Crafting Meaningful Obituaries
Takeaways

1. Obituaries have multiple purposes. Reporting the news is only one of them, and it's probably not the most important one.

2. *Engaging, thoughtful, and moving obituaries tell a story.* Details flesh out that story.

3. Obituary writers should get concurrence on tone from stake holders.

4. "The basics" are secondary in a well-written obituary.

5. Testimonials, anecdotes, and action words enliven an obituary. *A good obituary is more like a letter of recommendation than a resume.* Templates limit creativity. Lists omit details.

6. Use a form to gather information. *Ask for details that support assertions.* Get the "why."

7. A compelling lead does not start with someone's birthplace or similar demographic fact. Consider the first-sentence list, a poem or quote, a characterization, or an anecdote.

8. Deal with the expected basics economically. Elevate, both in length and location, the essence of a person. *Think about what you want an unborn generation to know.*

9. Be wary of pitfalls, especially cliches.

10. Double-check facts. Use Microsoft Word or Grammarly to suggest mechanical corrections.