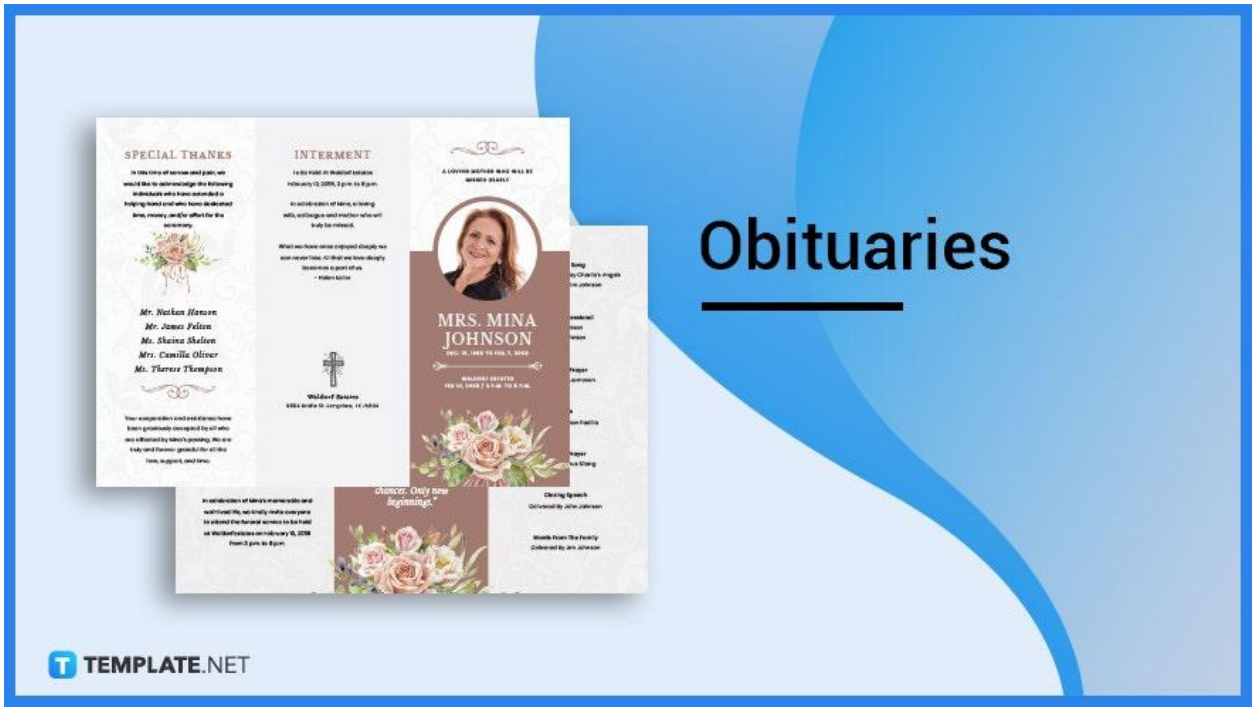
Obituaries

The etymology of the word ‘obituary’ stems from the Latin word ‘obit’ which means death. Just as a new life is celebrated with congratulatory messages or even baptism invitations, the end of a life is also celebrated and remembered, albeit in a more somber way.



Obituary Definition and Meaning

An obituary is a formal announcement that informs the public of a person’s recent death or expiration.

An obituary is traditionally a printed notice of death; but nowadays, it can be disseminated digitally as well.

What Is an Obituary?

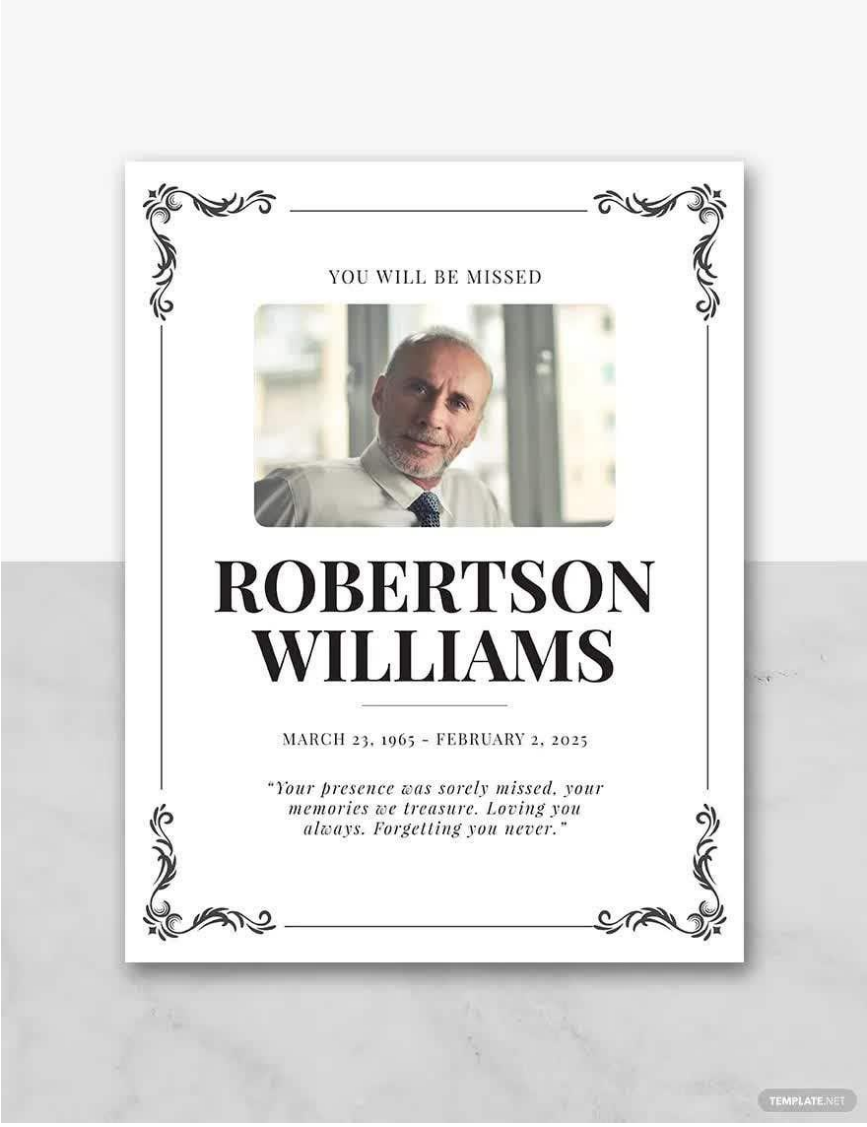
An obituary is a short notice that contains essential details such as the deceased’s name, date of birth, date of death, and information about the memorial service and funeral. It can

contain the photo of the deceased person as well. Traditionally, obituaries are printed or published in newspapers.

10 Types of Obituary

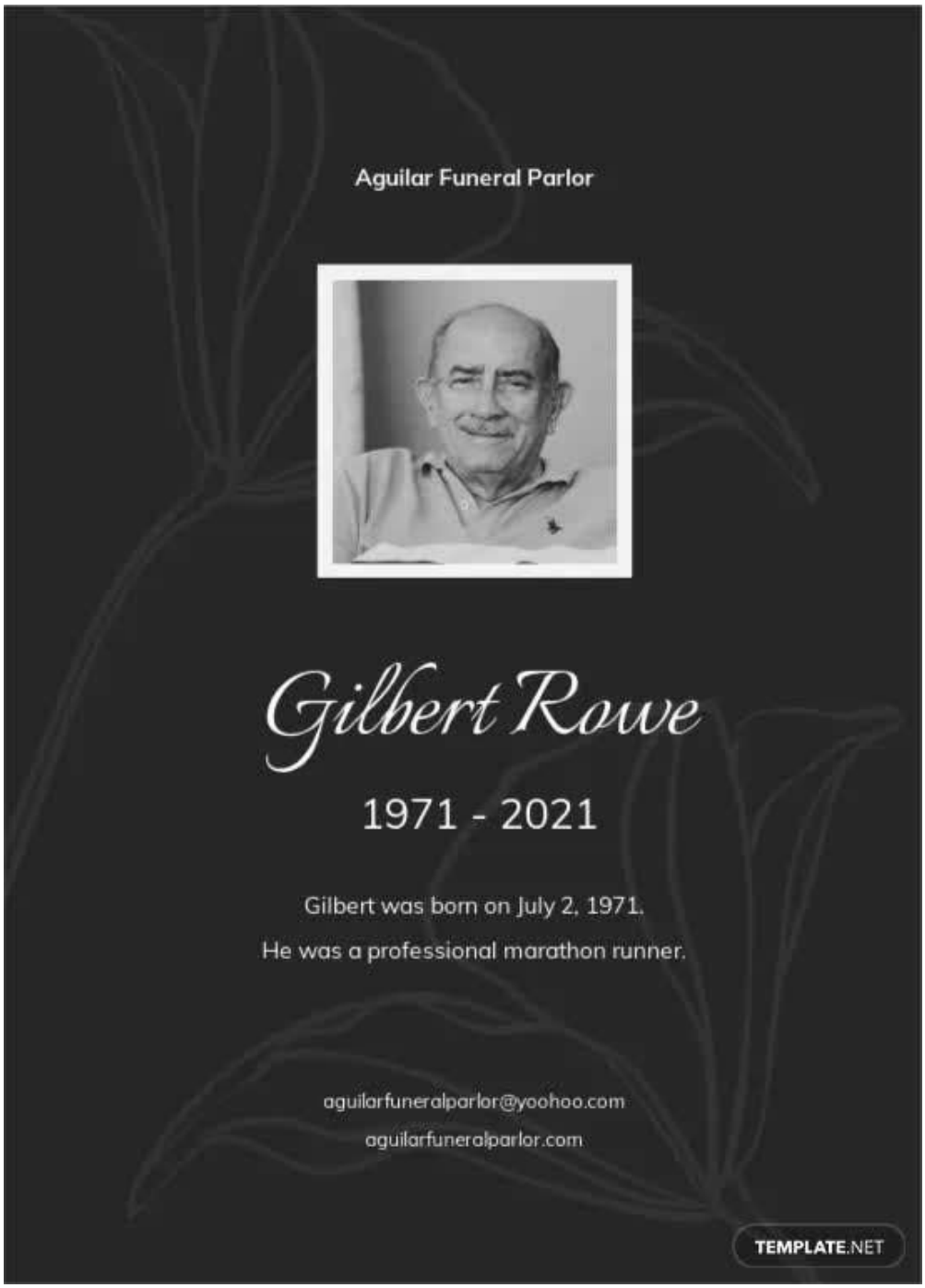
Obituary Program

You can’t go wrong with a white background for your obituary program. Keep it simple and solemn with a heartfelt quote, as seen in the example below.



Obituary Card

An obituary card does not need to contain a lengthy explanation. A short line or two that encapsulates the deceased individual's life or character is perfectly acceptable.



Obituary Brochure

If a basic obituary is too limiting, the alternative is to use an obituary brochure. You can expound further on the life of your beloved dead, give more details, and incorporate more graphics in a bi-fold brochure.

Funeral Program

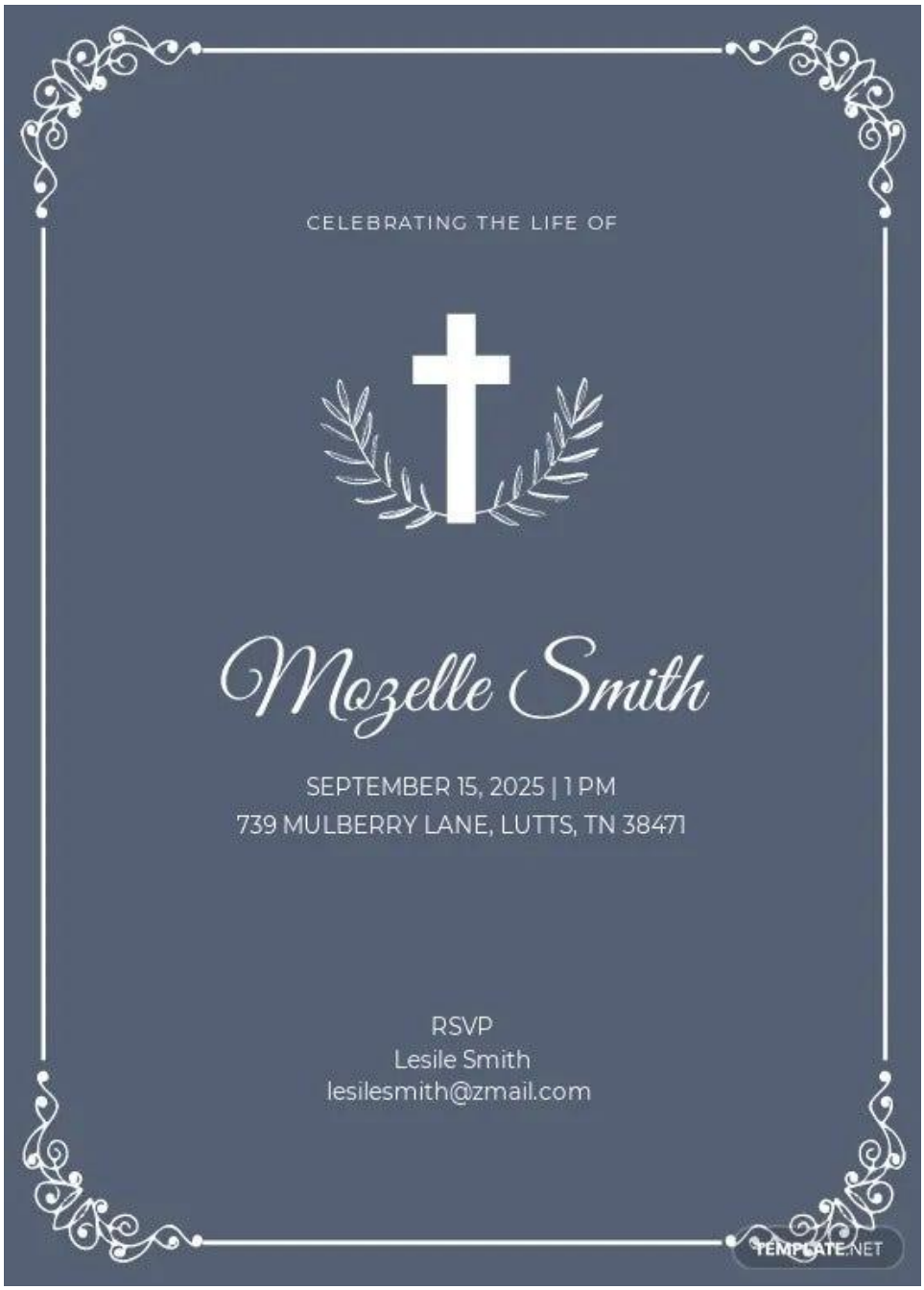
Aside from the name, birthdate, and date of death, you can include a short biography and an acknowledgment section in your funeral program. Keep it classic and elegant with subdued tones, as seen in the template below.

Memorial

A memorial invitation or notice should always contain the date, time, and location of the service. As for the design, you can add a cross or any significant symbol that's applicable to your faith, religion, or belief.

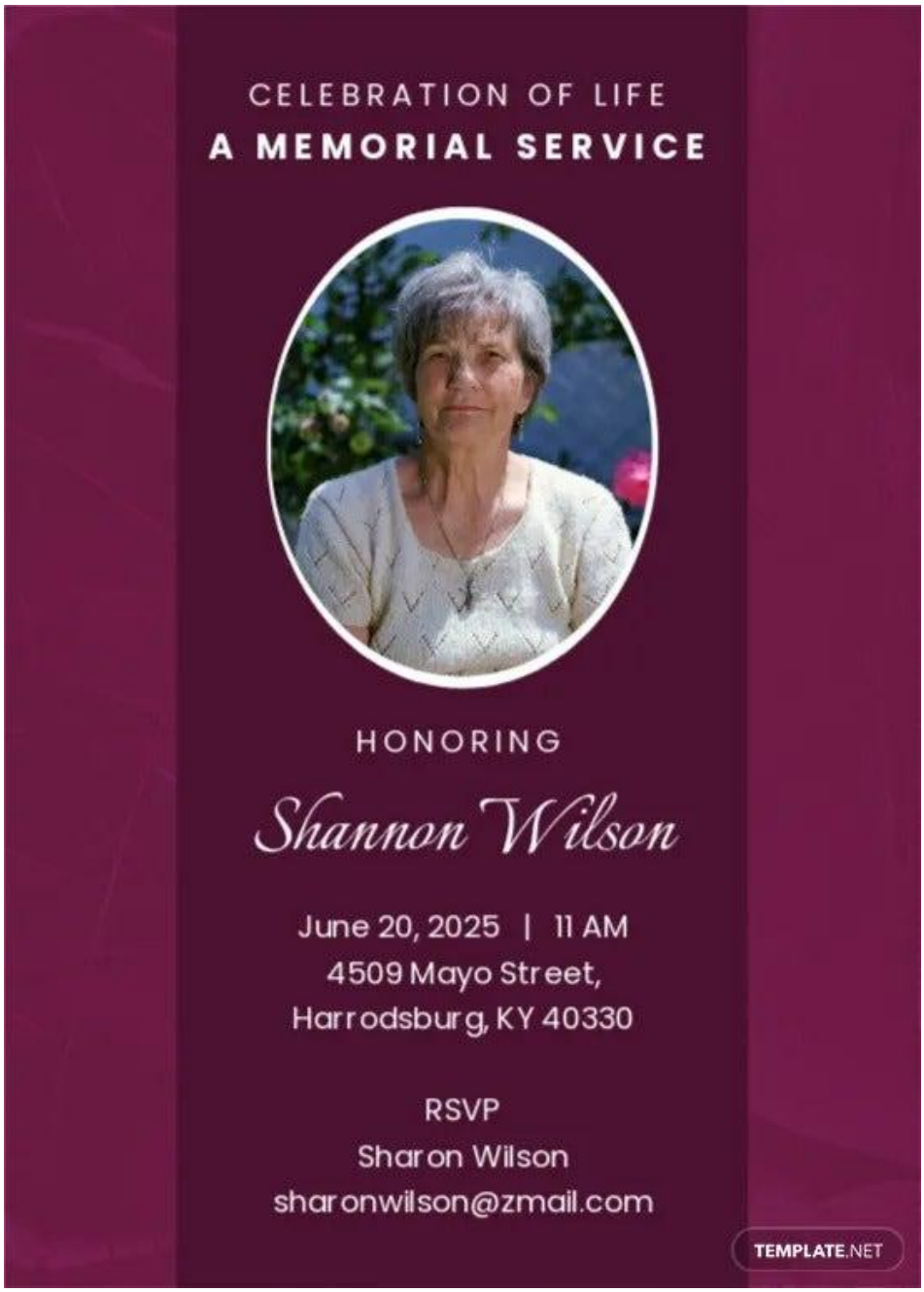
Funeral Announcement

You don’t have to stick to white or light colors all the time. Darker and more subdued shades can also work, as seen in this funeral announcement template below. However, to be considerate and sensitive, it’s best to steer clear of bright and loud colors.



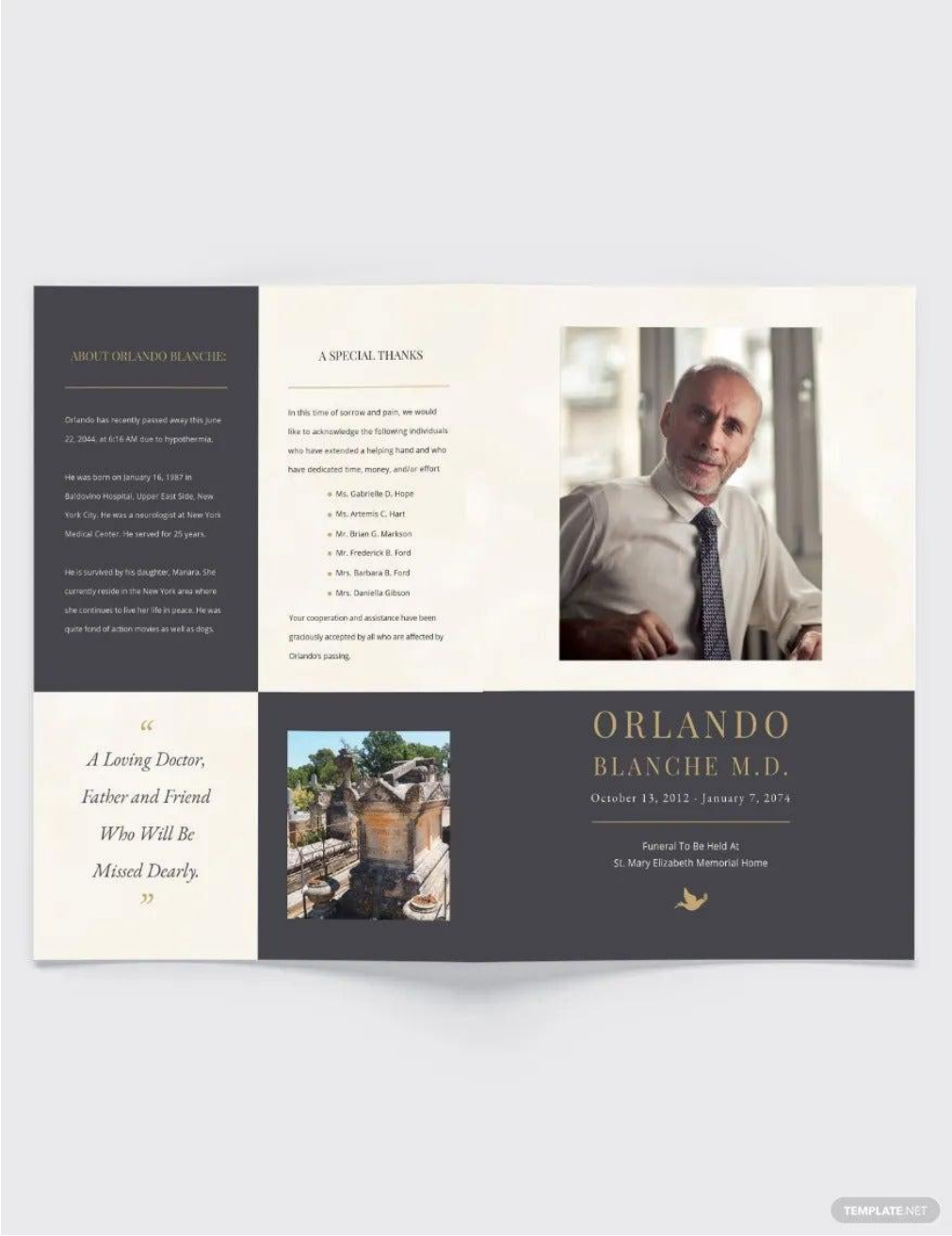
Funeral Memorial

A funeral memorial invitation or announcement should be a fitting tribute to the deceased. If the person had a favorite color or photo of themselves, you can honor their memory by incorporating that into the design.



Funeral Service

A funeral service is never easy to plan, especially for the bereaved family. Make the service more personal and heartfelt by sharing a brief biography of the deceased. Of course, a few words cannot totally capture the life of an individual. But offering a small glimpse of their life and legacy might be helpful to those who may not have known the deceased well.



Funeral Ceremony Invitation

Like any event invitation, a funeral ceremony can include an RSVP at the bottom of the invite. This can be particularly helpful if the bereaved family is expecting a lot of guests to attend the funeral. Include the name of the point person and their contact number or email address.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE HONORING

JANE SMITH

October 8, 2025

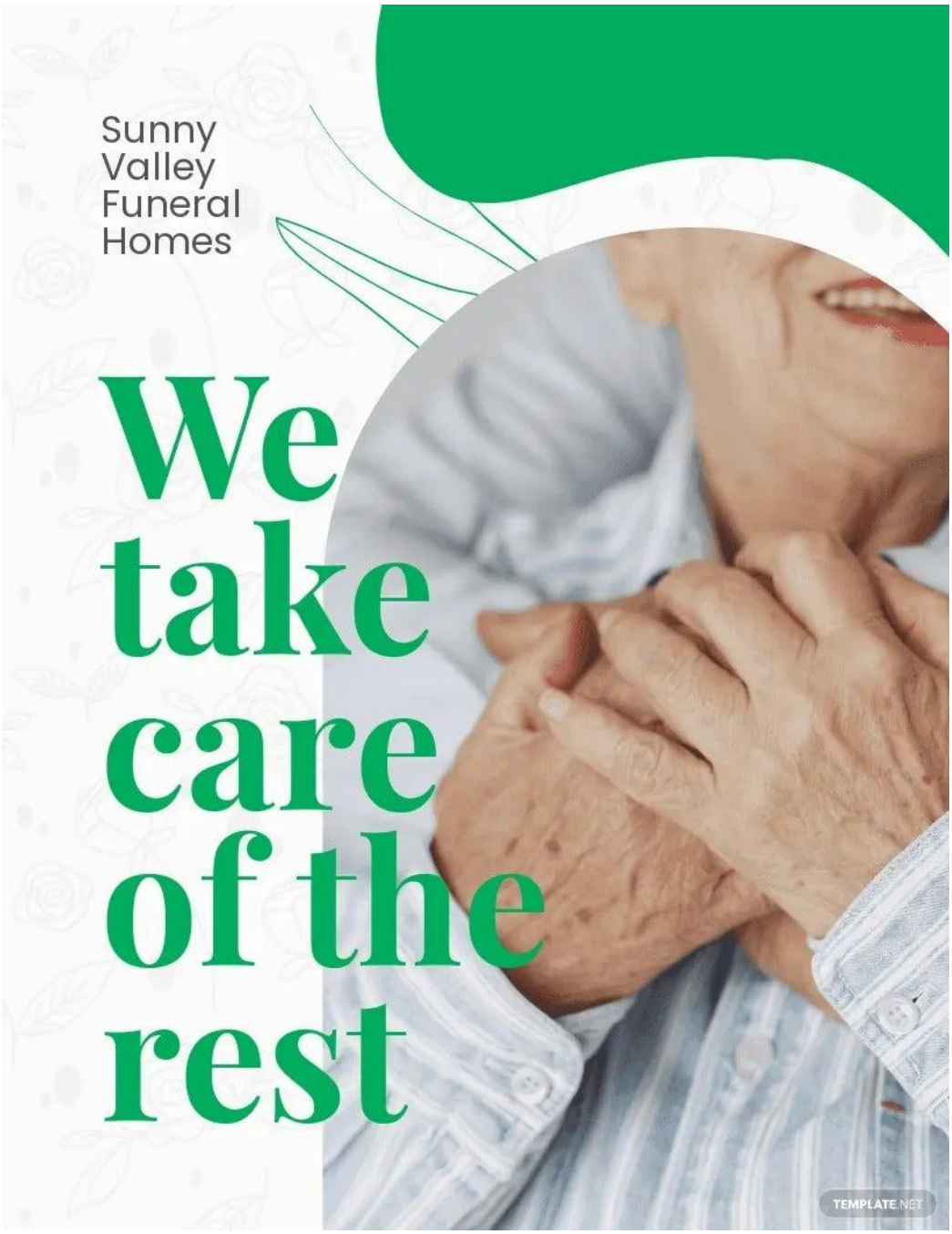
2 PM | Peaceful Spirit

RSVP
Diane Smith
dianesmith@zmail.com

TEMPLATE.NET

Funeral Flyer

For funeral parlors, funeral homes, and other similar businesses, they need to be able to capture the interest of potential clients and customers. Using a witty catchphrase or tag line in a funeral flyer and other marketing material is one way of doing so.



Obituary Uses, Purpose, and Importance

Obituaries have a straightforward and practical use. They can be designed purely from a functional perspective but they can also have a creative element added to it. The following describe some of the main uses and importance of an obituary.

Remembrance

The most important purpose of publishing an obituary is to honor the memory of the deceased individual. It is usually the immediate family's responsibility to initiate this formal gesture of remembrance.

Information

An obituary allows other family members, friends, and the general public to know about the death. By publishing the information or sending it out virtually, an obituary is basically a formal announcement to the community.

Clarity

It's important to indicate accurate information on the obituary. It's helpful to those interested to pay their last respects or attend the funeral if the details are stated clearly (i.e., when and where the service will be).

Documentation

Although it's not always the case, an obituary can be used for record-keeping purposes. Particularly for newspaper or printed obituaries, these may be kept on file for public record; thus, making it accessible to anyone in the community.

What’s In an Obituary? Parts?

Announcement

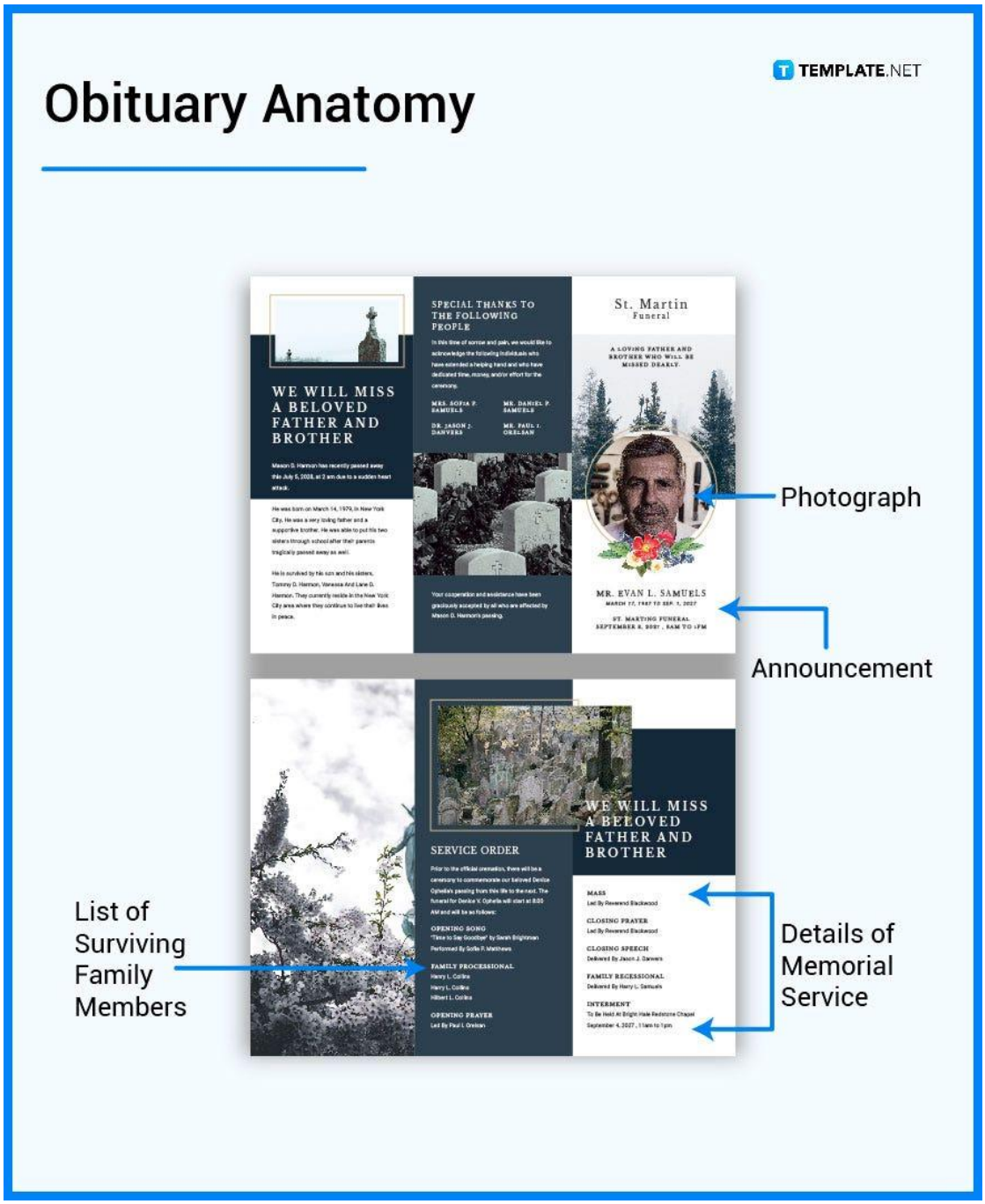
The most important section of an obituary is the formal announcement about the death. It includes the recently departed’s complete name, date of birth, and date of death. It’s also optional to include a brief line or two about the individual’s character or life’s work.

List of Surviving Family Members

Normally, the immediate family members are arranged in order on the obituary. This includes the spouse, children, in-laws, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren. The parents and siblings’ names may also be indicated, if applicable.

Photograph

Although it’s not required, many people opt to include a picture of the recently deceased on the obituary. The size of the image would depend on the family members’ decision.



Details of Memorial Service

For the public's information, you can include specific details about the viewing, memorial service, and funeral. Make sure to indicate the time, date, and location of these events.

How to Design an Obituary?

1. Choose an obituary size

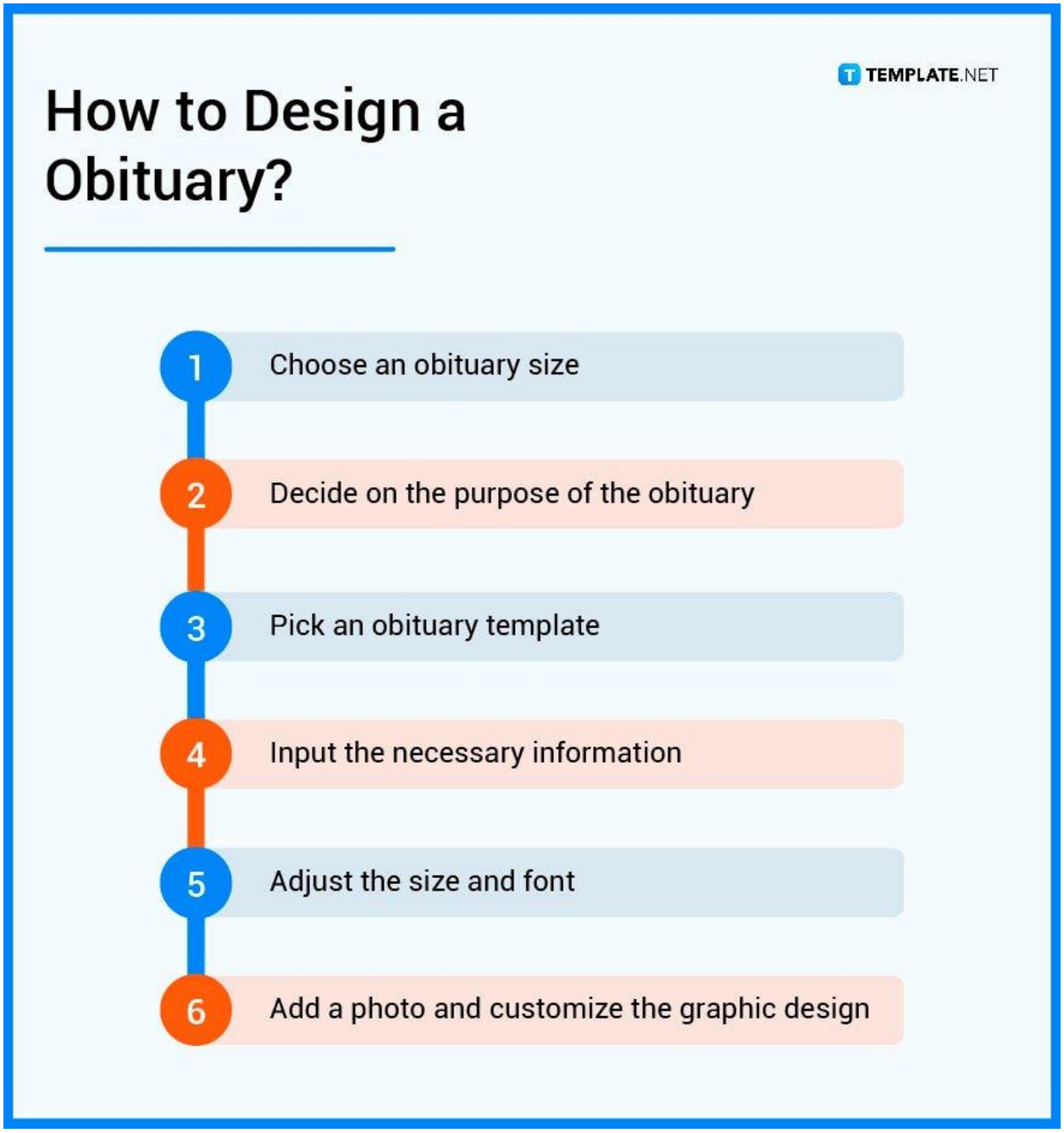
2. Decide on the purpose of the obituary

3. Pick an obituary template

4. Input the necessary information

5. Adjust the size and font

6. Add a photo and customize the graphic design



Obituary vs. Eulogy

An obituary is a public notice meant to inform people about an individual's death.

A eulogy is a personal tribute meant to honor the memory of a deceased person. It's usually delivered as a speech during funerals and memorial services.

What’s the difference between an Obituary, Tribute, and Funeral Notice?

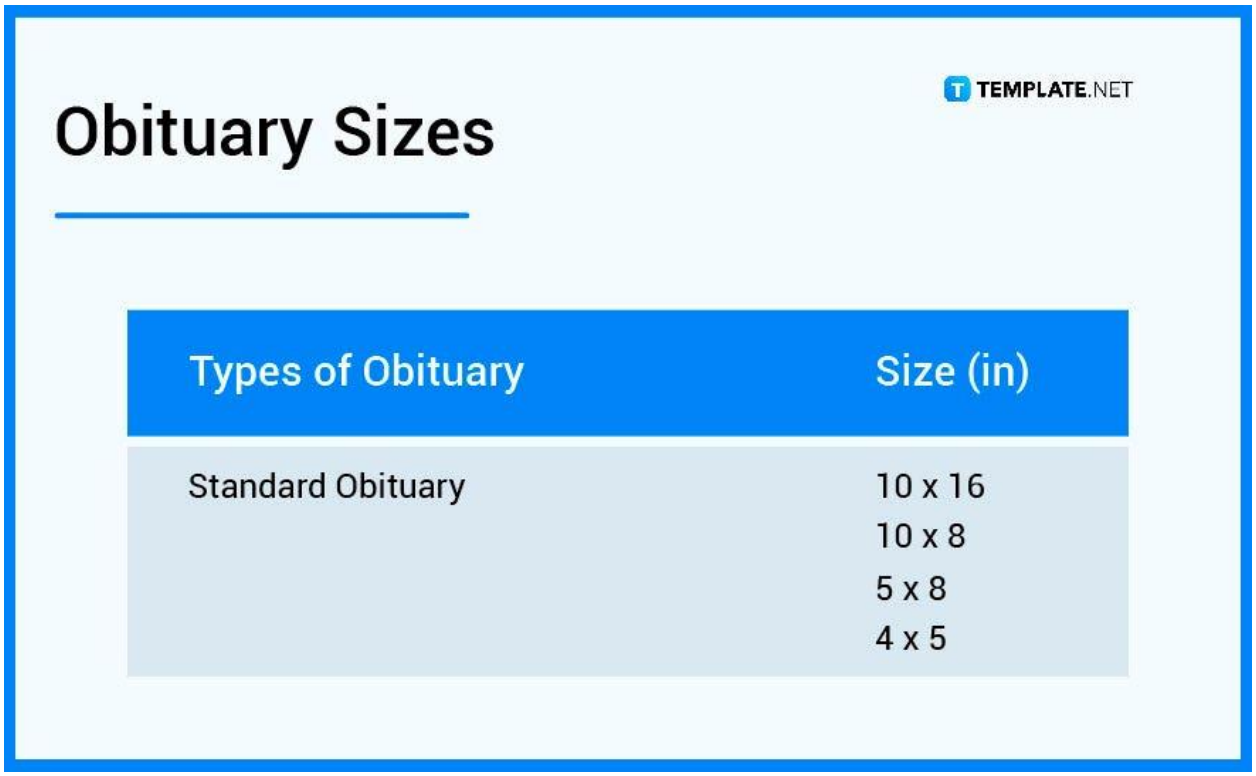
An obituary is a formal announcement informing the public about the recent death of an individual.

A tribute is a personal act of remembrance honoring a deceased person’s life. A tribute can come in different forms such as a speech or video presentation.

A funeral notice is a formal announcement about a recent death or an upcoming funeral. But unlike an obituary, a funeral notice is more standard advertising and is often less of a personal memorial.

Obituary Sizes

A typical printed obituary that's commonly found in newspapers can come in a range of sizes. The following are the standard and widely accepted obituary sizes.



Obituary Ideas and Examples

As the popular saying goes, death (along with taxes) is the only thing certain in life. There are various ways to present an obituary that will best honor your beloved departed's life and memory. Take a cue from these creative obituary ideas for more inspiration!

- Students Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Mother Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Father Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Funeral Program Obituary Ideas and examples
- Brother Obituary Ideas and Examples

- Grandfather Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Husband Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Newspaper Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Memorial Obituary Ideas and Examples
- Deceased Obituary Ideas and Examples

FAQs

What details should be in an obituary?

An obituary should include the deceased's full name, date of birth, date of death, and memorial service details.

What is the typical format of an obituary?

The typical format of an obituary is a brief and straightforward announcement of the death. A photo of the recently deceased is also recommended.

Do you list spouses of grandchildren in an obituary?

If space permits, you can include the names of the spouses of grandchildren. But it is not necessary. The spouse of the deceased and their children's spouses are more important.

Who should be listed as survivors in an obituary?

The deceased person's spouse, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren are usually listed.

What is a Feature Obituary?

A feature obituary is a longer and more detailed version of a typical news obituary. It focuses on the life and legacy of a deceased person.

What should be included in an obituary?

The name of the deceased, date of birth, date of death, list of bereaved or surviving family members, and details of the memorial service.

What makes a great obituary?

A great obituary is short and solemn. It can be simple but it should honor the deceased person.

What should you not put in an obituary?

You should not put a long tribute in an obituary, unless it’s a full length feature obituary. The obituary is a short announcement notifying the public of a recent death.

Is a eulogy the same as an obituary?

The two are different. A eulogy is more of a personal tribute or heartfelt speech remembering a dead person’s legacy and life.

Who usually reads the obituary at a funeral?

An obituary is usually information that is available for the public to read. A eulogy, on the other hand, is normally read or delivered at a funeral by a family member or a close friend of the deceased.