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One in Five People Have Cremated Remains at Home

Survey finds 54 percent of California and Washington residents with cremated remains are motivated to keep ashes at home primarily due to lack of knowledge regarding other options

OAKLAND, Calif. (Dec. 24, 2014) – Did you know that one in five California and Washington residents keep the ashes of a loved one at home, and of these respondents, half keep their parent’s cremated remains? A family of cemeteries, funeral homes and crematories in the U.S. surveyed 405 California and Washington state residents regarding cremation preferences to better understand views about permanent memorialization. The sponsors of the survey included: [Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery](#), [Chapel of the Chimes Hayward](#), [Chapel of the Chimes Oakland](#), [Sunset Lawn Chapel of the Chimes Sacramento](#) and [Skylawn Funeral Home](#).

The survey found that a majority of family members (54 percent) are motivated to keep the ashes at home primarily because they don’t know enough about cremation options and, secondly, to keep loved ones close. Although results show that a majority of people have only the remains of one individual at home (76 percent of respondents), a significant number (24 percent) have kept the remains of more than one person.

The numbers reflect the growing popularity of cremation as a choice for final arrangements. “We’re seeing more families decide that cremation is the right choice for them. The survey results mirror this trend with 85 percent of respondents claiming to have personally arranged a cremation at some point before,” said David Montgomery, private family memorial specialist for Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery, Chapel of the Chimes Hayward, Chapel of the Chimes Oakland, Sunset Lawn Chapel of the Chimes Sacramento and Skylawn Funeral Home.

Given the popularity of cremation, it’s no surprise that these cemeteries, funeral homes and crematories provide many memorial options designed for urn placement, including pedestals, granite benches that hold urns and even keepsake jewelry that contains a small portion of the ashes.

According to the survey, more than half of respondents (52 percent) elect to inter ashes in a cemetery as a way to honor loved ones. The other popular reasons for choosing a cemetery include: having a place for family members to visit (48 percent), showing respect (47 percent), memorializing loved ones (43 percent) and helping future generations connect with their heritage (43 percent).

For those who prefer to keep their loved one closer, cemeteries will place a memorial bench or pedestal in the backyard. “For some people,” said Montgomery, “having the remains in a memorial in their own yard is the ideal solution. It provides a sense of permanence and respect and maintains that feeling of closeness, but it can be moved if they change residences or want to eventually place it in a cemetery.”

Which family members' ashes are commonly kept at home?

The survey revealed interesting facts regarding the relationship to the deceased and the ashes most commonly kept at home. Fifty percent of respondents kept their parent's ashes at home, while only 15 percent kept their spouse's remains and five percent kept the ashes of a friend.

"We can't overstate the value of having a place for future generations to visit," said Montgomery. "Every year, we get visits from people looking for the gravesite of a long lost relative. Too often, we need to inform them that their loved one was cremated and the ashes taken by the family at the time. They may have been scattered somewhere or may have gone to someone's home, but there's no place to pay their respects. Many people don't think of the long-term implications when they make their final arrangements."

The good news is that if you have an urn sitting on your mantle, it's not too late to give it a permanent home. Montgomery points to a recent case where a woman came in with five urns because she didn't want them around the house anymore.

About the Survey

405 respondents in California and Washington State were surveyed online last July; all individuals surveyed kept the ashes of loved ones at home. Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery, Chapel of the Chimes Hayward, Chapel of the Chimes Oakland, Sunset Lawn Chapel of the Chimes Sacramento and Skylawn Funeral Home sponsored the survey.

ABOUT MOUNTAIN VIEW FUNERAL HOME, MEMORIAL PARK & CREMATORY

Established in 1915 and located in Lakewood, WA. For more information, visit mountainviewtacoma.com.

ABOUT CHAPEL OF THE CHIMES HAYWARD

Established in 1872 as a seven-acre cemetery and located in Hayward, Calif. For more information, visit hayward.chapelofthechimes.com. (FD 1240)

ABOUT CHAPEL OF THE CHIMES OAKLAND

Established in 1909 as a crematory and columbarium, Chapel of the Chimes Oakland is a leading cremation service provider in Northern California. For more information, visit oakland.chapelofthechimes.com. (FD 1254)

ABOUT SUNSET LAWN CHAPEL OF THE CHIMES SACRAMENTO

Established in 1938 as a 12-acre cemetery for World War II Soldiers and located in Sacramento, Calif. For more information, visit sunsetlawn.chapelofthechimes.com. (FD 1023)

ABOUT SKYLAWN FUNERAL HOME AND MEMORIAL PARK

Established in 1959 as a non-sectarian cemetery in San Mateo, Calif., a state-of-the-art funeral home was added in 2006. For more information, visit www.skylawnmemorialpark.com. (FD 1848)

MEDIA, PLEASE NOTE: To request the complete survey findings, receive high resolution images or to schedule an interview with David Montgomery, please contact David Cumpston at (415) 359-2316 or cumpston@landispr.com.

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