



PERSONAL HISTORY
&
FUNERAL/MEMORIAL
SERVICE
PLANNING GUIDE FOR
LOVED ONES

COMPOSED & COMPILED BY

**LEWISVILLE LODGE NO. 201 A. F. & A. M.
FUNERAL COMMITTEE – NOVEMBER 2007**

[PARAGRAPH 4, PAGE 5, AND PAGE 21 ADDED BY THE GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS]

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TO THE SURVIVORS

No one knows when, where and under what circumstances he or she is going to pass away, therefore this guide is given to you as a gift of information and special desires to assist you at a time when the family must make a number of difficult decisions.

The tradition of a funeral has arisen from the desires of survivors to pay final tribute and special honor to the memory of a loved one who has gone on. It has been found that having the deceased's special wishes and desires available in writing during these days of emotional stress can be of great assistance in making the funeral service a loving tribute to the memory of the one who left you this booklet.

The information in the Vital Statistics section is necessary in order for a death certificate to be issued by the state. The information in the Service Details is personal information, which meant a great deal to you and your loved one during his lifetime.

To Each Brother From The Funeral Committee



Our Role as Masonic Brethren

Regarding Masonic Funerals, Article 359. (396). of the Laws of The Grand Lodge Of Texas reads thusly:

“To Whom Extended. Burial with Masonic ceremonies is a privilege, which pertains to all Masons, including Entered Apprentices, Fellowcrafts, and Master Masons, by virtue of their membership. It may be extended to worthy non-affiliated Masons if the Master of the Lodge so determines. It shall be the duty each Lodge except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, to conduct the funeral ceremonies, in accordance with Masonic customs and usages, in all cases where it was the expressed wish of a member in good standing and is concurred in by his near relatives. In the absence of such expressed wish, the ceremonies shall be performed over the remains of such deceased member when requested by his near relatives after his death.

Upon request it may be extended at the discretion of the Master of the Lodge to worthy non-affiliated Masons if he so determines, and to worthy suspended Masons who have been suspended for non-payment of Lodge dues.”

Each Mason should ensure that a “*Masonic Last Rites Request Form*” has been completed and filed by their Lodge Secretary (see page 21 for the form, which can be filled out, printed, and given to your Lodge Secretary).

With that bit of obligatory “legalese” out of the way, let us examine the more important aspects of our Masonic Funeral Service. For it is not our Masonic Law, but our actions and deeds that are of any real significance when the Great Architect of the Universe calls one of our Brothers to the Celestial Grand Lodge on High.

There are few occasions when Freemasons may perform their public ceremonies, e.g., laying of cornerstones, open installation of officers, the periodic public educational program, and so on. By far, the most common is our Masonic Funeral Service. It is at this time that most non-Masons are introduced to Freemasonry – perhaps, for the very first time. It is at and during that somber service that most people present will form their opinion and perception of our Fraternity. Not being members of our Ancient Craft, and generally knowing very little about Freemasonry, they are often very curious as to who we are, what we stand for, and what is it that we believe in as an organization.

Conducting Masonic Funeral Services is as old as the Fraternity itself. In the days of Operative Masonry, stonemasons buried their own with great solemnity and reverence. The deceased Brother was a man they had worked with side-by-side for years – perhaps, even their entire lives. They extolled his virtues and the contributions he had made to the Craft's work. They spoke of the Eternal Life after death, and the need to perform "goode worke" toward all humanity throughout the course of a man's life. The entire guild and all of their families turned out in force to mourn their Brother's passing, and to express their sympathies to the Brother's family. This tradition has been carried forward for centuries to our present day Speculative Masonry.

The first thing any non-Mason will observe is the size of the turnout. If it is small, they may conclude that his Lodge did not hold the deceased Brother in very high esteem. Or, even worse, that Freemasons are much too busy with their own private lives and interests to practice the tenets of Charity and Brotherly Love of which we so loudly boast. In other words, they may conclude that we do not practice what we preach. If the turnout is large, the non-Mason is likely to come away with a very different impression of both the Fraternity and the deceased Brother.

Always remember that a Masonic Funeral Service is the final tribute we can pay to our fallen Brother. That is the appropriate time to thank the Brother's family for allowing him to share his time on Earth with our Fraternity. No, you may not have known the Brother personally, but if he was a member of your Lodge, he certainly deserves your presence at his funeral service. If he was a Brother, then he is entitled to all of the "lights, rights and benefits" of being a Freemason – and that certainly includes a well-attended Masonic Funeral Service. Attending these services are, in many ways, just as important as attending Lodge meetings – perhaps, even more so, because, as we can do nothing more for our Brother, the Funeral Service is really for the benefit of the deceased Brother's family and friends, and it exhibits our genuine care and concern for one of our own.

For those that may have forgotten, the Masonic Funeral Service is one of the most beautiful pieces of literature ever written. Simple, honest, and straightforward, it offers each of us an opportunity to reflect upon our own mortality, and to reaffirm our individual faith in the Supreme Grand Master of Heaven and Earth. It draws forth its inspiration and words of comfort not only from our Volume of Sacred Law, but also from many of the world's greatest literary geniuses. No one can listen to our service and not be impacted by the gentle, yet powerful, words that touch the heart of every person present – both Mason and non-Mason alike.

Consider the sobering passage from our Masonic Funeral Service: ***“When we look about us we see the marks of change and decay written upon every living thing. The cradle and the coffin stand side by side...and, it is a solemn truth that as soon as we begin to live, that moment we begin to die”***

One day, and we know not when, each one of us will be that Brother who has passed from sight. One day, each one of us will have ended our journey in this life. As your then cold and lifeless body is commended to the grave eternal, will you want your Masonic Brethren to be present and among those that mourn you, and to offer comfort and consolation to your loved ones?

As stated in our funeral service, you can do nothing more of a material nature for the departed Brother. Nevertheless, you can cherish his memory, and offer the tribute of respect and love to the late Brother’s memory.

Of even greater importance, you can be there to extend our fraternal sympathy to our Brother’s deeply afflicted and sorrowing family in their bereavement. We must tell his loved ones, and demonstrate it by our physical presence, that our promises to be true to them are not hollow or empty words. We owe our Brother something, and this may be the very last opportunity we will ever have to repay that debt.

Brethren, if you receive a call from your Lodge or see a Masonic Funeral Notice in your local newspaper, take the time out of your busy lives to make this final act of respect and tribute. No, you may not have personally known the Brother, but he was your Brother – and that alone is enough to justify making the effort to attend and to demonstrate to the world that we Freemasons do, in fact, sincerely care about each other – both in life and in death.

Each of us will one day cross death’s threshold. After spending years in the Masonic Fraternity, how would you feel if most of your Lodge Brothers were too occupied with their own self-interests to attend your Masonic Funeral Service? How will your loved ones feel about the organization you belonged to for so many years cannot even muster more than a small handful of members to stand around your casket?

This is one obligation and commitment that each of us should earnestly strive to fulfill even if we cannot always attend Lodge meetings. Let us demonstrate before the world that we are men who practice Brotherly Love – all the way to the grave’s edge.



Are You Considering A Masonic Funeral?

Many a member has expressed interest in having his Lodge perform a Masonic funeral upon their death. This is your right as a Mason. But how does one go about making this preparation and where can such a service take place?

First, a Masonic funeral is held at the request of a departed Brother or his family. Second, the service may be held in a chapel, home, church, synagogue or Lodge room with committal at graveside, or the complete service can be performed at any of the aforementioned places without a separate, committal. Also, a memorial service may be requested, however, you should make your wishes known to your immediate family. The Masonic service may be held in conjunction with a religious service and/or other fraternal service such as Legion or Elks or may be the only service performed. This is at the pleasure of the family, the only restriction being that the Masonic service, once started, must be completed without interruption for another service.

Discuss this with those responsible openly and frankly. It is highly recommended that you: (1) put your wishes in writing, (2) give a copy to the person who will handle your affairs, and (3) place another copy with your will, insurance papers and other valuable documents so that your survivors can clearly comply with your expressed wishes.

Whether or not you desire to have a Masonic funeral, keep in mind that the emotional anguish and trauma suffered by the survivors (more often than not), affects their ability to

think with the clarity they normally possess. This is a normal reaction and it is not unusual for widows and others to be at a loss and unable to recall important dates, anniversaries, events, personal interests and major accomplishments of the deceased, therefore everybody should consider preparing an autobiographical profile of their life and updating it as necessary to keep it current. The contents should include such information as: date and place of birth, number of brothers and sisters, marriage(s), number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, etc., religious affiliation, favorite scripture(s), hymn(s), song(s), church offices held, occupation or vocation, social accomplishments, recognitions or awards, membership in fraternal or civic/service clubs, offices held, dates of military service, rank held and any major medals, citations or commendations earned, also any public offices held. By way of additional information, include such things as hobbies (art, etc.) educational and professional accomplishments. You will want to record travels or unusual experiences you have had, not only as a child, but also special events that took place as you were growing up. You may want to record your own account of certain family events that stand out in your memory and share why these events were important to you. Take the opportunity to write down all those good thoughts that will make you look good. It is a lot easier to edit what you have written than it is to try to create a profile of isolated and fragmented memories. This may also be a good time to consider taking out a funeral expense insurance policy as a means to alleviate any financial concerns for your family when the time comes. Lastly, please consider the welfare of your Lodge and if you would be willing to contribute to an endowment fund, to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the same benefits of membership in this wonderful fraternity, as you were allowed to.

The funeral - properly planned for - can be a source of great comfort and healing to loved ones and friends, especially when those present get an accurate profile and better insight into the life of the person they have come to honor. This data is also invaluable to the person conducting the service. For all of these reasons, we have compiled the following questionnaire for you to complete and hope that it will be helpful to all concerned.

HISTORICAL RECORD

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____

Birth Date _____ Age _____

Birthplace: City _____ County _____ State _____

Occupation (Previous if retired) _____

Employer (Or retired from) _____

Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

1st Marriage

Spouse Name _____ Maiden Name _____

Date of Marriage _____ Place of Marriage _____

2nd Marriage

Spouse Name _____ Maiden Name _____

Date of Marriage _____ Place of Marriage _____

In Texas Since _____ In City Since _____

Social Security Number _____

Name of Father _____

City, State if living _____ Date if deceased _____

Name of Mother (Maiden) _____

City, State if living _____ Date if deceased _____

Total Education (Where, # of years) _____

IF VETERAN COMPLETE THIS BOX

Name of War _____ Service Number _____

Branch of Service _____ Military Service Yes ____ No ____

Place Inducted _____ Date _____

Place Discharged _____ Date _____

Rank/Rate when discharged _____ Discharge Papers Located _____

Flag drape casket Yes ____ No ____ Military Marker Yes ____ No ____

Flag Folding Ceremony with narration Yes ____ No ____ (See Page 13)

NAMES OF CHILDREN

Name _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes ____ No ____

Name _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes ____ No ____

Name _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes ____ No ____

Name _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes ____ No ____

Name _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes ____ No ____

BROTHERS – SISTERS

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

City, State _____ Deceased Yes _____ No _____

Grandchildren _____ # Great Grandchildren _____ # Great Great Grandchildren _____

Nieces _____ # Nephews _____ # Grand Nieces _____ # Grand Nephews _____

PERSONAL SERVICE WISHES AND DESIRES

Services to be held at: Funeral Home _____ Church _____ Type: Burial _____ Cremation _____

Services: Visitation _____ Wake _____ Memorial _____ Graveside _____
(If a combination is desired, please check all that apply)

Funeral Home Preference _____

Church Preference _____ Location _____

Clergyman (1) _____ or (2) _____

Preferred Singer _____ Preferred Instrumentalist _____

Special Readings or Scriptures (1) _____

(2) _____

Special Music or Hymns (1) _____

(2) _____

Pallbearers (If Available)

Flowers _____ Memorial _____ Donation _____ Other _____

If Memorial Donation (Name) _____

Clothing or Favorite Color _____

Open Casket Yes ___ No ___ Jewelry Yes ___ No ___ Eyeglasses Yes ___ No ___

Remove Prior to Burial: Jewelry Yes ___ No ___ Eyeglasses Yes ___ No ___

Cemetery Location _____ Burial Lot Deed Location _____

If burial is to be out of area, complete this shipping information:

Funeral Home _____ City _____ State _____

Next of Kin in area: Name _____ City _____ State _____

Phone _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS

NEWSPAPERS TO BE NOTIFIED

ORGANIZATIONS TO BE NOTIFIED
(Church, Other Fraternal Organizations, Bar Associations, CPA Societies, etc..)

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Birth Certificate	<hr/>
Last Will and Testament	<hr/>
Deed for Cemetery Plot	<hr/>

Deeds and Titles _____

Income Tax Records _____

Safety Deposit Box _____

Marriage Certificate _____

Mortgages and Notes _____

Life Insurance Policies _____

Annuities _____

Mutual Funds _____

Pension Funds _____

IRA/401(k) _____

Securities _____

Bank Account _____ Account # _____

Bank Account _____ Account # _____

Bank Account _____ Account # _____

Those items having account numbers should have their respective numbers listed, the company name and address, type of account(s), name of insured, beneficiary, etc. (This will help the survivors determine how many death certificates will be required)

Advisors to Notify

Pastor/Priest _____ Attorney _____

Family Physician _____ Accountant _____

Executor/Executrix _____

MASONIC SERVICE REQUESTS

Type of service desired: Symbolic (Blue) Lodge ____ Scottish Rite/Rose Croix ____

Shrine Legion of Honor ____ York Rite ____ Eastern Star ____ Combination ____
(Veterans only)

Masonic Service Location:

Church/Chapel _____ Graveside _____ Funeral Home _____ Combination _____

Masonic Emblem on Casket Yes _____ No _____ If Yes Specify _____

Masonic Emblem on Headstone Yes _____ No _____ If Yes Specify _____

If Scottish Rite Mason – Who to Receive 14th Degree Ring _____

Apron worn or draped on casket: Worn _____ Draped _____

Specific Jewelry to be worn :

Watch _____ Ring _____ Pendant _____ Pins _____ Cuff Links _____ Tie Tack _____

Other _____

Note: It is not uncommon to have a combination service, such as Rose Croix service in the Chapel or Church and a Blue Lodge or Shrine Legion of Honor Service at Graveside.

(If a combination is desired, please check all that apply)

SPECIAL MASONIC REQUESTS

MASONIC RECORD

Initiated: (EA) Date _____ City _____ State _____ Lodge _____

Passed: (FC) Date _____ City _____ State _____ Lodge _____

Raised: (MM) Date _____ City _____ State _____ Lodge _____

Affiliated Organizations:

Scottish Rite _____ York Rite _____ Shrine _____ Grotto _____

Other Affiliated Organizations Recognized By The Grand Lodge Of Texas:

Past Master Yes _____ No _____

Grand Lodge _____

Special Recognition/Accomplishments: (Golden Trowel, Certificates, Degree Team, etc...)

SPECIAL AWARDS RECEIVED, NON-MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCH POSITIONS HELD, EDUCATION OR DEGREES AND ANY OTHER INSTRUCTIONS NOT SPECIFICALLY LISTED ON THE PREVIOUS PAGES



Statement of Wishes and Desires:

For the purpose of relieving my family of confusion in the event of need, the preceding arrangements are my personal wishes and desires.

Signed

Witness

Date



United States Flag Stars And Stripes Folding Ceremony

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded.

The Flag: That portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

In the evening, in the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of “Retreat” and after the bugle call, “Retreat” has been sounded, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and raised on its flagstaff while the bugle call, “To The Colors” is sounded. It is run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body. (Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to unravel and fold the flag into a quarter fold--resume reading when Honor Guard is standing ready.)

1. The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life. It represents our belief that life is precious and should always be protected.
2. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life. This belief is expounded in several of the world's religions and is the hope of all mankind.
3. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of our veterans who have departed our ranks and who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world. This service shall not have been in vain and will never be forgotten.
4. The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.
5. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of the immortal Stephen Decatur, "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."
6. The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie; and it is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
7. The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through these same Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

8. The eighth fold is a tribute to the One who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and this fold is made to honor Mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
9. The ninth fold is a tribute to our womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the characters of the men that have made this country great have been molded.
10. The tenth fold is a tribute to Father, for he too has given his sons for the defense of our country since the Republic was born.

We fold from the stripes to the stars; for whereas the stripes represent the thirteen original colonies that founded our Republic, they now embodied in the fifty sovereign states represented by the stars, so that the stars cover the stripes.

11. The eleventh fold represents, in the eyes of a citizen of Jewish Faith, the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.
12. The twelfth fold represents, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, which reminds us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

(Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to inspect the flag--after the inspection, resume reading.)

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones and they, followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, have preserved for us the rights, privileges, and freedom which we enjoy today.

Masonic Last Rites Request Form

Dear Brother:

Many times we put off the difficult decision in our life feeling the time for it has not yet come. Unfortunately, this lack of action can result in leaving to others decisions we would much prefer to make for ourselves. In an effort to assure that your desires are adhered to, the following form has been designed as a service to help prepare each of us for that time we must approach that undiscovered country, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Completion of this form is not in any way required. This form is merely provided for your convenience as an act of fraternal friendship and brotherly love from the members of this lodge. Check the appropriate boxes and place with the papers or instructions indicating your wishes.

To the members of _____ Lodge No. _____, members of my immediate family, members of the clergy, and the proprietors of the funeral home, upon my death:

I would like to have:

- Masonic Funeral Services conducted at the funeral home.
- Masonic Funeral Services conducted at my place of worship, along with religious memorial rites if possible.
- Masonic Grave Side Service
- No Masonic Service

I would like to be remembered in my Masonic eulogy for having:

I would request the following Brothers to serve as pallbearers and honorary pallbearers (if able and willing) at my funeral:

PALLBEARERS

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

I would like my Masonic jewelry (rings, lapel pins, watch, etc):

- Left on my person during my last rites and then given to: _____
- Given to my Lodge for future presentation to: _____
- Given to my Lodge for future presentation to a worthy Brother of their choosing.

I would like to have my Masonic mementos (Past Master's Apron, books, literature, awards, etc):

- Given to: _____
- Given to my local Lodge to dispose of as they see fit
- Given to my Grand Lodge of Texas

I would like to:

- Inform my local lodge that I have made a provision in my Will for its future benefit.
- Inform the Grand Lodge that I have made a provision in my Will for its future benefit.
- Inform my local lodge that I have not made a provision in my Will for its future benefit but would like to discuss the possibility with its officers.

I would like (Special Requests):

I would like to have my Masonic Apron:

- Placed upon my person
- Draped upon my casket during the service

- Buried with my remains
- Given to _____ after the funeral

Your completion and submission of this form is strictly voluntary, but it is intended to provide comfort and relief for your family and loved ones at a time when you will be unable to guide them. Should you decide to complete and return this form to your Lodge, please give careful thought to your responses and make a copy to keep with your personal records. You may also wish to give a copy to your funeral director. This form will be kept on file at the Lodge and may be altered or revoked by you at any time.

Signature

Date

Credits

The information in this booklet was compiled with the help and permission of the following resources:

Laws of The Grand Lodge of Texas – 2005

The Masonic Service Association of North America – “Our Role As Masonic Brethren”

STB Volume 80, No 3 – March 2002

RWB Zelwin B. Eaton MMBBFMN #412

Editor, The Missouri Freemason (Modifications made to be applicable to Texas Masonry)

Hella Shrine Temple Legion of Honor – “United States Flag Stars And Stripes Folding Ceremony”

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Garland, TX 75043

Brother Craig Mulkey

Mulkey-Mason Funeral Home

148 W. Church Street

Lewisville, TX 75057

Special thanks to Brother Felix A. Colon PM, Cerritos, CA – “Are You Considering A Masonic Funeral?” and for his discerning eye and helpful suggestions regarding the content

Cover Picture – Most Worshipful King Solomon – Stained Glass window, which adorns the East wall of Stanfield Lodge No. 217 in Denton, TX.

