

Funeral Planning Tips

By Laura Sussman

PLANNING FOR END OF LIFE arrangements is something many people postpone as long as possible. Despite the potential emotional and financial impact, unlike planning for other life-cycle events, funerals are often planned in a matter of hours or days, not weeks or months.

Making funeral arrangements after a loved one has died is usually the most difficult time to do so. Planning in advance allows you to make decisions in a calm, informed manner. You are able to take time to gather the information you need and make informed decisions based on that information, not solely emotions.

Before meeting with a funeral director, take some time to think about what type of arrangements you will be planning. Some questions to ask yourself include:

- What type of services do you want?
- Would you like a funeral or memorial service?
- Will there be a visitation or viewing?
- Do you want to be embalmed?
- How will you be dressed?
- Where will the service take place?
 - Funeral Home



- House of Worship
- Graveside or Cryptside
- Home or Other Location
- Will the final disposition be a burial, cremation or shipping to another location?

Once you have an idea of what you type of arrangements you desire, the next step is to interview some funeral directors to ensure the director or funeral home you work with will meet your needs. Every funeral home has a unique culture; no two funeral homes are alike. It is best to check a few options before making your decision. Unlike big box stores, larger funeral homes don't equate to lower costs or better service. Some questions to ask when speaking to a funeral home on the phone or in person include:

- Are you locally or nationally owned?
- Will the person I meet with be working on commission (this is a very common practice in funeral service)?
- What makes you different from the other funeral homes in our community?
- What type of personal service do you provide?
- Do you charge extra to come meet me at my home, hospice room, other location?
- In general, how much time do you spend with a family when making arrangements?
- How many different people will I be working with throughout this process?
- Where are you located?
- What cemeteries do you work with?
- Will my loved one be kept at your facility or another location?
- What options will I have to see my loved one after his/her death?
- Will you accommodate any special requests I have related to preparation or disposition of the deceased.
- How long will it take to...Get the death certificates? Do the cremation? Have the burial?
- What are your prices for _____? , Could I have a copy of your General Price List?

When you have had a chance to think about the arrangements you desire and have researched information about the options available to you it is easier to make wise choices. Taking a bit of time in advance of a death cannot only help you save hundreds or thousands of dollars; it can also allow you to plan the most appropriate tribute to your loved one.

Laura Sussman is president of Kraft-Sussman Funeral Services, a locally owned, full-service funeral home serving southern Nevada. She holds an MA in Education and is a licensed funeral director and licensed funeral insurance producer. Her company's website, www.kraftsussman.com, has many resources available for funeral planning. She may be reached at (702) 485-6500, lsussman@kraftsussman.com or at 3975 S. Durango Dr., #104, Las Vegas, NV 89147.

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