

CREMATION
AND THE
FUNERAL





CREMATION TODAY

The number of people choosing cremation increased significantly during the past few years, but cremation itself remains unchanged. It is simply the process of reducing the body to bone fragments through the application of intense heat. What is done before or after the cremation process is up to the family or to you. You can make pre-need arrangements so that your wishes will be honored.

Contrary to what some people believe, cremation does not limit one's choices, but, in fact, increases one's options. It need not be looked upon as being a break in family or religious traditions. Cremation, in fact, is only one part in a series of events that leads to memorialization.

CREMATION AND THE FUNERAL

The choice of cremation in no way eliminates a funeral. A traditional or contemporary-type service is often planned to take place before the cremation process.

A funeral service followed by cremation need not be different than a funeral service followed by ground burial. The funeral service can be elaborate or simple; it can be traditional or non-traditional. Today, arrangements are as individual as the persons for whom and by whom they are made. A ceremony may be personalized to reflect the life of the deceased and, thus, have special meaning for those present.

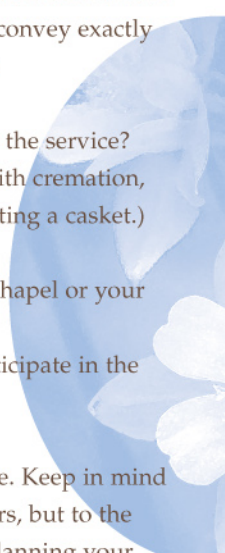
PLANNING THE CEREMONY

In making arrangements for a funeral ceremony, it is important to communicate your wishes or those of the deceased to the professional caregivers. They are there to serve you and to give advice and direction about available service options. They can help you plan a personalized service that will be a meaningful final event – a commemoration of a life lived.

Your view of what makes up a funeral ceremony may vary significantly from that of another person or even from that of the funeral service professional. You need to convey exactly what you want the funeral service to include.

- ◆ Do you want a period of visitation prior to the service?
- ◆ Do you want an open or closed casket? (With cremation, you often have the option of buying or renting a casket.)
- ◆ Do you want special music?
- ◆ Do you want the ceremony at the funeral chapel or your place of worship?
- ◆ Do you want family and/or friends to participate in the ceremony?

These and other decisions are for you to make. Keep in mind that funerals do not belong to funeral directors, but to the family of the deceased or to you, if you are planning your last rites in advance of need.



CREMATION AND MEMORIALIZATION

Once the funeral service has been arranged, including cremation, arrangements should be made for establishing a permanent memorial to serve as a focal point for remembrance. Options for memorialization are many and can be discussed with a funeral director or with a representative of the memorial facility.

The disposition of cremated remains is influenced by the type of memorialization desired. Usually cremated remains are placed in some type of permanent receptacle, referred to as an urn, before being committed to a final resting place. The container may be . . .

- ◆ placed in an indoor or outdoor mausoleum or columbarium;
- ◆ interred in a family burial plot; or
- ◆ interred in a special urn garden that many cemeteries provide for cremated remains

Cremated remains also may be scattered in cemetery gardens especially created and dedicated for this purpose. Individuals whose remains have been scattered in the garden can be identified by name on a special memorial plaque, marker or artwork or in a Book of Remembrance in a building on the cemetery grounds.

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

It is important to remember that cremation does not limit the funeral in any way, and, in fact, can give a greater number of options in the remembrance of those who are no longer with us.