

Granit Bronz

# INSIGHT

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A Newsletter from the Cold Spring Granite Memorial Group

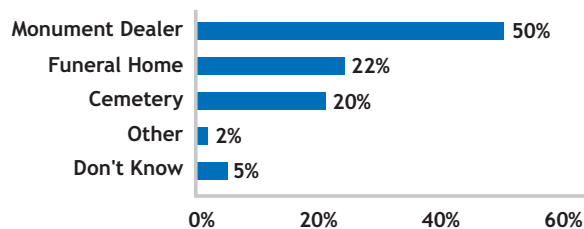
Summer 2003

## Key survey highlights need for firms to educate consumers about memorialization options

*Consumers largely in the dark, put off decisions, turning to preneed*

Consumers have very little knowledge of memorialization preferences and put off making memorialization decisions until they have to, but they are turning to preneed, according to a nationwide survey conducted by the Cold Spring Granite Co.

Where Did You Go To Purchase The Memorial?



The survey, the first comprehensive effort to gauge consumer memorial, burial and funeral preferences by region, age, income, gender and ethnicity, discovered consumers are in the dark about the existing range of memorialization products, making it critical for memorialization companies to educate Americans about the full line of available options through effective sales communication and marketing campaigns.

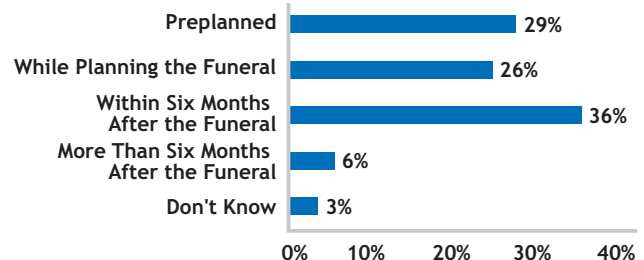
The survey found that:

- ◆ Most Americans (64 percent) have never purchased a memorial – an upright monument or a flat marker.
- ◆ Respondents who purchased an upright monument or flat marker were older, Caucasian, religiously affiliated, and in the lower- and mid-income categories.
- ◆ Most purchased memorials through monument companies (50 percent), funeral homes (22 percent) and cemeteries (20 percent).
- ◆ The majority (62 percent) purchased memorials while planning the funeral or within six months after the funeral.
- ◆ An increasing number (29 percent) pre-purchased memorials.
- ◆ Half of the respondents said they are likely to preplan their funeral arrangements or have already done so in a trend that is likely to grow with the aging baby boomer generation.

“The preplanning trend is larger than we expected, reflecting a huge opportunity for companies to educate consumers,” says Michael T. Baklarz, Cold Spring Granite senior vice president of sales and marketing.

Those with no religious affiliation were more likely to make memorialization decisions (purchasing a memorial or arranging for cremation) within six months after a funeral, while those earning over \$100,000 annually were more likely to make such decisions while planning a funeral.

When Was The Decision-Making Made?



When asked about memorialization options, most respondents were familiar with traditional burials, upright monuments, flat granite and bronze markers, cremation urns, and scattering of ashes. Except for high-income respondents earning over \$100,000, awareness of other options, including private family and community mausoleums and columbarium cremation niches, was low. Granite memorials were by far the top memorial choice for most respondents (66 percent) over bronze memorials (14 percent).

Traditional burials were preferred by most (58 percent) over cremation (34 percent). The percentage of respondents preferring cremation, however, was significantly higher than the actual rate, indicating cremation may grow at an even faster rate. Around 25 percent of the 2.2 million Americans who died last year were cremated. Analysts forecast the cremation rate to nearly double by 2025. Preference for

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## Driving sales

By Michael T. Baklarz, senior vice president of sales and marketing

### Creating experiences for the boomers

Making up 78 million people or nearly one third of the total U.S. population, baby boomers – Americans born during 1946-1964 who are 39 to 57 years old now – are the biggest and fastest-growing population group in the country. Understanding their preferences and lifestyles and incorporating that knowledge into your sales and marketing strategy is something that you should be doing now.

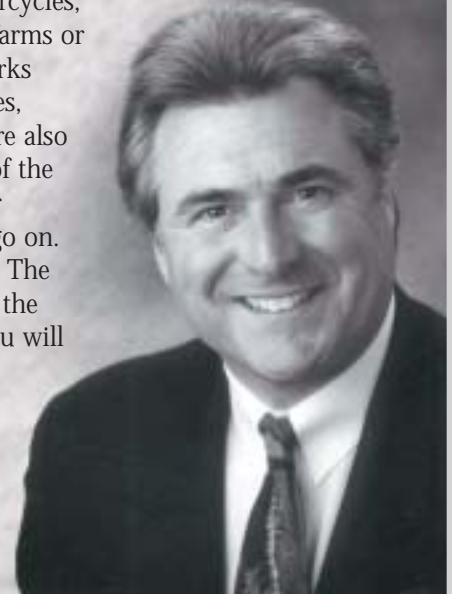
If one focus explains the boomers, it's lifestyle. Growing older for boomers is not simply about getting by. It's about being vital and enjoying the lifestyle. Boomers want things their way and they want them now. Because they are often bored in this "been-there-done-that" world, boomers are searching for novelty and creating their own experiences. Having been marketed to by companies for all their lives, boomers also want products, services and experiences that directly demonstrate an understanding of their values, lifestyles, wants and needs.

I'd like to point out some interesting product and death care developments that reflect the special experiences that boomers are already seeking. What the folks are doing in cremation is fascinating. Although boomers opting for cremation tend to be less religious in strictly adhering to a denominational religion, new cremation offerings tell you that boomers are spiritual. One firm develops diamonds with carbon partly derived from the deceased so a loved one can wear jewelry containing the remains of his or her late spouse. Another firm infuses crystal with cremated

remains so crystal bowls or artifacts containing the remains of loved ones can adorn homes of the bereaved.

Casket-makers are taking a similar approach. A British firm takes special orders for coffins made in the shapes of sledges, boats, bells and other items reflecting a hobby or lifestyle of the memorialized. Funeral homes are organizing ceremonies in which caskets are displayed in surroundings associated with the memorialized person's lifestyle; one ceremony had an open casket surrounded by kitchen décor with foods and cooking utensils. (The memorialized person enjoyed cooking.)

Whether it be motorcycles, diamond etchings of farms or three-dimensional works depicting nature scenes, monument builders are also carving the lifestyles of the memorialized on their monuments. I could go on. But you get the point. The more you understand the boomers, the more you will be able to create experiences that will appeal to their specific preferences and values.



## GB customers tour new foundry, see new products, learn about consumer research

Granit Bronz customers were recently briefed on memorialization market research results and new products, including Bronzes Jorda statuary and emblems and the new vase ring assembly units. They also informed GB executives about effective merchandising and marketing methods to improve their sales during a tour of the new Granit Bronz foundry.

From left to right: Johnny Phillips, Jim Hemmesch, Dave Montgomery of Macon County Memorial Park, Mike Baklarz, Ray Smith of Cornerstone, Gary Brown of the Phoenix Diocese, and Samuel Domsy of Haym Solomon Memorial Park.



# A veteran outlines key industry trends of the future



*What does Bernie Frie, who recently retired as Granit Bronz general manager after 42 years in the industry, have to offer? Plenty of insights about the future. The following is Bernie's list of major developments that will impact the industry.*

## ◆ Personalization

Personalization will continue to be the most important trend. "The value of a memorial increases exponentially with more personalization," says Frie.

## ◆ Preneed

Continued and changing legislation is underway to regulate preneed in the United States. This will be a wake-up call for memorialization companies to launch more effective preneed marketing campaigns. "Preneed is a vital service benefiting families," says Frie. "Nothing will change that."

## ◆ Memorials during the ceremony

Firms will have to figure out how to have memorials developed during the memorial ceremony. "This will require more preneed, more coordination with family members, higher manufacturing technology and insanely fast delivery," says Frie.

## ◆ Cremorials

Cremation will overtake traditional burials in a generation and demand for new cremorials, incorporating both bronze and granite, will soar.

## ◆ Bronze design innovations

"Imagine a cascading waterfall that is part of a large memorial," asks Frie. "This is the kind of customization people will ask for in the future."

## ◆ Crypt and niche front designs

Crypt and niche fronts today are personalized with few designs. "You have carved or sandblasted names and, in the case of some mausoleums, almost nothing," says Frie. Families will want more features to distinguish their loved ones on crypt or niche fronts.

## ◆ Ceramic photos

Clear and durable ceramic-fired photographs of loved ones posing by themselves, with family or with prized possessions will accompany more bronze and granite memorials.

## ◆ Ethnic memorial products

Whether racial or religious, Latino, Jewish or Chinese, memorial manufacturers, retailers and cemeteries will respond to a dizzying array of memorials distinguished by ethnicity and religion.

## ◆ Bronze colors

Just as there has been an explosion in granite colors, manufacturers will produce new bronze colors, from green to red, that will be as durable as traditional dark or light bronze colors.

## ◆ Pet memorials

With more families split and spread across the country, more Americans are valuing the companionship of pets and purchasing pet memorials.

## ◆ E-memorials

The Internet will play a larger role in memorialization. Web sites will be developed into e-memorials. Digital technology will also be featured in memorials, including monuments and markers equipped with DVD screens that can play bio-movies of the deceased.

## ◆ Garden cemeteries

Garden cemeteries will accompany the cremation boom. These can be as large as public or private cemeteries or simply a cremorial adorning a home garden.

## ◆ Mausoleums and columbariums

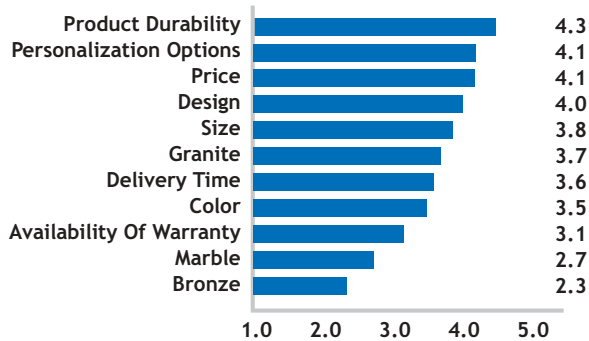
Cremation will also hasten the development of community mausoleums and columbariums that can be placed outdoors in cemeteries or at hospitals, universities, auditoriums, government buildings and war memorials.

## ◆ Bronze on granite memorials

Upright monuments will showcase more bronze features, lettering, emblems and statuary.

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**When Purchasing A Memorial, How Important Were The Following Factors?**



cremation was high among non-religiously affiliated and high-income respondents. Preference for traditional burials was highest among lower-income and religiously affiliated groups.

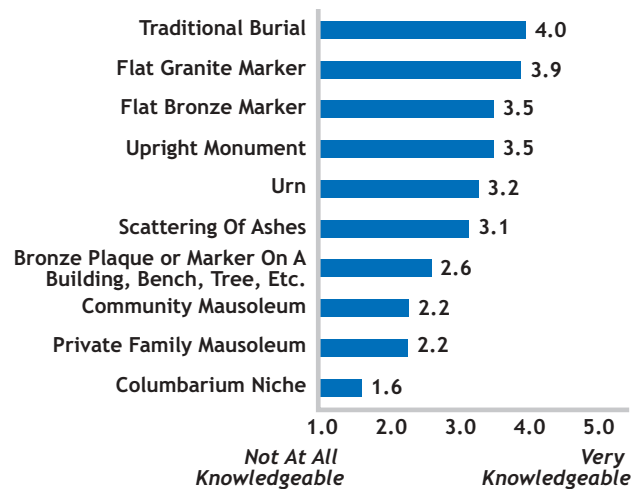
When asked how they would commemorate a family member through cremation, most respondents (40 percent) said they would scatter ashes at a special location; deposit ashes in an urn (37 percent); or mark the cremated remains with granite monument or marker in a cemetery (23 percent). Receptivity and knowledge of other cremation options, such as granite cremorials, columbariums and community mausoleums, was low.

According to Baklarz, one reason why so many Americans today opt for traditional gray, upright memorials and funerals is because loved ones have not left specific instructions about memorialization preferences that may be less formal. "With

more Americans opting for less formal ceremonies; cremation; and customized memorial colors, shapes, etchings and carvings, monument companies, funeral homes and cemeteries will need to educate consumers on the full range of memorialization and personalization options on a preneed basis."

The survey interviewed 1,000 males and females aged 45 and over who were randomly selected from four regions (Northeast, Southeast, West, and Central).

**How Knowledgeable Are You Of The Following Memorialization Options?**



## Drop us a line

Have a view on key developments covered in *InSight*? Tell us what you think. E-mail or write to:

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