



Schuler-Lefebvre  
FUNERAL CHAPEL

Dedicated To Those We Serve

## *Caring Connections: Your Wishes*

### ***Does your family know your wishes?***

Sitting around the supper table with family, talking, laughing, and eating; these are perhaps, some of the best times in our lives. Whether we are expressing our dreams and goals, or reminiscing about the past, shared communication within a family is very precious. Family discussions can often reach some extreme topics and wild ideas, but that's what family is for, to be able to share. However, have you every discussed your own death with your family - not jokingly, but very seriously? This is quite likely a topic that many people would rather not think about, much less discuss, but if given enough thought, there are definite advantages to pre-arranging your own funeral.

Regardless of age or health, discussing your wishes for your own funeral with your family, can be extremely helpful to those left in charge of making arrangements for your funeral at the time of death. In a recent article, we discussed what a funeral director can do for you. This information was basically directed to an "at need situation." Your funeral director can also help you with pre-arranging your own funeral service. By pre-arranging a funeral service, you have the option of letting family members know what your wishes are with regards to your funeral. It is important that this be a discussion, rather than a statement of details. Many times, a spouse or children may have certain ideas that they would like to be followed through at the funeral of a loved one to make it a bit more personalized. These personal touches often help surviving family members to better cope with their grief and the loss of a loved one.

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It is important to consider these ideas in your plans. By speaking with family and a funeral director, you can ensure that your wishes will be as planned.

Some of the many things you may wish to decide on include your choice of earth burial, cremation, organ donation or offering your body to science. You may also give consideration to where the service should be held and what type of service you would like; traditional service, service of remembrance, graveside service, or immediate care. Depending on the circumstances, you may also choose your own pallbearers, clergy, readers/readings, eulogist, music/musicians, honor guards, honorary pallbearers and press notices. By discussing and writing down this information, your family and funeral director will do their best to follow your wishes. Time will sometimes be a factor in which all wishes may not be fulfilled. For instance, selected people may have died after pre-arrangements have been made, some may have relocated and, also, new people may have entered your life that your family would like included in the service. After you have expressed your wishes and discussed them with your family, it is a good idea to visit your funeral director and explain your wishes with him/her. The funeral director will make note of your wishes and keep them on file for you. During your time with the funeral director, you may also select a casket or urn. You may even bring in clothing if that is what your wishes are.

When pre-arranging a funeral, many people also wish to have money set aside for the cost of the funeral. There are a number of ways that this could be done. You could have your own special account with money set aside, but let your family or executor know about it. You may also go through various insurance agencies which specialize in pre-planning and pre-paying for a funeral service. Also, you may pre-pay a funeral at a funeral home who are licensed to sell pre-paid funerals.

In having spent the time to pre-plan your own funeral, you will have relieved your loved ones of having to make some very difficult decisions, especially at a time when they are emotionally and physically exhausted. It is a gift to your family that will help them have a personal and comforting way of saying good-bye by knowing that they were able to have the services that you wished for.