more information regarding the reunion, please visit www.guptonalumni.org, call Tim Bond, the Alumni President, or contact the school directly, 615-327-3927.





ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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John A. Gupton Alumni Association

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