



Why People Read and Write Obituaries



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For some, reading obituaries is a daily habit. It's a fascination that often falls right into the morning routine while sipping a cup of coffee. Whether it's a way to stay informed or to stay connected, reading obituaries is a habit that helps people keep track of their friends, acquaintances and brethren. When someone takes the time to write an obituary notice for a loved one or as a service to the family, they know it will be read and shared.

Purpose of an Obituary

Obituaries provide a synopsis of the story of life for an endless cast of characters. They relate a legacy and memorialize lives, pointing out accomplishments and delving into history. Obituaries can be an announcement of death, but more often they are a celebration of life. These tributes are often filled with amusing anecdotes and notable achievements that explain who someone was and why their passing is a loss to all. A list of survivors - those who've been left behind - is often an identifier as much as it is an announcement.

HISTORY OF THE OBITUARY

Notices of the deaths of Americans first appeared in U.S. publications in the 16th century. More detailed accounts began to surface in the 1800s, commemorating prominent citizens and lesser known people by listing their accomplishments. Pre-Civil War obits offered glimpses into the deceased's lives, although women's obituaries were usually shorter than men's. They often attributed a woman's success by her role in society as a wife, mother and household matriarch. The lives of men were portrayed by their occupations, adventures and details of their deaths. Obituaries of soldiers and Civil War leaders later added a new perspective with more details of their life accomplishments and heroics. By the late 19th century, the occupations and public roles of women became more pronounced. The roles of social reformists and suffrage activists were also included in their obituaries.

THE MODERN ERA

By the mid-1900s, obituaries of both ordinary and famous people became a regular feature in many newspapers. With a shortage of professional copywriters to memorialize the recently deceased, many publishers chose to allow family members and morticians to write them instead. Life portraits in words evolved into obituaries as we know them today. While newspaper obituaries are still quite commonplace, finding obituaries online is becoming the norm. Guides, such as "Help Writing an Obituary," are available to assist friends and family members create suitable memorials to honor loved ones they've lost.



Why Write an Obituary Notice

As people pass on, those they've left behind often long to tell their stories. People don't have to be famous to be remembered for the impact they've had on society. Writing an obituary shares the accomplishments and life stories of those who have died, highlighting the details for those who knew the deceased and to inspire people they've never met. Writing obituaries also brings closure to the family. It's a story with an ending.

Why People Read Obituaries

There are many reasons why people read obituaries and death notices on a regular basis. For most, it's about discovering the stories behind the names and faces we see. Why is the need there? It's a ritual, a habit, a way of coping. It helps readers discover the meaning of life.

THE RITUAL

This practice goes beyond checking to see if anyone you know has passed. It quenches a need for knowledge, making readers feel nostalgic, connected and informed. Reading obituaries in the newspaper or online is unlike reading anything else published. So often, today's news stories end in the present and without a conclusion. These unique tales of personal history include the most important details to the stories of real people, and they always provide closure.

THE HABIT

Not everyone pays attention to the obituary column in the local newspaper or does a daily search to find obituaries online. It's a habit that has long been closely associated with older adults. With the growth of the Internet, however, has emerged a new band of obituary followers. They quench their thirst to be connected and to find information through an online obituary search.

THE KEY TO LONGEVITY

Studies show that how we address and cope with mental, physical and emotional losses throughout our lives impacts our ability to stay positive as we age. The Baltes Selective Optimization With Compensation psychological theory, for example, suggests that staying optimistic is one of the keys to greater longevity. The older we get, the more frequently we tend to lose friends, family and former classmates. Finding meaning in the life and the loss of others allows us to compensate for the inevitable - death itself.



Benefits of Online Obituaries

Reading and writing obituaries has many benefits. For some, it's a reminder of the meaning of life. For others, it's a respectful way to memorialize and honor friends or family members who have died. For all, it's an opportunity to gather and share the information quickly after it's been published online through obituary websites and social media.

REMEMBERED FOREVER

When an obituary is printed in the newspaper, it's lost unless it's clipped out and kept in a special place. Circulation is limited, making that special issue hard for some to access. Like many things on the Internet, online obituaries are a more accessible way to follow the lives and deaths of others. They are read and shared and read again.

EMBRACING NOSTALGIA

With age comes the desire to reminisce and remember days gone by. When someone dies and is remembered in an obituary, it allows others to embrace the nostalgia. Whether it's a celebrity that has faded from the limelight or a classmate who's lost touch over the years, readers and writers can recapture the days of glory and memories of a bygone era.

PROVIDING CLOSURE

Features, obituaries and recent death notices of those who have died always end the same way. While they rekindle a sense of community, they provide closure to hurting hearts and lost relationships. They tell the end of the story of life.



Conclusion

People have been paying tribute to the deceased through the obituary for more than 500 years. Online obituaries are a reflection of a social society, allowing people to share and absorb the life stories of celebrities and everyday people who have passed. Writing obituaries helps friends and family members commemorate the accomplishments and special qualities of loved ones they have lost. Casual and avid readers stay informed and connected, discovering interesting stories on their quest to discover the meaning of life.

About ObitsDaily.com

ObitsDaily.com is an online resource for viewing and posting obituaries in the U.S. It's an affordable and contemporary alternative to newspaper announcements. Users can perform a death notice search and find obituaries online commemorating friends and loved ones who have died. ObitsDaily.com also offers resources on topics such as how to write obituaries and what steps to take after a friend or family member has passed. To honor a loved one with an obituary, visit www.obitsdaily.com.

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