

SUMMER 2021



EVAN W. SMITH
Funeral Services

BULLETIN

Articles of Help & Healing for our Delaware Community



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The Story of a Lifetime: How to Write a Memorable Obituary

Writing an obituary for a departed loved one can be daunting. In this article, we offer a few tips for a meaningful tribute .

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The Story of a Lifetime: How to Write a Memorable Obituary

When a loved one passes on, the responsibility of writing their obituary can feel overwhelming.



You might worry that you'll forget to include important facts or that you won't do your loved one justice. But with careful thought and preparation, you can write a meaningful obituary that honors the departed in a beautiful and special way. This recorded tribute has multiple functions and each one is vitally important. It acknowledges your loss, informs the community of the death, and invites friends and family to attend the funeral service to offer their sympathy and support.

The obituary is where your loved one's life story is recorded and immortalized forever. Obituaries are an important way of remembering the people who meant the most to us and they offer the unique opportunity to demonstrate that love in a public written document. They also pay tribute to the departed by sharing with the world the unique attributes and characteristics that made them so special. Everyone's life has value and significance. Think of the obituary as your opportunity to pay homage to your beloved with a meaningful written farewell. Here are some tips to help you create a lovely and lasting written tribute.

Write from your heart. The most honest and potent impact you can make when drafting an obituary is by writing the way you speak. Skip the flowery language. Do away with stale and trite, and keep it real instead. Obituaries are the last words written about someone you care for very much. If you make your obituary open and honest, you can't go wrong.

Include pertinent information. Some of the most common details that are woven into an obituary include:

- Name of the deceased (including maiden name and nicknames)
- Dates and locations of birth, marriage, and death
- Schools attended
- Place of employment and position held
- Military service and status
- Organization affiliations or membership (religious, civic groups, etc.)
- Interests, hobbies, and passions
- Cause of death (if you wish to include this information)
- Family members who are predeceased and names of surviving loved ones (typically immediate family and partners or companions only)
- Funeral or memorial service details if open to the public, including the date, time, and location
- One or two charities people should donate to in honor of the deceased instead of sending flowers if you wish. You can use the phrase "in lieu of flowers" when memorial donations are requested. State the charity's name and address or include a link to their website.
- Special messages, such as a bible verse or a meaningful line from a favorite poem
- A photo of the deceased

Keep balance in mind. A long laundry list of dry facts isn't going to pique anyone's interest in your beloved. While you need to include basic relevant information, you also want to be an engaging storyteller. Your goal should be to craft a write-up about your loved

one that makes readers say, "Gee, I wish I had the opportunity to know Tony better. What a guy!" Take time to think about the anecdotes and memories you could share to shed light on your loved one's personality, character, and interests. Don't be afraid to inject a little humor, especially if the departed was known to have a sharp wit. You want readers to clearly see who your loved one was, how they lived, and what they loved. If you don't know where to start, read some other obituaries to gain an idea of how personal and touching a well-crafted obituary can be.

Accuracy matters. Correctness and completeness are of the utmost importance when drafting an obituary. Names can easily be misspelled, dates can be incorrect, and information can be missed. Remember, there are no do-overs or second chances with this exercise so check and double-check your facts. All information to be included in the obituary should also be verified with at least one other family member. The best way to ensure accuracy is to proofread your document carefully several times. Another good approach to catching errors is to set the document aside and review it again later or the next day prior to submitting it.

For many people, their obituary may be the only thing that's ever publicly published about them. It can be read now and also saved for generations, so its significance can't be overstated. There are many templates and step-by-step guides available for writing an obituary. Keep these resources in mind, but also feel free to be creative. The most beautiful and memorable obituaries are often the ones that don't follow the standard formula.

Plan an Unforgettable Family Reunion

Family reunions are a time-honored tradition in many cultures. But organizing these multi-generational gatherings can be a daunting task, even for a seasoned planner. Read on for the secrets to a planning a successful, memorable family reunion that won't leave you frazzled.

- **Start planning early:** Secure a date, location, budget, and multi-generational committee early on and allow at least 12 months to plan your event.
- **Location, location, location:** Even if the reunion is in your hometown, contact the Visitor's Center. They often have relationships with hotels and caterers that will bid on hosting your reunion, which will save money and make planning easier.
- **Communication is the key:** Use social media, emails, and conference calls frequently so everyone stays in the know.
- **Fundraise:** Host pre-reunion fundraisers like yard sales and bake sales to begin paying for events that require down-payments in advance.
- **Save some pennies:** Consider all-inclusive resorts, cruises, hotels with accommodations,

or ranches. If possible, cook or have a potluck for at least one of the events to cut catering costs. Ask around to see who has memberships like AAA or AARP that can make certain purchases more affordable.

- **Create cross-generational activities:** Appeal to the young and old with a range of activities such as disco dance classes, ancestral storytelling, scavenger hunts, boat rides, and talent shows.
- **Incorporate some free time:** Don't schedule something for every minute of every day. How about a Friday evening meet & greet, Saturday morning breakfast, a free afternoon, Saturday evening banquet, and Sunday morning church?
- **Organize a clean-up crew in advance:** Many families forget to plan for the reunion clean-up. This is a great way to have out-of-town family who couldn't assist with planning feel like they helped out.
- **Have fun:** At the end of the day, this is about you and your family creating joyous, lasting memories, so make the most of every minute of your time together!



I hope you enjoy the Summer issue of our quarterly "Bulletin." Be sure to subscribe to our email list so you get monthly articles and announcements as well.

Thank you and God bless.

- Evan W. Smith





Summer Storm Safety

The warm, humid conditions of the summer season create the perfect set-up for the development of thunderstorms.

At any given time, nearly 1,800 thunderstorms are simultaneously occurring worldwide and they can quickly develop into severe conditions such as tornadoes, damaging hail, and flash flooding. This summer, follow these helpful safety strategies:

Outdoor safety precautions:

- If the weather forecast calls for thunderstorms, postpone your trip or activity.
- Remember, when thunder roars, go indoors. Find a safe, enclosed shelter immediately.
- Follow the 30-30 rule: After you see lightning, start counting to 30. If you hear thunder before you reach 30, go indoors.
- If no shelter is available, crouch low, with as little of your body touching the ground as possible. Lightning causes electric currents along the top of the ground that can be deadly from over 100 feet away.
- Stay away from concrete floors or walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring. Although you should move into a non-concrete structure if possible, being indoors does not automatically protect you from

lightning. In fact, about one-third of lightning-strike injuries occur indoors.

- Don't seek shelter under a tree or near tall objects. Lightning will search for the tallest point in an area to strike, and if you are in that area you will be in danger. With that in mind, you don't want to be the tallest point in an area, so don't go to an open field or park.
- Don't go near any bodies of water, such as a pond, lake, swimming pool, or open body of water such as the ocean.

After the storm:

- Never touch any downed or low-hanging wires.
- Never pull tree limbs off power, telephone, or cable lines, or attempt to repair electrical equipment damaged in a storm.
- Stay clear of downed power lines do not attempt to drive over them. Always assume a downed power line is "live" and life-threatening. If you see a downed line, call 911 and warn others to stay away.
- Never go near chain link fences. Downed power lines or lightning strikes can energize the entire length of the fence.

According to the National Weather Service, lightning kills more than 70 people and injures at least 300 others each year in the United States.



Keep Your Memory Sharp at Any Age

We all experience those occasional ‘senior moments’.

Maybe you went into the kitchen and couldn’t remember why, or you couldn’t recall a familiar name during a conversation.

Memory lapses can occur at any age, but aging alone isn’t generally a cause of cognitive decline. When significant memory loss occurs among older people, it’s largely due to organic disorders, brain injury, or neurological illness. Studies have shown that you can help prevent cognitive decline and reduce the risk of dementia by following good health habits like these:



Keep high cholesterol and blood pressure under control. These conditions can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke, which can contribute to the development of certain types of dementia. Numerous studies have shown that good cardiovascular health—having healthy blood sugar levels, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure—is associated with better cognitive function.



Don’t smoke or drink excessively. Both are seen as risk factors for the development of dementia, so kick the habit if you smoke, and if you drink, do so in moderation.



Exercise regularly. Regular physical activity helps maintain blood flow to the brain and reduces your risk for conditions such as high blood pressure that are associated with the development of dementia.



Eat your veggies. People who consume plenty of vegetables and avoid unhealthy saturated fats have a lower risk for cognitive decline. Green leafy vegetables seemed to preserve cognitive function best, perhaps because of their high vitamin B and antioxidant content, which may prevent the harmful effects of aging on the brain caused by free radicals.



Have fish for dinner. The Omega-3 fatty acids found in most types of fish (particularly cold water fish, like salmon) are brain-friendly. People who eat any type of fish at least once a week do appreciably better on mental tests than those who avoid seafood altogether. If fish isn’t for you, take daily Omega-3 dietary supplements.



Stimulate your brain. Mental stimulation throughout your lifetime is important for good brain health. Keep your mind active by increasing your level of social interaction, learning new skills, doing puzzles, playing challenging games, and participating in other activities that require an engaged mind.

By taking these actions, you’ll be on your way to a better-performing brain, now and later in life.

Simple Ways to Spend Less and Save More

Is your nest egg looking a little skimpy these days? If you want to change your long-term financial outlook, you have to make it part of your everyday routine.

The good news is that small changes can add up to big savings down the road. Check out these easy ways to cut back without making any serious sacrifices to your lifestyle.

Align your spending with the things you really care about. It's not about living without any frills or fun. But it is about identifying what you do and don't care about, and then identifying how much you're spending on the things that are of little importance to you. Start by keeping a spending journal. Write down how much you spend and on what. You'll start to see a pattern emerge and from there, you can decide what's worth it to you and what's not. For example, you may discover that you're spending a surprising amount on fancy dinners that you could do without. There's an opportunity to cut back on your spending. On the other hand, you may love to travel and choose not to cut back on it at all. It's up to you to decide what's important.

Nix the budget busters. You might be surprised to learn that the average American spends nearly \$5,000 a year on coffee and

lunch. These things—along with ATM fees, lottery tickets, soda, cigarettes, credit card interest, and bottled water—are major budget busters. They're relatively small expenses individually that add up to a significant amount over the course of time. By packing your lunch a few times per week, forgoing the lottery tickets and using a refillable water bottle, you'll keep more of your hard-earned money in your wallet.

Keep a 30-day list. If there's something you want to buy on impulse, put it on your list instead. If you still really want the item when the 30 days are up, find a way to make it work. Most of the time, it will be long forgotten. But if it's not and you still want to make the purchase, conduct research to find the best price for the item before buying it. Doing your homework will help you to stay focused on being a smart shopper.

Write your financial goals on paper. A 2014 study from Dominican University revealed that people were 42 percent more likely to achieve their goals if they wrote them down. It's also important that the goals are specific and measurable—an amount you're

trying to put away, for example—and that you give yourself deadlines to achieve them.

Automate your savings. Most banks offer automated transfers between checking and savings accounts. You can choose when, how much and where to transfer the funds. You can even opt to put a portion of your direct deposit paycheck directly into your savings account. It's easy to set up and since you don't have to think about it, automating reduces the temptation to spend.

Pay cash for daily expenses. While it isn't practical to pay your mortgage or utility bills in cash, switching to cash for entertainment expenses, gas and groceries can really help you cut back on your spending. Because you have a finite amount of cash on hand to use, it creates a limit on expenditures and makes you more aware of what you're spending. It may mean making some hard choices, but paying cash will help you prioritize your purchases.

No matter where you are on your financial journey, you can turn your monetary situation around. As with most things in life, taking that first step is often the hardest part.



Community Focus

Webinar: Supporting Civilians & Veterans with Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This event was held on May 12, however a recording is available on our website in the Resources section, labeled “Videos”.

Presented by Leslie Holley, MA, LCPC, NCC. Topics included:

- What is trauma & PTSD (signs and symptoms)
- How trauma & PTSD affects civilians and veterans
- How to identify and manage traumatic events
- How to support someone with trauma and/or PTSD



You Are Invited to Join Us for This Free Virtual Event

Supporting Civilians & Veterans with Trauma & Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Free Webinar May 12, 2021 4:00 PM

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Leslie Holley is a Nationally Certified Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC - MD, IL) (LPC - MO, DC, VA) (NCC) who earned her Masters in Community Counseling from DePaul University where she also taught masters level clinical counseling courses as an adjunct professor. Currently, she works with clients at her private practice, Healing-Circle, LLC in downtown Silver Spring, MD and provides mental health presentations throughout the D.C., Maryland, Virginia (DMV) area.

Leslie offers counseling for adults and couples suffering from trauma, anxiety, depression, post baby issues, co-dependency, life transitions, and addiction. She helps clients establish boundaries and practice

healthy communication strategies through their mental health journey. She specializes in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Internal Family Systems (IFS), and has been extensively trained in trauma and how it affects the brain.

Moreover, she completed her Masters thesis, with distinction, on the help seeking behaviors of African American men.

Leslie has presented on mental health topics for the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Illinois Counseling Association (ICA), Northwestern University, DePaul University and the Maryland Counseling Association Multicultural Division (MAMCD), to name a few.

Leslie has shared her mental health knowledge on Chicago WGN Radio and on the online radio show, Let's Stay Together, during their monthly mental health segment. She has been a contributing writer for about.com and UrbanBalance.com, covering her work with couples in counseling, anxiety coping tools, and understanding depression to name a few.

Some of the many topics she has presented on include therapy 101, anger management, trauma in children and adolescents, how to manage a crisis, conflict resolution, bullying in the workplace, assertive training, and thriving in a multigenerational workforce. Leslie is the Past President of the Maryland Counseling Association.

Featured Recipe: Picnic Potato Salad

Potatoes are everyone's favorite vegetable.

They're inexpensive, easy to prepare, and delicious. This tasty potato salad is great for potlucks, barbecues, picnics, church gatherings, or even just as a side dish for dinner with the family. Leftovers can be refrigerated for up to four days, but don't expect there to be any!

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
- 4 stalks of celery, chopped
- 6 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons of sweet pickle relish
- 1 tablespoon of yellow mustard
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Paprika, sprinkled over top of salad as garnish
- Parsley, sprinkled over top of salad as garnish

Preparation:

1. Thoroughly wash potatoes. Put them in a large pot and add enough cold water to cover them. Bring potatoes to a rolling boil.
2. Reduce the heat to medium-high and cook for 10-15 minutes or until the potatoes are easily pierced with a paring knife. Drain and let cool until just able to handle.
3. Peel the skins from the potatoes (or leave them on if you like) and cut them into 1" pieces.
4. Transfer the warm potatoes to a large mixing bowl and allow them to cool,

about 15 minutes. Add the chopped eggs and celery.

5. In a medium bowl, mix the mayonnaise, sweet pickle relish, yellow mustard, celery seed, salt, and pepper. Gently fold into the potato mixture until fully mixed.
6. Time for a taste test! Add more seasonings if you like.
7. Spoon the potato salad into a suitable size bowl with a lid. Top with a sprinkle of paprika and parsley. Cover and refrigerate for at least two hours before serving.

Yield: 12 servings

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