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your passions.**

Write about your most
loved anecdote.



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The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the
Virginia Blue Ridge is here to help.

As a nonprofit completely run by
volunteers, we want to start the discussion
about the benefits of funeral planning.

Funeral pricing, burial options,
personalization...we're here to help you
make informed, meaningful, and dignified
funeral decisions. Start the discussion with
us today.

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for more information.

Contact Us

Funeral Consumers Alliance of the
Virginia Blue Ridge
PO Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062-0082
Phone: 540-953-5589

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Tell your story, your way.

A guide to writing
your own obituary



**The Funeral Consumers Alliance
of the
Virginia Blue Ridge**

Writing your obituary: the facts

What is it?

The obituary is the generally approved way to notify individuals in a community about a death. Traditionally, obituaries were published in a local paper or papers and prepared by a funeral director using a template provided by the funeral home and/or the newspaper.

Many newspaper obituaries are now available electronically on the newspaper's website. These websites also allow the reader to "post" thoughts and condolences to the family and other readers of the obituary.

This pamphlet addresses some of the concepts they employ, but first a definition of the term

"obituary":

- A record or announcement of a death, especially in a newspaper; usually comprising a brief biographical sketch of the deceased.

What to include in your obituary

Name/Announcement

- Full name of the deceased, including nickname, if any
- Age at death
- Residence, i.e. name of the city at death
- Day, date, place, and cause of death

Life

- Date and place of birth
- Childhood: siblings, stories, schools, friends
- Marriage(s): date of, place, spouse
- Education
- Designations, awards, recognition
- Employment: jobs, activities, stories
- Places of residence
- Hobbies, sports, interests, activities
- Any affiliations
- Achievements
- Unusual attributes, humor, other stories

Family

Be sure to include all of the family you are survived by, including spouse, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, siblings, and any other family members. Siblings and children should be listed in order of birth.

Things to remember before writing

It's Your Life!

Remember, in writing your own obituary, you are writing about the person you know best—yourself. What are your achievements, accomplishments, activities for which you would like to be best remembered? While not wanting to create a resume or biography, a short synopsis of your life will help to focus your thoughts and ideas before you begin to write your obituary.

A Cautionary Note

No matter what you submit to newspapers, it is their prerogative to cut and trim and rewrite to fit their own obituary rules and available space. Just about the only newspapers where one might find "printed as submitted" obituaries are in very small towns.

Most newspapers charge by the column line and some charge by the word. If the family is submitting the obituary to the newspaper independently of the funeral home, check the funeral home's billing statement line-by-line to be positive they haven't inserted an obituary-submission charge.