



Communicator

www.parkmemorial.com

Jerry Smolyk, President
Kirstie Smolyk, Vice-President

Message from the Smolyk Family

It is nice to see summer has finally arrived in Alberta. The promise of warm, sunny days is something many of us look forward to – barbecuing in the backyard, gardening, camping and travelling to different locales to visit family and friends. However, for those who are experiencing the first summer without a loved one, anticipating the long days ahead can be a difficult time. The annual trip to the lake or cottage this year may be dreaded – or may not be happening at all. Things that were once done with a partner, a parent, a child or another family member may no longer be possible or even want to be attempted without the special person. Remember you are not alone in your grief. Head outside for a walk in the fresh air. Maybe invite a friend. Or perhaps now is a good time to join a support group if you declined such an invitation in the past. We are here to help with resources. Don't hesitate to contact us. I wish you all a very happy summer and safe travels wherever your journey may take you.

~ Kirstie Smolyk, Vice President



Celebrating the Alberta Funeral Service Association's 90th Anniversary

Along with Canada's 150th celebration, the Alberta Funeral Service Association (AFSA) is also celebrating a special anniversary this year. AFSA, a professional organization of funeral service providers dedicated to the betterment of funeral service, has been assisting the public and its members for 90 years.

Park Memorial has been a longtime member and supporter of AFSA. Park Memorial's president, Jerry Smolyk, served a number of years on the executive board including as president from 1978-80. Vice president Kirstie Smolyk and manager Brad Eleniak have also served numerous terms on the board.

In celebration of the milestone event, the association hosted a 1920s-themed celebration at the River Cree Resort in Edmonton at the end of April. Included was the creation of a temporary museum exhibit (in one of the hotel's large ballrooms) dedicated to the history of funeral service in Alberta. Park Memorial participated, displaying a number of historic items we have kept over our own 75-year history including burial outfits that were used prior to the 1980s for deceased who did not have funeral attire. Other items Park Memorial displayed were historical embalming instruments and home embalming kits, a custom-made typewriter for typing in Ukrainian (used often in the '40s and '50s), photo books, and our first statement of profit and loss (it was not a particularly



Swinging in '20s style is Park Memorial's Nelson Lanca, Kirstie Smolyk, Midge Smolyk and Jerry Smolyk.

profitable one). Also on display were old funeral vehicles and a fully-operational horse-drawn funeral carriage. The museum was open to the public (we hope you had a chance to stop by) and welcomed school groups and the media. CTV aired a segment highlighting the museum while the Edmonton Journal also covered the event.

In addition to many educational seminars we attended to help us serve you better, we were treated to a Gatsby-themed gala awards dinner where many of us dressed in period costume from the roaring '20s. Two of our staff received long-term service awards as well. Our president Jerry Smolyk received his 55-year award and funeral director and embalmer Dennis Foster received his 50th. It was a wonderful night as we celebrated the history of funeral service with our colleagues across the province.

Soaring High on a Crane's Wings

By Lisa Johnston

Caroline was one of those lucky individuals who received a company pension in her mid-50s. Ready to retire from work but not from life, she immediately pursued other interests and birdwatching quickly became one of her favourite pastimes.

With binoculars in hand and well-worn books about birds, she would set off after breakfast each morning travelling to different areas within driving distance from home. Her husband, Martin, bought her a new camera, and Caroline loved the hunt of waiting in the wilderness for that one opportunity to click a photo of a rare bird she would then add to her ever-expanding scrapbook.

Unfortunately, Caroline's birdwatching ended suddenly after suffering a pulmonary incident. Rushed to the hospital, she underwent several tests uncovering a rare heart defect. Surgery was scheduled and deemed somewhat successful but Caroline, 67, would have to take life at a much slower pace.

Climbing hills and trekking through the marsh was no longer possible but Caroline still liked to go for walks in her neighbourhood or sit in her backyard amidst her bird feeders watching the birds that would visit every day. During this time, she also began to contemplate her death and what would have happened that fateful day if she never made it to the emergency room in time. She began to talk to Martin about what she would want for a funeral service, and although she was in no immediate danger, she decided to meet with a funeral director to plan her final arrangements.

The appointment took place at the funeral that served both Caroline's parents upon their deaths. Although highly spiritual, Caroline immediately said she did not want a traditional funeral service common with her parents' generation; she wanted something different and something that would involve birds. As they were brainstorming, the funeral director told her a story about the legend of the crane, which happened to be one of Caroline's favourite birds to capture on film.

"Throughout history, birds have been viewed as symbols of peace, love and even new life. The crane, one of the oldest recorded birds on Earth, has been a symbol of joy and the celebration of life, especially throughout Asia. Many believe the crane's powerful wings have the sacred task of carrying souls up to heaven."

As the crane is also one of the favourite subjects in origami – paper folding – Caroline and the funeral director came up with the idea of making paper cranes to be given to attendees at her memorial service. They would become the focal point of the ceremony – released into the sky at the completion of the service.

Caroline visited many craft shops over the next few months buying different shades of origami paper – blue, pink, yellow, orange, green and purple. As she did not think funeral guests would want to sit down to make their own origami cranes, she took on the task of constructing 100 beautiful coloured cranes which she stored in the box. She loved sitting on her back porch, listening to the birds and making the delicate cranes. So much so, she

started doing origami as a hobby making many beautiful creations over the years.

Almost 10 years to the date of her first cardiac incident, Caroline suffered a fatal heart attack. Her memorial service was planned for a spring day in the weeks following her death. As requested, Martin took the box of origami cranes to the funeral home. Following prayers from a celebrant and a light lunch – all planned by Caroline – guests were then instructed to take one of the cranes from a bowl at the front of the reception room. If they wished, they could write a note to Caroline to say goodbye or to wish her well in her journey up to heaven.

The guests then made their way outside to the lawn where an assortment of helium balloons awaited. Each crane was attached to the string of the balloon and then in unison released into the air.

It was a beautiful sight. The birds rose higher and higher until they faded from sight, allowing Caroline's friends and family to say goodbye as she continued her journey on the strong wings of the majestic cranes.



Please send me more information on funeral Pre-Planning

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ PC/Zip _____

I think the following friend, neighbour or family member would appreciate receiving future issues of this helpful newsletter.

Please add them to your mailing list.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ PC/Zip _____

Please send me information on the following:

Ask a Funeral Director

What are the memorial/tribute options available for families who choose to cremate?

The options are almost limitless. As with burying a loved one, most cemeteries offer in-ground burial of cremated remains. There are also above-ground tribute options with many different styles of columbarium available depending on the cemetery. A columbarium can be a free-standing outdoor structure or located within a mausoleum. Either way, secure compartments store the urn and can include a name plaque similar to a gravestone.

Some cemeteries offer scattering grounds or gardens. Other memorial options include park benches or tree plantings. Cremation jewelry has become popular in recent years and there are many types of pendants available that hold a small amount of cremated remains from your loved one.

From creating a diamond using cremated remains to launching them into space or submersing them to become part of a coral reef, the options are endless. The most important thing to remember is a lot of these decisions are irreversible, so make sure you discuss it in detail with all family members to find the most meaningful way to honour your unique loved one.

What is the purpose of a funeral?

Funerals have been performed for thousands of years. In today's society, there are many different types of funeral services. Whether you have a traditional church service or a modern celebration of life, the purpose is the same: to acknowledge the death of a loved one, pay tribute to their life and to begin the mourning process. Having a funeral also allows friends and relatives to express their love and provide support, while saying goodbye.

What is the role of the funeral director?

The role of the funeral director is to support and guide the family in all matters concerning the death. In the beginning, we assist with transferring the deceased to the funeral home and provide opportunities for viewing. We also help complete any paperwork and documentation. In the second stage – the funeral – we ensure your wishes and those of the deceased are taken care of with the utmost respect. Tasks may include arranging for a clergy/celebrant, flowers, musical requests, catering, writing an obituary and even accepting donations at the family's request. After the funeral service, we help arrange cremation or burial, provide information on monuments and grief resources, and if requested, assist with other paperwork. There are many other components behind the scenes, but our ultimate goal is to help you honour your loved one's life and begin your own personal grief journey.



New Partnership with SecuriGene Technologies Inc. to Preserve Loved One's DNA

Park Memorial is pleased to announce a new partnership with SecuriGene Technologies that will allow us to offer a new type of lasting memorial keepsake. DNA preservation is the best option for families who are looking for a meaningful way to memorialize and remember their loved one. Unlike ashes, hair or other traditional keepsake items, DNA contains the entire genetic "blueprint" of an individual. Preserving DNA gives families an opportunity to capture all this information and establish a connection that will last forever. It also helps to keep a physical record of your family tree, documents hereditary diseases that run in the family, stores DNA for future testing, opens doors for personalized medicine, and creates new opportunities for ancestry testing.



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PREARRANGED FUNERAL PLANS
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Do you have any questions about funeral service? If so, please call, email or Facebook us. We would be very happy to answer your questions.



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