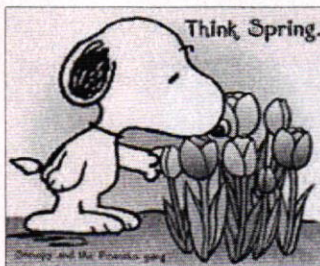


# NEWSLETTER

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

884-5933

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# SPRING 1986

NO. 6

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Polly Barnett-Birdsall, President; William Grande, Vice-President; Shirley Jacob, Corresponding Secretary; George Felbeck, Recording Secretary; Muriel Flood, Treasurer; Dorothy Williams, Emily McAllister, Rev. Ralph Galen

## FUTURE OF THE MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND

Comment by Polly Barnett-Birdsall, President

Now that the Funeral Practices Rule is a reality, is the work of memorial societies over? People who should know better (like me) have been wondering out loud if memorial societies have outlived their usefulness, now that the long-awaited FTC rule has been in effect for two years. What made me change my opinion about the need for memorial societies was a growing awareness that Rhode Island funeral directors are not complying with the Rule in some instances. That means that the Rule isn't working as it should. The FTC is depending on memorial societies to provide monitoring and to furnish them with data on compliance or non-compliance. So the job falls to us.

The MSRI performs two separate but connected functions: one political and the other educational. Politically we have been active, through our lobbyist and board vice-president Bill Grande, in pushing for the passage of Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney legislation in Rhode Island. We have been active as well in monitoring compliance with the Funeral Practices Rule. Board members and members at large have worked hard at gathering data on compliance by the state's funeral directors with the FTC Rule. That effort included an extensive telephone effort by several MSRI members to Rhode Island funeral directors to ask them to furnish prices for goods and services over the telephone as required by law. A report on the results of that survey appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

So, is the MSRI out of business? No, it's not. Our watchdog function is critical to determine compliance (or lack of it) with the Funeral Practices Rule. Our educational function will continue as long as persons need information and encouragement to plan their funerals in advance of need.



## FTC RULE SURVEY

A survey of Rhode Island funeral homes was conducted by members of the Memorial Society of Rhode Island this spring to determine whether the state's funeral establishments are complying with the Funeral Practices Rule. The Rule requires that funeral directors disclose itemized prices for goods and services over the telephone.

Complete results of the survey effort are not yet tabulated, but those received thus far indicate that the majority of funeral directors in the state are complying with the Rule. Some are in the "partial compliance" category, and a few are flatly non-compliant, that is, they did not furnish itemized prices for goods and services when asked to do so over the telephone.

Members participating in the survey telephoned funeral homes and asked for price breakdowns for such items as embalming and cosmetology, use of hearse and other vehicles, staff and support services, and transportation costs. They were also asked about direct burial and direct cremation costs.

Complete results of the survey should be available in time for our Annual Meeting.



## Interest in

### LIVING WILL

Interest in the passage of Living Will legislation in Rhode Island is mounting, thanks in part to the efforts of Attorney Bill Grande, MSRI Vice-President and registered lobbyist.

Bill has addressed groups around the state about the need for Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney legislation. His audiences include legislators, members of the East Greenwich Methodist Church and the Woonsocket Kiwanis Club.

Bill's visibility at the State House and around the state is a powerful asset to the Memorial Society of Rhode Island.



## ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 5, 1986

7:30 P. M.

Westminster Unitarian Church  
East Greenwich

### A. Program

1. Organ Donation and Transplant - A slide show presented by the coordinator of the Temporal Bone Bank of Boston.
2. Living Will Legislation - Sen. Jonathan K. Farnum, Rep. (Coventry, Foster, Scituate)

### B. Business Meeting

1. Reports
2. Election of Directors

### C. Refreshments

## INVITATION TO UPDATE LAST WISHES

The Memorial Society wishes to update its files concerning members instruction sheets. We find that some members inadvertently have not sent a copy of their sheets to the office and that some were written some years ago.

Experience has shown us that attitudes toward death and the kind of funeral arrangements that would be most appropriate for one's family may change over the years. Perhaps you may want to rethink your instructions in the light of recent experience. If you would like to bring the information on your instruction sheet in line with your current situation, please contact the office at 884-5933 or write to the Society at 119 Kenyon Avenue, East Greenwich, 02818 and sheets will be mailed to you. These sheets will also be available at the Annual Meeting.

In bringing our files up-to-date, we would also appreciate members informing us of a death of a member or if a move has occurred. We can assist members who move out of state with the name of a Society in their new location and how to transfer memberships.