

*Sossoman*  
Funeral Home & Crematory Center  
*5th Generation Family Owned & Operated Since 1949.*



*Hunter Lee Ensley*

**June 18, 2004 - June 10, 2025**

Hunter Lee Ensley 20 years old of Morganton, North Carolina was a student at Duke University. He was born in Albany, New York and grew up in Morganton, North Carolina. He loved the outdoors and especially loved the farm on which he grew up, the Perkins Farm. The Perkins Farm was his place of solitude, and he was always at ease there. Hunter was a person who bonded deeply with those whom he called family and friends. No one had a better friend than Hunter. Those of us who were the closest to him will be permanently affected by the loss of such a close friend, family member, and son.

Hunter was preceded in death by his Nana, Vivian Pauline Dean Ensley and his uncle Anthony Gehle. Hunter is survived by his parents, Rhonda and Michael Ensley of the home, grandparents Haven & Carol Ensley of Morganton, Millie & Richard Goodell of Franklin, NC, and Richard & Karen Gehle of Okeechobee, FL. Uncles Randall Gehle & wife Annette, David Ensley & wife Kim, Sean O'Neill and wife Danielle, Aunts Vicki Todd & husband Mark, and Renee Palmer & husband Joel. Four first cousins also survived, Michael Todd, Allie Todd, Kaitlin Ensley, and Cassidy Lakes.

Hunter was a person of many accomplishments as he was the Class of 2022 Valedictorian at Freedom High School, an Eagle Scout, and had a vast array of other accomplishments. His mind was keen and powerful and even at Duke University he had a mind capable of challenging the strongest scholarly thinkers. To demonstrate his range of capabilities he was also an accomplished equipment operator. Hunter was able to do anything that he cared to do and anything he set his mind to.

The loss of such a young and promising person defies explanation and understanding. Hunter found this world full of hypocrisy and pain. He is now in his forever home with the Lord Jesus and his Nana with whom he is playing Secret Agent. Hunter was our heartbeat, and our hearts will never beat right again. We will miss him and love him forever and be joyous when we meet him again standing by his

Nana and our Lord Jesus. The world is a bit less bright, a bit gloomier, and will never be the same. Please pray for us as we learn to cope with a loss much too early in life.

A celebration of Hunters life will be held at First Baptist Church of Morganton, North Carolina on his birthday, June 18th, 2025, with a visitation starting at 9:30am and the service starting at 11:00am.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

#### Visitation

June 18, 2025

9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

First Baptist Church Morganton

#### Service

June 18, 2025

11 a.m.

First Baptist Church Morganton

#### Committal

N/A

# Tribute Wall



–Leah

I understand! My heart hurts for your loss

–patti anderson



–Lillian Lee



My deepest and most sincere condolences to Micheal and family, I cannot imagine the pain that you are feeling... but always remember, Proverbs 3:5-6...know he is home and you will see him again.

–Philip Zitzmann

My heart aches for you Rhonda, Michael and family. I met Hunter only a couple of

times and just was amazed by all of his smiles, kindness and intelligence. I pray that you find healing in knowing that Hunter is among many angels and is being swept in by open arms. I hope to visit sometime in the autumn. Love , Aunt Marge

–Marge Gehle



–Jessica Gaspar



The first time I ever met Hunter was as a freshman in high school. He looked at me and said “You look like someone who likes hugs”, asked if he could hug me, and proceeded to share his random snacks me, someone he just met. I would continue to interact with him, many of our classes the same. I was always fascinated by how intelligent he was. To this day, I still stand in awe of him. He’s one of the people who you just can’t miss the small details of. Which, he had a way of making anyone themselves feel seen too. You couldn’t help but just smile, he was so endearingly Hunter. I haven’t spoken to him since the end of high school, but I always wondered what he was up to. I send my deepest condolences. May Peace and Love find us all in life. My thoughts are with you immensely.

–Anonymous

Dear Haven and extended family. So sorry for your loss of this talented young man.

–Bo Cash



Our hearts and love goes to The Whole Family during this time. Our family prays for comfort and strength for All of you. All we can say is that we know that feeling and we are here for you for anything to help and comfort one another. Our prayers, condolences and love to you all in the name of Jesus! The Sic family

–Juliana Sic

–Valerie Reisman



I'm so sorry for your family's loss. My heartfelt condolences go out to you all.

–Trey Carland



my prayers are with you Rhonda and family.

–Monica Webster

–Kathi Maness



Our hearts have been heavy with the ache of your loss. We think of you both and while we don't know your heartbreak we our reminded of how fragile, painful and beautiful life is.



We are sending our deepest condolences and embracing you from afar. Love to you both and your entire family, John & Tammy Derry

—John & Tammy Derry

—Manoj Sahasrabudhe



No words from us with my family to YOU all but we do understand all the emotions that all may bring. Our heart, prayers for everyone! Our daughter Maria has good memories with Hunter during their Elementary-HS years. Our condolences to everyone. We are here to help in anyway as we were at one point we were welcome into a club that we never signed up for. We thank God and the support of many in our community that has become family sent from God to help, support, be there for us and listened to our sorrows and unanswered questions. May God give you the comfort and strength. Our love to you; The Sic Family

—Juliana Sic



My heart aches for your family. Please know I have prayed for your family constantly and that you are so very close to my heart. I pray for God's peace that surpasses all understanding. Our community grieves with you.

—Ellen Settlemyer



Rhonda, Michael, we are praying for you and Hunter. Our hearts ache for you —Jim Sabin

—Jim Sabin



–Mike Charles

Our hearts ache for you. There are no words that can take away your pain and grief but know that we are praying for comfort and peace for you now and in the days to come. Much love from your Cane Creek family.

–Norma and Mike Clayton

Hunter was a beautiful young man. We will never forget him.

–Susanne Long

Hunter was a precious young man who we were honored to have met. We knew him as a kind, polite, thoughtful and generous young man. Our deepest condolences and prayers for him and to his loving family.

–Russ & Tonya Fischer



We are so sorry for the loss of your son. You are in our families thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

–Chuck Beitel



Michael and Rhonda I was informed yesterday by Mary Ellen about the tragic loss of your son. My heart is absolutely broken for you. No words are adequate, but I



want you to know that you and your family are in my constant thoughts and prayers, and I pray that the Lord will give you strength in your pain and help you endure and find peace. May the Lord comfort and sustain you always.

–Emory Cook

Our deepest condolences for the Ensley Family. You are in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

–Bill and Kelly Wood



Hunter will forever live in our memories. We send you our love and heartfelt condolences. We wish you all the strength in the world and the heavens above. Warm hugs and love.

–Pasi, Johanna, Elmeri & Emmi



–Kenady Roper



My heartfelt condolences to the entire family. Extremely saddened to hear this sad news. My prayers are with you all in this hour of grief.

–Seema Sethi MD



My deepest sympathies are extended to your entire family at this time.





–Adrienne Evans



Dear Rhonda and Michael, There are no words to ease the pain or to console you after losing your child. Please, know you are in our thoughts and heart and we pray for you and for Hunter. May his soul rest in peace. With all our sympathy, Bettina and Jürgen

–Bettina Bastian



We are so very sorry for Michael and Rhonda and the entire Ensley family for the loss of son, Hunter. Although he will no longer be walking the land and exploring the nature around him that he loved so much, our memories of his curiosity, intellect, friendship and smile will shine brightly with each of us every day. Bless you.

–Carl and Lynne Kohrt



Please accept my deepest condolences. My heart goes out to all of you. Sending prayers for peace and comfort.

–Angela Marsh

Our deepest condolences and thoughts and prayers for the Ensley Family. You are in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

–Bill and Kelly Wood



I am deeply sorry I did not have the privilege of knowing Hunter; he was an exceptional young man. My thoughts and prayers are with Rhonda, Michael and other family and



friends who were close to Hunter. Irene von Lazar

–Irene von Lazar

Praying for your family.

–Bonnie Ensley, Amy and John Ward, Brooke and Chris Branks and family



Hunter was smart, kind, and embracing of all others. His death is a devastating loss for parents who dedicated their lives to raising a tremendous young man and for a community that would have benefited from his future goals. This is a tough time for his generation. Rhonda and Michael we are here to support you in going through what no parent should ever have to endure. Rest in peace Hunter.

–Megan Sacchetti



Dear Rhonda and Michael, There are no words that could ease your unimaginable pain of losing Hunter. Our heart aches with yours and we will keep you and Hunter in our prayers. With deepest sympathy and love. Bettina and Jürgen

–Bettina Bastian



–Jeff & Trisha Richardson





–Anonymous



You all are in my thoughts and prayers.

–Lisa Stamey



I am your mail carrier and I'm so sorry to hear about this! I will be praying for your family!

–Catherine Darling



It was such a blessing and honor to know Hunter. He was truly one of a kind and one of the best friends anyone could have. I miss his hugs and giant smile! I am forever blessed to have had him in my life.

–Mattie Plaster



May you find comfort and peace in all the memories you have. With sympathy and love. Avril

–Avril Tatum

Rhonda & Michael We are praying for you both and Hunter too. I have no words, but please know Mike and I love and respect all three of you.

–Carol Maxwell



The world has lost a special person much too soon, but Hunter's legacy of love for nature, for knowledge, and for his family will endure forever in our memories and those of his loving parents, Rhonda and Michael.

–Carl and Lynne Kohrt



Prayers for the family from a friend of a friend.

–Ronnie Ratliffe



God Bless your family as you go through this absolutely heartbreaking time, We will continue to pray for your family May he rest in peace Marc & Cindy Hatchel

–marc s hatchel



Rhonda and Michael, We are deeply sorry for the loss of Hunter. He will be missed and always remembered. Our hearts are with you and the whole family during this incredibly difficult time. We are lifting you and your family up in prayer and will continue to hold you close in our thoughts and prayers in the days ahead. We are close by if

you need anything. We love you all. Kelli, John and Peyton Chasteen

–Kelli (Sellers) Chasteen

It has been a few years since we have seen Hunter but we remember him as a sweet and very bright young man. Our hearts break for his parents, grandparents and other dear family. We love you all.

–Angela Nicholas and Al

–Anonymous



I remember Hunter from kindergarten. The first thing that comes to mind when I think of Hunter was his individuality and immense love for bugs. I had a crush on him for much of 3rd and 4th grade because of his tremendous intelligence. Hunter was not only a pleasure to have in class because he was funny and kind but also because of the way he stimulated my curiosity and because he thought differently from me. I haven't spoken to him for a very long time but I think about him often. I often thought about trying to reconnect and ask him for a coffee sometime; now I have immense regret I never did. My sincerest condolences to you Mrs. Ensely especially. It was easy to see how involved you were and how much you cared about Hunter due to your commitment to student life at FHES. The coming days I will be keeping all impacted in my prayers.

–Sophia Poteat



I was absolutely heartbroken to hear about Hunter's passing. I had the true privilege of teaching him in both 7th and 8th grade, and I will never forget the kindness,



intelligence, and quiet strength he carried with him. He was one of those students who stays with you long after the school year ends. Hunter made my classroom a better place simply by being in it. He was thoughtful, respectful, and had such a genuine way of making others feel seen.

Watching him grow during those years was a gift, and I am devastated by this loss. Please know I'm holding your family in my heart. I am so very sorry, and I hope you can find some small comfort in knowing how much he was admired and cared for. With deepest sympathy, Brittany Buchanan

–Brittany Buchanan



I'm very sad and troubled to hear this. He was an amazing young man. My prayers are with all of you.

–Julie Barlow

–LaNisha Thorpe



I was so saddened to receive the news from Haven. Mike, I can't even imagine what you are going through. Praying for all of you that God will comfort you at this time and that He will help you make sense of this. God Bless Rod Allen

–Rodney Allen



Hunter, it was a pleasure to know you, teach you, and learn from you. I loved your enthusiasm for learning, your wit, and sense of humor. The world was a better place with you in it, but it's also a better place because you were in it. You are



so missed and loved. I will cherish the memories of us learning together. Rhonda and Michael, thank you for sharing your kind, inquisitive, and vibrant son. Our prayers are with your family for comfort, healing, and peace.

–Cher Wheeler



Sincere condolences for the loss of Hunter. I do not have words to express my grief, I cannot imagine the state of the family and loved ones. Praying for strength. May his soul rest in peace.

–Priti Bhagia, MD

–Edward and Roben Plyler



Our deepest sympathies for the loss of Hunter. The staff of Valdese Cleaners

–Amy Crotts



May his memory be a blessing.

–Stephanie Rose

So sorry to get this news. Hunter was a special person who will be forever missed. Our heart goes out to the family.

–Brandon and Lila Jones

Nothing I can say will ever ease your pain. I will forever remember Hunter as an adorable child. I will always be

there for all of you. Pauline will care for him until you see him again.



My condolences and prayers of comfort & strength to the Family of Hunter Lee Ensley.

–Kayla L. Broadie



I was so saddened to hear this. Hunter has such a beautiful soul and bright smile. The world really did lose a little light with this loss....

–Tricia Lindsay



What a beautiful and heartfelt obituary for your dear Hunter. It's a true testament to your faith, love, and strong family bond. Although your hearts are broken, may you find comfort in knowing that you will see him again one day in a place where there is only rejoicing. (Colleague & friend of Randy Gehle)

–Lori Fox

Rest in Peace

–Carlos H Barrero







–Renee Palmer



Sending my condolences.

–Andrea Ridley Hale



–Greg Huynh



–Ed Hathaway



My heart aches for you. There are no words to express our sympathies. We love you and please let us know if we can help to ease your pain at all.

–Christina Campbell

It seems like yesterday that this beautiful brown-eyed boy joined our Cub Scout Pack 202. I was overjoyed as Hunter brought inquisitiveness, intelligence, spunk, and kindness to our tight-knit group. Being his den leader was a joy because there was always a smile, hug, and willingness to help. He also brought with him a family who adored and supported him. Even his grandfather pitched in to teach life skills to our Pack. It is difficult to wrap my brain around him being gone so soon. The world is a better place because of Hunter, and our lives are better because of his influence. I will always be so proud of him. May he rest in the arms of our loving God. Rhonda & Michael, may you feel the prayers and love that are being sent to you and your precious family during this time. With love,  
"Ms. Ingrid", Jeff, Reed & John Farrar

–Ingrid Farrar

My heart is broken and my sky's are dark today. I had the honor and pleasure of photographing Rhonda Michael and Hunter from day 1. I watching him grow into a beautiful young man with so much talent. I was so taken by the way his mind worked and his sheer intelligence. I knew he was destined for greatness. We are heartbroken the Lord called him home. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Rhonda, Michael and all their families. We can't imagine your pain. We are praying for your comfort during these difficult days ahead. With Love from Stephen and the Dey family. God Bless!

–Stephen Dey



Dear Rhonda and Mike, you and all of your family members are in my heartfelt thoughts and prayers.

–Libby Linker



My heart is broken for such a loss as you have. The world



will miss such a precious Great Nephew as he was to me. Many prayers and thoughts go out to you all. May God give you comfort in many ways. Love you all

–Linda Dean Sellers



You will forever be little Hunter to us, playing and always smiling, with Marlie.. these will always be precious moments and memories. You were Loved by many... For ever Blessed to have been apart of your life.

–Dennis and Angela Clay