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Ever wonder what an unveiling is?

We are asked that questions almost daily.

To start, no one, no matter how religious, or how loved, is required to have an unveiling or do an unveiling for someone. Under Jewish law all that is "required" is that a grave is properly marked. ***Someone lived and their life deserves to be remembered, in some way.***

The amount that is spent is not important, the style of memorial is not important, the wording on the memorial is not important, the grave being marked is important.

Most say unveilings were started during the depression, when your local temple was a large part and the center of your community. When a member of your family passed away and you went to temple, some daily, some weekly, to say Kaddish, you would build an closer bond with your rabbi, sometimes closer then families ever had previously. As families started to think about marking the grave they would go to the rabbi and ask what to write. The rabbi would give suggestions and offer to do a small service at the time the memorial is placed and then the family could, in return, make a donation back to the temple.

This went on for years and unveilings have been seen as almost second funeral in some instances. In reality, no rabbi is needed, though can be used, a family can say the prayers, say poems, psalms or whatever they see fit to say good bye as a group. An unveiling can be as small as one person or as large as 100. It is done for the comfort of those immediately mourning and what is best for them is to be used to guide the process of an unveiling.

Unveilings decreased in popularity during the 70's and 80's and then slowly found a rebirth as we entered the late 90's and the last ten years. Families enjoy the opportunity to go to the cemetery as a group, say a few prayers, have an opportunity to see the memorial, and in a small way, have some type of closure.

Main Office and Production Facility ~ At the Everett Cemeteries
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Indoor Display ~ 5 Edgell Road, Framingham, MA (508)872-1400
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An unveiling can be done at any time. Though so many have been raised to do it at the one year mark, that is traditional, based on how long one says Kaddish (usually one year). The only true guidance is not to do one within the first 30 days after death, anytime after that is perfectly fine. Keep in mind the memorial itself is nothing religious. It is not kosher, not blessed, it can be seen at any time, visited at any time and touch by anyone. It is only a small representation of the person. It does not have to be veiled until the unveiling.

As it happens, we tell families to veil only the day of, as it can be impractical to try to keep a veil on a memorial for any period of time. Between the rain, wind, and grass cutting it is near impossible to keep a veil look fresh and nice and there is no reason to. The veil can be placed on five minutes before the service and just draped over the memorial. As quick as it is placed, the small service tells you when to remove it. The veil is such a small part of the service that many do the service without one. The veil itself, simply a piece of cheesecloth or a white cloth, again, no religious significance, not a cloth like a tallice or yamulkah, just a simple white piece of cheesecloth.

In summary, you, as the family, make as much or as little of the unveiling as you would like. Some of the nicest services are when the immediate family attends and everyone says something, each reads one prayer, makes a statement, or leads a reading.

We are happy, obviously at no charge, to supply a veil and the unveiling prayers that we suggest.
