



# THE LIGATURE

"The Tie That Binds"

Official Publication of the  
John A. Gupton College  
Alumni Association  
Spring/Summer Edition - 2021

# 75<sup>TH</sup>



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ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION**

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Our Alumni website now  
has a new Link:  
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Email us:



**Tracy Hamm-Allen**  
Director of  
Alumni Relations

[allen@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:allen@guptoncollege.edu)



**Bobby W. Cook**  
Newsletter Editor  
[cook@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:cook@guptoncollege.edu)

## Letter from the President

Friends,

30 years ago, I graduated from John A Gupton College and faced life as a 22-year-old that thought I had all the answers. 30 years later, a 25-year marriage, 2 beautiful children and a blessed life beyond deserving, I thought a tribute to the 30 most important lessons both taught and learned would be a fitting way to write my last President's letter. My hope is one, if not all encourage you daily.

Life isn't fair, but it's still good.

When in doubt, just take the next small step.

You don't have to win every argument. Stay true to yourself.

When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.

Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.

It's OK to let your children see you cry.

Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.

Get rid of anything that isn't useful. Clutter weighs you down in many ways.

Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.

It's never too late to be happy. But it's all up to you and no one else.

When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.

Burn the candles, use the nice sheets. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special enough.

If you're not early, your late.

No one is in charge of your happiness but you.

Frame every so-called disaster with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'

Forgive but don't forget.

What other people think of you is none of your business.

Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.

Go to Church and read your Bible. Scripture helps all things.

Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.

Believe in miracles.

Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.

Your children get only one childhood.

All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.

If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.

Envy is a waste of time. Accept what you already have not what you need.

The best is yet to come.

No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.

Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

To all the alumni, from the past 75 years, I wish all of you great success in both your Professional and Personal life. There's always an opportunity to learn and continue to grow from yourself and others. Take the time to listen, be patient and serve others. It makes life so much easier and enjoyable.

Sincerely,



**Bill Hudson**  
Class of 1991



# 75<sup>th</sup> Alumni Reunion

SPONSORED BY:

*Wilbert*



Reception - Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup> – 6 pm

*Grand Hyatt Nashville*

Please join us at the **Grand Hyatt Nashville** for the Friday night reception sponsored by **Wilbert Vault**. This is always a fun gathering of old friends and colleagues and gives everyone the opportunity to catch up and meet fellow Alumni members. **Grand Hyatt Nashville** is a downtown luxury hotel on Broadway at Nashville Yards. Within walking distance of the Gulch and Midtown, this retreat features one of the highest outdoor rooftop bars in Music City, a spa, and seven food and beverage experiences.

**WIN  
PRIZES!**

In celebration of our 75<sup>th</sup> Alumni Reunion, during the reception this year we will be giving away **John A. Gupton** swag and some awesome prizes. The prizes include a Television, Yeti Coolers, and many more. **You MUST be present to win a prize!** Valet parking for the event is \$15. The hotel does not have self-parking.

Breakfast - Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – 8 am

*Grand Hyatt Nashville*

Breakfast will be sponsored by **Batesville Casket Company** and **Matthews Aurora**. Please join us Saturday morning in the **Railhead Room** for a morning meal before heading to the college for the annual business meeting.

**M** Matthews Aurora  
FUNERAL SOLUTIONS



Business Meeting

Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – 10am

*John A. Gupton College*

Our annual **John A. Gupton College** business meeting will be held at the college in the **Harris O. Yates Lecture Hall**. During the meeting, the **25 year** and **50-year** pins will be presented, and we encourage all recipients to attend. We also encourage all Alumni members to attend the meeting.



## Alumni reunion cont.

Afternoon Activity – Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – 3 pm -6 pm



*Country Music Hall of Fame*

*RCA Studio - B*

Inside the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, you're invited to get a glimpse behind the scenes at the music and artists that made country music history.

Historic RCA Studio B—once home to musical titans such as Elvis Presley, Chet Atkins, Eddy Arnold, Roy Orbison, and the Everly Brothers, it is one of the world's most famous recording facilities.

### **HOW TO ATTEND:**

Visit the college website ([guptoncollege.edu](http://guptoncollege.edu)), click the "Pay Here" section to the right side and pay the \$38 per person fee. **IMPORTANT:** In the memo section, please state the name of the alumni who is attending if different than the cardholder and then type "**MUSEUM EVENT**". You can also use the alumni website, [guptonalumni.com](http://guptonalumni.com), and click on 'donate' to get you to the same screen.

Call Tracy at the college 615-327-3927 with questions.

**You must pay online by July 1<sup>st</sup> in order to reserve your spot!**

Dinner – Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 pm



Saturday evening, the Alumni will have dinner at Morton's Steakhouse. The restaurant is located just 4 blocks from the Grand Hyatt and within walking distance of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center, Ryman Auditorium, Schermerhorn Symphony Center, and a string of infamous live music venues.

### **HOW TO ATTEND:**

Visit the college website ([guptoncollege.edu](http://guptoncollege.edu)), click on "Pay Here" and pay the \$100 per person fee (which includes dinner and a drink ticket) **IMPORTANT:** In the memo section, please state the name of the alumni who is attending if different than the cardholder and then type "**DINNER**". You can also use the alumni website ([guptonalumni.com](http://guptonalumni.com)) and click on 'Donate' to get you the same payment screen.

Call Tracy at the college, 615-327-3927 with questions.

**You must pay online by July 1<sup>st</sup> in order to reserve your spot!**

## Alumni reunion cont.



## Reserving a Room – Group Rates *Grand Hyatt Nashville*

The Alumni Association has negotiated a group rate (\$249 per night) for the Grand Hyatt Nashville should any Alumni Member wish to stay at this beautiful premier Nashville hotel. The staff at the Grand Hyatt has created a dedicated website for you to make your reservations.

### JAGC ALUMNI DEDICATED RESERVATION WEBSITE:

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/BNARN/G-GUPT>

If you need additional assistance, please call 1-877-803-7534  
**Group Rates are only available until July 1<sup>st</sup>, so please don't delay!**



#### 2020

#### 2021

Marla Belyew  
Scotty Brewer  
Steve Brown  
Freeman Burnett  
Bartley Carr  
Brian K. Cooper  
Timiki Davidson  
Travis Dugger  
Larry Fitts  
Thomas Fluehr  
Damon Gibson  
Brian Gilstrap  
Stacie Green  
Brandon Harris  
Samuel Jackson  
Felicia Lashley  
William Lawson  
Phillippe Lumpkin  
Sean Maier  
Lynn McClain  
Leslie McGee  
Phyllis Odom  
Jacqueline Page  
Ezra Plemons  
John Robbins  
William Roberts  
Robert Shelton, Jr.  
Mary Smith  
Antonio Starks  
William Washington  
Haskell Wells

Tara Bessling  
Korie Blanton  
Sean Bledsoe  
William Brown  
Melanie Bryant  
Jacky Carver, Jr.  
Robert Clary  
Charles Covington  
Jason Cox  
Joel Daugherty  
Gerald DuPriest  
William Eldridge  
James Ford  
Ricky Garland  
Ronnie Harrell  
Chadwick Haynes  
Jeffrey Higgins  
Wade Hughes  
Elmore Jordan, Jr.  
Jimmy Kesey  
John King  
Joseph Marler  
Tommy Miller, Jr.  
Shannon Parks  
Matthew Pierson  
D. Shawn Porter  
Matthew Purcell  
Grady Rich  
Gregory Roberts  
Reginald Rogers  
Heather Saunders  
Elmer Shupe  
James Spivey  
Carolyn Young



#### 2020

#### 2021

William Arnold, III  
Kenneth Bates  
James Churchville  
Donald Creech  
Joseph Dickerson  
Stewart Essex  
Thomas Evans  
Frank Foggie, Jr.  
Herman Folsom  
Rex Grizzle  
Major Hamilton  
Van Hamilton  
Milton Hollifield  
William A. Holman  
Paul Hutchens  
Timothy Jones  
Thomas Kimbro  
Ulysses Mullen  
James Murphy  
Harold Nance  
Paul Parham  
Stanley Powell  
Calvin Rinehart  
Michael Robinson  
Jim Shiver  
Marshall Swift  
Bruce Thomas  
James Webb, Jr.

Jimmy Anthony  
Albert Atchley  
Frederick Bostleman  
David Bull  
Stephen Carraway, III  
Michael Fobbus  
Robert Foster, Jr.  
Roy Gibson  
John Gilland  
William Hart  
Edwin Hoover  
Bobby Lands  
Joe Larimer  
John Matthews  
Henry Miller  
Robert Parker  
Bennie Smith  
Frederick Stafford  
Rhea Tarleton  
Stephen West  
Wyoming Wicker  
Lannie Willis

## NBE Pass Rates

The **American Board of Funeral Service Education** serves as the national academic accreditation agency for college and university programs in Funeral Service and Mortuary Science Education. The National Board pass rates, graduation rates, and employment rates for **John A. Gupton College** programs are shown below.

### Associate of Arts Degree Program

Year	Complete Course of Study	Position in Funeral Service	NBE ARTS Pass Rate	NBE SCIENCE Pass Rate
2011	48%	87%	86%	94%
2012	45%	78%	81%	100%
2013	47%	90%	88%	97%
2014	45%	77%	92%	88%
2015	80%	77%	86%	89%
2016	70%	75%	79%	79%
2017	83%	91%	83%	96%
2018	76%	84%	97%	94%
2019	58%	79%	83%	89%
2020	56%	71%	90%	81%

### Funeral Director Certificate Program

Year	Complete Course of Study	Position in Funeral Service	State Board Pass Rate
2011	65%	100%	100%
2012	80%	100%	88%
2013	38%	100%	82%
2014	53%	86%	75%
2015	42%	88%	86%
2016	50%	94%	71%
2017	44%	92%	69%
2018	50%	100%	89%
2019	50%	100%	86%
2020	61%	100%	90%

### Associate of Applied Science Program

Year	Complete Course of Study	Position in Funeral Service	NBE ARTS Pass Rate	NBE SCIENCE Pass Rate
2018	100%	100%	100%	100%
2019	73%	100%	100%	100%
2020	65%	91%	86%	81%



## Spring Semester 2021 - Top 10%

April Bradley  
Shelby Burkes  
Taryn Closen  
Matthew Crabtree  
Paisley Eads  
Brittney Easley  
Peyton Forrester  
Masynn Galyon  
Leah Hale  
Garrett Henderson  
Morgan Henderson  
Alexis Mauk  
Timothy Parish  
Jack Partlow  
Natosha Simpson  
Mitchell Stanfill  
Jill Strawn

Seymour, TN  
Murfreesboro, TN  
Nashville, TN  
Athens, TN  
Bristol, TN  
Madison, TN  
Dahlonega, GA  
Jacksboro, TN  
Bowling Green, KY  
Lindale, GA  
Cookeville, TN  
Mt. Carmel, TN  
Huntingdon, TN  
Lebanon, TN  
Grandview, TN  
Lexington, TN  
Johnson City, TN



### Alumni Spotlight



**John Foster** is a 1994 **John A. Gupton College** Alumni. In addition to Gupton, he attended Middle Tennessee State University and has also earned a banking diploma from the Graduate School of Banking at LSU. While in the funeral business, he worked for **Hibbett & Hailey / Hermitage Funeral Homes** in Nashville, **Pettus Owen & Wood** and lastly at **Ligon and Bobo Funeral home** in Lebanon, TN.

In early 2020, John was promoted to **President of Wilson Bank & Trust**. Wilson Bank & Trust is a community bank headquartered in Lebanon TN with 28 offices serving 9 counties throughout Middle Tennessee. In his community, John has served as chairman of the **Wilson County Fellowship of Christian Athletes**, Leadership Wilson, United Way of Wilson County. John attends **Gladeville Baptist Church** along with his wife Casey and his two daughters, Ashley and Karli.



Know anyone that should be featured in the "Alumni Spotlight" section of a future newsletter? Contact Bobby Cook at [cook@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:cook@guptoncollege.edu)

# Obituaries



**Adam Paul Schrock**, 15, of Owensboro died Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at Norton Children's Hospital. Adam was born on May 18, 2005, in Owensboro. He was a freshman at Daviess County High School and attended First Baptist Church. Adam accomplished many things in his short time on Earth. Survivors include his parents, Allison Simmons Schrock and **Bryan Schrock (1994 graduate of John A. Gupton College)**; the best big sister in the world, Abigail Lane Schrock; grandparents, Fred "Freddy" Simmons, Vivian "The Mimi" Simmons Cripps, and "Grandma" Ruby Schrock; an uncle, Levy (Susan) Schrock; aunt, Cindy Keen Simmons; and several cousins that he enjoyed playing with and who loved him very much. A Celebration of Adam's life was held at 3:00pm on Saturday, January 23, 2021, at First Baptist Church, 230 JR Miller Blvd, in Owensboro. Visitation was held on Saturday from 12:00pm until 3:00pm at First Baptist Church.

**Ronald T. Giddens** died December 5, 2020, at the age of 93. Though born in humble beginnings, he rose to accomplish much in his lifetime. He officially began working at the age of 12 – though he always claimed to be 6 at his father's funeral home, Giddens Funeral Home. Ronald is survived by his second wife, Lester Hart Giddens; his daughter and son-in-law, Robin Giddens and J. David Sheppard; and his grandchildren, Molly Giddens Sheppard and James D. Sheppard, Jr., as well as other extended family. A Celebration of Life was held on Saturday, February 13 at 2:00 p.m. at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Legacy Lodge. **Ronald was a 1965 graduate of John A. Gupton College.**



**William C. "Bill" Perry**, age 92 of Centre, passed away Tuesday, May 11th at Cherokee Health & Rehab. Funeral services were 11 AM Thursday at the Perry Funeral Home Chapel, with Dr. George Cobb, Bro. Keith Day and Rev. Melvyn Salter officiating. The family received friends from 6:30 until 8 PM Wednesday, at the funeral home. Honorary Pallbearers: Members of the Cherokee County Rescue Squad and Alumni of John A Gupton College. Mr. Perry was a native of Butler County, Alabama, the son of the late Riley and Dorothy Caine Perry. He was the second-generation owner of Perry Funeral Home in Centre, AL. He was a past President of the Alabama Funeral Directors Association & the John A Gupton Alumni Association, **Bill was a 1949 graduate of John A. Gupton College.**

**Michael Wayne Morgan**, age 45, passed away Wednesday, May 5, 2021. He was a member and youth pastor at The Tabernacle Church in Waverly. He graduated from **John A. Gupton Mortuary College in 1996**. Michael worked for Humphreys County Funeral Home and Carr & Erwin Funeral Home in Pulaski. Visitation was held from 4:00 – 8:00pm Monday, May 10th and from 11:00am until service time Tuesday, May 11th at Humphreys County Funeral Home. Funeral Services was conducted at 2:00pm Tuesday, May 11, 2021, in the Humphreys County Funeral Home Chapel with Bro. Dale Caudle and Jon Maples officiating.



**Mrs. Clara E. Spann**, age 98, of Dickson, TN and formerly of Charlotte passed away Saturday May 15, 2021, at Alive Hospice in Nashville after a short stay. She was a member of the Central Church of Christ in Charlotte. Most of her life was spent caring for her family. She and her husband J.T. "Jr" Spann loved singing in several Gospel Singing groups over the years. Visitation was held on Tuesday 1-8 p.m. and Wednesday 12-5 at the Spann Funeral Home. Funeral Services were conducted at 5:00 p.m. Wednesday May 19, 2021, from the Chapel of Spann Funeral Home with Bro. Rufus Clifford officiating. **Her son, B. Steven Spann is President of John A. Gupton College and an Alumni member.**

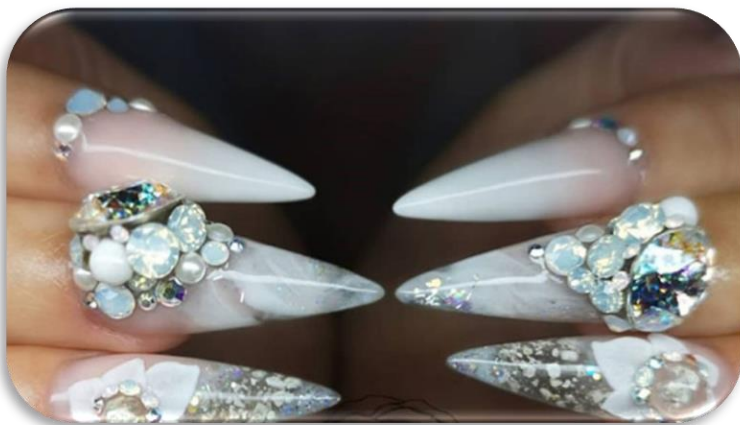
## Bride adds father's ashes into her wedding manicure

PORTIONS OF AN ONLINE ARTICLE PUBLISHED ON DEATHCAREINDUSTRY.COM IN OCTOBER 2019.

Five months before the wedding of Charlotte Walton her father passed away. The family was of course devastated and it broke Charlotte's heart that her father would no longer be able to walk her down the aisle as they had always planned. Wanting to help her cousin nail artist Kirsty Meakin had the idea to add some of the ashes from the recently departed father into the acrylic design of her nails, to symbolize him holding her hand down the aisle. After a few weeks when the natural nails began to grow out the acrylic parts with the ashes were removed and placed on a frame with a photo of the father as a keepsake. She posted a YouTube video going through the entire creation process and gained more than 60,000 views to date. With the viewers embracing this new art form which included the father in a unique way.

She also added a video with the removal and creation of the keepsake, which was received with the same level of admiration. Viewers truly loved the entire ideation behind this unique use of ashes.

Foreshadowing the changing sentiment of the public about how we honor the memory of loved ones. There is no doubt as the funeral industry continues to see a rise in the rate of cremations, grieving families will find more and more unique and interesting ways to celebrate and memorialize their loved ones.



### Alumni, Stay in Touch!

Moved? Changed your name?  
Different email address? Let us  
know so we can keep you  
informed about local events and  
JAG news that matters to you.



Anyone interested in being  
featured in the "Alumni Spotlight"  
section of a future newsletter,  
please contact Bobby Cook at  
[cook@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:cook@guptoncollege.edu)



Do you have anything you would like to  
share with your fellow Alumni?

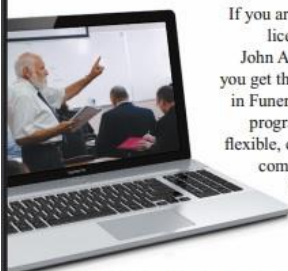
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at [cook@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:cook@guptoncollege.edu)



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program. Our online program is  
flexible, career-focused and may be  
completed in 12 or 16 months.  
Financial Aid is available.

For information concerning cost and program  
call 615-327-3927, go to our website at [guptoncollege.edu](http://guptoncollege.edu)  
or email [admissions@guptoncollege.edu](mailto:admissions@guptoncollege.edu).



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### CONTINUING EDUCATION ON-LINE

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



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**John A. Gupton Alumni Association**

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**TO CONTACT THE COLLEGE:**

1616 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37203  
Office: 615.327.3927 | Fax: 615.321.4518  
[guptoncollege.edu](http://guptoncollege.edu)