



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

Making Waves

WHILE KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGE OF THE TIDE

JUNE 9 – 11, 2024

**MARRIOTT COOL SPRINGS HOTEL
700 COOL SPRINGS BLVD, FRANKLIN, TN 37067**

★ **Book your group rate for Tennessee Funeral Directors Association** ★

(Right click and follow link to make your room reservations)

<https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1702072195388&key=GRP>

Please be prepared to show your TFDA membership card
at the convention registration booth.

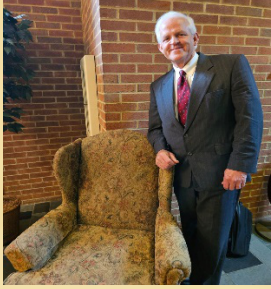
Convention Schedule



SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2024

Business Attire with tropical colors encouraged for all events on Sunday.

Sign up for Continued Education Credits at all seminars.



10:00 AM – 10:30 AM Sunday

Interfaith Service

Jim Taylor, 2024 Convention Chaplain

Williamson Memorial Funeral Home & Cremation Services



12:00 Noon – 1:00 PM Sunday

Seminar – Featuring Tiffany Gleeson

“Embracing Ownership Mindset and Creating A Culture To Drive Pre-Need Sales”

Park Lawn Vice President Pre-Need Sales

(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)



1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Sunday

Seminar – Featuring Joseph Thomas, CFSP

“Improv for Funeral Directors”

Pierce Mortuary College

(TN State Approved for 1 CEU)



2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Sunday

Seminar – Featuring Valerie J. Wages, CFSP, LE, LFD

“Getting Your Team Successful At Answering The Telephone”

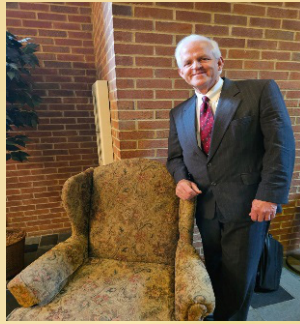
(TN State Approved for 2 CEU's)

Sponsored by: The Heritage Family



SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2024

Business Attire with tropical colors encouraged for all events on Sunday.



5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Sunday

Memorial Service

Jim Taylor – TFDA Convention Chaplain
An annual event that is very heartwarming for all in attendance.



Professional Musical Guests
Joe Copolo, Southridge Quartet
and
Scott Fowler, Legacy Five
Williamson Memorial Funeral Home



6:00 PM – 8:30 PM Sunday

Grand Opening of the Exhibit Hall

Come support all of the vendors for the continued support of the convention!
(TN State Board Approved for 1 CEU)



MONDAY, JUNE 10TH, 2024

Business Attire with tropical colors encouraged!



9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Monday

TFDA Business Meeting

TFDA Installation of 2024-2025 Directors
50 Years of Service Plaques Honorees
Guests, State Representative Sam Whitson &
Alderman Brandy Blanton, City of Franklin



11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Monday

Joint Luncheon

Mike Keith, “Voice of the Titans”
“Lasting Success”

(Pending TN State Board Approval for 1 CEU)

1:00 PM – 3:30 PM Monday

Exhibit Hall

Come support all of the vendors for the continued support of the convention!
(TN State Board Approved for 1 CEU)



Auctioneer: **Robbie Beal**

5:00 PM – 9:00 PM Monday
Monday Night Beach Buffet Meal
Live and Silent Auction
Steel Drums and DJ Brent Elliott
Casual Tropical Attire



DJ Brent Elliott

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024

8:00 AM Golf Tournament – Franklin Bridge Golf Course

The Wilbert Group: Pierce, Wilbert Vaults of TN & Astral sponsoring golf luncheon
(Golf Packet Included)



1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Tuesday – Casual Tropical Attire
Seminar – Featuring Matt Smith
“Embalming Difficult Cases”
(Pending TN State Board Approval of 3 CEU's)

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Tuesday
Past President's Reception
Evening Dinner Tropical Attire



6:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Grand Banquet

Sponsored by:
Atlantic Coast Life

Dining, Dancing and Honoring One of Own

Entertainment:
Top Tier Band
Evening Dinner
Tropical Attire



2024 TFDA & TFSSC 121st Annual Convention

List of Endorsed Companies, Sponsors and Exhibitors

Please help support the companies that support your association!
Click on the company name to check out their website.

Ambulance & Coach Sales – Exhibiting 3 Hearses -
Full Page Thanagram Advertiser

American Foundation for Suicide
Prevention - Tennessee Chapter - Exhibitor

ASD – Exhibitor

**ASTRAL CASKET COMPANY:
“The Wilbert Group” - SPONSORING GOLF
TOURNAMENT LUNCHEON**

**ATLANTIC COAST LIFE – SPONSOR
OF THE GRAND BANQUET**

BATESVILLE CASKETS - SILVER SPONSOR

Cherished Candles – Exhibitor

Clark Grave Vaults - Exhibitor

Crain M & M Sales – Exhibiting 1 Hearse

DEATHCALL - GOLD SPONSOR

Digital Closure – Exhibitor

**DIRECTOR’S ANSWERING
SERVICE – SPONSOR OF LANYARDS
& WALLETS, Thanagram Advertiser,
LAST YEARS WINNER FOR THE BEST
DECORATED BOOTH SPACE**

Dodge Company - Exhibitor

Funeral Directors Life (FDL) - Exhibitor

**FUNERAL HOME GIFTS – MEMORIAL
SERVICE BLANKETS**

**GENESIS WHOLE BODY DONOR
PROGRAM - SILVER SPONSOR**

**HOMESTEADERS LIFE COMPANY -
SILVER SPONSOR**

Independent Funeral Planning
Alliance (IFPA) – Exhibitor

John A. Gupton Mortuary College – Exhibitor

Jones Coach Sales – Exhibiting 2 Hearses
Larkspur Conservation - Exhibitor

**MATTHEWS AURORA FUNERAL SOLUTIONS -
TFDA ENDORSED COMPANY - GOLD SPONSOR**

Mid-South & Mountain Mortuary - Exhibitor

Music City Mortuary - Exhibitor

ObituaryShare.com – Exhibitor

**PARK LAWN TENNESSEE, CORPORATION -
GOLD SPONSOR**

PFA Tax & Accounting Professionals - Exhibitor

**PIERCE CHEMICALS: “The Wilbert Group” -
SPONSORING GOLF
TOURNAMENT LUNCHEON**

Precoa Insurance – Exhibitor

R & S Markers – Exhibitor

**SECURITY NATIONAL LIFE
INSURANCE - TFDA ENDORSED
COMPANY - GOLD SPONSOR**

**SOMETHING UNIQUE CUSTOM
DESIGNS – MEMORIAL SERVICE FLOWERS**

**THE MESSENGER CO. – MEMORIAL
SERVICE GIFTS SPONSOR**

**TUKIOS – MEMORIAL
SERVICE VIDEO**

Wellabe / Great Western Insurance – Exhibitor

**WILBERT VAULTS OF TN - “The Wilbert Group” -
SPONSORING GOLF
TOURNAMENT LUNCHEON**

Yarborough Mortuary Services, Inc. – Exhibitor

Speakers and Special Guest



2022-2023

JOHN O. "JACK" MITCHELL, IV, CFSP, CCSP NFDA REPRESENTATIVE

Baltimore, MD

Jack Mitchell is the 2023-24 immediate past-president of the National Funeral Directors Association.

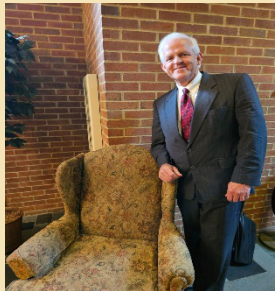
Jack is a sixth-generation funeral director with Mitchell-Wiedefeld Funeral Home in Baltimore, Maryland. He has also operated John O. Mitchell IV Funeral Services of Dulaney Valley since 2007, when he and his father became the owners of Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens.

Jack has extensive experience serving on committees with both the Maryland State Funeral Directors Association (MSFDA) and NFDA. He is a past president of MSFDA and is Maryland's former representative to the NFDA Policy Board.

Nationally, Jack has served on the NFDA Advocacy Committee, Budget Task Force, Convention Education Task Force, Spokesperson Team and Cemetery Resources Work Group. He previously served as an at-large representative on the NFDA Board of Directors.

Business Information:

Mitchell-Wiedefeld Funeral Home, 6500 York Rd., Baltimore, MD 21212, Phone: 410-377-8300



JIM TAYLOR, TFDA CONVENTION CHAPLAIN

Jim Taylor has been on staff at Williamson Memorial Funeral Home & Cremation Services for more than 30 years, serving in various capacities including as house chaplain.

But his role at both the Franklin and Spring Hill locations for Williamson Memorial goes beyond just having a career. It's a true calling.

"This is so much more than just a paycheck for me," said Taylor, also known as Jimbo to the many natives of Williamson County who know him. "This is truly a ministry in and of itself. I know so many of the folks that come in our doors, and have had the opportunity to serve their grieving family in a time of need.

"I feel like the Lord can open doors that we can't shut and he can shut doors that we can't open, and I feel like he had his hand on me coming to work here."

That was in 1990, when Clyde Stephens hired him to work at what was then Franklin Memorial Chapel and later Williamson Memorial. Taylor, who graduated in the 1970s from David Lipscomb College with a bachelor's degree in Bible and speech, went through a two-year apprenticeship and took a state board exam to get his license as a funeral director after Stephens brought him aboard.

As house chaplain for Williamson Memorial in both Franklin and Spring Hill, Taylor has officiated more than 2,300 funerals. He said that quite often he will take families out to area churches for funeral services or take them to some of the rural cemeteries for graveside services.

"We do several funerals a year and he preaches probably 40% of them, if not more," said Pam Stephens, Clyde Stephens' daughter who is also a funeral director at Williamson Memorial. "He started out as an ambulance driver back in the days when ambulances were located in the funeral homes.

"Now he does a little bit of everything, and he loves what he does. Jim has been an asset not only for the families we serve here, but for the whole community. He is loved by so many."

Though he didn't officially become a licensed funeral director until the early 1990s, Taylor felt long before that he would land in a service position in which he offered comfort and caring for many families. He worked part-time at the funeral home as a high school student.

"As a teen, I went to school in the morning, worked in the funeral home in the afternoon, and ran ambulance cars at night," said Taylor, who turns 70 today, May 18.

When he's not in his role as funeral director and chaplain, Taylor enjoys his family and his hobbies. He and his wife, Dawn, have raised three children in Franklin.

And like many in Williamson County, Taylor holds a deep interest in Civil War history. His great-great-grandfather fought in the Battle of Franklin, and he can look out from the Williamson Memorial parking lot and see where the Nov. 30, 1864, skirmish got underway on Winstead Hill.

"I have a huge interest in Civil War history here in town, and that's probably what generated a lot of that interest," Taylor said of the proximity to the battle site and his ancestral lineage.

He's also an avid golfer and enjoys gardening as well.

When it comes to his place of employment over the past 33 years, Taylor has witnessed firsthand the impact that Williamson Memorial Funeral Home & Cremation Services has had on countless families in the area.

"I think folks here in Franklin and Williamson County take a lot of pride in knowing that for years our funeral home was owned and operated by a family. Clyde Stephens knew everybody in town, so he built this relationship, this rapport, with so many families, and they trusted him, especially with their loved one in the time of need.

"So I think Franklin residents have considered Williamson Memorial and later Spring Hill as their home funeral home. It is such an honor for us to be trusted by loved ones and to serve them."



TIFFANY GLEESON

PARK LAWN VICE PRESIDENT OF PRE-NEED SALES & MARKETING

A dynamic innovative leader in the deathcare space, Tiffany Gleeson is currently Vice President of Sales, East Division at Park Lawn Corporation. Building and leading the team to execute Park Lawn's sales strategy, setting short- and long-term growth plans, and exceeding revenue targets are among her responsibilities. Tiffany has a strong passion for nurturing a mindset of customer excellence.

Prior to joining the Park Lawn family, Tiffany held many leadership roles throughout her career from her beginnings as a family service counselor to Area Vice President of Operations and Sales.

Tiffany holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and is currently pursuing her master's degree in finance. She believes we should never stop learning. Tiffany is married to Chris and together they enjoy 8 children and 2 grandchildren.



JOSEPH THOMAS, CFSP

Joseph Thomas, CFSP is an instructor for Pierce Mortuary Colleges, fifth-generation funeral director and embalmer, pre-planning and cemetery specialist, and first-generation humor writer and improviser. He studied Mortuary Science at John A. Gupton College in Nashville, Tennessee, earned his undergraduate degree in English at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee. His comedy studies include improv comedy at Improv Nashville in Nashville, Tennessee and humor and satire writing at the Second City

Training Center in Chicago, Illinois, and his work has appeared in The Weekly Humorist, Points in Case, The Commercial Appeal, The Daily Memphian, The Memphis Flyer, and The Chicago Tribune as well as his own funeral humor blog, Mortified on Substack.

Joseph currently lives the suburb life just outside Memphis, Tennessee with his wife, kids, and dog and is a member of Memphis's premier improv comedy troupe, The Bluff City Liars.



VALERIE J. WAGES, CFSP, LE, LFD

Public Relations: Recognized as a state and national public speaker in the death care profession. Top-rated funeral director in providing exceptional customer service during the arrangement conference and meticulous attention to detail during the service honoring a person's life.

Management: Help develop seven ReputationBuilder employee development programs for funeral service, which have been utilized throughout the United States and Europe. Personnel

throughout many privately held funeral homes and corporately held funeral homes use revised versions of these training courses even today.

Development: Help develop and improve the skills and techniques of hundreds of funeral service professionals throughout the United States and Europe.



MIKE KEITH, “VOICE OF THE TITANS”

Mike Keith starts his 27th season with the Tennessee Titans, his 26th as “The Voice of the Titans”.

Describing one legendary NFL play on January 8, 2000 put him on the map. Mike accurately and enthusiastically called the play that he later dubbed as “The Music City Miracle”, a last-second touchdown that gave the Tennessee Titans a playoff win over the Buffalo Bills. ESPN named Mike’s description of “The Music City Miracle” as one of the 10 Best Radio Calls in American Sports History.

With that signature call and scores more since 1999, Mike earned a spot on the “Top 100 Local Voices in the first 100 Years of Sports Broadcasting” list by Sports Broadcast Journal in 2021.

Along with being named Tennessee’s Sportscaster of the Year twelve times and winning 20+ Associated Press awards, Mike owns a 1997 Edward R. Murrow Award for nationwide excellence in reporting. Mike is a member of five Halls of Fame, including the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame, TSSAA Hall of Fame, BGA Hall of Fame and University of Tennessee Baseball Hall of Fame.

Outside of calling play-by-play on Sundays, Mike hosts multiple Titans Radio shows during game week, hosts The Mike Vrabel Show, Titans All Access and Titans Gameday television programs, and moderates the official Titans podcast known as The OTP. Mike has also called the Reese’s Senior Bowl and hosted shows on Sirius XM NFL Radio, has done play-by-play work for both ESPN and the SEC Network and is the special announcer for “Paddle Royale”, a ping-pong tournament that highlights Country Radio Seminar week annually. Yes, he calls ping-pong and has even called paintball. Ask Mike about it!

Two passions are calling Tennessee high school state championship events in various sports for the TSSAA and working with talented young broadcasters to help them develop their broadcasting craft. Teaching might have become Mike’s truest love, as he started his broadcasting career while in high school at BGA, working at WAGG-TV in Franklin. Mike likes to share with broadcasting students that he “made a ton of mistakes and had a lot of help along the way.”

Mike became the WUTK’s sports director on his third day on campus in Knoxville in 1986. Within just months of that appointment, at only 19, Mike was hired by the legendary John Ward with the Vol Radio Network. He would work in a variety of roles with the Vol Network from 1987-98, including being “The Voice of the Baseball Vols” from 1992-98. His love of college baseball is well-known, and the Titans certainly understand, having allowed ESPN to hire Mike to call NCAA Regionals in 2015, 2016 and 2018.

Mike also hosted one of Tennessee’s first daily sports talk shows from 1989-98 for WIVK/WNOX Radio in Knoxville. His four-hour show was named Tennessee’s best in five of the first six years that awards were presented in AP’s sports talk show category in 1990’s. Mike still makes weekly appearances on over ten different sports talk shows throughout the region during football season and he enjoys each.

Born in Knoxville and raised in Franklin, Mike and his wife, Michelle, have two children, Abby, and Matthew.



MATT SMITH

The opportunity to impact the lives of others can present itself in many ways. But for Matt Smith, he answers that calling every day in his life’s work. In death, he restores beauty and creates a greater family experience by making the loved one “Perfectly Presentable”.

If there ever were a trailblazer in a profession, it is Matt Smith. In the past 25 years, Matt has become an international icon in embalming and professional instruction.

“Matt MAKES the impossible POSSIBLE and the overwhelmingly challenging EASIER.”
~S. Hill

Matt is well-known for his innovative solutions for difficult case restoration and feature setting. The one to transform bodies and mindset in the most difficult cases;

Severe Edema, Severe Emaciation, Gun-shot trauma, Auto accident trauma, Burn victim, Decomposition cases, Jaundice, Infant embalming, Autopsy, Tissue Donor, Frozen cases, Multiple Complexities, The infamous 'Creating the Smile', and more.

Developing and teaching his rarified technical procedures and artistic enhancements with his extensive experience, Matt inspires this community. He has designed well-documented visuals and instructional courses to transform the profession. Matt is driven to make an impact. But most importantly, he is an inspirational, encouraging, and compelling coach.

Matt has spoken to numerous groups, Colleges, and Associations including the American Board of Funeral Services Education. Internationally Matt has presented for the NFDA, ICCFA, ABFSE, AFE in Hong Kong and Macau, and Trinidad & Tobago, Mexico, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. In the United States, he has presented at state association conventions in 30 states.

Embalming nearly 19,000 bodies during his career since graduating in 1994 from John A. Gupton College in Nashville, TN, Matt has been a trade embalmer for several funeral home operations in the Metro Detroit area. Matt is the owner and President of Homeward Bound Shipping specializing in domestic mortuary shipping and international repatriation. Matt is also the founder of Professional Embalmers Institute (PEI), where embalmers from around the world gain experience with hands-on training.

"Matt Smith is a true professional; an embalmer with great talent who combines technical proficiency and true compassion. He serves the living by caring for the dead."

~T. Lynch

We hope you enjoy your
2024 TFDA & TFSSC CONVENTION

