

# idea corner

## How To Enjoy Your Own Funeral

“Plan my own funeral?” one staff member gasped when the subject was first brought up at a meeting. “Why I don’t even want to *be* at my own funeral.”

“We sincerely wish more people would plan on being the host at their funeral instead of living all their lives thinking they will always be visitors at funerals,” one funeral director volunteered when we asked him to be a participant in our conference.

With Benjamin Franklin’s 200-year-old statement, “In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes,” urging us on, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, East District Office, felt that a real need could be met by offering a one-day seminar on “How to Plan a Funeral.”

Working on the premise that most people have finally learned to plan for tax payments but only a few give any thought to planning for death, the objective of the conference was to present the facts every family should know about funeral planning to help save money and emotional stress. Conferees of various ages, representing a cross-section of economical and racial backgrounds, attended the conference.

University of Georgia Extension specialists provided up-to-date information on the legal aspects of planning (wills, estate planning, duties of an executor, clearing up financial affairs of deceased people) and on funeral facts (cost, types of cemeteries, cremation, vaults, and caskets). Representatives of

the Georgia Funeral Directors Association and local funeral directors discussed the role of the funeral director, types of funerals, costs, advanced arrangements, grave markers, and flowers.

The question-and-answer period was invaluable. Conferees asked about cremation, donation of vital organs, memorial societies, funeral prices, and procedures for making funeral arrangements.

In the past few years, it has become more acceptable to talk about death. A number of conferences and short courses have been offered to professionals in the medical and counseling field who work with dying patients.

However, among the lay public, planning for death is still considered by many to be a morbid and unmentionable topic. We believe these conferences have helped negate some of the taboos and false information concerning funerals.

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