



Best Practices for Classes: Widow(er) Support

The purpose of this document is to provide Class Officers with some experience-based best practices to help you support your class's widows and widowers more effectively in the days, months, and years after the death of a classmate.

1. Establish a Class Widow(er) Liaison:

- A Class Officer can perform this role as an additional duty following graduation, but WPAOG recommends that each Class create a separate "Widow(er) Liaison" Class Officer position NLT your 10th Reunion.
- The Liaison will serve as the primary POC between a Class and the other surviving widow(er)s of the Class.
- A widow(er) who has remained engaged with their deceased spouse's class makes an ideal candidate for this position.
- Notify Class-Services@wpaog.org of the name of your Widow Liaison. WPAOG will add that individual to the Class Leader distribution list.

2. Prepare to support your Class's Widow(er)s:

- Class Officers should discuss and decide upon a standard protocol for when a classmate passes. Who will notify AOG? Will your class send flowers? Will a classmate take your class flag to the funeral?
- All Class Officers, especially the Widow(er) Liaison or POC, should become familiar with WPAOG's Memorial Support Information at: <https://www.westpointaog.org/file/memorialsupport.pdf>, and the items needed in order to be buried in a military cemetery.
- Establish lines of communication with ailing classmates and their spouses.
- Create a system that allows your Class's existing widow(er)s to network with each other. A widow(er) is automatically added to your Class's email distribution and roster once WPAOG is notified of the spouse's passing.

3. Upon the death of a classmate, activate your class's support for the widow(er):

- WPAOG will provide your Liaison with the information that we have on file for the NOK of your fallen classmates.
- If your class learns of a death that WPAOG has not yet announced, please collect the following information: *name of the deceased, Class year, date of death, name and contact information of spouse or NOK*, and then notify us at 845.446.1617 or dnsreport@wpaog.org
- Contact the family to offer condolences on behalf of your Class.
- Obtain information from the family to help you support them:
 - Funeral plans (dates, times, locations, etc.).
 - A mailing address to send flowers; ask if family requests charitable donations in lieu of flowers.
 - A phone number or email address, and ask if it is okay to share it with the class.
- Using the WPAOG master Class Distribution List, send an email to your classmates to inform them of the pertinent information.
- Identify classmates to attend the funeral.
- Later, make follow up calls or emails with the widow(er) to discuss memorial articles for TAPS; inform the family about the WPAOG Class Ring Memorial Program; and encourage them to participate in Class functions such as reunions, mini-reunions, cruises, etc.
- Consider contacting the West Point Society President in the widow(er)'s area.

FYSA: WPAOG designates all widow(er)s as Associate Members of WPAOG, so they will continue to receive the *West Point Magazine* as well as other communications from WPAOG, their spouse's Class, and their local Society.

Helpful Numbers/Email Addresses/Links:

- WPAOG Memorial Support Document: <https://www.westpointaog.org/file/memorialsupport.pdf>
- Death Notification System (DNS): 845.446.1617; dns-report@wpaog.org
- Class Services: 845.446.1614; Class-Services@wpaog.org
- Society Support: 845.446.1612; Society-Support@wpaog.org
- Memorial Article/TAPS: 845.446.1647; memorials@wpaog.org; <https://www.westpointaog.org/memorials>
- West Point Class Ring Memorial Program: 845.446.1614;
<https://www.westpointaog.org/RingMemorialProgram>
- Memorial Brick and Paver Program: 845.446.1605; bricks@wpaog.org
- Memorial and Tribute Gifts: <http://wpaog.myplannedgift.org/memorials-and-tribute-gifts>
- West Point Planned Giving (Legacy Gifts): <http://wpaog.myplannedgift.org/>