



Best Practices for Societies: Widow(er) Support

The purpose of this document is to provide Society Leaders with some experience-based best practices to help you support your widows and widowers more effectively in the days, months, and years after the death of a graduate.

1. Establish a Society Widow(er) Liaison:

- WPAOG recommends each Society establish a Widow(er) Liaison position to support and represent the local widows(er)s and to assist with the communication amongst the Society, widow(er), and WPAOG. This can be a new stand-alone position or be assigned as an additional duty to a current Society Officer. An active Society member who is a widow(er) might want to help others and provide valuable assistance.
- Notify society-support@wpaog.org of the Liaison's name so the WPAOG records can be updated internally.

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

- The Society should discuss and decide upon a standard protocol for when a graduate or their family member passes. Who will notify WPAOG? Who will share the notifications? Will your Society send flowers?
- All Society Leadership, 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 all local graduates and their immediate family members, especially those who are ill.
- Include widows(er)s in Society events and offer events where they can network together. A widow(er) is automatically added to your Society's email distribution and roster once WPAOG is notified of the spouse's passing.

3. Upon the death of a local graduate, activate your Society Widow(er) Liaison support:

- When WPAOG is notified first of a graduate's passing, they will send an email to the president of the Society.
- If your Society 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 Society.
- 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 Society.
- Using the WPAOG Society Distribution List, send an email to your constituents to inform them of the pertinent information.
- Identify representatives to attend the funeral.
- Later, make follow up calls or emails with the widow(er) to keep them connected to the local Society members and engaged in events.

FYSA: WPAOG designates all widows(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 spouses' 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/>