

# *Pierce Mortuary Colleges Profile*

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## **Who are Pierce Mortuary Colleges and what curricula are offered?**

Pierce Mortuary Colleges is a group of private colleges teaching funeral service education. These colleges include:

- Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, Dallas, TX
- Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service, Decatur, GA (Atlanta area)
- Mid-America College of Funeral Service, Jeffersonville, IN (Louisville, KY area)

Under one management team, they offer a student an outstanding educational background to enter the funeral service profession. The curriculum offered at Pierce Mortuary Colleges addresses the changing needs and expectations associated with funeral services and inclusive to the high accreditation standards of the American Board of Funeral Service Education. The Mortuary Science Program prepares students for a career as a funeral service professional. The curriculum's strong theoretic basis is complemented with practical training, resulting in a well-rounded curriculum.

## **What is the history of Pierce Mortuary Colleges?**

Dallas Institute traces its roots to 1900 with one of the first schools of embalming in the United States, the Barnes School of Anatomy, Sanitary Science and Embalming later called The Dallas School of Embalming. In 1945, the school was succeeded by Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science founded by W.H. Pierce and L.G. Frederick. Dallas Institute of Funeral Service is the longest continuous operation under the same general management of any funeral service educational institution in the United States.

The Gupton School of Embalming was founded in 1920 by Mr. L. A. Gupton in Nashville, Tennessee, for the purpose of teaching the art and science of embalming and funeral directing. It began with a faculty of two, teaching from the chapel of a Nashville funeral home. In 1922, Mr. Gupton was joined by Mr. W. G. Jones and the college was named Gupton-Jones College of Embalming. In 1954, Gupton-Jones College was merged with Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science becoming the Dallas Institute-Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in Dallas. By 1969, growth demands led to re-establishing Gupton-Jones as a separate school in Nashville.

Mid-America College began as two separate mortuary colleges - the Kentucky School of Mortuary Science founded in Louisville in 1895, and the Indiana College of Mortuary Science, founded in Indianapolis in 1905. In 1972, the Kentucky School of Mortuary Science became part of Dallas Institute, followed in 1978 by the Indiana College of Mortuary Science, which changed its name to Mid-America College of Funeral Service in 1979. At this time the non-profit corporation was changed from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science to Pierce Mortuary Colleges, Inc., and each of the satellite schools assumed its individual identity.

## **What makes Pierce Mortuary Colleges unique?**

Pierce Mortuary Colleges promote excellence in the 21st century practice of mortuary arts and sciences. When students enter a Pierce Mortuary College classroom, they are enrolled with other students seeking an education in funeral service. We provide a full program which includes all required general education and mortuary science courses in an environment that nurtures the profession of funeral service. The students are taught by licensed professionals who have undergone the same requirements that the students will undergo.

## **What are the benefits of an education from Pierce Mortuary Colleges?**

The three Pierce Mortuary Colleges have a rich history in tradition and their success can be measured by the number of outstanding funeral directors who are alumni. Students are given a funeral service education taught by professionals who have worked in funeral service and have the opportunity to learn to embalm under professionals

with many years of experience. Their funeral service associate's degree offers superior, hands-on training that helps graduates stand out in the job market—and in the mortuary science profession. In addition to standard courses required for licensure as a funeral director and embalmer, their degree also provides students with two certifications: Cremation Arranger Certification and the Crematory Operations Certification. Their Associate's degree and Bachelor's degree in Funeral Service is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

### **What value does a Pierce Mortuary College graduate bring to a funeral home?**

Each college is recognized nationwide for producing knowledgeable funeral service practitioners. Individuals who have graduated from a Pierce Mortuary College have learned at a school where the sole focus is funeral service education. Graduates have also studied under funeral professionals who not only teach theory and principles but also impart their practical perspective that better positions graduates for the real world.

### **How would potential students contact Pierce Mortuary Colleges for more information?**

A central website through which students can access each of the colleges is [www.pierce.edu](http://www.pierce.edu).

Individual college contact information:

Dallas Institute of Funeral Service

Local: (214) 388-5466 or Toll-Free (800) 235-5444 or visit their website at [www.dallasinstitute.edu](http://www.dallasinstitute.edu)

Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service

Local: (770) 593-2257 or Toll-Free (800)848-5352 or visit their website at [www.gupton-jones.edu](http://www.gupton-jones.edu)

Mid-America College of Funeral Service

Local: (812) 288-8878 or Toll-Free (800)221.6158 or visit their website at [www.midamerica.edu](http://www.midamerica.edu)

### **Dallas Institute of Funeral Service - President James Shoemake, CFSP**



#### **Why do students come to Dallas Institute?**

Your choice in a college for your funeral service education will be one of the most important decisions you will make. Dallas Institute of Funeral Service has an outstanding tradition in funeral service education. Educating men and women for a future in the funeral service profession has been its sole purpose for almost seventy years.

#### **What makes Dallas Institute more unique than any other mortuary college?**

Our state of the art facilities, excellent faculty and the location in the heart of the Southwest give the student every opportunity to succeed, as well as to have the amenities of a forward-thinking cosmopolitan city like Dallas. Preparing students to be successful in our profession is our primary purpose.

#### **Where do I believe our profession will be in 5 years?**

I anticipate many new challenges in the next few years as the attitudes toward death and memorialization change to reflect a younger generation arranging funerals for their elders. Changes in economic circumstances for those whose end-of-life decisions are imminent will cause many choices to be based on finances. Our profession will need to be prepared to offer viable alternatives to the way things have "always been done". I expect cremation to be the choice for final disposition in many more services. Memorialization will still be vital as we seek to personalize each service to the life remembered.

#### **Why do I love my job?**

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to teach when I came to Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. I always loved human anatomy and to have the opportunity to help others to learn the mysteries of our bodies as well as how the process of embalming works using the body to distribute embalming fluid is exciting. Having the opportunity to

share our knowledge and life experiences with others is stimulating. Watching students who are learning has been motivating me for over thirty years.

### **Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service - President Walter L. Crox, Jr., CFSP**

#### **Why do students come to Gupton-Jones College?**



Students come to Gupton-Jones College for a variety of reasons, leading with our reputation for excellence and dedicated educational focus on funeral service. Unlike community or general studies colleges, nearly every course is taught with the perspective of funeral service – for example, our chemistry courses are all about embalming whereas at a community college you'll be in a chemistry course that barely touches on that specialization. In addition to the focused curriculum, many students come to Gupton-Jones as referrals from funeral professionals who had graduated from Gupton-Jones, or because they come from families where one or more previously graduated from Gupton-Jones.

#### **What makes Gupton-Jones College more unique than any other mortuary college?**

Gupton-Jones College is one of the largest mortuary schools in the country with a proud heritage of producing top-notch funeral professionals. In fact, nearly all of our instructors are themselves graduates of Gupton-Jones and bring a diversity of knowledge and experience back to the college to pass along to students.

#### **Where do I believe our profession will be in 5 years?**

The steady increase in the cremation rate will drive tremendous change and necessitate different business models in the funeral service profession. Cremation does not generate the same revenue per service compared to traditional burial and yet many businesses have fixed overhead in facilities and other operational components. However, we as an industry are not doing our jobs educating cremation families on the value of services and even viewing of the body. Dr. Alan Wolfelt says that in order to say goodbye, you first have to say hello – that's the value of viewing the body. It is extremely important from a psychological perspective and we must impart that to our students so that they can better serve families' needs.

#### **Why do I love my job?**

I get to help change people's lives, have an impact on students, and hopefully instill in them the passion to serve and help families during very difficult times.

### **Mid-America College of Funeral Service - President Lauren M. Budrow, CFSP**



#### **Why do students come to Mid-America College?**

In addition to our high National Board Exam scores, students are attracted to Mid-America College because of our reputation for excellent instruction, faculty who are passionate about funeral service, and the knowledge that they will graduate with all the tools to help them succeed as funeral professionals.

#### **What makes Mid-America College more unique than any other mortuary college?**

While all mortuary colleges offer similar curriculum as accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education, the educational and social experience can vary widely. As the name implies, Mid-America College is conveniently located in the heartland of America, providing a well-rounded schedule of extracurricular activities balanced with a pragmatic approach to education. We have an extremely diverse student body and foster a collaborative working environment among students and faculty.

#### **Where do I believe our profession will be in 5 years?**

We are already seeing an increase in the use of funeral celebrants as families desire unique experiences to celebrate

their loved ones. Funeral service professionals must recognize and be responsive to these expectations. We will be doing more event planning and will be challenged with coming up with ways to personalize funerals and memorials. Creativity will be the key to our success. I also expect that continuing education requirements will increase for state licensure.

### Why do I love my job?

I love my job because I love the funeral service profession. I have a vision for what I want funeral service to be, and I was not able to make the same kind of impact meeting one family at a time in an at-need situation as I was in educating many future funeral directors to spread new ideas and enthusiasm for what we do.

### Pierce Mortuary Colleges - Dr. Jill Karn, Chief Operating Officer



#### Why do students choose a Pierce Mortuary College?

Each of the Pierce Mortuary Colleges provides students with a solid core of quantitative analytic skills coupled with practical knowledge. Our instructors impart real-world expertise along with the methodical curriculum, delivering an experiential learning environment for students. Our goal is to graduate funeral professionals who will succeed with diverse technical and business skills, grounded in integrity.

#### How are the Pierce Mortuary Colleges responding to emerging challenges in the industry?

We are always looking at what more we can do to better position our students to gain a competitive edge in the changing market. One example is recognizing the rising cremation rates, all Pierce College graduates will have both a Cremation Arranger certification and a Crematory Operator certification which we offer in partnership with the International Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association.

We also are emphasizing to students that this is an industry that deals with a lot of abstracts where there may not be textbook solutions – this is why we give students an abundance of practical guidance and teach them how to identify problems and find solutions. This will not only serve them well professionally but also for their employers, and ultimately the families they serve.

### Why do I love my job?

It is so gratifying to see people's lives change as a result of their learning experience in any of our colleges. I also see the positive impact that they in turn make on other people, and this is most rewarding for me. Finally, I have the pleasure to work day in and day out with a group of educators who are so committed to mentoring individuals for rewarding careers.

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