

SAN DIEGO MEMORIAL SOCIETY

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FALL-WINTER 2014 NEWSLETTER

2015 ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE THIS DATE: APRIL 25, 2015– SDMS 57TH ANNUAL MEETING.

Information on location and speakers will be available in the Spring-Summer Newsletter mailed to you in March, 2015,

IT'S YOUR SOCIETY

When sitting down to write a column for any newsletter it is always difficult to find a starting place. Where to start and what topics to approach. First on my list is to thank the members of our Board of Directors. They give their time and energy to keep the San Diego Memorial Society vibrant, relevant, and timely. Between the four board meetings a year, the annual membership meeting and committees/taskforces they are all very involved. Board members have families, jobs and many of the demands we all face everyday. I thank them all for all they give to keep our Society going.

I also wish to extend a heart felt thank you to Barbara Thomson, Office Manager, Executive Director, and who knows how many other hats she wears every day. Without her efforts and her generosity we would not be as successful as we are. Thank you Barbara!

Finally, a big thank you to all our members for the support you give to the San Diego Memorial Society. Without the support of our members there would be no San Diego Memorial Society. It is always very warming to receive the reports from our Treasurer and our Office Manager of the generous gifts from our members, in both dollars and voices. We always welcome the gifts, of all sizes, to support the goals of the Memorial Society. While I understand that it is nice to be able to receive a tax deduction for the gifts you make, I would suggest the value to you is in the gift itself, not the tax deduction.

The Board of Directors has been working on changing our IRS tax status for several years. We have spent a lot of time, energy, hot air, and money to reach that goal. So far we have not been successful. We are not giving up. We are dedicated to reaching our goal but the drain on our treasury is considerable. Every member of our Society can help us. Please tell your friends and family members about our Society and urge them to consider joining. Please consider a donation to the San Diego Memorial Society.

Tim Jenkins
President, San Diego Memorial Society

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Timothy Jenkins – President
Victor Savino – Vice President
Frances San Clemente – Treasurer
Elaine Durson – Secretary

Russ Armstead— Director Emeritus
Michael Cooney - Director
Sade Obanwo—Director
Stephen Ross—Director
Kent Stallman—Director
Philip Vinci — Director
Fredricka Ward – Director
Paul Ward – Director



*A nonprofit, nonsectarian association
established in 1958.*

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YOUR OFFICE COORDINATOR'S ANNUAL PLEA FOR FINANCIAL HELP

To all of our newer members and long time members, once again I must come to you asking for your help to keep the San Diego Memorial Society up and running. There is strong competition in the funeral industry today and with the Trident Society holding free lunches all over San Diego County each week to promote their expensive cremation plans plus all of the other companies who have become "Cremation on line" plans, we are struggling more than ever to bring in new members. Our sole source of income is the one time \$40 lifetime membership you pay when you join the society plus the donations that our wonderful members send us throughout the year.

Volunteers continue to staff the Senior Health Fairs throughout the County as well as any kind of venue that is being held that we are made aware of to try to get the word out about our wonderful organization and bring in new members. We do not have the budget to do much in the way of advertising so we have to rely on the above mentioned type of exposure plus referrals from Hospices, hospitals, churches, the County Medical Examiner's office, and our loyal members who tell friends and family about us.

Once again, if you belong to any organization, church or any type of group that has guest speakers please let them know that we are delighted to supply them with a speaker to make a presentation at no charge to them and we never limit the attendance size or how long we are given to make our presentation.

Without your donations and referrals we would not be able to keep the Society up and running and it would be a tragic loss to our members and the residents of San Diego County if we were ever forced to close for lack of financial help. For a \$40 membership fee and whatever donations we receive we are saving our members sometimes as much as \$2000 to \$3000 or more. All you need to do to verify this is make a few calls to obtain pricing from any of the 65+ mortuaries in San Diego County. I can guarantee it is the best \$40 investment you will ever make but we need more than that to keep our doors open.

We have cut expenses as much as possible to keep our overhead low. Some of you have complained that we don't enclose envelopes in our March newsletter. It costs us an extra \$500 just for the envelopes plus the extra postage and printing costs. And believe me when I say a very small percentage of the envelopes are ever used. As I have said many times, no donation is too small and everyone we receive is greatly appreciated. So many of the organizations like ours have had to close their doors for lack of volunteers to keep them up and running but more so for lack of funds. You have no idea how much time is expended by our volunteers to keep this organization open for business.

I do so wish I didn't need to come to you every year begging for donations but having been a member of this Society since 1963 I am fully aware of how important it is to so many.

Thanks once again for your time and donations.

Barbara Thomson, Office Coordinator

RECEIVING FUTURE NEWSLETTERS VIA E-MAIL

Just another reminder for our members-if you are interested in receiving your SDMS newsletters via e-mail please notify us by emailing your instruction to Barbara@sdmsonline.com. Be sure to include your name, address and email info and it is also important to notify the office of any change of mailing address or email address,. **NOTE: If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please notify the office.....**

ANNUAL CONTRACT CHANGES FOR PARTICIPATING MORTUARIES

The annual contracts for our Participating Mortuaries end on December 31st. Check our website after January 1st to get the latest updated information on the mortuaries. Always remember that our website is the first thing updated when we make any changes to the list of Participating Mortuaries. I will be enclosing a current list in the Spring-Summer newsletter which will be coming to you in March.

BURIAL AND MEMORIAL BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS

The Veterans Administration offers a number of burial and memorial benefits to veterans if their discharge from the military was under conditions other than dishonorable – which will need to be verified. To do this you will need a copy of the veteran's DD Form 214 "Certificate of Release to Discharge from Active Duty" which you can request at [archives.gov/veterans](https://www.archives.gov/veterans).

The following is a rundown of some of the different benefits available to veterans that die a non-service related death:

NATIONAL CEMETERY BENEFITS – VA benefits provided at no cost to the family include a gravesite, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual gravesite care; a headstone or marker; a US burial flag that can be used to drape the casket or accompany the urn; and a Presidential memorial certificate, which is an engraved certificate signed by the current President expressing the country's grateful recognition of the veteran's service. National cemetery burial benefits are also available to spouses and dependents of veterans. If cremated the remains will be buried or inurned in the same manner. Funeral or cremation arrangements and costs are NOT taken care of by the VA. They are the responsibility of the veteran's family.

PRIVATE CEMETERY BENEFITS – If the veteran is buried in a private cemetery the benefits available include a free government headstone or marker, or a medallion that can be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker; a burial flag, and Presidential memorial certificate. Funeral arrangements and costs again are the responsibility of the family, and there are no benefits offered to spouses and dependents that are buried in private cemeteries.

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS – all eligible veterans buried in either a national or private cemetery is entitled to a military funeral honors ceremony. This includes the folding and presenting the U.S. burial flag to the veteran's survivors and the playing of Taps, performed by two or more uniformed military members. For a complete rundown of burial and memorial benefits, eligibility details and required forms, visit www.cem.va.gov or call 800-827-1000.

BURIAL ALLOWANCES – In addition to the many burial benefits, some veterans may also qualify for a \$734 burial and funeral expense allowance (if hospitalized by VA at time of death), and a \$734 plot-interment allowance to those who choose to be buried in a private cemetery. To find out if you are eligible, see benefits.va.gov/benefits/factsheets/burials/burial.pdf. To apply for burial allowances, you'll need to fill out VA Form 21-530 "Application for Burial Benefits." You will need to attach a copy of discharge document DD214 or equivalent, death certificate, funeral and burial bills. They should show that you have paid them in full. You may download the form at va.gov/vaforms.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

BEFORE I GO, YOU SHOULD KNOW (This would be a great Christmas Gift!)

The above named booklet is now available thru the San Diego Memorial Society for your purchase. The price is \$20 per copy (free shipping). It includes the following:

- *Your funeral plans
- *Where your important papers are
- *Who should take care of your pets and how
- *Who to call when the time comes
- *That you love them enough to get it together with.....

Before I Go, You Should Know, the comprehensive end-of-life planner. Featuring illustrations by Edward Gorey. It is spiral bound, BIG - has 30 pages to record everything from your preference for burial or cremation to how to close down your social media accounts and online life. Also includes two **free** chapters from the book Final Rights with consumer funeral and burial rights and rules specific to California, a survivor's checklist of important but often overlooked tasks when death occurs. There is also a place to record all the biographical information your family will need for an obituary, funeral or memorial service.

To purchase this much needed booklet please fill out the following information and mail to San Diego Memorial Society, 13446 Poway Rd. #207, Poway, CA 92064 along with your check or call Barbara at 858-391-1267 and pay with a credit card over the phone.

Please send me _____ copies of Before I Go, You Should Know. My mailing information is:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Find enclosed a check for _____

DONATIONS ALWAYS NEEDED AND GREATLY APPRECIATED!