



How to Memorialize Your Pet

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We didn't create this list. We're just the keepers of it!

Dr. Leah Hertzell began the original list in 1991 in loving memory of her dog Barney. Through the decades, many other pet parents and veterinary professionals have added their thoughts and the list continues to grow each year.

In memory of the pets we've loved and lost, here are some ideas for memorializing your pet:

- Take lots of photographs and, when you think you've taken enough, take some more. Use the photos to fill an album, place them in your pet's favorite spots in the house, make a collage with them, fill a multi-picture frame with them, or carry pictures in your wallet.
- Write a poem, story or song about or dedicated to your pet.
- Write down your special memories of your pet. Ask friends and family to add their anecdotes.
- Chronicle your best memories of your pet by keeping a daily gratitude journal.
- Write a letter to your pet expressing your love and gratitude or any feelings of regret or guilt you may be struggling with. It feels good to get it all out and pets are very forgiving!
- Videotape your pet doing anything and everything normal and routine, like eating, sleeping, playing, interacting with you. It's the daily routines we miss the most after our pets die.
- Make something that reminds you of your pet, like a drawing, a clay sculpture, or a needlework project.
- Have a professional portrait, sketch, or sculpture done of your pet. This can be done after the pet's death from a photograph. You can also have a photo of your pet transferred to a T-shirt, clock, button, or mug.
- Keep whiskers or a clipping of fur and place them in a cloth pouch or a locket.
- Have your pet's fur or wool spun into yarn and knit or crochet something in memory of your pet. (This only works with pets whose fur is long.)
- Keep pet tags. Place these on a key ring so you will always be carrying the memory of your special friend with you.
- Have a plaque made to honor your pet. Place it in a special place next to your pet's ashes, in the hospital where your pet was cared for or on a tree near where your pet is buried. →



(Cont.)

- Volunteer your time at a humane organization or help find homes for strays and unwanted pets.
- Plant a bush, shrub, tree, or flowers over or near the location where the pet's body or ashes are buried.
- Place the ashes of your pet in an urn and keep it indoors near a potted houseplant. If you have room indoors for a large potted tree, bury your pet's cremains in the container under the tree.
- Collect your pet's collars, tags, bowls, blankets or toys and place them in a special display in honor of your pet. You can also place your pet's ashes and sympathy cards with them.
- Send out announcements of your pet's death to those who were close to you and your pet.
- Plan a funeral, wake, or memorial service for your pet and invite others to attend.
- Write an obituary about your pet and place it in your local newspaper.
- Post a tribute to your pet on a pet memorial website.
- Create a daily ritual in honor of your pet's memory. Light a candle before each meal, say an evening prayer, place a photo in a place where you can say hello each morning.
- Place a bit of your pet's cremains in a pendant urn and wear it as a necklace near your heart.
- Make an annual donation in your pet's name to an animal-related organization or charity.
- Establish a fund in your pet's name to help other pet parents who can't afford veterinary treatment for their own pets.
- Support ongoing research regarding the illness or treatment your pet experienced.
- Seek paraprofessional training or further professional education/certification so you can help others grieve and heal through pet loss.
- Ask your veterinarian or pet crematory to make ClayPaws® prints of your pets' paws, claws or hooves after they die.

For more information, visit the Veterinary Wisdom® Resource Center at www.veterinarywisdom.com