



## *Memorialization a time-honored tradition*

Memorialization is a time-honored tradition that has been practiced by caring people through the centuries. As survivors we care about and want to remember those who precede us in death. Memorialization helps us to remember and to be remembered.

Selecting and establishing a permanent memorial for a family member or loved one not only satisfies an immediate need, but it also fulfills the need to preserve our heritage. Memorials are stepping-stones to the past, and to the future. They link the generations.

## *Cremation preparation for memorialization*

Many people mistakenly believe that the process of cremation – reducing human remains to bone fragments – is an end in itself, but it is not. Cremation is preparation for memorialization just as is traditional burial. In fact, the

options for the final disposition of cremated remains and the subsequent memorials used to honor them are many and varied.

## *Cremation Memorials making the selection*

It is never too soon to set up a visual symbol in beautiful surroundings that will perpetuate cherished memories. But beautiful memorials don't just happen. They require forethought and planning.

Many families make their memorial selections in advance so that decision-making can be done together and can be eliminated during a time of stress. But whether a memorial purchase is made prior to need or at the time of need, you will want to be familiar with the many cremation memorial options that are available.

## *Columbarium Niche*

A columbarium is an indoor or outdoor wall containing niches. A niche is defined as a recessed compartment designed to hold urns. Columbariums may be an entire building, a room, a wall along a corridor or a series of special alcoves or halls in a mausoleum, chapel, or other buildings located in a cemetery or on other dedicated property. Niches come in many sizes with a selection of fronts such as glass, marble, bronze, granite or mosaic. Glass fronts may be clear, tinted, frosted or etched. Some columbarium niches are designed for specific size urns while others may contain a double size space for two urns or even larger niches for multiple

urns. Some clear glass fronted niches allow meaningful memorabilia to be placed inside along with the urn.

### *The Urn Garden*

Many cemeteries or memorial parks have areas designated specifically for the interment of cremated remains. These areas are called Urn Gardens and are set aside for those who desire ground or above-ground interment. Some gardens offer individual urn burial plots that will accommodate a marker. Others offer unmarked areas for interment of the urn, with adjacent walls or sculptures for memorial plaques.

Check with your cemetery or memorial park on the types of permanent memorialization they offer for garden interment of cremated remains.

### *Family Plot*

If you already own a burial plot or have a space in a family lot, you may choose to inter the cremation urn there. Cemeteries often permit the interment of the cremated remains of more than one person in a single adult space. Or if you wish to be interred in a family plot, but do not want ground interment, there are monuments available to house the cremated remains. These monuments can be used for those who have chosen cremation or in combination with family members who have chosen casketed burial.

Grave site committal of the urn is available and some cemeteries require that the urn be placed in an urn vault for interment.

There are a wide variety of markers and monuments available but you should check your cemetery's rules before purchasing your memorial. The monument or marker you select will be a lasting genealogical record for the generations of your family and a lasting symbol of the special life you want to remember and commemorate.

### *The Scattering Garden*

In recent years some cemeteries have opened areas to scatter cremated remains. Called Scattering Gardens, they provide choices for personal memorialization within this dedicated property. Often individuals whose remains have been scattered in the garden are identified on a special memorial plaque, wall or unique work of art on which the names are inscribed. Some cemeteries also have benches on which a plaque may be attached or a living memorial, such as a tree, where a plaque may be placed in front of it. Some cemeteries offer memorializing an individual with an entry in a Book of Memories or Remembrance located in a chapel or mausoleum on the cemetery grounds. These entries, beautifully executed in calligraphy and often illuminated in the manner of ancient manuscripts, provide a personal lasting tribute.

The scattering of cremated remains also may be done at a designated geographical spot on land or in water in accordance with federal, state/provincial or local laws. If scattering is done, it is recommended that arrangements also be made for a permanent memorial that will provide a place of pilgrimage for those who want to remember and celebrate the life of a loved one.

## *Cremation Urns*

Urns for the permanent containment of cremated remains come in a variety of sizes, styles and materials. In fact, there are urns to satisfy every taste, requirement and, as well as, every budget.

You may select an urn from bronze, pewter, marble, granite, brass or from selected hardwoods. They are also available in porcelain, ceramic, stone, hand-blown glass and cloisonné. Urns range in size from single to multiple capacity, and in styling from the traditional book shape and classic Grecian design to novel creations and decorative art pieces and can be personalized to depict an individual's hobby or special interest. Some designs have a matching picture frame to display a photo of the individual being memorialized.

## *Keepsake Options*

Many urns are also produced in smaller versions to hold a small portion of the remains. These are referred to as Keepsake Urns. They are especially appropriate when only a portion of the cremated remains are to be scattered or when families choose to divide the cremated remains among family members.

Other innovative options available are: Decorative pendants, known as Keepsake jewelry, are available in a number of styles and are designed to hold a small portion of cremated remains; Memorial Glass sculptures where a portion of the cremated remains are permanently embedded in the glass of these fine art pieces; and Memorial Tablets where the cremated remains are integrated into a granite-like material suitable for placement in a cemetery, church memorial garden, or placed in the ground.

## *Presentation Urns*

Presentation urns, which are large enough to hold a temporary urn, are also available for use at a memorial or religious service, when a family is undecided as to the final disposition of the cremated remains.

With so many beautiful and unique urns available, you may have difficulty in making a selection. But before making a final decision, it must be decided where the cremated remains will be placed. If it is going to be placed in a columbarium niche, what size and shape urn can it accommodate? Will it be interred in an urn garden or family plot? Do you need an urn vault? Does your cemetery or columbarium require a specific type of urn be used? These are some of the things you should take into consideration before you make your selection.

## *Cremation Memorial – the lasting tribute*

Although the selection of a cremation memorial may be time-consuming and require some important decision-making, once it has been accomplished it will give you and the generations that follow much satisfaction. Permanent memorialization not only provides a lasting tribute to a loved one, but also gives peace of mind and a place of pilgrimage. Caring about and remembering others are what life and memorializing are all about.