

## Master of Ceremonies Example

### Nina's Garden

*"We gather to remember the little things that made a special place in our heart.*

*To remember those happy times when we laughed and those times when our hearts broke as one.*

*For who could put a price on memories?*

*We gather to share the pain*

*To hurt when you hurt without presuming that our pain is the same.*

*To cry when you cry and not try to hide or avoid our tears.*

*For tears are memories in motion.*

*We gather to give the gift of grief*

*To stand beside you in silence and not be uncomfortable with your tears.*

*To allow you the gift of mourning this loss and not lose patience*

*For grief is nature's way of healing a broken heart*

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ of the Funeral and Tribute Center. We are here to remember and celebrate the life of Nina Beth. It is our hope that every part of this service will honor a life lived among us.

I am sure you would like to join me in saying to her mother Lucille and father, Dan, her nieces and nephews and aunts and uncles that you are in our thoughts because of your loss. We want to be available to you in any way possible as you face the journey of grief.

Let me express the family's gratitude for your presence. The journey of grief is long and those who walk it should not have to walk it alone. In times like these nothing takes the place of friends. Your presence helps the family realize how valuable their loved one was to others and shows what an impact her living and dying has made.

We honor a woman who touched many lives. We will stop to hear the stories, to laugh and cry together once again and to acknowledge that we are different because Nina was here.

Our Celebrant today will be Glenda Stansbury. After our time together today, we will say our final goodbyes at Memorial Park Cemetery. A reception will follow here at the Tribute Center.

Our firm has produced a video tribute that we wish to present at this time. May we pause as we spend a few moments remembering Nina's life.

## VIDEO TRIBUTE

### **Master of Ceremonies Example**

Welcome. My name is Glenda Stansbury and I am honored to be the Funeral Director for our time together remembering Raymond M. We come here today with full hearts and numb minds. There are no words to express the mixture of feelings that surrounds each person here. Sadness for ourselves because this amazing, courageous man is no longer here to show us how to deal with adversity everyday with a smile. Joy for Ray, because his long life of living with limitations is now complete and there are other mountains out there for him to climb, goals to embrace, clouds to touch. Gratefulness that this life of inspiration was part of this earth for 63 years to guide, to teach and to love.

We come to stand with Ray's family to bear witness to your loss. You were faithful and vigilant guardians of this life and though the road was long and sometimes trying, you never gave up and, in return, were blessed by his presence for much longer than anyone could have dreamed. The hole in the world where Ray used to be will feel especially large and daunting. The journey of grief is long and no one should have to walk it alone. We ask you to commit yourself to being present to Ray's family in the coming days, weeks, and months as they find ways to live without their Ray. Each of you has a special Ray story. Find a time soon to share it with the family—call, email or write a note to let them know that Ray was a part of your life.

On behalf of the family, we thank you for being here to stand that silent vigil with them, because every person here represents a life that Ray made an

impression on during his time among us. We honor the multitudes of people who were there for Ray for the past forty years. The OSU band and his fraternity who raised millions of dollars to pay for his care, those caretakers who were Ray's lifeline and link to survival. Whether you visited him every week, cooked for him, wrote him, prayed for him or gave of your money, you each were special people in his life—the ones who never let him give up and helped him see each morning as another opportunity.

This is a sacred and special moment where we can let tears flow, and let laughter heal, where we can share stories and begin the journey of turning those stories into memories. We'll hear the music of his heart and see the snapshots of his time on earth. Leading us in our tribute today will be Doug Manning. He was Ray's pastor here at Southern Hills from 1964 until 1973. He was part of that first group of responders who did everything possible to make sure that Ray was stabilized and cared for after the accident and stayed in touch with him for the rest of his life. After our time together here, you are invited to join us on Ray's final journey to Resthaven Cemetery, where we will say our last goodbyes. And finally, we will leave this moment taking a portion of Ray's life with us in our hearts where his influence and spirit will live on forever.

As you entered today, you were given a ribbon to wear. Of course the colors stand for his beloved OSU Cowboys. But they also resemble wings, angel wings to honor and thank each one of you for being the wind beneath Ray's wings. He needed every one and now, as we watch the video tribute that our firm has prepared to the song, *Wind Beneath My Wings*, accept this as his thank you and blessing for being there for him.

VIDEO TRIBUTE

## Ceremonial Words

*Create a ceremonial opportunity when the family comes back to pick up the cremated remains or coming in for an ID viewing of their loved one. This can be a powerful and special moment. Take the family into a quiet room, light some candles or have some flowers there with the body or the urn and then utilize some of these words. Or invite some of the family to offer a memory.*

### General

It is an important day when we gather together to honor a life and mourn a death. Time stands still for just a moment as we stand here to acknowledge that someone has touched our lives, has left an imprint on our hearts and that our souls are eternally changed. \_\_\_\_\_ left this life on \_\_\_\_\_ but his/her spirit and his/her living made a difference and will continue to do so as long as each of you remember him/her in your hearts and carry the lessons of his/her life with you.

You now are the representatives and the ambassadors of \_\_\_\_\_'s legacy. She/He gave you wonderful gifts of kindness, graciousness, strength, acceptance and love. (\_\_\_\_\_ showed you how to live with challenges and struggles and how to survive. While not every moment was easy and not every memory etched in gold, in the final analysis, \_\_\_\_\_ gave to each of you every inch of what she had to offer. She/He never held back and always tried to give it her/his all.) *note: This part would depend upon how much you knew about the person, relationships, etc.*

You are her/his future and her/his memories. Be kind and patient with one another and allow each one of your family to experience grief in the way that fits them best. Washington Irving said *"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief...and unspeakable love.* Accept your tears and expressions of loss. Accept the angels

in human form who come along with a word, a hug or a memory to share. Help each other during those difficult times, the holidays, the anniversaries, the birthdays, the times when you will miss her/him the most.

**BLESSING:** *May you go forward today with a small flickering of light in your soul. May the memories of your loved one begin to bring comfort rather than pain. May the words, touch and presence of others bring solace. And may you be blessed in your coming in and going out, grateful for a life lived and a legacy left behind. Go in peace.*

### **Child**

*A small life walked by  
Leaving footprints on our hearts forever.*

Children are nature's way of telling us that the world should continue. The young ones in our world can melt the hardest hearts, bring smiles to the cynical and sad and make us look forward to tomorrow with promise and hope. Children are supposed to live beyond our time. We are here when they come into the world but we do not plan to be here when they leave. They are our legacy—they are not supposed to be our past.

And so now honoring the times you shared are even more special and sacred because it is the way that you keep their lights alive in your lives. It takes a village to raise a child—it also takes a village to mourn one. You don't overcome the death of a child, you learn how to live in different ways in the world and see the world for them, and remind others what they have lost.

In this moment and from now on you will remember \_\_\_\_\_, the place he/she has in your heart and the responsibility you now carry to keep his/her life alive through your memories and your stories.

## **Stillbirths or Pregnancy Loss**

*A small life walked by*

*Leaving footprints on our hearts forever.*

Children are nature's way of telling us that the world should continue. The young ones in our world can melt the hardest hearts, bring smiles to the cynical and sad and make us look forward to tomorrow with promise and hope. Children are supposed to live beyond our time. We are here when they come into the world but we do not plan to be here when they leave. They are our legacy—they are not supposed to be our past. And when one does not even have an opportunity to take a breath to become a part of our lives, the loss is quiet, deep and long lasting.

Too often people consider pregnancy loss a minor grief—one that can easily be conquered. But they are sadly wrong. For the minute the test was positive, the moment that a little movement could be felt, the giggle of the first kick—these were special and sacred memories that the parents believed were only the first in a long life of experiences.

And so now honoring hopes and dreams that each parent shared are even more special and sacred because it is the way that we keep their lights alive in your lives. It takes a village to raise a child—it also takes a village to mourn one. You don't overcome the death of a baby, you learn how to live in different ways in the world and see the world for them, and remind others what they have lost.

In this moment and from now on we will remember these little ones that were here for a whisper, the place they have in our hearts and the responsibility we now carry to keep their brief appearance in life alive through our memories.

**Hallowing The Ground: A Closing Ceremony To Be Used At The Cemetery**

When an old monk was asked why he cared for the ancient graves and why he cleaned the stones to preserve the writings carved there. His reply was simple, "they still have their names. They will always have their names."

From this day on this place will bear the name of \_\_\_\_\_. It is here that his name will be honored by those who love him. It is here that he will be remembered by generations yet unborn. This place means he will always have his name.

When Chief Crazy Horse was asked where his home was, he replied, my land is where my people are buried. He fought valiant wars to defend the burial grounds of his people. For in those sacred grounds he found a connection with his heritage and felt like he belonged to a family. There he found the hope that he too would be so honored and remembered. In this hope he found the courage to live.

From this time on this land will also be sacred to you. For it is here that the body of \_\_\_\_\_ returned to the earth from which we all came. It is here that he became one with the earth and with the universe.

*(note: in case of cremation you substitute it is here where we picture the returning to the earth from which we all came.)*

It is here that generations to come will find a connection to their roots. They will come here and feel the sense of belonging to a greater force called family.

It is here that many will come to feel the presence and the love shared in life. Some will come often. Others may come only on rare occasions; all who come will be blessed. It is here that we show honor to the memories of a life that touched us and remains alive in our hearts.

May we therefore hallow this ground by placing your individual flowers here and, by that act, pledge to remember and honor him for as long as you live.

This is now the earthly home of \_\_\_\_\_, and like Chief Crazy Horse, our home is also where our people are buried. And we are standing on holy ground

### **Scattering At Sea**

A reading that was shared at the Queen Mum's funeral.

*You can shed tears that she is gone*

*Or you can smile because she has lived.*

*You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back*

*Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left.*

*Your heart can be empty because you can't see her*

*Or you can be full of the love you shared*

*You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday*

*Or you can be happy for tomorrow, because of yesterday*

*You can remember her and only that she's gone*

*Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on*

And so we come together under this beautiful winter sky, to honor the life that \_\_\_\_\_ lived. She gathered her friends and family together, gave them the gift of life and love and lived well in the world that she made.

We come to bid her a gentle farewell, to acknowledge the pain of loss and the days of grief that lay ahead for us, her family and friends, and to hallow this spot where she will be sent to lay to rest with \_\_\_\_\_. Her days of pain and suffering are done and now she can be at peace among the gentle waves of the Bay that she loved sailing with \_\_\_\_\_.



From this time on, this water will be sacred to you. For it is here that our beloved \_\_\_\_\_, returns to the earth from which we all came. We can come here to place the orange tulips that she loved and send a wish of remembrance to her spirit.

It is here that we can come to feel the presence and the love shared in life. She left behind such a huge example of living each moment to the fullest, striving to be her best and seeking fun in everything she touched.

It is here that we show honor to the memories of a life that touched us and remains alive in our hearts, for no one is dead until they are forgotten.

May we therefore pledge to keep the example of love and joy of an intentional and determined life with us each day and be eternally grateful that \_\_\_\_\_ was part of our world and our lives.

The poet wrote:

*The cares of the world concern me no longer.*

*I have completed this life. My work is done, the children of my heart grown.*

*My family is well on their journey and happy and healthy in their pursuits. . .*

*I have loved much and well*

*To those I leave behind, .*

*I hope I will remain in their hearts as they will in mine. . .*

*Thank you for taking such good care of me*

*And all of you who have been my friends, thank for teaching me about life and about love.*

*Go in peace and in blessings for the day*