

Hebrew Cemetery Association

By Lorrie Klemons, Publicity

In Judaism, burying the dead is an important ritual surrounded by requirements and customs that are designed to honor the dead, *kavod ha-meit*. The funeral is a supreme act of loving kindness. The deceased cannot repay you.

The first thing you should do immediately when somebody dies is to notify your synagogue. If you

do not belong to one, any Charlotte rabbi will guide you through the process. You will most likely meet with the rabbi or cantor and he or she will explain the ritual steps in Jewish funerals and the reasons for them. At that meeting, he or she will also ask you what rituals you would like to follow. Different clergy may demand the following of certain rituals that



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they deem to be halachic, or according to Jewish law, and therefore, not negotiable. You will need to be prepared to give the rabbi/cantor information about the deceased, a brief family history, and any anecdotes that you care to share that will enable the officiating clergy to adequately eulogize your loved one.

Soon after meeting with the clergy, the mourning family will need to meet with the funeral

home staff to arrange for the funeral. Funeral services may be held at the synagogue, the funeral home, or graveside. The services provided by the funeral home may include retrieving the body from the deathbed; offering a choice of casket; transporting the body, and sometimes the family, to the place of funeral service; organizing the logistics of the burial; and assisting in the conduct of the funeral itself.

The Jewish community of Charlotte has developed a close working relationship with the Harry and Bryant Funeral Home on Providence Rd which graciously accommodates our Jewish rituals of *Tahara* and *Shomer*. *Tahara* is the ritual cleansing or purification of the body, and includes dressing the body in traditional burial shrouds and placing the body in the kosher casket. *Shomer* is the tradition of guarding the

body until the time of burial.

Judaism considers the body to be the abode of the soul. As such, it is respected and guarded even after the soul has departed. For those readers who are unaware, there is a dedicated group of Jewish volunteers from Temple Israel here in Charlotte who regularly perform *Tahara* and *Shomer* for any Jew who dies in our city. In quiet and humble anonymity they perform these acts of loving kindness.

Join your Hebrew Cemetery Association today. For more information about membership benefits, graves, interfaith or cremata areas, prepaid funeral costs, or endowment donations, call Cemetery Director Joe Kodsí at 704-364-4112 or 704-576-1859. Visit the website of the Hebrew Cemetery Association of Charlotte at www.hebrewcemetery.org. ☆

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Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community

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years, the assets increased to more than \$12 million. Two years later there was an increase to \$22 million and as of the end of the 2006 fiscal year total assets under management were in excess of \$32 million.

I know that Don Bernstein and others realize that the community continues to grow and with it the

needs to provide for future generations. The FCJC's mission to advance philanthropy through education and to raise permanent charitable resources to improve and strengthen the quality of Jewish life is as important now as it was ten years ago. A wonderful Jewish community prospers here in Charlotte but it will require

continued investment in the future to sustain it. ☆

Phil Warshawer is the Director for Planned Giving for the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community. For more information or any questions, contact Phil at 704-973-4544 or pwarshawer@ffjc.org.

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