

# newsworthy trends

## Adding A Personal Touch To Funerals

(NAPSA)—An increasing number of Americans these days are planning funerals that are as unique as their loved ones. For example, when Dee Pracht's husband, Dan, was killed in a motorcycle accident, she wanted to plan a funeral that would both honor his memory and celebrate his life. The result was a personalized funeral service that reflected her husband's motorcycle hobby, his love of Jimmy Buffet music and his duty as a corrections officer.

"We're honoring a person; we're remembering his life, and how can you remember a person's life without including all of the things that they did and loved," said Pracht.

Pracht is not alone in her sentiment. A new survey released by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) found that of the U.S. adults who want funerals, 62 percent want some form of personalization. The poll, conducted by Harris Interactive® for NFDA, also found that nearly three out of four adults (73 percent) find a funeral service to be an important part of the grieving and healing process for friends and family members. (The Harris Interactive survey for NFDA was conducted online between Sept. 14 and 16, 2004 among 2,158 U.S. adults. The sampling error is plus or minus two percentage points.)

Personalizing a funeral means taking important aspects of the person's life and incorporating them into the funeral service. This can be accomplished in a number of ways including the displaying of photos, playing special music or video tributes, or integrating the person's



**Dee Pracht planned a very unique and personal funeral for her husband Dan.**

hobby into the funeral service. The most popular forms of personalization cited in the survey by those who want a funeral include friends relating personal stories (50 percent), playing favorite music (47 percent), and displaying a variety of personal photos (42 percent).

"The funeral is a vital part of the grieving process and the more personal the funeral is, the more it helps heal," explains nationally renowned grief and bereavement expert, Doug Manning.

To help families learn about how to plan a meaningful funeral, NFDA members are taking part in the association's "*For a Life Worth Celebrating<sup>SM</sup>*" public education effort. "*For a Life Worth Celebrating*" is a grassroots effort by NFDA members to help families better understand their funeral service options through informational articles, brochures and other efforts. To learn more about how to personalize a funeral, contact a local NFDA member funeral home or visit NFDA's Web site at [www.nfda.org](http://www.nfda.org).