

DIFFERENT WAYS FAMILIES DEAL WITH DEATH

More and more today we are reading about and seeing in the media a step back in time in the ways some families are dealing with death. Natural Burial is a huge topic of interest. Caring for the body, sitting with it for a period of time, and finally transporting it to the final resting site are three of the common changes I see. All of this takes planning and often the deceased has had a say in it and there is a plan in place prior to death. Here are two stories that speak to the ways that families have dealt with death:

As my father was dying he became less and less himself. He did not get out of bed, it was difficult to understand him when he spoke, he neither read nor watched television, he was always in pajamas.

After he died, Jan and I washed his body and dressed him in street clothes. Doing this, though he was dead, seemed to make him more himself again. He was not just a body, but he was a man. He had on corduroy trousers, one of his airplane shirts, an outside shirt and socks.

When strangers came to take him away he was “ready,” presentable, if you will. To

I was so glad to be able to be with my mother at the moment of her death. And your strong and sympathetic presence was a much needed and appreciated support.

It never would have occurred to me to prepare my mother’s body, to wash and dress her, before handing her over to the funeral home if you hadn’t been there to guide and help. But it was one of the most important, most healing, most connecting moments of her passing. What used to be a most common ritual had been lost to us, but now we can take it back.

prepare him as we did seemed to restore his humanity, his individuality. One last time he was a person, not just a corpse. That was comforting to me, and I think he would have appreciated it.

That last act of ultimate intimacy and caring somehow made it easier to let her go. It is a memory I shall hold close and treasure for the rest of my life, all the more precious for being totally unexpected.

I just want to pass along a big **THANK YOU** for the support and guidance provided through the Funeral Consumers Alliance. As you know, my Mom was diagnosed with cancer in April of last year. Her doctor gave her a few weeks to 6 months to live. She passed away on November 14, 2010. From day one Mom made it very clear she did not want a memorial service after her death, but, rather, have a “living memorial” during her final time remaining. Mom also wanted to be buried next to her sister, mother, and other relatives in a small town in Central Oregon.

With the advice from FCA I was able to obtain a “Permit to Transfer” and I and my two brothers took our mother in the back of my older brother’s pickup on her final road trip. Mom always enjoyed us taking her on road trips around the area. The trip took approx. 6 hours. A little snow over the pass on Highway 199 just south of the Oregon border, but we made the trip without delay. We were met at the gravesite by representatives of a local funeral services company. A few relatives and friends met at the cemetery as well. We all spoke about some of our most memorable and joyful times with my Mother. It was a more joyous than sad little ceremony. That’s the way Mom wanted it, and that’s what Mom received, all made possible by Funeral Consumers Alliance.