Appendix F  Eulogy Guidelines

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Preparing a Eulogy
For years, members of the fire service have told us that preparing a eulogy was one of the most difficult things they had ever done. They wanted their remarks to be both comforting and respectful.

A eulogy is for the living, most importantly for family and close friends. So we have turned to survivors and friends of fallen firefighters to share what meant the most to them. We also have asked senior fire officers what worked best in their preparation and delivery.

If asked to deliver a eulogy for a fallen firefighter from your department, here are a few guidelines that may help you gather your thoughts and prepare a fitting tribute.

Research
Get the key facts-age, nickname, names of family members and closest friends, timeline of key events in the person's life, personal and professional accomplishments, and honors and awards received.

Ask friends and family members for stories that illustrate how they want to remember their loved one. If you use one of these stories, remember to acknowledge the source. For example, "Jim's daughters told me..." or "Ann's father reminded me that..."

Include information about the firefighter's character and personality. What was the firefighter proudest of in his or her life? For what would he or she want to be remembered?

If you knew the firefighter, include personal anecdotes and memories. If you did not know the firefighter personally, say that! Speak with people who did, especially those who shared years of friendship and memories.

Organize
You may want to use a theme to tie your presentation together. For example, "Jack loved adventure," or, "In everything he did, Don reached out to help other people."

It may help to put your ideas on note cards and then arrange them in a logical order for your presentation.

Draft
Begin by expressing your condolences and the department's sense of loss. Acknowledge family members, including spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings, and close friends.

Focus on the person's life, not the circumstances that led to the death. Include funny stories. Even in the midst of deep grief, it is important to smile. And remember to mention the source of the story, if appropriate.

Include a statement of support from the department. The department must follow through on any promised support, so only promise what you can ensure will be delivered.
Acknowledge the department member who is acting as the liaison for the family. Have a printed copy of the final eulogy ready for the family and others who may want one.

**Practice**

Review and practice your remarks before the service. If you are nervous about speaking in front of other people, practice speaking in front of someone you trust to give you honest, supportive feedback.

*It is okay to show emotion!*

Have a back-up plan so someone else can take over if you cannot finish speaking.

Be prepared to adjust your planned remarks. Before you speak, another person may use some of the same stories or information. Acknowledge this or have other stories ready.

Above all, remember not everyone is a great orator. However, families will remember the sincerity of your words and your kindness forever.

**Reference Materials**

These resources may also help you in writing and delivering a eulogy.

Funerals with Love [link to: www.funeralswithlove.com/eulogy.htm]
Suggestions for structuring, writing, and delivering a eulogy; a downloadable book is available for a fee

Grief Loss & Recovery [link to: www.grieflossrecovery.com/griefarticles/martinO1.html]
Brief step-by-step guideline to writing a eulogy

A Labor of Love: How to Write a Eulogy [link to: www.funeralsonline.com/1eulogy.htm]
By Garry Schaeffer
Downloadable book available for a small fee; also available in paperback
Appendix G  Reception

The family may choose to have a small private gathering at home, in which case, Department involvement may be minimal to non-existent. If the Funeral/Memorial has been a large formal affair then a reception is appropriate. The family may or may not attend but the event should be relaxed and allow people to visit and unwind after what has certainly been a tension filled few days.

It is the responsibility of this division to organize and provide food and refreshments at a reception at the conclusion of the Memorial Service or Interment (whichever ends our involvement). This will probably take place at a location away from the cemetery. Should the family decide to have a private gathering, this division should offer any assistance in planning and preparation through the Family Liaison Officer.

The responsibilities of this division include:

1. Location selection (Ensure adequate parking and reception space for the anticipated group)
2. Number of anticipated attendees
3. Anticipated starting and ending times
4. Menu and refreshments (catered?)
5. Provide maps to be distributed at the Interment
6. Tableware and seating
7. If the reception is to be outside, establish the need for tents and restrooms
8. Will there be any introductions or program – if speakers/program PA and stage.
9. Relocation of flowers (if desired)
10. Department provided transportation for individuals.
Appendix H  Ceremonies

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“Last Alarm” Bell Service

The “bell service” is ideal indoors as part of the church/funeral home memorial service. Two people are needed to perform the service—one to read the selection and the other to ring the bell. If possible, the service will be conducted by the fallen firefighter’s department.

Another protocol is to conduct this service at graveside; graveside service is generally more difficult to hear, and, if there is inclement weather, it may be difficult to meaningfully conduct. (Lengthy grave site services may do an injustice to the tribute and may be uncomfortable to family members.)

Position the bell in the rear of the church or funeral home. If there is not enough room to situate the bell any distance from the people, be sure to warn those sitting close of the sudden noise. The “bell service” should focus on the words being read; the bell sounding inconspicuously from the rear.

Resources: Determine where bells are located.

Bell Service Suggested Reading #1

The Life of a firefighter is closely associated with the ringing of a bell.

As he/she begins his/her hours of duty it is the bell that starts it off, and so through the day and night, each alarm is sounded by a bell, which calls him/her to fight fires and to place his/her life in jeopardy for the good of his/her fellow man.

And when the fire is out and the alarm has come to an end, the bell rings three times, three times each to signal the end.

And now ____________________ has completed his/her task, his/her duties were well done, and the bell rings three times.

Bell Service Suggested Reading #2

During times like these we seek strong symbols to give us a better understanding of our feelings during this time of sadness and as a reflection of the devotion our comrade had for his/her duty.

The sounding of “taps” is a strong symbol which gives honor and respect to those who have served so well.
So also is the sounding of a bell. A special signal of three rings, three times each, represents the end of his/her duties and that he/she will be returning to quarters.

For our comrade ________________________ His/Her last alarm, He/She is coming home.
Suggested "Last Alarm" Ceremony

Chaplain or Department member reads or recites:

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF TODAY’S FIRE SERVICE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A MORE DANGEROUS WORK ENVIRONMENT THAN EVER BEFORE. WE ARE FORCED TO CONTINUALLY CHANGE OUR STRATEGIES AND TACTICS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR TASKS.

OUR METHODS MAY CHANGE, BUT OUR GOALS REMAIN THE SAME AS THEY WERE IN THE PAST; TO SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT PROPERTY, SOMETIMES AT A TERRIBLE COST. THIS IS WHAT WE DO, THIS IS OUR CHOSEN PROFESSION, AND THIS IS THE TRADITION OF THE FIREFIGHTER.

THE FIRE SERVICE OF TODAY IS EVER CHANGING, BUT IT IS STEEPED IN TRADITIONS OVER 200 YEARS OLD. ONE SUCH TRADITION IS THE RINGING OF A BELL.

IN THE PAST, AS FIREFIGHTERS BEGAN THEIR TOUR OF DUTY, IT WAS THE BELL THAT SIGNALED THE BEGINNING OF THAT DAY’S SHIFT. THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND NIGHT, EACH ALARM WAS SOUNDED BY A BELL, WHICH SUMMONED THESE BRAVE SOULS TO FIGHT FIRES AND TO PLACE THEIR LIVES IN JEOPARDY FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. AND WHEN THE FIRE WAS OUT AND THE ALARM HAD COME TO AN END, IT WAS A BELL THAT SIGNALED TO ALL, THE COMPLETION OF THE CALL. WHEN A FIREFIGHTER DIED, PAYING THE SUPREME SACRIFICE, IT WAS THE MOURNFUL TOLL OF THE BELL THAT SOLEMNLY ANNOUNCED A COMRADES PASSING.

WE UTILIZE THESE TRADITIONS AS SYMBOLS, WHICH REFLECT HONOR AND RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN SO MUCH AND WHO HAVE SERVED SO WELL. TO SYMBOLIZE THE DEVOTION THAT THESE BRAVE SOULS HAD FOR THEIR DUTY, A SPECIAL SIGNAL OF THREE RINGS WAS ADOPTED FROM ROMAN TIMES. THESE THREE TOLLS REPRESENT THE END OF OUR COMRADES’ DUTY, THEIR TOUR COMPLETE AND THEY WILL BE RETURNING TO QUARTERS. AND SO, TO THOSE WHO HAVE SELFLESSLY DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO SERVING OTHERS; THEIR TASKS COMPLETED, THEIR DUTIES DONE, WE SOUND THE BELL.

TO OUR COMRADE ____________ ; HIS/HER LAST ALARM, HE/SHE IS GOING HOME.
Firefighter's Prayer
When I am called to duty God
Whenever flames may rage
Give me strength to save a life
Whatever be its age.
Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late
Or save an older person from
The horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert
And hear the weakest shout
And quickly and efficiently
Put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling
To give the best in me
To guard my friends and neighbors
And protect their property.
And if according to Your will
I must answer death's call
Bless with Your protecting hand
My family one and all.

23rd Psalm
The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name' sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,
I will fear no evil: For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of . .
mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; My cup runneth
over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
days of my life,
and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.