



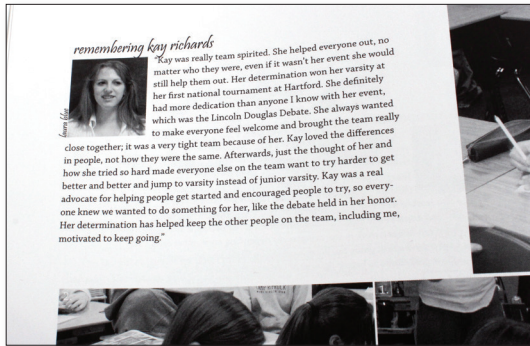
COVERING CAMPUS DEATHS

IT'S THE PLAN YOU HOPE YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO USE

“Never make important decisions when you are upset.”

This is some really good advice my mom gave me years ago and, while it applies to all areas of life, it's especially relevant for yearbook advisers and staffs. When a student or faculty member dies, it impacts the entire school community, including yearbook staffers and advisers.

ODYSSEY, CHANTILLY HS, CHANTILLY, VA



REMEMBERING KAY RICHARDS Following their policy which says that editorial coverage will be used following a student death, this mod appeared on the speech and debate spread the following year.

While the greater community will have time to grieve, yearbook staffs on deadline may not have much time to make some very important decisions. This is why your staff should create an obituary policy now.

To get started, look at sample obituary policies from other yearbook staffs. As you evaluate and tweak these policies to create something that works for your school, here are a few things you will want to think about and discuss:

Would we be comfortable implementing this policy regardless of how the person passed away?

Does the policy take into consideration printing deadlines? What will you do if someone dies after your final proofs have been submitted? What if someone dies after the book comes out?

Would you be able to use your policy, even if several people passed away during the same year?

As documentarians of the year, your staff will likely want to cover how the tragedy has impacted your school. If hundreds of people show up for a vigil or a group of students paint a mural in memoriam, your reporters should be there to cover the event. How will you cover these events that are certainly newsworthy but at the same time remain sensitive to the intense emotions your school and yearbook staff are likely experiencing?

An obituary policy is a lot like insurance; you hope you never have to use it, but when you need it, you'll be glad it's there. A carefully crafted policy can make a difficult time a little bit easier for you and your staff and may even provide some comfort to a grieving family and community.



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