

WRITING AN OBITUARY

At a minimum, an obituary is a notice in the newspaper of a death and funeral arrangements. But it can be much more: a record of the extended family – both living and dead, a thank you to those who helped out, a request for memorial donations. Most importantly, an obituary can be a compelling story of a life.

Whether you are writing your loved ones obituary who just passed away or you are writing your own obituary while making your funeral pre-arrangements, this guide can assist you in creating an obituary that will honor the life of the decedent. Please keep in mind this list is only a guide. You may choose to include some of the information listed in the sections, to add to these suggestions, or you may choose to omit sections from your obituary.

There are other things to consider about an obituary. You will need to decide what newspaper(s) you want the obituary to be placed in. You may want to send the obituary to newspapers in other cities where the deceased formerly lived or worked. You will also need to decide when and how long the obituary is to run. Typically an obituary is published one or two days prior to the visitation or services to allow family and friends ample time to make arrangements to attend. You will also need to decide if you will be placing a photograph of the decedent in the obituary and if it will be black and white or color.

Most newspapers charge by the word or by the line to publish obituaries. They typically charge for photographs as well. To keep cost to a minimum, you may want to omit pictures and keep the obituary brief or you may consider placing a free death notice only. Most newspapers do not charge for a death notice to be placed in the obituaries. Death notices will usually include the name, age and date of death of the decedent as well as a service date, time and location only.

- **NAME / ANNOUNCEMENT**
 - Full name of the deceased, including nickname, if any
 - Age at death
 - Residence (for example, the name of the city) at death
 - Day and date of death
 - Place of death
 - Cause of death

- **LIFE**
 - Date of birth
 - Place of birth
 - Names of parents
 - Childhood: siblings, stories, schools, friends
 - Marriage(s): date of, place, name of spouse
 - Education: school, college, university and other
 - Designations, awards, and other recognition
 - Employment: jobs, activities, stories, colleagues, satisfactions, promotions, union activities, frustrations,
 - Places of residence

- **Hobbies, sports, interests, activities, and other enjoyment**
- **Charitable, religious, fraternal, political, and other affiliations; positions held**
- **Achievements**
- **Unusual attributes, humor, other stories**

- **FAMILY**

- **Predeceased by:**
 - **Spouse**
 - **Children (in order of date of birth)**
 - **Grandchildren**
 - **Siblings (in order of date of birth)**
 - **Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws**
- **Survived by (and place of residence):**
 - **Spouse**
 - **Children (in order of date of birth, and their spouses)**
 - **Grandchildren**
 - **Great-grandchildren**
 - **Great-great-grandchildren**
 - **Parents**
 - **Grandparents**
 - **Siblings (in order of date of birth)**
 - **Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws**
 - **Friends**
 - **Pets (if appropriate)**

- **SERVICE**

- **Day, date, time, place**
- **Name of officiant**
- **Visitation information if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Reception information if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Other memorial, vigil, or graveside services if applicable: day, date, time, place**
- **Place of interment**

- **END**

- **Memorial funds established**
- **Memorial donation suggestions, including addresses**
- **Thank you to people, groups, or institutions**
- **Quotation or poem**
- **Web site memorials**
- **Name of funeral home in charge of arrangements**