Obituary Guidelines

It provides obituary guidelines to help you write and post your obituary. Below are templates, general writing guidelines, and information on professionally written obituaries.

Carefully read all the material, then determine what is the most important to include. Remember these are suggestions and it is unlikely all of them are appropriate for you.

Obituary Templates

It has two fill-in-the-blanks obituary templates to assist you. There is a very brief version (typically used for paid announcements in newsletters). A lengthier version which is frequently used for online and non-paid publications.

Obituary Guidelines

* ANNOUNCEMENT
  + Deceased’s full name, including well-known nickname, (if any) followed by a comma and age at death. (You do not need to say “age”.) For example, Mary Alma Miller, 82.
  + Residence (name of the city) at death. Do not use specific street address for the deceased.
  + Day and date of death.
  + Place of death (if appropriate). Some may wish to mention where the deceased died such as, “at his family home in Plano, Texas”.
  + Cause of death (if appropriate).
* LIFE STORY
  + Date of birth.
  + Place of birth.
  + Names of parents.
  + Childhood: siblings, stories, schools, friends.
  + Marriage(s): date of, place, name of spouse.
  + Education: school, university or other.
  + Designations, awards, and other recognition.
  + Employment: jobs, activities, promotions, union activities. Frequently used if the person held long-term employment with a company; or had a particular passion for his or her profession. List job function or title, name of company and number of years employed.
  + Activities: hobbies, sports, interests, charitable, fraternal, political, and other affiliations. List memberships, positions held; clubs, volunteer work or noteworthy accomplishments.
  + Religious Affiliation
  + Military Services: List the dates and branches of service as well as number of years served.
* FAMILY
  + 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
    - Pets (if appropriate)
  + Predeceased by (and date of death):
    - Spouse
    - Children (in order of date of birth)
    - Grandchildren
    - Siblings (in order of date of birth)
    - Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws
    - Pets (if appropriate)
* MEMORIAL
  + Day, date, time, place (if applicable)
  + Reception information if applicable: day, date, time, place
  + Other memorial or vigil, if applicable: day, date, time, place
  + Place of inurnment
  + Where to call for more information (even if no service planned)
* CLOSING
  + Memorial funds established.
  + Memorial donation suggestions, including addresses.
  + Thank you to people, groups, or institutions.
  + Quotation, poem