

Report of District Almoner to 105EA Cabinet November 1998.
Via Membership Committee Chairman. November 1998.
Revised January 2007.

APPENDIX: FUNERAL PROTOCOLS, FORMALITIES & CEREMONIES.

1. **INTRODUCTION.**

The frequency of funerals of Lions in our District 105EA is the reason for Clubs seeking guidance on the formalities and protocols that may occur, or be carried out at the funeral of a deceased Lion. These guidance notes are put together in order to help Clubs fulfil their obligations to all in the difficult times that precede, accompany, and follow a funeral ceremony.

First and most important, it must be stated that the funeral of a deceased Lion member is not a Lions function. It is the private property of the family of the deceased and such propriety must be respected by Lions at all times. Only if the family has invited Lions to take part in ceremonies at the funeral should Lions take part, and any Lions ceremonies and formalities should be arranged with the full advance knowledge and permission of the family and of course the Clergy. Failing such an invitation and permission, Lions attending the funerals of deceased Lions should behave purely as private citizens showing due respect to a deceased Lion colleague.

Where invitations to inject Lions ceremonies into funerals are received, these may include acting as pall bearers, escorts, flag bearers etc, it is important that appropriate advice is sought to carry out these duties with dignity and respect.

2. **DUTIES OF THE CLUB ALMONER.**

The Club Almoner should liaise with the family of the deceased Lion in order to ascertain the timing and venue of the funeral, the family's wishes with respect to floral tributes, donations to family nominated charities, and whether Lions involvement's in ceremonies are required. They should then ensure that Club Officer's, and all Club members are aware of the facts, and ensure the Club is liaising with the family and its Funeral Directors if any Lion ceremonial involvement is needed, and is providing that involvement.

The family wishes must always be respected and carried out.

3. **INFORMING DISTRICT 105EA.**

As soon as the Club Secretary, or responsible club officer, becomes aware of the death of a Club member they should notify the 'District Almoner' immediately, either by telephone, fax or E-mail [where available]. It will be the responsibility of 'The District Almoner' to notify the District Governor, the appropriate Region Chairperson, and Zone Chairperson, and any other Lions deemed appropriate to the information of the death. In the absence of the District Almoner (e.g.: Holidays, illness etc) the District Governor will appoint a suitable deputy to stand in during their absence. The 'District Almoner' or Deputy should acknowledge the receipt of this information with 24 hours. If the notification is not acknowledged within that time, the Club Officer should notify the District Governor direct. As soon as the funeral details are known these should be forwarded to the 'District Almoner' or their 'Deputy' for onward circulation.

It is essential that the details should be circulated as widely and quickly as possible, for it is amazing how far Lions friendships extend; and it is the purpose of this circulation to ensure that those who wish to pay respects to their departed friends may do so, having been informed in good time.

The District Governor will decide whether their schedules will allow them to attend the funeral. If they are not able to attend, they will nominate a representative; should tributes be allowed they will arrange them, whether they are to be floral or monetary donations.

4. **BEFORE THE FUNERAL.**

The primary duty here is discreet support to the family of the deceased in whatever manner is appropriate to the particular case. The secondary duties will be in the fielding telephone enquiries from Lions intending to travel to the funeral, and will mainly be concerned with providing directions in your locality.

5. AT THE FUNERAL.

Formalities & Ceremonies at the Funeral.

The tenets of the Introduction must be restated:

First and most important: The funeral of a deceased Lion member is not a Lions function. It is the private property of the family of the deceased and such propriety must be respected by Lions at all times. Only if the family has invited Lions to take part in ceremonies at the funeral should Lions take part and any Lions ceremonies and formalities should be arranged with the full advance knowledge and permission of the family and the Clergy. Failing such an invitation and permission, Lions attending the funerals of deceased Lions should behave purely as private citizens showing due respect to a deceased Lion colleague.

Where invitations to inject Lions ceremonies into funerals are received these may include, acting as Pallbearers, escorts, as flag bearers etc. It is important that appropriate advice is sought to carry out these duties with dignity and respect. The conduct of ceremonial funerals is documented in unpublished 'Civil Ceremony Manuals' & in unpublished 'Military Manuals', and there may be Lions in local Clubs with experience of these. If this is so, and the suggestions of these Lions meet with the approval of the inviting family, then they should be carried out.

Pallbearers are more likely to be requested by families rather than other duties, in this case it is usual for four [4] or six [6] persons to carry the coffin. This is an arduous duty and should only be carried out by the physically fit under the supervision of an undertaker with some sort of rehearsal before the event.

Flag bearers are much less likely to be requested, but should they be required then the National flag of the deceased should be used, together with the Lions Clubs International golden yellow flag. Obtaining flags and holsters to carry them is often difficult and if difficulty is experienced, then the 'District Sergeant at Arms' should be contacted for advice. Please note that 'Flag Bearers' also need to be physically fit and of equal height. Flags should precede the coffin into the place of worship in the upright position, be stored during the service in holders at the side, and follow the coffin out of the place of worship in the lowered position. Should the ceremony be a cremation, then the flags can be retrieved after the ceremony has ended and the congregation have left the chapel.

Military-Style funerals.

It is noteworthy that in Military-style funerals arms and flags are always and at all times 'reversed', ie: arms with muzzles pointing to the ground and flags lowered. It is also usual to 'reverse' any order of processional protocol. Medals of the deceased are usually carried immediately after the coffin, and sometimes three volleys of small arms are fired. In these cases the advice of local Lions with specialist knowledge is recommended.

Musical tributes, such as the playing of the 'Last Post', and possibly a subsequent 'Reveille' are much less likely to be requested, if so, specialist musical and military advice should be sought.

Floral Tributes are often requested and any private flowers should be directed via the appointed undertakers. Should official floral tributes involving the laying of wreaths be required; then for a club, the Lion President, or for the District, the District Governor or their representative should do this. The usual method is to walk forwards slowly, lay the wreath in the appropriate position, step back smartly one pace, remain standing for about 10 seconds for respect, turn smartly and walk back smartly.

6. AFTER THE FUNERAL.

Informing District 105EA & Lions Clubs International.

This is effected via the Club Monthly Membership Report sent in to the District Administration Officer immediately after the second club meeting of each month. If a club only holds one business meeting a month, then it should be submitted immediately after that meeting. It is extremely important that in the month of February this function is carried out quickly, and that emergency methods of communication are employed in the first half of March in order that the names of Lions passing on to higher order in these periods can be included and remembered in the 'Necrology' ceremony conducted at the annual 105EA District Convention.

Duties of the Club Almoner.

These will now involve maintaining the contact between the deceased Lion's family and the Club, and reserving the family instinct of Lionism within the wider object of maintaining the interest and involvement of the family, such that succeeding generations may in their own good time see the value of Lionism and see fit to join it.

Obituaries

It is the role the Sub-Editor to submit Obituaries in the standard editorial format as required by "The Lion" magazine Editor's current requirements. Obituaries should be concise with no more than a maximum of 75 words. Clubs wishing to have an Obituary placed in "The Lion" magazine should send it to the District's Lion Magazine Sub-Editor, and not contact "The Lion" magazine Editor direct.

It should be noted that any submission of an Obituary will only be altered by the District Sub-Editor after consultation with a representative of a Lions Club making the submission, but it cannot be guaranteed that it will not be edited by the "The Lion" magazine's Editor, if the entry does not comply with the editorial format, or editorial space is restricted.

Please note that where the term 'Lion' is used this includes ALL members of the Lions family. The term 'Lions family' was not used as it might have caused confusion with the term 'The deceased's Family'

Prepared & Written by Past District Governor Lion Bryn ROBERTS, 21st November 1998.

Revised & Updated by Lion Brian Stanbridge, 10th January 2005.

Revision checked & approved by Past District Governor Lion Bryn ROBERTS. 15th January 2005.

Revision approved by District Governor Lion Ian FOX. 20th January 2005.

Revised & Updated by Lion David PYE 13th January 2007.

In consultation with PDG Lion Bryn Roberts revision approved by District Governor Lion Brian Stanbridge 14th January 2007.

References to Funeral Procedure can be found in:

The Funeral Guide & Information Book.

G.Whitman. Dip.F.D. ISBN 0 9518449 1 1

Military Customs.

Major T.J.Edwards. M.B.E.

Fifth Ed. 1961, Pub. Gale & Polden.

Wellington Press, Aldershot, Hants.

[Before ISBN !!!]