



JOSEPH MCPHEE
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Funeral Industry Glossary Of Terms

A

ALGOR MORTIS

The cooling of the body immediately after death to room temperature and temporary stiffening of the muscles.

AMBULANCE

An automotive vehicle especially constructed and equipped to transport injured, sick or incapacitated persons.

APPRENTICE

The name generally applied to an individual learning the embalming and funeral directing procedure under the supervision of a licensee.

ARRANGEMENT ROOM

A room of the funeral home used to make the necessary funeral arrangements with the family of the deceased.

ASPIRATE

Process of withdrawing fluids and gases from the abdominal cavity.

B

BACKGROUND DRAPES

Decorative drapes (usually made of velour) arranged on a frame and placed behind the casket as a background.

BEREAVED

(N) The immediate family of the deceased. (V) suffering from grief upon the death of a loved one.

BURIAL

Placing of a dead body in an underground chamber earth burial- interment.

BURIAL CERTIFICATE OR PERMIT

A legal paper issued by the local government authorizing burial. The permit may authorize earth burial or cremation or removal to a distant point.

BURIAL GARMENTS

Wearing apparel made especially for the dead.

BURIAL INSURANCE

An insurance policy in which the principal is paid in a funeral service and merchandise rather than cash.

C**CANOPY**

A roof like structure projecting from the outside wall over the driveway allowing passengers to board and alight from vehicles without being directly exposed to the elements sometimes construed as a portable canvas shelter used to cover the grave area during committal service.

CASKET

A receptacle of wood, metal or plastic into which the dead human body is placed for burial. Sometimes referred to as "coffin" or "burial case."

CASKET COACH

Hearse: A motor coach designed and used for the conveyance of the casketed remains from the place the funeral service is conducted to the cemetery. Also known as a Funeral Coach.

CASKETING

Placing of the body in the casket upon completion of embalming, dressing and cosmetizing.

CASKET RACK

A device which allows caskets to be placed one on top of the other for display purposes.

CASKET VEIL

A silk or net transparent covering for the casket for the purpose of keeping flies and other insects from the remains.

CATAFALQUE

A stand upon which the casketed remains rest while in state and during the funeral service.

CEMETERY

An area of ground set aside for burial or entombment of the deceased.

CENOTAPH

An empty tomb or monument erected in memory of a person buried elsewhere.

CERTIFIED DEATH CERTIFICATE

A legalized copy of the original certificate, issued upon request by the local government for the purpose of substantiating various claims by the family of the deceased such as insurance and other death benefits.

CHAPEL

A large room of the funeral home in which the farewell service is held.

CHURCH TRUCK

A collapsible catafalque used for funerals.

CLIENTS

Those who employ the services of the funeral director.

COFFIN

A wedge shaped burial case, usually eight- sided.

COLUMBARIUM

A structure of vaults lined with recesses for urns containing cremated remains.

COMMITTAL SERVICE

The final portion of the funeral service at which time the deceased is interred or entombed.

CORONER

A public official and in some cases a constitutional officer whose duty it is to investigate the case of death if it appears to be from other than natural causes, or if there was no physician in attendance for a long time prior to death.

CORTEGE

The funeral procession.

COSMETOLOGY

Utilization of cosmetics to restore life like appearance to the deceased.

CREMATION

Reduction of the body to ashes by fire.

CREMATION PERMIT

A certificate issued by local government authorizing cremation of the deceased.

CREMATORY

A furnace for cremating remains a building housing such a furnace.

CRYPT

A vault or room used for keeping remains.

COT

The stretcher-like carrier used to remove deceased persons from the place of death to the funeral home.

D**DEATH**

Cessation of all vital functions without the capability of resuscitation.

DEATH CERTIFICATE

A legal paper signed by the attending physician showing the cause of death and other vital statistical data pertaining to the deceased.

DEATH NOTICE

That paragraph in the classified section of a newspaper publicizing the death of a person and giving those details of the funeral service the survivors wish to have published. Most such notices list the names of the relatives of the deceased.

DECEASED

(*N*) one in whom all physical life has ceased; (*V*) dead.

DISINTER

To remove the remains from the burial place; to dig up.

DISPLAY ROOM

That room in the funeral home in which caskets, Urns, burial garments and sometimes vaults are displayed.

DOOR BADGE**E**

A floral spray placed on the door of a residence wherein death has occurred.

EMBALM

The process of preserving a dead body by means of circulating preservative and antiseptic through the veins and arteries.

EMBALMER

One who disinfects or preserves dead human bodies by the injection or external application of antiseptics, disinfectants or preservative fluids; prepares human bodies for transportation which are dead of contagious or infectious diseases; or uses derma surgery or plastic art for restoring mutilated features.

EMBALMING FLUID

Liquid chemicals used in preserving a dead body.

EMBALMING TABLE

An operating table usually constructed of metal with a porcelain surface upon which the remains are placed for embalming.

ETHICS

The moral code which guides the members of the profession in proper conduct of their duties and obligations.

EXHUME

To dig up the remains; to remove from the place of burial.

F**FAMILY CAR**

That limousine in the funeral procession set aside for the use of the immediate family.

FAMILY ROOM

A specially arranged room in the funeral home which affords the family privacy at the time of the funeral service.

FLOWER CAR

A vehicle used for the transportation of flower pieces from the funeral home to the church and/or cemetery.

FLOWER RACKS AND STANDS

Wooden or metal stands and racks of varying heights used for banking flowers around the casket.

FINAL RITES

The funeral service.

FIRST CALL

The initial visit of the funeral director to the place of death for the purpose of removing the deceased and to secure certain information for which he has immediate need.

FUNERAL COACH

See Casket Coach.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Funeral director's conference with the family for the purpose of completing financial and service details of a funeral.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

A professional who prepares for the burial or other disposition of dead human bodies,

supervises such burial or disposition, maintains a funeral establishment for such purposes, counsels with survivors. Synonym: mortician, undertaker.

FUNERAL HOME

A building used for the purpose of embalming, arranging and conducting funerals.

FUNERAL SERVICE

1) The profession which deals with the handling of dead human bodies; 2) The religious or other rites conducted immediately before final disposition of the dead human body.

FUNERAL SPRAY

A collective mass of cut flowers sent to the residence of the deceased or to the funeral home as a floral tribute to the deceased.

G

GRAVE

An excavation in the earth for the purpose of burying the deceased .

GRAVE LINER

A receptacle made of concrete, metal or wood into which the casket is placed as an extra precaution in protecting the remains from the elements.

GRAVE (OR MEMORIAL) MARKER

A method of identifying the occupant of a particular grave. Permanent grave markers are usually of metal or stone which gives such data as the name of the individual, date and place of birth, date and place of death.

H

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

Friends or members of a religious, social or fraternal organization who act as an escort or honor guard for the deceased. Honorary pallbearers do not carry the casket.

I

INQUEST

An official inquiry or examination usually before a jury to determine the cause of death.

IN STATE

The custom of availing the deceased for viewing by relatives and friends prior to or after the funeral service.

INSTRUMENTS

The varied tools required in the embalming operation.

INTER

To bury a dead body in the earth in a grave or tomb.

INURNMENT

The placing of the ashes of one cremated in an urn.

L**LEAD CAR**

The vehicle in which the funeral director and sometimes the clergyman rides. When the procession is formed, the lead car moves to the head of it and leads the procession to the church and/or cemetery.

LICENSE

An authorization from the state granting permission to perform duties which, without such permission, would be illegal.

LIMOUSINE

An automobile designed to seat five or more persons behind the driver's seat.

LOWERING DEVICE

A mechanism used for lowering the casket into the grave. Apparatus is placed over the open grave which has two or more straps which support the casket over the opening. Upon release of the mechanism, the straps unwind from a cylinder and slowly lower the casket into the grave.

M**MAUSOLEUM**

A public or private building especially designed to receive entombments. A permanent above ground resting place for the dead.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

A government official, usually appointed, who has a thorough medical knowledge and whose function is to perform an autopsy on bodies dead from violence, suicide, crime, etc., and to investigate circumstances of death.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A religious service conducted in memory of the deceased without the remains being present.

MINISTER'S ROOM

A room in the funeral home set aside for the clergyman wherein he can robe and make any last minute preparations for the funeral service.

MORGUE

A place to where bodies found dead are removed and exposed pending identification by relatives.

MORTICIAN

See funeral director.

MORTUARY

A synonym for funeral home a building specifically designed and constructed for caring for the dead.

MORTUARY SCIENCE

That part of the funeral service profession dealing with the proper preparation of the body for final disposition.

MOURNER

One who is present at the funeral out of affection or respect for the deceased.

N**NICHE**

A hollowed space in a wall made especially (in this connotation) for placing of urns containing cremated remains.

O**OBITUARY**

A notice of the death of a person, particularly a newspaper notice, containing a biographical sketch.

P**PALLBEARERS**

Individuals whose duty is to carry the casket when necessary during funeral service. Pallbearers in some sections of the country are hired and in other sections are close friends and relatives of the deceased.

PLOT

A specific area of ground in a cemetery owned by a family or individual. A plot usually contains two or more graves.

PREARRANGED FUNERAL

Funeral arrangements completed by an individual prior to his/her death.

PREARRANGED FUNERAL TRUST

A method by which an individual can pre-pay their funeral expenses.

PREPARATION ROOM

A room in a funeral home designed and equipped for preparing the deceased for final disposition,

PREPARATION TABLE

An operating table located in the preparation room upon which the body is placed for embalming and dressing.

PROCESSION

The vehicular movement of the funeral from the place where the funeral service was conducted to the cemetery. May also apply to a church funeral where the mourners follow the casket as it is brought into and taken out of the church.

PURGE

A discharge from the deceased through the mouth, nose and ears of matter from the stomach and intestine caused by improper or ineffectual embalming, due to putrefaction.

PUTREFACTION

The decomposition of the body upon death which causes discoloration and the formation of a foul smelling product.

R**REGISTER**

A book made available by the funeral director for recording the names of people visiting the funeral home to pay their respects to the deceased. Also has space for entering other data such as name, dates of birth and death of the deceased, name of the officiating clergyman, place of interment, time and date of service, list of floral tributes, etc.

REMAINS

The deceased.

REPOSING ROOM

A room of the funeral home where a body lies in state from the time it is casketed until the time of the funeral service.

RESTORATIVE ART

Derma surgery: the process of restoring mutilated and distorted features by employing wax, creams, plaster, etc.

RIGOR MORTIS

Rigidity of the muscles which occurs at death.

S

SERVICE CAR

Usually a utility vehicle to which tasteful ornamentation may be added in the form of a metal firm name plate, post lamps, etc. It is utilized to transport chairs, church trucks, flower stands, shipping cases, etc.

SLUMBER ROOM

A room equipped with, besides the usual furniture, a bed upon which the deceased is placed prior to casketing on the day of the funeral. The body, appropriately dressed, lies in state on the bed.

SPIRITUAL BANQUET

A Roman Catholic practice involving specific prayers, such as Masses and Rosaries offered by an individual or a group for a definite purpose.

SURVIVOR

The persons outliving the deceased, particularly the immediate family.

T**TRADE EMBALMER**

A licensed embalmer who is not employed by one specific funeral home, but does the embalming for several firms either on a salary or per case basis.

TRANSIT PERMIT

A legal paper issued by the local government authorizing removal of a body to a cemetery for interment. Some cities also require an additional permit if the deceased is to be cremated.

U**URN**

A container into which cremated remains are placed, made of metal, wood or stone.

V**VAULT**

A burial chamber underground or partly so. Also includes in meaning the outside metal or concrete casket container.

VIGIL

A Roman Catholic religious service held on the eve of the funeral service.

VISITATION

An opportunity for survivors and friends to view the deceased in private usually in a special room within the funeral home.

W

WAKE

A watch kept over the deceased, sometimes lasting the entire night preceding the funeral.

We would like to thank the following for their direct contribution to this page: