

OBITUARY INSTRUCTIONS & EXAMPLE TEXT

While there are no hard and fast rules for writing an obituary, this document serves as a general template for the information and structure that is often used. Feel free to modify your own writing as you see fit. Also, please ask for assistance if you have difficulty or need service, cemetery or charity addresses.

1. INTRODUCTION PT1—Proper name of deceased, age, spouse (if applicable), residence city, “died” (in own words), date of death, and place of death.

You may use nicknames (usually in quotations), but should include the person’s proper name at least once. The prefix “the late” is a short way of saying that the spouse died earlier. Also, many people feel strongly about the word “died”. Please choose the wording you feel to be appropriate.

Joseph L. Smith, 94, husband of the late Mary Perkins Smith of Norwalk, passed away Thursday, January 10, 2009 at the Norwalk Hospital.

2. INTRODUCTION PT2—Date of birth, place of birth, parents names.

Born January 10, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, he was the son of the late Robert T. and Martha Jenkins Smith.

3. BIOGRAPHY—Generally, this is a brief paragraph about the person. Some items to include would be notable personal achievements, education, employment, and military history. It is also helpful to include jobs, past residences or affiliations that readers may know the person from. One or two lines are optimum. Do not feel obligated to write a complete biography of the person. Additional information can be saved for eulogies.

Mr. Smith attended Norwalk High School, and then served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He later worked for 25 years at Perkin Elmer as a technician. In his spare time he was an active volunteer at St. Mary Church in Norwalk.

4. SURVIVORS—Here you list the surviving family members. Proper names, spouses and town of residence are often included. Street addresses should not be published.

In this section, you may have a large amount of information to include. In a newspaper, grammar is a secondary concern to being clear and concise. Begin with the most immediate relatives. The order of relatives is SPOUSE-CHILDREN-PARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN-GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, SIBLINGS. Other relatives may be included but usually are not.

He is survived by sons Richard and his wife Betty of Rochester, NY and Joseph Jr. and his wife Sarah of Norwalk; 3 granddaughters, Lauren of Rochester, Alice and Melissa of Norwalk. He is also survived by his brother William of Palm Beach, FL and by 10 nieces and nephews.

5. PREDECESSORS—(THIS IS OPTIONAL) Here you would list the names of family members who died earlier.

In addition to his wife Mary, he was predeceased by his brother Frank.

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6. SERVICES—Date, time, and place of visitation and funeral or memorial and burial. Burial time is often dependant on the length of services and cemeteries often do not have an exact street address. Also, a reception or Shiva afterwards is usually not publicly mentioned until the end of the services.

Friends may call, Thursday from 4:00 to 8:00 PM at Collins Funeral Home, 92 East Avenue, Norwalk. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday at 10:00 AM in St. Mary Church, 669 West Avenue. Interment will follow in Assumption Cemetery, Greens Farms Road, Westport, CT.

5. DONATIONS—(THIS IS OPTIONAL) Here you would name a charity (or two), to direct memorial contributions to. Complete mailing addresses are helpful and local branches of large national organizations are often used. You may choose to add the words “in lieu of flowers” if you want exclusively want donations instead of any flowers.

Donations in his name may be made to: American Lung Association of Connecticut, Fairfield County, 12 Byington Place, Norwalk, CT 06851.