

Writing an Obituary

Before you begin to write a draft of an obituary, you may want to organize some vital statistics. Make a list of personal data such as:

Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Fathers Name, Mother's first name and MAIDEN name, Education-name of school, dates attended, include college, **Marriage**-to whom, date and place of marriage, **Where person resided**-name of communities and dates living in those communities, **Career**-Where the person worked, dates of employment, dates of retirement, awards or citation earned and positions held. (Military dates, too, if applicable), **Personal attributes**-What the person enjoyed doing, the things that meant a lot to them, volunteer work, hobbies, memberships of present and past to include churches, clubs and organizations.

There is no right or wrong way to write an obituary. You may be brief on these subjects, or you may elaborate on details. You may also be somewhat humorous or lighthearted in writing the obituary. It typically begins with the date and place of death, and the age of the person.

From that point, a chronological listing the person's life is written with the following points.

Lead notice of death - John Smith, longtime employee with John Morrell and Company, died February 1, 2021, at Sanford Hospice in Sioux Falls, SD, with his family by his side. He was 90.

Birth, education, military, and early career - John Lawson Smith was born January 2, 1931, in Sioux Falls, SD, to Michael and Martha (Washington) Smith. He attended Sioux Falls public schools, and graduated from Washington Senior High School in 1949. Following high school, he worked for Sioux Falls Motorcars as a mechanic. In 1951, he began his life-long career with John Morrell and Company.

Marriage, early life, employment - career - On January 14, 1952, he was united in marriage with Sally Anderson in Sioux Falls. Residing in Sioux Falls, the couple purchased their first home on Jefferson Avenue, and soon became loving parents to their four children. After 48 years with the company, John retired from Morrell in 1999. He was honored with a gold watch, a plaque, and a nice dinner hosted by his friends and coworkers.

Memberships, volunteer work - John was a member of First Lutheran Church, the Elks Club, Morrell Retirees, and was a lifetime member of the Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers. Following his retirement, he enjoyed working with Meals on Wheels, Project Car, and volunteering at the Minnehaha Courthouse Museum.

Hobbies, passions - John and Sally enjoyed traveling, and particularly enjoyed their trips to Europe. In 2002, they took a cruise along the Western Coast to Alaska. John was also a talented woodworker, and made several oak highchairs for the grandchildren. Those who remember John best will recall his ability to tell detailed stories of the old west, and amusing tales of Sioux Falls in its early days. He always liked looking at the bright side of life, and even in his older days when he was not feeling well, maintained a steady smile on his face and a hearty welcome to those coming to visit.

Survivors - Grateful for having shared his life are his wife, Sally; sons, John, Jr. Smith (Susan), Sioux Falls, SD, Michael Smith (Dawn), Spearfish, SD; daughters, Sandra Johnson (Allen), Brookings, SD, Maggie Baker (Tom), Sundance, WY; 9 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; brother, Tom Smith, Sioux Falls, SD; and sister, Lois Argus, Seattle, WA. He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Agnes Worthington; and a brother, Charles Smith.

Memorials or listing of charities - Memorials made be directed to First Lutheran Church Media Ministries, 327 S Dakota Ave., Sioux Falls, SD, 57104.

Funeral Service information - Funeral Services will be held 11:00am Friday, February 12, 2021, at First Lutheran Church, 327 S. Dakota Avenue. Visitation begins at noon, with the family present to greet friends from 4:00 to 6:00 Thursday evening at Miller Funeral Home & on-site crematory, 507 S. Main Avenue.

