

# Gilpatric-VanVliet Funeral Home moves to Esopus

ULSTER PARK, NY— NYS licensed funeral director **Harry VanVliet IV**, a lifelong resident of the town of Esopus, NY announces that his firm, the **Gilpatric-VanVliet Funeral Home**, has moved from Smith Ave, Kingston, NY into a newly renovated facility at 339 Broadway, Ulster Park, Town of Esopus. Esopus is bordered on three sides by water including 10 miles of the Hudson River shoreline to the East, the Rondout Creek to the North, and the Walkill River to the West.

The Cape-Cod-style facility is handicap accessible, with a large chapel, multiple restrooms, abundant off-street lighted parking, updated audio-visual technology, and a host of other amenities. Uniquely, this move occurs during the year that the funeral home celebrates its 140th anniversary of continuous compassionate service to families.

Established in 1872 as the **Murphy Funeral Home**, it became the **James M. Murphy Funeral Home** in 1917, then the **Gilpatric-Murphy Funeral Home** in 1972.

The **Murphy Funeral Home** was founded in 1872 by **John J. Murphy**, and has been in continuous operation since that time. **Marie Murphy Gilpatric Cherney**, became the youngest licensed undertaker in New York State in 1925. Marie, her father, **James M. Murphy**, and her son **James F. Gilpatric** were all graduates of the *Renouard Training School for Embalmers* in New York City.

James F. Gilpatric officially became associated with the business in 1950, and took over as owner and director in 1954 after the death of his grandfather, James M. Murphy.



Harry VanVliet, IV



Gilpatric-Vanvliet Funeral Home

In 2005, James F. Gilpatric sold the familiar two story, Irish green and white funeral home building at 176 Broadway, and moved his business operations to 27 Smith Avenue, which was also home to the **Joseph V. Leahy Funeral Home**, with the assistance of Leahy president/Director **Bernard C. Gray**. In essence two separate funeral firms in one building. The move represented a semi-retirement for Jim, who had been a licensed funeral director since 1951. And with the move to the Leahy building, the **Gilpatric-Murphy Funeral Home** was more centrally located, with more room and accessibility.

In his more than 60 years on the job, Gilpatric saw changes ranging from how embalming is performed to how the deceased are removed from their place of death to changes in calling hours. Gravity embalming has been replaced with machine-aided processes that cut the procedure from 12 hours to three. When Gilpatric assisted his grandfather, removals were done

in long wicker baskets, and calling hours lasted for days. Family members sometime spent the night.

In 2009, while an associate funeral director with the Leahy Funeral Home, Harry VanVliet IV purchased

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Reprinted from

November 2012

**NOMIS**  
PUBLICATIONS, INC.  
**FUNERAL HOME &  
CEMETERY NEWS**

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the business from Jim Gilpatric. VanVliet changed the firm's name in 2010 to the Gilpatric-VanVliet Funeral Home, and continued to operate it from within the Leahy Funeral Home building on Smith Ave, until this move. The goal of the name change was to assist families in identifying which one of the multiple Kingston-based funeral homes Harry was with.

Also unique in this move is that this is the first and only funeral home in Esopus, NY managed and operated by a lifelong Esopus resident with family roots deep in the town's history. It was Harry's dream to one day open a funeral home in his hometown where his family was among the first settlers, dating back to the early 1700's. Harry has spent his entire adult life in public and community service. He served as a deputy sheriff with the Ulster County Sheriff's Criminal Division beginning in 1977,



(L to R) Harry VanVliet, IV  
and Jim Gilpatric

ascended through the ranks, and retired as Captain of Police Services in 2007. During his law enforcement career, he attended the mortuary science program at *Hudson Valley Community College*, Troy, NY earning an associate degree in 1998 and soon after his license as a NYS licensed funeral director.

The Gilpatric-VanVliet Funeral Home remains an independently owned and operated firm offering funeral, cremation and prearrangement services. Though they have moved to Esopus, they will continue to offer families in Kingston and surrounding communities the choice to select their firm for funeral, prearrangement and crema-

tion needs. "For over a century, our firm has earned a deservedly good reputation, which is built upon the words of others – and merited by our performance," stated VanVliet. To learn more visit [www.gvvfh.com](http://www.gvvfh.com).

Reprinted from

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