Eulogies

Objective: to bid farewell to someone who has died and to comfort those present.

DO’S

1. Only accept an invitation to give a eulogy if you can maintain your composure, feelings are fine, losing it isn’t.

2. Acknowledge shared feelings of sadness, loss & anger but don’t dwell on these

3. Mention high points in person’s life, okay to mention humorous stories as well

4. Try to briefly cover multiple aspects of deceased’s life: family, social, professional, church etc…

5. Use phrases that bond the group together:

a. All of us who cared for Mary will miss her . . .

b. By your presence here, you have demonstrated just how much Mary has touched our lives, her circle of influence was great…

c. Our lives have benefited from Mary’s influence…

6. Try to place loss in a larger, optimistic perspective: themes like continuity of life, living life to the fullest, appreciating each moment, no regrets etc.. insert a few lines of poetry or Scripture

7. Be sensitive in the language, illustrations and tone used, remember those who loved him most are present, don’t offend!

8. Let it be obvious that you knew the deceased beyond casual contact

DON’T’S

1. Don’t recount graphic details of his death if tragic…wife and kids are listening

2. Don’t give a biography of his life only! Ex: born, school, married, worked, etc…

3. Don’t use eulogy as a soapbox for some issue, death was avoidable, drunk driver- - it’s okay to mention the avoidable loss, but don’t dwell (thesis) on anti drunk driving

4. Don’t discount feelings of loss, remorse, people need to grieve, eulogy helps them do this, don’t stifle it.
Structural Options:

1. Pick 2-5 personality characteristics (positive/neutral) and illustrate these w/i eulogy by stories from past or testimony from others that knew him

2. Describe the influence of deceased on others, how have other been enriched by deceased's influence

3. Mention outstanding achievements, show audience how important/influential these accomplishments were.

4. I. Intro
   A. estab. relat. between occasion, audience and deceased
   B. recount a striking incident in the person’s life that illustrates a dominant character trait

II. Body
   A. point out the significance of deceased contribution to society
   B. they went beyond call of duty/expectations
   C. were achievements made in face of adversity?

III. Conclusion
   A. recount an event that best exemplifies the “best” qualities of the deceased
   B. show how the audience can learn/better their lives if they embody the qualities that the deceased possessed

View
* Bobby Kennedy announces Martin Luther King's death, Indianapolis, IN 1968 (TEXT)
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3- zYP0M

* Funny and wise eulogy
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73Qc9D3m8y8