

IOBGA MEMORIAL CEREMONY

*Our thanks to IOBGA International Past President (2001) Carol Foote (District 19)
for her wonderful contribution of this service.*

[If available, prior to the ceremony, post the colors of the departed's country and the IOBGA burgee. If a ships bell can be made available, you can add "eight bells" where indicated. At a minimum, a Leader and/or an acting Chaplain will be required to lead the service, or other members can participate in lieu of the Leader or Chaplain as you wish].

INTRODUCTION: Presiding Officer/Leader

Friends, a member of the IOBGA has embarked on his/her last voyage. The tide of this life has ebbed for our friend, and we, his/her fellow members, have gathered to honor his/her memory.

INVOCATION: Acting Chaplain

Let us bow our heads.

"Our gracious Captain, Skipper of our souls: We come together in fellowship today to remember and honor our departed friend and teammate, _____. We lay before You our sorrow, that You may cleanse us with Your tears. We offer up to You our memories, that You may strengthen and bless them with Your love. We bring to You our hope, that You may help us each to live a life worthy of remembrance. Fill our hearts with the light and comfort of Your presence as you guide our remembrance of _____ this day. Amen"

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EPITAPH: Presiding Officer/Leader

A reading from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4 : “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to reap; A time to break down and a time to build up; A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance.”

Through every season we realize how human fulfillment and true happiness come from knowing and valuing that which we have, and sharing it with others. Friendship and laughter, patience and sorrow, humility and compassion, service and teaching, from birth through death, all these are God’s gifts to us, the precious moments of life itself.

We thank _____ for the moments of life we have shared with him/her.

Picture _____’s face and the times shared with him/her. As you do, something will make you smile. If you could select only one word, phrase, or short sentence to describe what brings on that smile about _____, what would it be?

[OPTIONAL: Allow short time for members to offer their descriptive phrases. If you prefer to collect some of the qualities/memories that people treasure about the departed in advance and have the leader or a member share them **instead, they can be inserted here.....**eg her sense of humor, her quick smile, her off-color jokes, the way she interrupted the president at meetings all the time, her fried chicken, her understanding way of listening...anything that is typical of this person and brings a smile to your face.]

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We treasure the memory of our friend, who has helped us and shared in our journey of life. We, who honor him/her, are sustained by recollections of his/her service to us and the people of our Blue Gavel, boating, and local communities. We rejoice in the difference he/she has made.

[If there are specific contributions you want to recognize in the area of service, you can insert them here.]

Through all these seasons, our fellow member has lived his/her life. We pray that he/she now enjoys a time of peace, joy, and refreshment. For us, Now is the season; Ours is the time.

INSPIRATIONAL READING: Member, Friend, or Family member of the Departed

Choose from a favorite poem, or the verse of a favorite hymn or song, or a favorite scripture of the departed. If music is a strong association for this person, a recording or live performance can go here.

RELEASE AND PROMISE: Presiding Officer/Leader

“We rejoice in our faith that when the final watch changes, _____ and other friends who have preceded him/her will be waiting to guide us over the horizon to the harbor beyond.

We release _____ to be with us now in a different way. We will honor his/her memory by enjoying our fondest memories of him/her. We will honor him/her by allowing the lessons we have learned from him/her to continue to teach us. We will honor _____ by being the best that we can be, and by departing from this place with a deeper appreciation for each other.”

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MOMENT OF SILENCE: Presiding Officer/Leader

Join me now in offering a moment of silence for _____.

{Eight bells may be rung here}

{If there are wreaths or flowers to be tossed into the water, they can be released here.}

PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS AND COMMITMENT:

Acting Chaplain:

Let us pray:

“Eternal God, thank you for sharing with us the life of _____, our friend and teammate. Before he/she was ours, he/she is yours. For all that _____ has given us to make us what we are, for that of him/her which lives and grows in each of us, for the joy and laughter by which he/she brightened our days, and for his/her life that in your love will never end, we give you thanks.

We now offer _____ back into your arms, to join our IOBG and IOBGA friends who have gone before him/her. May his/her soul shine with your Light and rest at home in your Peace.”

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BENEDICTION AND PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE: Acting Chaplain: [immediately follows Prayer of Thankfulness]

“Lord, comfort us in our loneliness, strengthen us in our weakness, guide and encourage us in our uncertainty, and give us courage to face the future inspired and unafraid. Help us to trust your presence in the events we do not understand, put us in touch with the inner resources hidden in us, and guide us through the future by gently transforming our grief into compassion, our hurts into new hope for others.

Draw those of us who remain in this life closer to one another. Make us faithful to serve one another, as _____ has served us, and help us to know thy Grace. Amen.”

CLOSING: Presiding Officer/Leader:

May the enduring spirit of _____ continue to touch our lives as we move on to our next port of call. Thank you for coming to share in this remembrance.

(NOTE: If music is a strong association with this person, it is especially nice at this time to play a CD or have a live performance of a song or piece that people strongly associate with this person, preferably something upbeat that brings on joyful or inspiring memories)

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Sample Inspirational Reading

What Will Matter

Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.

Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave?

What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.

Author: Michael Josephson