

Speech 11 Let's talk about the Importance of Attending Memorials

Brethren, the paying of respect to a departed Brother and provision of support to that Brother's grieving family is of paramount importance to every Mason. It is the very manifestation of who we are as a Craft. We all remember the Charge at the Northeast angle of the Lodge. During my term as DDGM and before I have considered this duty fundamental. Let me share a recent anecdote to illustrate.

Recently I made a Fraternal visit to a District lodge conducting a First Degree, but prior to the opening of lodge, a departed Brother's family had requested a Masonic Memorial Service for their loved one. I attended early and had the opportunity to meet the Candidate for the evening as I entered. He was expectedly nervous, but also feeling a little awkward as to what to do. Should he wait in his vehicle, or should he attend the Memorial Service. Naturally, with the Lodge Secretary, I consulted the Widow to request her preference. She advised she would appreciate the Candidate attending, so he accompanied her in, and sat with her during the Service. The Widow's son, a Mason from another District, took part. The Memorial Service was flawlessly delivered.

After the Service, I joined the Worshipful Master in expressing condolences to the departed Brother's family. The Widow remarked how on well the Work was done, on the support that was offered to her family, and on the turnout of Brethren participating. She then remarked how thankful she was that the Candidate was there to sit with her, so that she was not alone, and so her son could participate as her husband would have wished. She and her son departed comforted.

It was then approaching time for the Regular Meeting to begin. So, I had another opportunity to spend some time with the Candidate. He felt the Work done in the Masonic Memorial Service was impressive. It was then that I remarked to him that tonight he would have the opportunity to view two of the significant points in every Mason's journey: the Beginning and the End. It was then time for my presentation into Lodge. The Degree was masterfully conducted, indicating significant practice and care. Our newest Brother was enthralled. I had the opportunity to present him with the sanctioned Masonic pin and share a few words with him to clarify the Degree and its purpose, and concurrently illustrate the significance of paying respect to a departed Brother. He had been given a glimpse into the future time when the gavel of the Great Architect would someday call him. (None of us knows when)

In the outside world there is politics and the term "the forgotten man", but in Masonry there is no such thing for a Brother or his family. A Candidate witnessed for himself that evening, a family grieved as his might, but they did not do so alone, and comfort and support were there in abundance: the family need only ask. And that family would still be remembered when the Lodge held events, or at times in the years to come when the Widow might feel melancholy, Brethren she mightn't know would reach out or offer some Benevolence. Our newest Brother understood. Likewise, and in all cases, the Family and the Community see Masonry in its best light when others see our thoughtfulness and compassion at work. Whether the Family wishes a formal Masonic Memorial Service, or alternatively and informally whether Brethren attend a funeral or visitation if that is their preference, eyes are upon us for the Brother who devoted his time, and often theirs, in contributing during his Masonic career. How we show our appreciation to him, and to them who have shared him with us, is of vital significance. It is who we are and a landmark of our Craft, it's how we will retain members and how we will gain new ones.