

above us. We flourished in the nation you came home to build. The most difficult days of your lives bought us fifty years of freedom.²⁵

His tribute completed, Clinton added this challenge:

Let us carry on the work you began here. You completed your mission here, but the mission of freedom goes on; the battle continues.

Eulogies



Watch at MyCommunicationLab
Video: "Eulogy for Charlie Brown"

A **eulogy**—a speech of tribute delivered when someone has died—can be one of the most significant and memorable and also one of the most challenging forms of commemorative address. As the editor of a recent collection of eulogies notes,

A good eulogy can be . . . a bridge between the living and the dead, between us and them, memory and eternity. The more specific and real the remembrances spoken, the stronger the bridge.²⁶

When you deliver a eulogy, you should mention—indeed, linger on—the unique achievements of the person to whom you are paying tribute and, of course, express a sense of loss. The mother of a child killed in the 2012 Newtown, Connecticut, school shooting, opened her eulogy for her little boy on this heart-wrenching note of grief:

The sky is crying, and the flags are at half-mast. It is a sad, sad day.²⁷

But it is also proper in a eulogy to include personal and even humorous recollections of the person who has died. In his eulogy for his beloved Aunt Betty, John T. Masterson, Jr., related this humorous story:

Whereas other relatives sent books, clothing, or sensible toys for Christmas and birthdays, Aunt Betty tended toward the off-beat. . . . There was the year she (or the mail order house) got the order number wrong and sent me reflective driveway markers for Christmas. The thing about Aunt Betty was that if you received a gift like that, you didn't recognize it as a mistake; instead, my family and I sat around the Christmas tree trying to figure out the joke!²⁸

Finally, turn to the living, and encourage them to transcend their sorrow and sense of loss and feel instead gratitude that the dead person was once alive among them.

eulogy

A speech of tribute delivered when someone has died

RECAP

TYPES OF CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

- Introductions
- Toasts
- Award presentations
- Nominations
- Acceptances
- Keynote addresses
- Commencement addresses
- Commemorative addresses and tributes
- Eulogies

Beebe, S.A. & Beebe, S.J. (2015). *Public Speaking: An audience-centered approach* (9th ed). Pearson.