

**Ghost tour of downtown
Tallahassee proves
theatrical, educational**

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Note: text in [] contains the corrections made, Ghost Tours are offered annually several nights in October and year-round as preformed group tours. Prices for ghost tours vary. Reservations call 850-212-2063.

When I started this column, I decided to make a list of things that I wanted to do and see in Tallahassee.

Something that has been on my to-do list for quite some time now is taking a downtown walking tour. And last Thursday I finally did it!

It was around 6:45 p.m. and it was already getting dark. I was to meet up at Kleman Plaza with tour hostess Beth LaCivita, owner of Guided Tours in Florida's Capital and the Forgotten Coast.

LaCivita has been doing these tours for about six years. She said conducting the walking tours is her way of teaching local history, but in a fun way.

"I've always loved Florida history and I love to share," she said. "During Florida's territory days everything happened in Tallahassee. There is so much rich history, it's very unique."

And she's not just driven by passion. LaCivita is bona fide, having received her master's degree in history, specializing in Florida's history. She's served as the former executive director of the local preservation board and worked for the state's Bureau of Historic Preservation.

Thursday night I was signed up to take a ghost tour. Joining me were students from the Trinity School for Children from Tampa.

Now it normally doesn't take much to scare me, so I was a little nervous to learn about the grim past of

Tallahassee.

My tour guide was Dr. William J. Gunn (otherwise known as Jaylen Christie, a local actor). Gunn was the first black in Florida to graduate from medical school and open a practice. I learned that on my tour.

And just in case you haven't pieced it together — he's been dead since 1954 [[1922](#)].

Before the tour started he said, "Please do not touch,

feed, abuse or molest any of the ghosts" — and that let me know it was going to be an interesting night.

There were several stops along way: Regions Bank, otherwise known as "Hanging Hall;" [[The Historic Exchange Bank Building](#)] the Knott House, the downtown chain of parks, the Columns building, St. James Missionary Baptist Church [[St. James C.M.E. Church](#)] and the old city cemetery (my favorite stop of the tour). And that is just to name a few.

I found the tour not only theatrical, but entertaining and very educational.

Even my tour guide, who's from Tallahassee, said he's learned a lot from the tours, such as the fact that the builder of the Knott House, George Proctor, was a free black man.

I highly recommend the tour. And if you're not into ghosts, don't worry. There are other options available and rest assured it'll still be fun.