

THE LIGATURE

THE TIE THAT BINDS

SUMMER 2015

Official Publication of the
John A. Gupton College Alumni Association

Letter from the President

Dear Gupton Alumni,

As of the writing of this final letter to everyone as your President, I want to thank you again for allowing me to serve as your President. This school is and will always have a special place in my life. We are so blessed to have a great faculty and staff. President Steve Spann is leading the college to new levels, and with the staff of excellent teachers who truly love what they do. On my desk, I have a bobble head of Dr. Yates. This is a constant reminder to me of the years of service this man dedicated to the college. I am forever grateful for the things I learned under his teaching. He was only one of many but he had the most years at the college. I learned so much from everyone there. I want to personally thank them for the time they invested in me. This allowed me to do what I have always wanted to do. Going to college at 50 years of age was not easy for me, but now I'm reaping my rewards and enjoying coming to work daily.

As we are preparing for the upcoming Alumni Reunion in August, I want to encourage everyone to make plans to attend. The deadlines are fast approaching so make your reservations now. I look forward to seeing you there.

I also want to thank Batesville and Aurora Casket companies for hosting the marketing class on a trip to their factories. These companies provide a bus for students to travel to the factories and given tours of the facilities. They see new products, and also learn how caskets are made. Also, thank you to Wilbert Vault Company for the great breakfast and facility tour in Nashville. These tours were one of my highlights of my school years. To tour the factories was amazing! You get to see firsthand how merchandise is made and this can't be taught in the classroom. Again: THANK YOU!!

In closing; thank you again for allowing me to serve you. I look forward to seeing you at the reunion the first weekend in August.

Sincerely,

Greg Greene

Greg Greene



Want an electronic
version of The Ligature?

Send us your
email address!

Email us:

allen@guptoncollege.edu

Check us out on FaceBook

JOHN A. GUPTON
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Tag photos, leave
comments find old friends

Or check out our website:

www.guptionalumni.org

Annual Alumni Reunion 2015

The annual Alumni Reunion is planned for the weekend of Friday August 7th and Saturday August 8th. In order to make reservations to stay in town at the Hilton Garden Inn Nashville/Vanderbilt call (615) 369-5900 or (877) 245-8854 **BEFORE** Tuesday, **July 8, 2015** to get the Gupton group rate of \$179.00 (plus tax) per night. The Hilton Garden Inn is located at 1715 Broadway in Nashville, TN

PARKING:

Overnight self parking is \$20 and overnight valet is \$28.

For those of you who are only coming for the events and are **NOT** planning on staying in the hotel, self parking is \$10 and valet is \$12.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, August 7 –

6pm-8pm - Cocktail reception in the Veranda Room.

Sponsored by:

Wilbert.

Saturday, August 8 –

7:30am-9:30am - Breakfast will be served in the West End Room. Sponsored by:



Batesville

Aurora

10am - The Alumni Business Meeting will be held in the Dr. Harris O. Yates Lecture Hall at the college – all Alumni are encouraged to attend if possible.

6pm - Dinner will be held in the Music Square Room at 6pm. The cost per person is \$50. Entertainment will start at 7pm, and will be none other than, “the King”

Sponsored by:

Matthews
INTERNATIONAL
CASKET DIVISION

IMPORTANT:

Anyone attending the dinner and entertainment on Saturday night **MUST confirm and pre-pay** no later than **July 1st**.



Photos of John A. Gupton Alumni, Staff, and Friends



From L-R, Steve Spann, Tim Bond, David Christian, Bruce Winningham, Ricky Anderson, and Malcolm Butler. Class of 1989.



Alumni Officers. From L-R. Tim Bond, Greg Greene, Jeff Duffer, Bill Hudson, and Ronnie Gandy.



From L-R, Tim Bond, Tracy Hamm-Allen, Stephane Murphy, Greg Greene



From L-R, Tracy Hamm-Allen, Donna Collard, Steve Spann



From L-R, Danny Hurt, Stephane Murphy, Jeff Murphy

In Memory



Matthew Purcell, 42, passed away on May 12, 2015 after a brave fight with a terrible illness.

In addition to being a John A. Gupton Alumni, Matthew was a full time student at NC Central working on getting a degree in social work.

Matthew will be greatly missed by all of his family and friends.

A "Go Fund Me" account was set up during his illness - with all donations going towards supporting his care giving, living expenses, and medical bills. Anyone who would like to assist his family with any expenses that remain can still access the site to contribute.

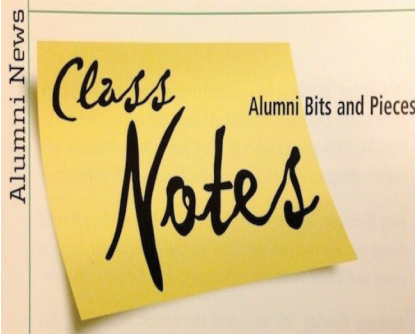
The URL for the site is: <http://www.gofundme.com/matthewpurcell>



ATTENTION ALUMNI:

We have always asked that you keep your physical address updated with the Alumni Association so that we can easily stay in touch. However, it would be a tremendous help for us to also have your current **E-Mail address** on file. Please take the time to add or update your e-mail address in our records.

Alumni News



Congratulations to 2012 graduate **Kimberly Seaman** on recently being recognized nationally as SCI's winner of the "Life Well Celebrated" award ceremony. Kimberly is a director at Woodlawn Roesch-Patton in Nashville, TN



Congratulations to JAGC students **Cody Hunter** and Katie Cross on the birth of their daughter, **Adalyn Pearl Hunter**, on April 28, 2015. Both baby and Mother are doing great!

Former JAG Alumni newsletter editor and 2001 graduate, **Ryan "Opie" Padgett**, was recently promoted to Care Center Manager at **Woodlawn Roesch-Patton** in Nashville, TN. He had served in an interim role for several months helping with the transition

Jasmine Zervas, 2011 graduate, married Mr. Jonathan Spence on May 30th, 2015 at the **Alexandria Church of God**. Congratulations to the newlyweds



Congratulations to 2014 graduate **Aaron Meroniuk** on the birth of his daughter, **Madelyn Harper Meroniuk**, on May 28, 2015.

Congratulations to **Joshua Adair (14')** and **Diene Bowers Adair (12')** on the birth of their daughter, **Hensley Renee Adair**, on April 2, 2015.



Gerald Clark, 2011 graduate, relocated from Tennessee to Texas recently to join the staff of **Blubonnet Hills Funeral Home** in Colleyville, TX.



Delbrita Greene, 2013 graduate from John A. Gupton and new member of the Alumni association accepted a position earlier this year as a director at **Woodlawn Roesch-Patton** located in Nashville, TN.



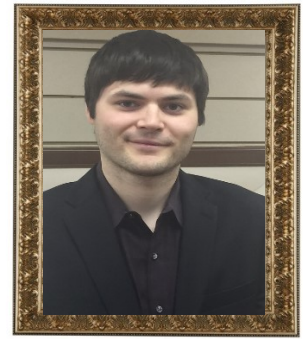
There have been several exciting, recent events in the life of **Ariel Boyle** (now **Ariel Asid**). She graduated from **John A. Gupton** in 2014, becoming an Alumni member from the most recent class to graduate. She is now serving her apprenticeship at **Woodlawn Roesch-Patton** in Nashville, TN. However, those are not the most exciting things to happen to her within the past year. On May 22, 2015 she married Brian Asid in Naestved (Copenhagen) Denmark. Congrats to **Ariel** for all of the new exciting adventures that she is experiencing, and congrats to the newlyweds on their new life together.

Send all submissions to the newsletter editor **Bobby Cook** at cook@guptoncollege.edu



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

In this edition of "The Ligature" – we spotlight **2009** graduate, **Robert Degnan** with an article he wrote on a subject that has an impact on everyone in the funeral business.



A FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S LOSS

After I graduated from John A. Gupton Mortuary College, I started my apprenticeship at my family's funeral home. My grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-grandmother were in the business. During that time I learned so much, not just about funeral service, but also about my family and how much respect they got from the families that they served and the community. I got to know them real well and observed them on how they handled these families. The families they served weren't just clients; they treated them like they were one of their own. It really was amazing to witness how personal they were to these families and how much they helped them in their time of need. They really lived up to their slogan "Our Family Serving Your Family." After learning a lot about the business and my family, I too wanted to serve the families they served.

Working in the business over the years, you learn a lot about the different families you serve and yourself. During the time I started working at the funeral home up until the present, I lost all of my family members who worked in the funeral home and paved the road for me. Obviously we all know the inevitability of death but working in this field we deal with it on a day-to-day basis; therefore, we are more familiar with it and we have less of a phobia about it. However when you lose a family member in this field of business, it can be a difficult task to grieve properly. Everyone grieves differently in their own way, but from personal experience and from others I've talked to in the business, it was very difficult for them to grieve as well. Regardless if your family member is at the funeral home you work at or a different one that you went to visit, the funeral home, the environment, the visitation, and the funeral service are all things that we are around and do on a daily basis.

During the time you're at the funeral home for your family member's funeral, you may experience masked or delayed grief rather if you do it consciously or subconsciously. When you're at the service everything is familiar to you. When you are working as the funeral director, you are there for the families and you are strong for them. During your families' funeral you might do the same, you might act as the strong funeral director that's there for the family and guides them, but if you're doing all of that, how can you possibly grieve properly? To those of you that might have this issue, and feel like you can't properly grieve in the presence of a funeral home or mortuary, I recommend having a family gathering at a residence after the funeral service is over with and have a little memorial tribute of your departed loved one with your family. Express your feelings by telling memories of your loved one, and there you will be able to grieve in a way that you probably couldn't have at the funeral home.

Mourning is a process that will take time but it is very important that you don't mask or delay your grief because it could cause emotional problems later on. Some funeral directors might not have this problem but to those that do, please don't ignore these symptoms. It is very healthy to grieve properly and whatever method helps you, go for it. This has been my personal experience with loss while working in the industry and it has helped me tremendously.

"It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live."
- Marcus Aurelius

Alumni News

We need your help in locating some of our fellow Alumni. Please reference the following lists and reach out to anyone who you may be in contact with and encourage them to attend this years reunion. Also it is very important for everyone to log onto our website and complete the contact/lead form to include a current e-mail address as well as physical address.

Class of 1965

The following is a list of 1965 Alumni members with no current address on file:

Altman, Roger E
Bailey, Charles S
Beecham, Virgil C
Boyd, Thomas R
Bull, Howard D
Clifton, Carl R
Dover, James A
Dubose, James E
Dunlap, Benjamin L
Dutton, William C
Erwin, William
Fletcher, Genell
Grosse, Landon R
Harrell, James C
Harrison, Elden D
Hatfield, Richard M
Hemperley III, Carlos M
Hill, Ronald O
Hines, Seborn
Hinze, Tommy W
Holmes, Lanning R
Lane, Ross C
Norris, Johnnie F
Robinson, Lewis J
Rounsavall, James F
Shugart, Doyle
Skinner, Charles E
Townson, James D
Warhurst, Michael V
Wright, Ronnie M

(Deceased in red)

The following is a list of 1965 Alumni members with an address on file:

Bryan, James R – Anniston, AL
Campbell, Dennis R – Graysville, IL
Giddens, Ronald T – Jax Bch, FL
Hinton, Lawrence – Hopkinsville, KY
Hudgins, Lamar H – Titusville, FL
Jeffers, Richard – Greeneville, TN
Jones, Douglas B – S. Boston, VA
Justis, Claude P – Greeneville, TN
McGee, Gary – Jackson, MS
McGlohon, James A – Hawkinsville, GA
Morrison, Jr., Joe – Cherokee, AL
Morrow, Shelby – Elba, AL
Myers, Jr, Frank – Tellico Plains, TN
Neal, Don W – Lawrenceburg, TN
Peeples, Julian A – Dalton, GA
Raines, Douglas – Old Hickory, TN
Reed, George H – Pikeville, TN
Rivers, Leroy – Goosecreek, SC
Thurman, Jr., Robert W – Brentwood, TN
Walker, Gary – Tupelo, MS
Wilson, Glenn – Galax, VA



Class of 1990

The following is a list of 1990 Alumni members with no current address on file:

Gilmore, Tracy A
Lollar, Robert G
Manley, Carol Ann K

The following is a list of 1990 Alumni members with an address on file:

Allred, Bobby D – Crossville, TN
Anderson, Nelson W – Pulaski, TN
Elder, Kenneth – Byrdstown, TN
Evans, Jr, Charles E – Bastrop, LA
Genry, David B – Yadkinville, NC
Greene, Ricky W – Nashville, TN
Hodges, Timothy B – Elkin, NC
Jenkins, Robert B – Sweetwater, TN
Layne, Gerry D – Palmer, TN
Lea, Jody T – Brownsville, TN
Mayo, James W – Mt. Juliet, TN
Neighbours, Christopher L – Nashville, TN
Parrish, Debra L – Lake City, FL
Scarbrough, Thomas A – Rockwood, TN





John A. Gupton College Top 10% Spring 2015 Semester

Kenley Bates
Emma Davis
Danielle Elmer
Richard Gallois
Eric Hughes
Shelby Ingram
Sara Lee
Amanda Nelson-Davis
LaFaith Phillips
Tavaran Ridley
Alex Sibley
Latricia Springer
Ashely Tino

Hohenwald, Tennessee
Englewood, Tennessee
Hermitage, Tennessee
Antioch, Tennessee
Centerville, Tennessee
Morgantown, Kentucky
Spring Hill, Tennessee
Jonesville, Virginia
Montgomery, Alabama
Nashville, Tennessee
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Smyrna, Tennessee
Cookeville, Tennessee

Independent Funeral Group – Spring Meeting

On Tuesday, April 22 The **Independent Funeral Group** held their annual Spring meeting at John A. Gupton College. The guest speaker for the seminar was Mr. Vernie Fountain.

Mr. Fountain is the Founder of **Fountain National Academy of Professional Embalming Skills** in Springfield, MO.

In attendance along with several independent group members were, **Gupton Alumni**, and a couple of students. Thanks to everyone who helped this event be a huge success.



Student Alexandria Sibley, Mr Vernie Fountain, and JAG Instructor Tracy Hamm Allen (class of 98')

Student Christy Stice, JAG instructor Tracy (class of 98'), and Student Alexandria Sibley



School News

Often times as students sit in class at JAGC taking notes, preparing for the next test, or maybe even daydreaming – the thought never crosses their minds about what the future holds for both them and their classmates. Pictured here are three former students and current Alumni members: Sid Garner (’98), Tracy Hamm Allen (’98) who is Director of Mortuary Science/Alumni Relations, and Robbie Bacon (81’), former JAGC instructor who taught all professional courses including comps. This is just proof that you never know what the career path for JAGC students will look like.



Scholarships



Ariel Edmondson is the recipient of the Mayes Memorial Scholarship. Pictured with Ariel is TFDA Executive Director Bob Batson, and JAGC President Steve Spann.



Latricia Springer is a TFDA Scholarship recipient. Latricia is pictured with the TFDA Executive Director Bob Batson, and JAGC President Steve Spann.



Danielle Elmer is a TFDA scholarship recipient. Pictured with Danielle is TFDA Executive Director Bob Batson and JAGC President Steve Spann



Jeffrey Rutledge received the Past President's scholarship. Pictured with him is Ex. Dir Bob Batson and JAGC President Steve Spann



On, Thursday May 7th, the Marketing Class visited Batesville Casket Company in Manchester, TN. The students received a tour of the plant and received knowledge and information regarding the manufacturing of metal caskets. The students also received a demonstration of how to present caskets in the selection room. Batesville Casket Company representative, Charlotte Williams spoke to the class and provided lunch before returning to Nashville.



On Tuesday, May 12th, the Marketing Class visited Wilbert Vault Company in Nashville, TN. The students received a warm welcome at the Holiday Inn Express on West End for a great breakfast and a presentation by Danny Hurt, a JAGC honorary alumni. After breakfast, the students received a tour of the facility and there were many Wilbert representatives on hand to help students understand the process. Thank you to Jackie Purcell for allowing the students time to tour the plant.



On Thursday, May 14th, the Marketing Class of JAGC was the first large group to visit the Aurora plant in Piney Flatts, TN. This tour provided the students a greater understanding of how hardwood caskets are made. Aurora representatives were on hand to provide a good lunch prior to visiting the plant. JAGC thanks Mike Blair, Christina Kent, David Bentley 68', and David Akard 97'. Also, thanks to Bill Hudson 91' for making this unique trip possible for the students.



The 2015 John A. Gupton Marketing class, pictured here at the Wilbert Vault plant in Nashville, TN.





ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

JOHN A. GUPTON COLLEGE

1616 CHURCH STREET

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203

John A. Gupton Alumni Association

www.guptionalumni.org

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