



THE LIGATURE

"The Tie That Binds"

Official Publication of the
John A. Gupton College
Alumni Association
Fall Edition - 2022



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JOHN A. GUPTON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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Website Link

Our College website now has a new Alumni Link:
www.guptoncollege.edu

Email us:



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Letter from the President

Dear Gupton Alumni:

I would first like to say what an honor it is to serve as the John A. Gupton 2022-2023 President. My goal is to represent the Alumni Association as proudly as so many others have done in the past. John A. Gupton was a fantastic experience for me. Each time I visit the school, so many fond memories come back to mind. The late nights studying for comps tests. Making sure my suits weren't wrinkled. We were some of the last students to be taught by the late Dr. Harris O. Yates. At the beginning of each semester, he would say, "Look to your right, look to your left. All of you will not finish my course." Boy was he right. Ask any past alumni about "Blood Tracing" and you will understand the dedication it took to pass his class. He was a great teacher and a great man.

This year's alumni reunion was fantastic! I was incredibly pleased to see the turnout. Each year I enjoy meeting new students, seeing old friends, and meeting our other alumni. We also had a good turnout for breakfast and the annual business meeting. A special thanks to Batesville, Matthews Aurora, and Wilbert Vaults for their continued support of the Alumni Association. We are working on more in-person continuing education classes. You can still go to the schools' website and obtain some forms from there.

We encourage all alumni that can please come and support graduation day. It will be held at the Lowes Vanderbilt Hotel on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 7:30 pm. We thank all the alumni who actively support the endowment fund. We encourage your 100% participation in sending your alumni dues.

In closing, if you have any suggestions about how to make our Alumni Association work better in the future, please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sincerely,

Christopher Jefferson



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And More!

Alumni Reunion Photos





Bringing James home

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON SLATE.COM BY CATHERINE ASHE JUNE 20, 2018

Would you like to know what terrifies pediatric ICU nurses? What could be scarier than a Code Blue, more alarming than a dropping heart rate in an unborn baby, or more shocking than the crimson spill of blood in a trauma unit? A newly bereaved mother wrapping her dead son in blankets and marching out of the hospital with his body. You'd think, sometime in the past 10 years, that this would've happened. Surely I could not be the first mother to walk away, to wish to bury her child at home? And yet it seems that I was.

Thirty-two weeks into a fairly uneventful pregnancy, we were told that our son, James, would likely die before he was born. He was afflicted with a chromosomal disease. If he lived to birth, he would probably die shortly afterward. Desperate to control something in the tumultuous aftermath of the diagnosis, I went into planning mode. If he died, would we bury or cremate him? How does one go about the planning of a funeral for a child not yet born? I should've been at Target buying wipes and diapers. Instead, I was driving through cemeteries to evaluate the view and speaking to crematorium directors.



One particular phone call will always stay with me. Shortly after the shocking news, I called a funeral home to discuss how a newborn's death would be handled. I asked, would they come to the hospital? Or would we bring our son to them? Brusquely, the funeral director informed me that he would have to consult with a "higher-up." There were no condolences, no offered words of sympathy. Just a cold silence. I knew there had to be a better way. I began to wonder about home burial. Even in the age of the internet, home-burial laws, which vary by state, can be challenging to locate and understand.

It took days of research and phone calls to find the answers. Every time I had to explain our story again, I wept. The fresh wound was reopened again and again. When James died on Jan. 2, 2017, at the age of 5 months, everything in my mind and body rebelled against the thought of leaving him in the hospital. I could not fathom the thought of my son's tiny, lifeless body being wheeled to the morgue and laid on a cold, stainless steel table to eventually be placed in a freezer. He would be alone, and he had never been alone in his life. As we prepared to leave the hospital with his body, the nurses were visibly flustered. They stammered out questions. Was this breaking some law? Was I really going to take my son's dead body with me when I left the hospital? The implication was clear: Did I really intend to bury him in my backyard like the family dog? God love the nurses, they tried to stall us while frantic phone calls ricocheted between the hospital and the health department. In their panic, all they could manage to come up with was that we would need a car seat. A car seat for our dead baby. "Just in case," they said. In due time, a car seat was procured. I glanced at it and scoffed. My husband meekly scooped it up and tucked it under his arm. We left the hospital with nurses trailing skeptically in our wake. There was no paperwork. There was no formality. We just ... left. We drove home with our dead baby cradled in my arms.

I had done my research. I knew my rights. In the state of North Carolina, home burial is legal. Further, transport of a body is legal for anyone with a relationship to the deceased. We were breaking no laws. In every state in the U.S. it is legal to have a home visitation, although home-burial and transport laws vary. We were assisted by a local funeral director who is a proponent for home burial in North Carolina. I knew that we would care for our son's body. We would open our modest house in the mountains to those who knew and loved him, and we would bury him. It seemed only natural to me that this was the way it should be done. Our son had lived five short months; all of them spent here in these sunny rooms. This was his home. He would be laid to rest here with his family nearby to watch over him. There would be no prescribed visitation time in a claustrophobic funeral parlor, no stilted negotiations over caskets, no cloying scent of antiseptic to cover the smell of death. That day, I somehow found the strength to go to my desk, sit at my computer, and write to friends, family, and James' medical caretakers. I let them know we would open our home the following day for a visitation. I had no expectations of what would happen.

Bringing James Home, Continued

That night, I laid in bed and tried to sleep. My son was nestled in his bed adjoining ours, as he had always been. Does that sound morbid? I thought so too once. As if somehow, in death, our children suddenly become something else—something frightening or unnatural. As it turns out, they are still our children. They are still the fingers and toes that we have lovingly counted and kissed. They are still the tiny embodiments of our hopes and dreams. Living or dead makes no difference. They are still part of us.

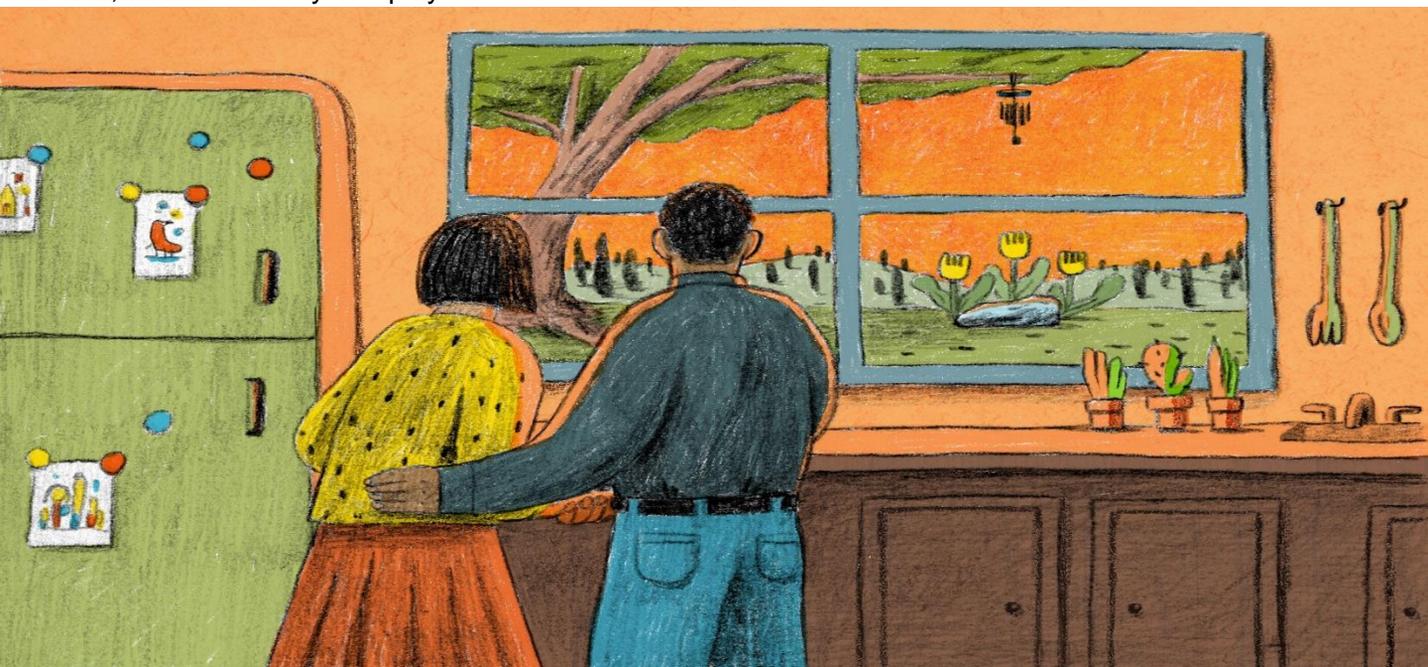
The next morning was cold and bright—January in western North Carolina. The sun was a silver disc in a steel sky. It became imperative to me when I woke that I notify our neighbors that our small cul-de-sac might experience heavier-than-usual traffic. So with my pale and shaken mother trailing along behind me, I made the rounds and knocked on doors. Why I couldn't have delegated that to someone else still eludes me.

The responses I received varied from bereft to empathetic. One neighbor, a steel-haired and tall woman in her late 60s, told me that she'd lost her first son at 1 day old. She said it quietly, and her expression was hard to read. She was of a generation that didn't talk about such terrible losses. One day, several decades ago, she came home from the hospital empty-handed and continued on with life.

The appointed hour arrived, and our street was clogged with traffic. Cars parked the entire length, on the shoulder and in the ditches. Our house filled with flowers and food and people. It must have been hard for many of my friends, most of them mothers, to walk to the crib in which our son lay. It must have been hard to reach out and stroke his cheek and to hold his little hand. They did, though. Those who'd had reservations, those who were afraid of our decision to keep our dead son at home, they came to me afterward, faces often wet with tears. "Why don't we do all of our burials like this?" they asked. "When did it become so different?"

The following day was clear, icy, and bleak. The wind was biting cold, but the sun shone down from a chill sky. I stood beside James' grave. Tears froze on my cheeks. My husband stood next to me. We each held James as the other read a eulogy. When it was time, I laid him in his little white coffin, surrounded by the pictures we'd chosen and the Disney princess figurine from his older sister. I slipped my wedding band onto his tiny hand. My husband knelt in the cold dirt and placed the lid carefully. We buried James at 4:52 p.m., the same time he came into this world.

We can see his grave from our kitchen window. It is outlined by rocks from local quarries and marked with a flat granite stone. *James Julian Ashe, Aug. 1, 2016-Jan. 2, 2017. Beloved Son and Brother.* Wind chimes hang over him. There are small remembrances left by his sisters. When I stand at the kitchen sink, washing dishes, or filling my 100th cup of water for the girls, I know that this is the better way. He is out there, buried in the soil of North Carolina. He is out there, where we can visit him every day, where his sisters can take flowers, and where they can play with their friends. He is home.



Summer Semester 2022- Top 10%



| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Willow Bynum | Martin, Tennessee |
| Maranda Cawthon | Bruceton, Tennessee |
| Travis Copenhaver | Alderson, West Virginia |
| Victoria Cross | Poplar Bulff, Missouri |
| Chloe Franks | Boliver, Tennessee |
| Angie Garcia | Mount Juliet, Tennessee |
| Sarah Grant | Dayton, Tennessee |
| Brittany Huffines | Lawrenceburg, Tennessee |
| Blake Irions | Hayti, Missouri |
| Lyndsey Lowery | Hayti, Missouri |
| Estreya McCanna | Clarksville, Tennessee |
| Alexis Moffett | Amory, Mississippi |
| Patrick Moore | Chattanooga, Tennessee |
| Lillian Mosher | Marietta, Georgia |
| Callia Riden | Old Hickory, Tennessee |
| Joshua Sparks | Grand Rapids, Michigan |
| Cameron Westbrook | Kingsport, Tennessee |

John A. Gupton College NBE pass rates and program information.

| Single Year | School Pass Rate | National Pass Rate | Single Year | School Pass Rate | National Pass Rate |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 2021 Arts | 96% | 68% | 2021 Sciences | 93% | 57% |
| 2020 Arts | 88% | 73% | 2020 Sciences | 81% | 64% |
| 2019 Arts | 90% | 72% | 2019 Sciences | 93% | 63% |
| 2018 Arts | 97% | 77% | 2018 Sciences | 94% | 71% |

| Year | Total Enrolled | # of New Students | # of Grads | Timely Grad* | Graduation Rate** | Did not finish*** | Overall % Employed | Employed In FS |
|------|----------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 2021 | 237 | 92 | 27 | 23/27 | 85% | 45 | 100% | 89% |
| 2020 | 231 | 70 | 46 | 26/46 | 57% | 26 | 82% | 80% |
| 2019 | 178 | 67 | 30 | 19/30 | 63% | 15 | 87% | 83% |
| 2018 | 173 | 81 | 30 | 30/30 | 93% | 31 | 100% | 87% |



JOHN A. GUPTON COLLEGE

A Professional Tradition Since 1946

GRADUATION 2022

We encourage all Alumni members to gather to celebrate and congratulate the **John A. Gupton College** class of 2022.

The graduation ceremony will be held at Nashville's Loews Vanderbilt Hotel located at 2100 West End Avenue. The ceremony will begin at 7:30 P.M. We hope to see you there!



Congratulations!

Class of **2022**



Mr. William "Billy" Claud Kernodle, II, of Wynne, Arkansas, died on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, in Olive Branch, Mississippi, he was 95. In 1947 Billy attended the **John A. Gupton School of Mortuary Science** and graduated in December of 1947. Visitation was held on Friday, November 12, 2021, at Kernodle Funeral Home from 5 to 7 PM. Funeral services were on Saturday, November 13, 2021, at 1 PM. Burial in Cogbill Cemetery with military honors. Memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church in Wynne, P. O. Box 1007, Wynne, Arkansas 72396 or Dream Flights, 1894 E. William St. 4-451, Carson City, NV 89701 or dreamflights.org.

Robert Bryan Warden, 68, of Hoxie, passed away Saturday, May 14, 2022, in the NEA Baptist Hospital in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He continued his education at **John A. Gupton Mortuary College** in Nashville, Tennessee to become a third generation Mortician in the family for the Bryan Funeral Home in Hoxie. Funeral Services were held Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 2 P.M. in the Bryan Chapel with Bro. Jake Guenrich officiating. Interment followed in the Lawrence Memorial Park. Visitation was Tuesday evening from 6 P.M. till 8 P.M. in the Bryan Chapel.




Alumni
Association



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LORETTA
LYNN
1932 - 2022

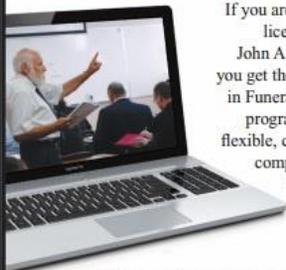


QUEEN
ELIZABETH II
1926 - 2022



Nichelle
Nichols
1932
2022

**ON-LINE ASSOCIATE DEGREE
IN FUNERAL SERVICE**



If you are interested in becoming a licensed funeral professional, John A. Gupton College can help you get there. The Associate Degree in Funeral Service is an accredited 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 or email admissions@guptoncollege.edu.



**JOHN A. GUPTON
COLLEGE**

**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 or email admissions@guptoncollege.edu.



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John A. Gupton Alumni Association

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