Southern®

FUNERAL DIRECTOR MAGAZINE

Family owned and published since 1919

July/August 2022
www.sfdmagazine.com

Casket & Shipping

The History of the Casket Industry - CFSA, Notes From the Editor
Hunting Like a Hawk in a New Era of Funeral Economics by Danielle Thacker
Eagle's Wings Air Meeting the Challenges of Yesterday and Today by Frank Kaiser and Dave McComb
Beginning the Monument and Memorialization Conversation By Jay Kown
Mementos on Monuments By Jay Kown
Funding Your Funeral Business for Growth by Teresa Carlson, The Bancorp
ICCFA Convention & Expo Vegas Style - Summary and Photos
Louisiana/Mississippi FDA Joint Convention in the "Big Easy" - Summary and Photos
The History, Value, and Benefit of Funeral Flowers By Todd Van Beck
Starmark's Green Burial Council Certifies Nature's Way® Natural and Terra
C&J Financial Launches Revolutionary Quick Claim™ Mobile App

be used by themselves, or they may be placed on a base. Two major sub-categories exist - the traditional style has a front nosing and the western style (or full face) does not.

Grass Markers - grass markers, also known as flat or flush markers, derive the name from the fact that they are normally installed into the ground, with only the top face showing. They are the simplest form of granite memorial and they are typically all straight without angled surfaces.

Bevel Markers - bevels, also called pillow or hickey markers, are very simple memorials. The most common style has a straight angled top surface. The back is generally 2 inches taller than the front.

Once a monument is selected, it's time to determine what information (names, dates, etc.) to place on the monument and how to best do so. Primarily there are two ways to do so – sandblasting and laser etching.

Sandblasting - Families can commemorate personal memories using the traditional sandblasting process to produce a loved one's memorial. This process selectivity removes granite from the surface of the stone using a rubber stencil, high-pressured air, and abrasive grit. This creates memorials with incredible sharpness and stunning detail.

Laser etching - the second way to add inscriptions and images to the monument is via laser etching. The laser is like a pencil – the beam emitted from it allows the controller to trace patterns onto the surface. The controller (usually a computer) controls the direction, intensity, speed of movement, and spread of the laser beam aimed at the surface. Improvements in technology have allowed for the imprinting of photographic images into stone. Entire monument designs can be done using only laser etching, or laser etching can be used in conjunction with traditional sandblasting and takes place after blasting.

A few final thoughts

Monument suppliers like Tecstone have a host of tools available to help you not only sell monuments but allow families to create the designs. Through the use of software and a computer screen, the design of the monument can be created and viewed by the family. Changes can be made real time and the family can leave knowing that the design of the monument has been created and approved.

There are other memorials beyond monuments available for placement in cemeteries and other public and private areas. This includes memorial benches and statues. Discuss with your monument supplier just what is available to present to families for memorialization. In the end, it is all about finding your comfort level in presenting monuments to families. This task is much easier if you spend the time getting to know the families and the loved ones they lost as well as being knowledgeable about monuments and memorials.

Jay Kown is the Director of Sales for Tecstone Granite. He has more than 20 years of sales and marketing experience in the monuments and memorials industry. He is an effective sales leader with strengths in key customer relationships, new account development, national accounts, strategic market development, planning, budgeting, forecasting and analysis.

Marketing Muscle?

Do you find yourself needing an extra resource to complete that project on time or are you suddenly short staffed on the marketing team? Weigel Strategic Marketing can help, whether it's as comprehensive as a strategic marketing plan or as simple as copy for a social media or website blog.

Weigel Strategic Marketing is a firm that provides communications and branding assistance to a diverse portfolio of funeral service companies.

We are experienced in all forms of marketing - from traditional marketing to the latest digital offerings.

If your marketing efforts need a little extra punch, why not give us a call today?

WEIGEL STRATEGIC MARKETING

317-608-8914

weigelstrategicmarketing@gmail.com

Mementos on Monuments

By Jay Kown

For those that have visited a cemetery and stopped by the gravesites of military veterans, you may have noticed coins on the top of headstones that were left behind by previous visitors.

A coin left on the headstone is a message to the deceased veteran's family that someone has visited their grave and paid their respects. Each type of coin left on the top of the monument for the veteran has its own meaning.

- A penny left on the top of the headstone means that the gravesite was visited.
- A nickel indicates that the person visiting the site trained at boot camp with the deceased veteran
- A dime means the person served with the deceased in some capacity.
- A quarter left at the grave means that the person who left the coin was with the veteran when they were killed.

Typically, the money placed in national and state veterans' cemeteries is collected and put towards future burial costs and cemetery maintenance.

The practice became is believed to have first begun in the United States during the Vietnam War as a way to pay respects to the fallen servicemen.

More recently, a common practice in the military is leaving behind challenge coins on the graves of deceased servicemen. These tokens usually bear the emblem of the deceased's military unit. These challenge coins are usually left there by the servicemembers brothers-in-arms.

Challenge coins started gaining popularity during the Vietnam War when Special Forces units started using them. Eventually, the use of challenge coins became more widely used in the rest of the U.S. military. Challenge coins are used to prove membership in an organization when challenged. They are also presented by unit commanders to a member of the unit in recognition of an achievement.

While the practice is not always common, the practice of leaving behind mementos on top of gravestones dates back to the beginning of the human species as a way to pay respect to the deceased person. As practiced, pottery, jewelry, and other sorts of goods have been placed at grave sites throughout history. In some cases, these goods were thought to carry on to the person to the afterlife.

Though you've probably never heard this term before, "Charon's obol" has a lot of significance regarding coins on a monument. Dating back to the ancient Greeks, this myth reflects the history behind an ancient custom. As soon as Greece created its own monetary system, this became a common practice.

So, what myth does Charon's obol refer to? Charon is the ferryman who brings souls across the river from the world of the living to the world of the dead. Between the land of the living and the Underworld was the River Styx and Acheron. These two rivers divided the souls of the living and the departed. Those joining the Underworld needed to cross by boat. The ferryman of Hades was Charon.

The term "obol" refers to the payment or bribe intended for Charon. In essence, this was a way for the family to "pay" for their loved one's passage into the afterlife. Typically, the family placed the coin in the mouth of the deceased. Later, they were also placed over the eyes. The family buried their loved ones with this coin. There were coins specifically used as Charon's obol, and they usually were too thin for normal use as a payment. Charon's obol began in Greece, but it spread throughout the New East, western Europe, and beyond. Historically, the coins were placed in the mouths of the deceased, or according to some sources, over their eyes. People who can't pay the fee are said to be doomed to wander the shores of the river for 100 years. Another popular reason for leaving coins on graves relates to the notorious Donnelly family of Canada,