



This Pre-planning Guide has been developed so that you may provide your family with a record of your wishes and preferences for a Funeral/Memorial Service.

Although this can be a difficult task, leaving your loved ones information, guidance, and ideas about what is important to you at your time of death, not only personalizes the service but greatly eases the burden on loved ones during an emotionally stressful time.

It is important that the information in this Guide be reviewed regularly, and appropriate changes made when necessary. Consider it an extension of your will and estate planning. Please feel free to make copies of this guide and to pass them on to your friends and families as “gifts of life.”

When you are finished filling out the Guide, it is beneficial to share your wishes with a family member or trusted friend. If you are unable to review the Guide with a family member, be sure to let someone know that you have completed a Pre-planning Guide.

I have left a copy of my Memorial Service Pre-Planning Guide with:

Important:

Please do not leave the original copy of this Guide in your safety deposit box. Your family may require this information during the weekend when the banks are closed, and often safety deposit access may be frozen at the time of death.

The time you spend now will leave an ever-lasting legacy to your friends and family.

Let's begin:

To begin, find a quiet and peaceful place to fill out the Pre-planning Guide. Give yourself adequate time, and allow yourself the privilege of remembering the good times as well as the bad. Be prepared to laugh and to cry. Be creative and let your imagination flow. Remember that the guide is something that you will fill out, but the funeral it helps to plan will be for your friends and family. It will help them to remember you as a unique individual and to gain much needed emotional support during their grieving process.

Filling out this Guide can be an emotional and difficult task. However, the questions are presented in such a way as to make it clear and easy to follow, and to inspire your creativity. Remember that the information you record is a guide only, and you are not obligating your friends and family to fulfill all of these wishes. You are simply giving them a variety of information that will help to create a ceremony that reflects your ideas and beliefs. This is an invaluable gift to leave your loved ones.

FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE PRE-PLANNING GUIDE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Revision Date: _____

Dear Loved Ones,

You will need to make many decisions after my death and I have recorded my personal wishes and preferences regarding a Funeral/Memorial Service in the Pre-planning Guide that follows. I would ask that you read through this entire document before finalizing any arrangements.

□ I Vital Statistics

The Funeral Director will need the following information to complete a Death Certificate:

1. Legal Name:

2. Address:

3. Date of Birth:

(Year/Month/Day)

4. Place of Birth:

5. Country of Citizenship:

6. Social Insurance/Security Number:

7. Usual Occupation:

8. Kind of Business/Industry:

9. Military Service:

10. Highest Level of Education Completed:

11. Marital Status:

12. Legal Name of Spouse (including that of a deceased spouse):

13. Occupation of Spouse (including that of a deceased spouse):

14. Father's Name (First, Middle, Last):

15. Mother's Name (First, Middle, Last, Maiden):

16. Place of Disposition (Cemetery, Crematorium, other):

[II Other Personal Information](#)

The following is information that might be useful when completing an Obituary or for writing a Eulogy.

1. Nickname or name I am commonly called:

2. Education:

Elementary Schools Attended: _____

High Schools Attended: _____

Colleges/Universities/Trade Schools:

I hold the following educational degrees:

I received the following scholarships:

3. Military Service:

Date and place of Enlistment: _____

Date and place of Discharge: _____

Level of Service: _____

Honorary Mention: _____

Details of Service: _____

4. Religious Affiliation:

Names of Churches I have attended (past to present):

I have held the following position/s at my church:

5. Community Service:

I have enjoyed the following Community Service/Volunteer Work:

6. Sports and Leisure:

I enjoy or have enjoyed playing the following sports:

I have received the following athletic awards:

My Step Parent Information:

My Brothers and Sisters:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

My Spousal Information:

Name: _____ Age: _____

If deceased, date of death: _____

Something special I would like you to know about my Spouse is:

Information regarding previous spouses (if appropriate):

My Children are:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Living: _____ Deceased: _____

Address: _____

My Grandchildren are:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

My Great Grandchildren are:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Name: _____ Age: _____ Name: _____ Age: _____

Other special family members are:

III Additional Information

The following is information that could be used to personalize my Funeral/Memorial Service, or might be helpful to someone writing a Eulogy.

1. These are my Favorite:

- Color

- Car:

- Sports Team

- Movie

- Actor/Actress

- Song

- Singer/Band

- Place to Visit

- Hero

- Food

- Drink

- Animal

- Saying

2. My favorite childhood memories are:

3. My favorite memories as a teenager are:

4. My favorite memories as a young adult are:

5. My favorite memories as an adult are:

6. Places I have traveled to and enjoyed are (may include dates, nature of trip, special memories):

7. Special things I have done that I am proud of are:

8. The people who have had the most effect on my life are:

9. If I could live my life over again, I would spend less time:

10. If I could live my life over again, I would spend more time:

11. The most fun I ever had was:

12. The things in life that have given me the greatest enjoyment are:

13. I would describe myself as having the following attributes:

14. Something I always wanted to do but never got around to is:

15. If I could make one important statement to the loved ones I leave behind, this is what I would say:

16. I have a special message for:

Name: _____

Message: _____

[IV Notification](#)

1. Please be sure to notify the following people of my death:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

[V Funeral Arrangements](#)

1. I am a Member of the following Memorial Society and they have specific information regarding my wishes at this time:

Name of Society: _____

Contact: _____ Phone #: _____

2. I have made arrangements with the following Funeral Home, and they have a record of my wishes regarding Funeral Arrangements: (The appropriate documentation is attached to this Guide)

Name of Funeral Director: _____

Funeral Home Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

3. Details of a Funeral Package I have arranged are as follows:

4. I have pre-paid for my Funeral Arrangements:

_____ Yes (Documentation of this is attached to the Guide) _____ No

5. I have not made arrangements with a Funeral Home but I would recommend the following one:

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

I have considered what I would like with regards to Funeral Arrangements and have listed the following choices:

6. I request a Burial: _____ Yes _____ No

7. I would like my body to be:

_____ Interned _____ Entombed

8. I would like the following type of casket:

_____ Ornate Metal _____ Ornate Wood _____ Simple hard/soft wood

_____ Fibre board/Cardboard _____ Other

9. If possible, I would like a Green Burial

_____ Yes _____ No

10. I have purchased a burial plot, which is located at:
(The appropriate documentation is attached to this Guide)

11. I prefer Cremation: _____ Yes _____ No

I would like my ashes to be:

12. _____ Buried at the following location:

13. _____ Placed in a Columbarium

14. _____ Scattered (i.e. at sea, in a park, on a lake, etc...)

Location and reason for this choice: _____

15. _____ Given to a loved one to keep

Name of person and reason for this choice: _____

16. I would like the container for my ashes to be:

17. I have purchased a burial plot/place for my cremated remains. It is located at:
(The appropriate documentation is attached to this Guide)

18. I would like to wear the following clothes and jewelry for my disposition:

19. I wish my body to be embalmed: Yes _____ No _____

20. I would like an Obituary to be published in the following Newspapers both online and offline.

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

I would like the following specific information included in my Obituary:

_____ I would not like an Obituary to be published

21. I would like Memorial Contributions sent to:

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____

I would like it to be stated in my Obituary, that Memorial Contributions are preferred.

_____ Yes

_____ No

[VI Funeral/Memorial Service](#)

My goal in completing this section of the Pre-planning Guide is to provide my loved ones with as much assistance as possible during this emotional and stressful time. Please use the following information as you see fit, and keep in mind that it is simply a general outline of my wishes.

1. I would like the following elements to be included in my Service:

_____ Visitation/Wake

_____ Traditional Funeral Service

_____ Open Casket During Service

_____ Procession to Cemetery

_____ Graveside Service

_____ Memorial Service

_____ Reception

_____ Other _____

2. I am a member of the following Society and would like their special ceremony included in my Service:

Name of Society: _____

Contact: _____ Phone #: _____

3. I believe that any of the following people would be wonderful choices for an Official/Minister/Preacher for the Service:

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

4. I would like Pall Bearers: _____Yes _____No

My choices for this would be:

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

5. I would like ushers: _____Yes _____No

My choices for this would be:

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

Name _____ Phone #: _____

6. I would like the Service to be located at:

____Church

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Funeral Home

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Chapel

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Private Home

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Outside

Location Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Reception Hall

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Club

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

7. Guest List:

I would like the Funeral/Memorial Service to be open to the:

___ The public

___ Family and friends only

I have the following specific guest list requests:

8. I would like the Service to be of the following type:

Special celebration of my life, reflecting my accomplishments and milestones. I want people to share their memories of me with those present.

Traditional, religious service with my name reflected during the service.

Combination of both of the above.

9. I would like the general theme of the Service to be:

I would like the service to include a:

10. Eulogy: Yes No

I would like to have a eulogy written and read by:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

If they would like, I would also like to have a eulogy written and read by:

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

I would like the eulogy to include facts about my:

___ Personal life, sports, hobbies, interests

___ Career, work relationships, accomplishments

___ Family life

___ Other

Specify: _____

I would like the following things mentioned in my eulogy:

11. Poems and Readings:

I would like poems included in my Funeral/Memorial Service: Yes ___ No ___

I would especially like the following poems to be included:
(I have attached copies of these poems to this Guide)

Title: _____ Poet: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Poet: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Poet: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Poet: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Poet: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Special Readings/Sayings/Quotes:

I would like a special Reading, Saying, or Quote included in my Funeral/Memorial Service:

Yes _____

No _____

I would like the following ones to be included:
(I have attached copies of these to this Guide)

Title: _____ Author: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Reason for Choice: _____

12. Songs and Music:

I would like special music to be included in my Funeral/Memorial Service: Yes ____ No _____

I would like the music to be in the form of:

____ Organist/ Pianist

____ Choir

____ Solo Performance

____ Recorded Music

____ Other

I would like the music to be:

____ Religious

____ Traditional

____ Contemporary

____ Reflect a certain theme

Details of the theme: _____

A list of songs I would pick for my service would be:

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

Title: _____ Artist: _____

[□ VII Symbolic Goodbye](#)

1. I would like to include a symbolic good-bye in my Service:

____ Yes

____ No

2. I would like to suggest the following:

3. I would like my family and friends to come together and celebrate my memory in a special tradition on the anniversary of my death. Some ideas would be:

[VIII Reception Following the Service](#)

1. I would like a gathering of people after the Funeral/Memorial Service:

Yes No

2. Guest List:

I would like the Reception to be:

Open to everyone
 Open to close friends and family only

3. I would like the Reception to be at the following location:

My family home
 Other family home

Specify: _____

The Funeral Home or Memorial Facility
 Reception hall
 Club
 Outdoor location

Specify: _____

Other

Specify: _____

4. My preferences for food and beverages would be:

IX [Additional Requests](#)

1. I would like to make the following additional suggestions for my Funeral/Memorial Service:

X [Legal Information](#)

You will need the following information regarding my legal affairs and papers.

1. My legal documentation is located: (i.e. will, living will, insurance papers, financial records, etc.)

2. Next of Kin: _____ Phone #: _____

3. Executor of my Estate: _____ Phone #: _____

4. Power of Attorney: _____ Phone #: _____

5. General Practitioner: _____ Phone #: _____

6. Church: _____ Phone #: _____

7. Attorney: _____ Phone #: _____

[Pre-planning Guide Glossary of Terms](#)

The following is information you may find helpful while filling out the Pre-Planning Guide. You will also find the definitions of various terms you will run across when pre-planning a Funeral or Memorial Service. (Definitions are denoted with an astrix*)

[I Vital Statistics](#)

Some or all of this basic information is usually required to complete a Registration of Death, confirm a death with that country's bureau of Vital Statistics, and to complete a Death Certificate.

- 1.—15. Please fill in your vital statistics
16. If you have not decided upon a Place of Disposition, you may leave this line blank.

[II Other Personal Information](#)

This is additional information that will be useful for your loved ones when composing an Obituary or a Eulogy.

- 1.— 8. If any of these questions are not applicable, simply leave those lines blank.

[III Additional Information](#)

1.—16. This information provides some extra insight into your unique personality and history. This can help your loved ones add depth and meaning to your Service. Take some time in answering these questions. Not all this information will be used during the Service but it will give your friends and family powerful emotional connection to you. Don't worry if you are unable to answer some of the questions, just leave those lines blank. And remember, that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, it is simply what is right for you.

[IV Notification](#)

1. Most families will publish a notice of a death (Obituary) in a local newspaper, and personally contact only family members and close friends. It is possible, however, for loved ones to overlook someone who you wish to be notified of your death. This is a place where you can record the names and phone numbers of those you wish to let know that you have passed away. Request the funeral home to list it in their obituary listing on their website.

[V Funeral Arrangements](#)

1. *Memorial Society: These are organizations that gather information about the death care industry on behalf of their members. They are usually dedicated to helping people plan simple yet dignified funerals at reasonable costs. If you are a member of a Memorial Society list it here.
2. *Funeral Home: These are businesses that specialize in the many details and legalities involved when a death occurs.

3. * Package Funerals: Many funeral homes offer package funerals that may cost less than purchasing individual items or services. Be sure to ask about packages.
4. If you have paid for your Funeral arrangements you may make a note of it here. Be sure to attach any documentation of payment to this guide.
5. If you have not consulted with a Funeral Home, but you have a suggestion of one that your family could use, you may record that suggestion here.
6. *Burial: The body is enclosed in a casket of some kind and put in the ground or in a tomb. This is the most common form of disposition of a body. You can let your family know your wishes regarding this here.
7. *Internment: The body is buried underground.

*Entombment: The body is placed above ground in a structure called a mausoleum crypt. This crypt can vary greatly in size, ornamentation, the number of bodies it holds, and expense.
8. *Casket: This is the container into which the body is placed for burial. The selection of a casket is an extremely personal decision. There are many things to consider, but the most important thing is to be sure that you are aware of all the options. Common materials used for building caskets include metal and various hardwoods and soft woods.
9. *Green Burial: This type of burial is dedicated to being environmentally friendly. All caskets are made of non toxic, biodegradable materials and no toxic embalming fluids are allowed. The idea of these burials is to literally return “dust to dust”.
10. If you have purchased a Burial plot you may record its location and attach the appropriate documentation to this guide.
11. *Cremation: This is the process by which high heat and flame is used to reduce the body to ash and bone fragments. Cremation is increasing in popularity due to its economy and flexibility. Cremation is also environmentally friendly. If you wish to be cremated you can let your family know that wish by entering it here.
12. Burial of Ashes: This can take place in a cemetery garden or burial plot. If you desire your ashes to be buried elsewhere you will have to check with local regulations.

13. * Columbarium: A structure with niches (small spaces) for placing cremated remains in urns or other approved containers. This is located at a cemetery and provides a place where loved ones can visit and remember.

14. Scattering of Ashes: Because there are no public health concerns when dealing with cremated remains, most areas do not have laws regarding this. However, there may be local or cemetery restrictions in your area. Consult your Funeral Director for information on these. Common methods of scattering ashes are from a boat on a lake or the ocean, or by airplane. People have also been known to scatter ashes on their own property, favorite golf course, parks, etc... It is recommended that you consult a Funeral Director or the local authorities to determine your options for scattering of ashes.

15. You may want a loved one to keep your remains. If so you may record that wish here.

16. Container for Ashes: Ashes can be stored in just about any container. However, it is recommended that the container have a lid that can be sealed. Urns can be purchased at a Funeral Home.

17. If you have purchased a Burial plot or Columbarium Niche for your urn, you may record its location here. Be sure to attach the appropriate documentation of this purchase to the guide.

18. Clothing and Jewelry for Disposition: Many people will choose a specific outfit and/or jewelry (i.e. wedding rings) to wear for their burial or disposition. Any jewelry you choose to wear will be destroyed during the cremation process and be disposed of by the crematorium in accordance with the laws of your area.

19. *Embalming: This is the practice of preserving bodies after death. It is used for two primary purposes: to allow enough time between a death and burial to observe certain customs such as visitations and viewings, and to prevent the spread of infection. At this time, most corpses in North America are embalmed. However, in most cases embalming is not required by law and is usually only necessary if you choose a funeral service that includes viewing of the body.

20. *Obituary: This is a notice, usually in a newspaper, of an individual's death. It usually contains a short biography of that person and the details of the Funeral/Memorial Service. It is common to publish an Obituary in several local newspapers to let people in the area, who may not be contacted by the family after a death, know of a person's passing. You may also wish to have an Obituary published in the newspapers of other cities you have lived in.

21. *Memorial Contributions: These are gifts given as a tribute in memory of a deceased person. It is common for the family of the deceased to make people aware of the Charitable Organization or Medical Research Fund that they would prefer people to donate to. If you have a preference for Memorial Contributions, you may record it here.

Sometimes it is stated in the Obituary that donations to this organization are preferred in lieu of flowers.

□ VI [Funeral/Memorial Service](#)

1. You may choose one or several of the options listed here.

- ***Visitation/Wake:** This is an opportunity for survivors and friends to view the deceased in private, and usually takes place in a special room within the Funeral Home. Visitation hours are usually posted by the Funeral Home and people are welcome to come and go as they please. In a traditional Wake, one or many people remain with the body until the time of burial. This sometimes lasts the entire night preceding the funeral, and is often accompanied by food and beverage.
- ***Traditional Funeral Service:** A Funeral involves the presence of the body of the deceased, and takes place in the first few days following death.

Traditional services often take place in a Church or Chapel and are officiated by a member of the clergy. They can be very simple affairs or quite elaborate depending upon your wishes. This is a good choice for someone who has church affiliations. Many people gain comfort and solace from the rituals and formality surrounding this type of service.

Keep in mind that funerals can be an expensive option, since they usually involve the purchase of a casket (often the most expensive part of a funeral), embalming (preparing and dressing of the body for viewing), transportation of the body to a final resting place, and use of facilities at the funeral home.

It is important to remember that Funeral Services are becoming more and more personalized as people are insisting on memorable ways to commemorate the passing of their loved ones. Although they are less flexible than Memorial Services, many unique ideas can be incorporated into the Service.

- **Open Casket During Service:** While viewing the body is not appropriate for all cultures and faiths, many people find it helps them acknowledge the reality of death. It also provides closure, and makes them realize that indeed, a life has ended. Whether or not to include a viewing of the body in the service is an extremely personal decision, and should represent the choices of the deceased and his or her closest relatives. While some people find this practice to be somewhat morbid, it's important to remember that there are benefits to open casket ceremonies, and it is not required that everyone take part in the viewing.
- ***Procession to Cemetery:** This is the movement of vehicles from the location of the Funeral Service to the place of burial. A hearse usually carries the casket at the beginning of the processional, however other forms of transport can be used, such as a horse drawn carriage or fire truck. It is common for the procession to make its way past places that were favorites of the deceased, for example a park or ocean view.

It can also apply to a Church Funeral Service where guests follow the casket out of the church and to the cemetery.

- *Graveside Service: This type of Funeral Service takes place at the Gravesite. It can be very formal, conducted by a pastor, priest, or other speaker, or it can be informal with friends and loved ones coming forward to speak. The Graveside Service can make up the bulk of the Funeral Program or can be simply a short service following a formal Funeral Service in a Church, Chapel, or Funeral Home.
- *Memorial Service: A Memorial Service pays tribute to the life of the deceased, however, the body of the person who has died is not present. Because the body is not present, Memorial Services can be held in a variety of locations and can take place a few days, or a few weeks after the death has occurred. This can be extremely helpful. It allows for a longer planning process, and if people are coming from a distance away, it allows them to take advantage of advance booking discounts available through most airlines.

Memorial Services are becoming increasingly popular as people are looking for more unique and personal ways to celebrate the life of their loved one. They can also be more economical as they do not usually involve embalming, elaborate caskets or urns, grave liners, or vaults and do not necessarily require the full services of a Funeral Home or Director.

- *Reception: Many Funeral/Memorial Services are followed by a less formal gathering of friends and family members afterwards. This is a wonderful time for people to share memories and provide support to the survivors. If the Funeral/Memorial Service took place at a Funeral Home or other private location, the Reception can take place at the same location. Many Funeral Homes have special rooms for this.

2. *Society: Many Societies or Organizations will have special Funeral Ceremonies that they perform for their members. These can be fraternal organizations such as the Masons, sororities, religious groups, or career groups such as Police or Firefighters.

3. Officiate: Selecting the Funeral Official is one of the most important decisions to be made regarding a Funeral/Memorial Service. This person will keep the ceremony running smoothly. It is important to look for someone your loved ones will feel at ease with and can relate to easily. This person should be articulate and be able to speak confidently in front of an audience. It is also important to choose someone who will respect your personal beliefs and philosophies about life and death. The officiate can be a religious affiliate (chaplain, minister, priest, rabbi), Funeral Director, human celebrant, family member, or friend.

4. Pallbearers: These usually include 4 to 6 men who are not of the immediate family.

5. Ushers: These are usually present in a formal Funeral/Memorial Service and number between 2 and 4 people dependent upon the number of guests expected. If the Service is taking place at a Funeral Home, they will often have someone who will lead people to their seats.

6. Location: There are many choices for the location of a Funeral Service, Memorial Service, and Funeral Reception. One of the most profound ways to personalize a Memorial Service is to

gather people at a location that is particularly unique to the person who has passed away. Is there a place that reflects the unique aspects of the life you have lived? And, if so, would it be a good location for a Memorial Service? Remember that if you are choosing a more unconventional location, you should consider how many people it can accommodate and the ability to serve food if that is desired.

7. Guest list: Funeral/Memorial Services can be either open to the public or only to those family members and friends who have been invited. An announcement regarding this is usually placed in an Obituary in a local newspaper. If a specific guest list is desired, it is always possible that the loved ones organizing the service may overlook an important guest. Their names can be listed here.

8. Type of service: For many people the rituals and ceremonies of a traditional funeral can be a meaningful and helpful experience. In this case, this type of Service is a very valid one. On the other hand, there is a gathering movement today towards creating non-traditional services that center around the positive and unique aspects of the life lived and takes into account the emotional needs of those left behind.

Remember that any combination of elements is possible in the organization of a Funeral/Memorial Service, and the goal is to help create a beautiful celebration that will assist your loved ones through their grieving.

9. Theme: One way to enhance a Memorial Service is to focus on an activity or trait that distinctly made the person who has died who they were. Creating a theme to the service can help to augment people's memories of that person. Do you have a special hobby, career, or cultural background that would make a wonderful theme or focus for a Service? Do you think of yourself in terms of a special relationship to those who will be attending the Service, for example: a mother, grandmother, teacher, or friend?

10. Eulogy: This is a speech or written work in praise of the character or accomplishments of a person. Because they are written specifically about the person who has passed away, they always add a unique and personal touch to a service. In considering who to invite to make a eulogy on your behalf, think of the attributes you would like to be remembered by, and who is likely to best communicate these things. It is reasonable to have several people deliver eulogies.

11. Poems and Readings: Poems and Readings can add a significant personal touch to a Memorial Service and the right poem or reading at a funeral can provide the perfect words to comfort or inspire those in attendance. Is there a certain Poem or Reading that reflects your personality, accurately represents your feelings, or simply moves you more than others? Here is the place to record some of your personal choices and add great meaning to the Service your loved ones are planning.

12. Songs and Music: Music has always played an important part in a Memorial Service. The songs that are picked should have special meaning to you and your loved ones. The lyrics can convey a perfect message from you or the music can be of your favorite genre such as Pop, Jazz,

Country, or Classical. Other choices to consider are music from your ethnic background such as bagpipes or Celtic fiddle. Just remember that traditional funeral music is not your only choice.

□ VII Symbolic Gesture or Goodbye

1. There are a number of wonderful symbolic goodbyes that can add a beautiful touch to a Funeral or Memorial Service. A candle lighting ceremony, throwing coins in a fountain, planting a tree, even releasing butterflies or white doves can represent the flight of the spirit and be a poignant way of concluding a ceremony. If you wish to include a Symbolic Gesture or Goodbye, you may want to try to think of something that is uniquely you. We have heard of guests hitting special golf balls for a golfer, people planting a garden for a gardener, or guests contributing to a charity cook book for a gourmet chef.

□ VIII Reception

1. Many people find that a gathering of family and friends after the service is a wonderful way to allow everyone to personally contribute to the farewell. It's a time to chat about remembrances and for people to offer sympathy and support. This is usually a more informal gathering.

2. Guest list: It is not necessary to invite everyone who attends the Funeral or Memorial Service to a Reception afterwards. Sometimes, only family members and close friends are extended this invitation.

3. Location: This will depend upon the number of guests invited to the Reception. Often, if the Funeral or Memorial Service is held somewhere other than a Church, Chapel, or Gravesite, the Reception will be held at the same location.

4. Food and Beverages: The presence of food and beverages at the Reception is a long-standing tradition. It does not have to be elaborate or require hours of preparation on the part of those organizing the Funeral. However, many people find that serving food allows guests to mingle and provides a wonderful atmosphere for comfortably sharing memories of the deceased.

□ IX Additional Requests

If you have any further requests that have not already been covered in this guide, you may add them here.

□ X Legal Information

This is information that your loved ones will require after your death in order to deal with your affairs. It is likely that you have this information recorded elsewhere but it will be helpful to have a copy of it attached to this Pre-planning guide.

□ XI A Final Note

It is our greatest hope that in filling out the Pre-Planning Guide, you have given yourself a sense of deep personal satisfaction and joy in the knowledge that you have provided your loved ones

with an exceptional gift. The unique insights you have provided will allow them to create a lasting memory of you that will never die.

