



## *Family Liaison Office*

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### **Suggestions for Memorial Services**

It is most important that the memorial service reflect the wishes of the family. Once those are taken into consideration, the following are general suggestions that may be considered in planning a memorial service.

- Tributes from individuals who knew the deceased are often the most meaningful portion of the service for those attending. If the service is being held at post, the head of agency, colleagues, and friends from the community are good choices as speakers. If the service is being planned by one of the Bureaus in the Department of State, it may be possible to identify colleagues who represent the various posts served by the deceased during his or her career.
- Make sure that music, readings, poems, prayers reflect the life of the individual, and assist those in attendance to reflect on that life.
- As far as possible ensure that information about the service is widely disseminated so that all those who would wish to attend may do so.
- In some situations it may be helpful to offer childcare or transportation for those wishing to attend the service.
- Planners of the service may wish to consider flowers (keep in mind the choice of culturally appropriate flowers), appropriate music, a display of photos of the deceased, and refreshments following the service.
- A printed program for the service gives information to those attending and becomes a keepsake for family and friends.
- Have a memorial book (with photos and flowers as appropriate) for friends to sign, then give or send to family.
- Videotaping the service for the family is a thoughtful gesture.
- If information on the presentation of a flag to the family is desired, the Family Liaison Office may be able to assist [flo@state.gov](mailto:flo@state.gov), or contact U.S. Marine Corps Casualty Branch at 703-784-9512.