

Obituary writing tips

Most obituaries that are printed in The Monroe Evening News are between 250 and 300 words. The \$50 obituary fee allows an obituary up to 400 words. Long obituaries that are more than 400 words are charged on a space-used basis, and the cost jumps substantially at that point.

Publication in our weekly Bedford Now newspaper for obituaries with a Bedford Township connection is included with the \$50 fee, but will be done on a space-available basis.

Most other newspapers charge for all obituaries on a per-word or per-line basis. It is very common for \$150 to \$300 to be the publication fee at another newspaper for an obituary that would cost only \$50 in The Monroe Evening News.

In order to limit the obituary publication costs, especially when your family wants to list the obituary in more than one newspaper, you will want the obituary to include important details about the deceased with as few words used as possible.

What information typically goes into an obituary?

The following details should be in every obituary:

Deceased person's full name.

His or her hometown.

Age.

Birth date and location.

Date of death.

City or township where death took place.

Burial location when applicable.

Name of funeral home or cremation society that is handling arrangements.

Time, date and location of public services and calling hours.

Parents' names.

Spouse's or partner's full name.

Marriage date.

Names of all immediate family who survive: spouse or partner, parents, stepparents, siblings, stepsiblings, half-siblings, children, stepchildren, number of grandchildren, number of great-grandchildren.

The following details are often included in Monroe-area obituaries, but can be at the family's discretion:

Photo of deceased. Pick one photo that shows the person in such a way that friends will recognize him or her. It is possible for the funeral homes and newspapers to pick a face out of a group photo for an obituary if the face can be clearly seen.

Religious or military icon or logo (icons that available for obituaries in The Monroe Evening News include all military branches, a cross, and a flag.)

Location of death (home, hospital, hospice ...).

Cause of death, length of illness, or the fact that the deceased was “under the care of hospice”.

If a cremation will take place.

If there will be private family services.

If a memorial service will be held at a later time.

Former hometown for the deceased.

City or location where the deceased and spouse were married.

Work history and business affiliations.

Names of extended family members or loved ones who survive, such as guardian, grandparents, godparents, in-laws, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandchildren, former spouse, cousin, special friend, companion.

Dates of former marriages and names of former spouses.

Hometowns of some or all of the surviving family.

Names of family members who preceded in death.

Minister or officiant for services.

Military service record.

High school and colleges that were attended or graduated from.

Church or religious affiliation.

Special accomplishments, awards and honors.

Club and organization memberships.

Hobbies or interests.

Memorial donation requests.

Online condolence web site.

Tips on getting the most information in an obituary with the least possible words used include:

Avoid extra words such as beloved, cherished, devoted or dear when listing the family members.

Thank-yous, prayers or verses can be listed in the funeral program, read at the services or sent via the mail rather than included in the obituary.

List hometowns only for the deceased and immediate family, rather than for all the family members.

Consider using first names instead of full names for grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Provide specific facts rather than general descriptions: “He volunteered at his grandchildren’s sporting events” gives more details than “He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren.” If someone was a homemaker, you can explain her talents with phrases such as “She was a homemaker and known for her blue-ribbon winning strawberry jam.”