

CREATING A MEMORIAL DAY LEGACY

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May is a wonderful month to celebrate so many things, (i.e. graduations, summer jobs, Cinco De Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and summer vacation plans.) Spring has been slow to arrive and all of us for sure are eager to start making some memories this spring and summer. Memories are created many ways, and mean different things to different people.

Memorial Day is identified as the official start to summer break for some, so taking off for an extended weekend is how many families celebrate. Others will load up their vehicle with plants and mulch, shovels and hand tools, gallons of water and will head to the graves of their loved ones and friends. These are all traditions that have formed over the years and become important in our lives because they connect us to our past.

Growing up, we would spend the day visiting cemeteries with my mother's side of the family. Grandmother had the most beautiful flower garden ever, and preferred to place her fresh cut peonies in tin foil wrapped aluminum coffee cans on the graves while the rest of us planted annuals. After several hours of decorating, there was a pull off alongside Rt 595/278 near Carbon Hill Cemetery where we would set up tables and lawn chairs and spend time sharing our meal together. Everyone brought picnic baskets full of food, and grandmother would have made her famous noodles. Fried chicken and lemon pies were also staples of our annual event. This may seem like a silly memory to some, but for me I absolutely treasured that day as a kid. A full day visiting cousins and grandparents while learning about my relatives, and I honestly believe that is when my love for genealogy began.

In keeping with the May holiday and paying your respects this month, I would encourage each of you to consider making a memorial on behalf of your loved ones. There are many ways to keep their memory alive and meaningful through a charitable gift, and naming opportunities are available at different levels that provide you with a choice. It should be the goal of your selected charity to personally work with you to identify what level reflects the life of the individual you are memorializing. If he or she lived a life giving back to others, then contributing to a charity in their memory allows them to continue being philanthropic beyond their lifetime. This Memorial Day start a new tradition by making a donation on their behalf and enable their legacy to stand out in a way that truly says "never forgotten."