

NEWSLETTER

MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND
119 Kenyon Avenue
East Greenwich, RI 02818

884-5933
884-5451



SPRING 1981

No. 1

May 1981

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Rev. Frederick E. Gillis, President; Carolin Goldman, Vice President, Marie Hennedy, Corr. Secretary; Winnifred Bennis, Recording Secretary; Muriel Flood*, Treasurer; Rev. Bruce Kennedy*, Nelson Marshall; Anne Wise; Edmund Armstrong*.
(*Terms end in June.)

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Memorial Society of RI will be held at 3 PM on Sunday, June 7 in the fellowship hall of the Westminster Unitarian Church, 119 Kenyon Ave., East Greenwich, to hear reports from the President and Treasurer, to elect three Directors to serve until 1984, and to make amendments to the bylaws of the Society (text of changes on page 2).

A program for members and other interested people will precede the business meeting. It will feature a discussion of "living wills" by Rep. Anthony Carcieri, who recently presented a bill on the subject in the State legislature, and who will speak on the legal aspects, and John Ladd, Professor Philosophy at Brown University, who will discuss some of the theoretical and philosophical concepts involved.

WIDE INTEREST SHOWN IN MEMORIAL SOCIETY

A question sent to the Providence Journal-Bulletin's "Action Line" in January sparked an interview with Memorial Society President Fred Gillis. The reply in the paper listed the Society as a source of information on alternative funeral arrangements. This produced over 50 inquiries and several memberships. Subsequent TV appearances have resulted in several more inquiries.

MEMORIAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED

The Memorial Society of Rhode Island is now officially incorporated under R.I. law as a "non-business" corporation. It is also registered with the federal Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt organization. Membership in the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies is now pending approval of bylaw changes.

The Society offers to members basic information on relevant laws and available funeral services and has set up a recording keeping service for members who wish to have their funeral plans on file in a place outside their home.

MEMBERSHIP GROWS

The Memorial Society of R.I. now has 17 individual memberships and 29 family memberships. This represents about 76 people. Over 120 have shown interest in the services of the Society. Spread the word to your friends. The more members we have, the stronger is our voice.

Membership applications are available by calling the Memorial Society at 884-5933 (weekdays 9:30-12:30) or by writing us at 119 Kenyon Avenue, East Greenwich, RI 02818.

PRESIDENT'S APPEARANCES

President Fred Gillis has represented the Society on several occasions recently:

July 1980 - Spoke on memorial societies before a class on Death and Dying at Bristol Co. Community College, Fall River.

Nov. 1980 - Spoke before a similar class at URI, Providence.

Jan. 1981 - Responded to request for information from Action Line.

Feb. 1981 - TV appearance on Bob Blanchard's Channel 12 Consumer File.

Mar. 1981 - TV appearance on RI State Council of Churches Channel 10 program - The Week Starts Here.

Apr. 1981 - Spoke before widows and widowers group in Seekonk with Vice Pres. Carolin Goldman

May 1981 - TV appearance with funeral directors on Channel 12's Face to Face with Lawrence vanHeerden.

MANUAL AVAILABLE

One of the most comprehensive manuals on the topic of simple funeral arrangements is the commonsense booklet called A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial, by Ernest Morgan. The Society has copies available to members at the discount price of \$1.50. For non-members the price is \$2.50

Muriel Flood
Conflict with
Fant Batton Party

One of the necessary headaches which every organization must deal with is the legal aspects. We thought we had the details of our bylaws straightened out last June, but when we applied for membership in the Continental Assoc. of Funeral and Memorial Societies, we were informed that there were a couple of flaws that had to be corrected if they would accept us.

Since there are some so-called "memorial societies" which are not non-profit and controlled by their members, but are actually pre-paid, money making funeral businesses, we must make it clear that the societies with which we offer reciprocal membership and information exchanges are truly non-profit and democratically controlled, and preferably members of CAFMS or the equivalent Memorial Societies Assoc. of Canada.

It is generally accepted according to parliamentary procedure that bylaws may be changed only by a 2/3 vote, not just a majority as our present bylaws state. In addition, there should be provision for the membership at large to call a general meeting.

Changes have been made by the Board and these have been approved by the CAFMS. See the text of the changes below.

Rhode Islanders who have membership in the New England Memorial Society, based in Boston, or in the Memorial Society of Greater New Bedford are invited to transfer their membership to the Memorial Society of R. I. Services offered are similar and we have the advantage of keeping in touch with R.I. laws, cooperation with R.I. funeral directors, and the convenience of being closer. Membership transfers are \$8.00. Please use the form on page three.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee presents the following names for Directors to serve until 1984:

- Mrs. Emily McAllister - Kingston
- The Rev. Bruce Kennedy - Providence (renomination)
- Mrs. Muriel Flood - North Kingstown (renomination)

Further nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

Nelson Marshall,
Chair
Nominating Committee

BYLAW CHANGES PROPOSED FOR ANNUAL MEETING

The following changes in our Bylaws are proposed for the Annual Meeting on June 7. Additions are underlined.

Article III, Section 7

The society will provide the same service, advice, and assistance that it offer to its own members to members of other memorial societies that belong to the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies or the Memorial Society Association of Canada, and to members of those independent memorial societies that are clearly non-profit and democratically controlled.

Article IV, Section 2

A member of another non-profit, democratically controlled memorial society (see Art. III, Sect. 7) moving into the Rhode Island area will be welcomed as a member in good standing..etc.

Article V, Section 1

Meetings will be called by the Board of Directors, or by a petition signed by any 7 members of the society, on 10 days notice, which notice shall state the business to be transacted.

Article VII

These By-laws may be amended by vote of 2/3 of the members present..etc.



RULES FOR CREMATIONS FOR ROMAN CATHOLICS

ARE YOU A MEMBER ?

We have had several inquiries from Roman Catholics who wish to be cremated and do not know what the Church permits. Before the 2nd. Vatican Council cremation was not acceptable for Catholics. It is now permitted under certain conditions. A directive from Bishop Gelineau's office reads as follows:

Some of those receiving this newsletter have not yet taken out membership in the Memorial Society of R.I. The advantages of membership are many. You may take advantage of our information and record-keeping services. You will receive updated comparisons of funeral costs. Most importantly you will be associating yourself with those of similar mind and supporting our educational endeavors throughout the state. A lifetime membership is \$15. per individual, \$20. for a family. Transfers from other memorial societies are \$8.

"Permission for cremation may be granted by the Ordinary in individual cases. In these instances the burial of cremated remains should take place in a Catholic cemetery and arrangements for the burial of the cremated remains should be made by the funeral director with the Diocesan Cemetery Office at the time this permission is granted."

Fill out the form below. Join today.

Those wishing cremation should put their request in writing and send it to the Bishop's office. It should be understood that there must be a regular funeral service in the church with the casket present before the cremation takes place. Scattering of ashes is not permitted. Those with further questions should communicate with the Bishop's office.

INTERVIEWS WITH FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Information about funeral directors who have stated their willingness to cooperate with the Memorial Society and who have quoted prices for basic services is gathered from personal interviews made by Society members. So far, the Board has been doing all the interviews and we have contacted 7 funeral directors who are cooperative. We would like to expand our list and need help making interviews. If you would be willing to interview one or more funeral directors in your area, please contact the Society. We will get you proper interview forms and give you instructions.

ADE BETHUNE FEATURED

Memorial Soc. member and former President Ade Bethune was featured in an article in the Providence Journal in which she explained her belief in simplicity in funeral practices and talked about the coffin (not casket!) she has already built. Plans for a homemade coffin can be obtained from Miss Bethune for \$2.50 by writing St. Leo's Society, Box 744, Newport, RI 02840. She uses hers as a blanket chest!

HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR FORMS ?

Members have received pink forms (Form A) on which they can provide basic information needed at the time of death and specify the type of arrangements they wish. If you are a member and have not yet filled out your forms, you are not taking full advantage of your membership.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Memorial Societies are essentially consumer organizations. Their strength depends on numbers. If you have friends whom you know believe in simplicity in funeral arrangements, tell them about the Memorial Society. The Memorial Society of British Columbia in Canada began with a small group about 20 years ago. It now has over 150,000 members! The word gets around! There are many people who want simplicity and not the conventional funeral.

Fill out your forms today. Put a copy in an accessible place (not a safe deposit box) give a copy to your next of kin, and send us a copy for our files. If you need additional copies of any forms, please contact the Society.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND, INC., 119 Kenyon Ave., East Greenwich, RI 02818

Please enroll me/us as a member of the Society. I enclose _____ \$15 for Individual Membership, or _____ \$20 for Family Membership, or _____ \$8 to transfer from the _____ Memorial Society. Address: _____

Name (s) _____ Telephone _____

Street _____ Town _____ Zip _____

For Family Membership, give name(s) of dependent children you wish to include in your membership: _____