OBITUARIES

THE FIRST DRAFT OF HISTORY
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OBITUARY

1730S LONDON:

DEATH NOTICES IN THE GENTLEMAN’S MAGAZINE
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OBITUARY

• TIMES OF LONDON Refined the idea over the next century and half: aristocrats and celebrities

• America adopted for not only celebrities, but “everyday” people as well
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OBITUARY

• JOURNALISTS WRITE OBITS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE
• KNOWN AS THE “SIBERIA OF THE NEWSROOM”
• FAMILIES OR FRIENDS WRITE OBITS FOR EVERYONE ELSE
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OBITUARY

• NOW MOVING OFF-SITE, TO PLACES LIKE LEGACY.COM (1,500 NEWSPAPERS USE)

• “SELFIE-OBITS” ARE ON THE RISE

HIS LIFE CREED IS...
IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO START BEEFING UP YOUR OBITUARY.
Diy1ol.com
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE OBITUARY

- OBITUARIES TELL US STORIES, A WAY OF “BRANDING” THAT PERSON’S IMAGE
HOW DO WE WRITE AN OBITUARY?

• WRITTEN LIKE A FEATURE STORY
• TOUCHES READERS THROUGH REVEALING DETAILS
• DEATH IS ONLY ONE SMALL PIECE OF THIS STORY
HOW DO WE WRITE AN OBITUARY?

• SMALL, PERSONAL DETAILS TO ADD DEPTH
• CAPTURE PERSONALITY THROUGH THE SMALL DETAILS

“SHE DANCED LIKE A TEENAGER LONG AFTER SHE WAS ONE AND NEVER MET A CHANEL POCKETBOOK SHE DIDN’T LIKE.”

“ON THE PAGE, AS IN LIFE, FISHER WAS THE MASTER OF CALLING OUR NONSENSE – EVEN HER OWN.”
STRUCTURE

- HOOK
- RELEVANT DETAILS OF DEATH
- MAJOR DETAILS OF LIFE (ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SCANDALS, ETC)
- INCORPORATE SMALL, INTIMATE DETAILS THROUGHOUT
- BOLT GRAF (WHY THIS PERSON MATTERED) TOWARD END
- CLOSURE
HOW WILL YOUR STORY END?

• WHAT WOULD THE OPENING LINE TO YOUR OWN OBITUARY BE?
• WHAT SMALL, INTIMATE DETAILS WOULD YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR OWN OBIT?
• WHAT WOULD THE BOLT GRAF BE FOR YOUR OWN OBIT?