

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

The Unregulated World of Pet Cremation

~Sheri-lyn Shepler



- It was a sickening moment when Rob Lauver realized that his beloved dogs, Brandy and Keasha, had been sent to a "glue factory" after a veterinarian had euthanized them.

Calling himself "naive and trusting," Lauver had assumed his Labrador Retriever and White German Shepherd - which had suffered from old age and cancer, respectively - had been cremated with the dignity befitting their status as Lauver family members.

Instead, their remains were cooked down to be used as fertilizer or animal feed. The revulsion Lauver felt when he learned their actual fate propelled him on a 13-year crusade to warn consumers of the fraud that he says permeates the \$3-billion, largely unregulated industry.

"I was horrified to know that this was the final end for my loyal companions. The current state of the pet cremation and burial industry is ... wrought with misrepresentation of services and exploitation of grieving pet owners."

- A remote corner of southwest Virginia, where 150 dog carcasses and remains were found dumped by the side of a rural road. The County health department inspector then found another two dozen carcasses inside the animal cremation facility waiting to be dumped, not cremated as promised to the pets families.

- Kathy Bethea paid \$125 for the cremation of her dog. She was supposed to receive the ashes, but never did, and is upset that her pet came to the end it did.

"She was not my dog. She was my baby," Bethea told her local newspaper.

- A family is distraught after their beloved pet's body was found dumped in a field.

Border Collie, Bournville was put down after he developed cancerous lumps on his head.

His ashes were passed back to the family after cremation - but days later, his owner was told the body of his pet had been found in a field and identified by his microchip.

Unfortunately, the pet cremation and cemetery industry has attracted some unscrupulous outfits that give a bad name to the honest proprietors.

One of the biggest scams is charging customers for what they think is a one-animal-at-a-time cremation, only to burn multiple carcasses together and indiscriminately divvy up the ashes to owners afterwards. Another unfortunate scam is paying customers receiving the ashes of their family friend and finding out the ashes are of some other burned item. Their pet? Left behind at the funeral home in a decomposed state as found recently at the R.D. Pyke Funeral Home in Henryville, Indiana.

Such abuse could be avoided if there was a standardized vocabulary for the services offered by pet crematories.

Now, shady operators and some veterinarians play semantic games by using misleading descriptions of the services they provide to fool customers. A cremation advertised as "private" may imply each pet is burned separately, but that is not necessarily the case, even though the owner is billed a premium rate.

So what do you do? How can you be certain your pet or your family doesn't fall prey to these disgustingly cruel thoughtless actions or lack there of?

Easy. Use a reputable and proven memorial service facility like **Pet Angel Memorial Centers** where you'll hear testimonials like this one time and time again:

"It was from the 1st moment when the phone was answered - I felt I was understood in exactly how much I loved my dog. And I knew from the voice on the other end that she would be well taken care of and that they ALL really cared."
- Deb Anderson



The great part about Pet Angel Memorial Centers is the fact that you can drop in at anytime and take a tour of the facilities as well as the actual equipment used in your pets cremation. You can even opt to witness your pets cremation in a private viewing room if you choose. There are a number of things that Pet Angel offers that differs and completely stands out from the competition...if you want to call it that.

Let me give you some background on how I came to know and respect Pet Angel Memorial Centers.

I remember my beloved dog, Sequoyah, a Timberwolf/White German Shepherd mix that was the absolute love of my life. He meant more to me than anything ever had at that point and saying goodbye to him was the hardest thing I ever had to do, but he was an old, sick doggie that could no longer walk on his own. Being a very large boy, I had to call the veterinarian to personally come to the house to perform the procedure that would physically take him from me. Needless to say, I was hysterical. Being ignorant to the whole process and too upset to ask any type of logical questions, I sat on the floor, next to my angel and cried over him, assuring him everything would be ok. I know now that it would not. Once his beautiful eyes that had gazed at me with so much love were closed for the last time, I was left with the emptiness the size of the Grand Canyon in my heart. I was a mess. "Now what?", I thought. He was gone and this 140lb beast was lying lifeless in the middle of my living room. At that point, the vet asked me what my wishes were for his remains. I had no idea. "What were my options?", I asked. He told me I had a choice of cremation, which at the time I could never have afforded, or burial in a very nice plot with other pets. He made it sound so appealing, let me tell you. As if he would be forever at play with other dogs like him. I chose that option, it seemed nice at the time. He then went out to his truck, brought in a black plastic bag and asked me to help him stuff my best friend into it, tie it up and carry



be sorry for the respect he deserved but never received after his years of unconditional love and loyal companionship.

Fast forward 12 years. My findings have become a very serious and brutal truth to take in. I now know where Sequoyah was placed...well, dumped. I'm sure he was thrown into a mass pit of dead animals - other peoples pets or possibly sold off to various companies to be used for various disgusting things. Regardless, it's absolutely awful and I want everyone to know what I didn't give myself the chance to discover years ago.

I met with **Pet Angel Memorial Center** in Pinellas Park, Florida for a tour of the facility and to gain information about procedures for my future pet loss as I have 4 dogs at home, 1 being 16 years old. I was amazed, enlightened, surprised and impressed. I felt so at ease and strangely able to talk about my experience with Sequoyah's death for the first time. I found myself weeping uncontrollably while absorbing the information now in front of me that I was so

blindly kept from in the past. The incredible and caring staff took me through a charming and comfortable chapel where friends, family and pets can all gather together to grieve, laugh, love and say their final goodbyes to your furry loved one. But, that's



him out and drop him into the back of his truck full of equipment of some sort. I was sick and heartbroken. I wrote him a check and I said goodbye. I have been plagued for years as to the final resting place of my baby, but I will never know. I will always wonder and be sorry for the respect he never received after his years of

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- Cremation Services
- Memorial Service Options
- 24-Hour Assistance
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- Unique Remembrance Items

Honor your pet for the life you shared - for more information, contact **Pet Angel Memorial Center[®]**.

727-548-1456
www.petangelmemorialcenter.com



not at all the end of the wonderful things Pet Angel offers to you and your family. Here are some of the things they offer.

Celebration of Life Memorial Services can include:

- Use of the facility for family time
- A personalized service designed specifically for you, your friends, and the special relationship that you shared with your pet
- Use of the Pet Angel Chapel or at a place special to you and your family
- Service Folders for those in attendance
- 20 Personalized Cards
- A plentiful choice of urns, jewelry and photo keepsakes, art, books, figurines and so much more to choose from
- Grief management tools for you and your family
- Special information for the children in your pet's life
- An opportunity to share in special holiday programs throughout the year, in remembrance of your animal angel
- A pet-friendly environment that welcomes all animals.
- "Service after the service" - A member of the Pet Angel staff will follow up with you periodically to determine any other grief support that you might desire.
- Outreach support for you and your circle of friends in seminars to guide your group on options available for a pet's death and the grief process.

- Prearrangement programs available for advance preparation
- Private pet pick-up from your home by a compassionate Pet Angel staff member and carefully wrapped in a blanket with dignity, for placement in a small casket during transport to the Memorial Center.

Private Pet Cremation Services

You may not be certain what you want to do with the body of your loved one. By choosing cremation services, you have several options when the time arrives, all of which Pet Angel will assist you with.

- Keep them in an urn for remembrance
- Scatter the ashes in a meaningful location
- Lay them to rest in a cemetery plot

Pet Angel's cremation service features a unique **Authenticated Memorial** process that will ensure the private cremation of your beloved pet. The special **Pet Angel Stainless Steel Tag** accompanies your pet throughout the removal and cremation process, and ensures your pet receives the individualized and private service you desire and they deserve, and it all is done **ON-SITE!** (most facilities take your pet off-site to a place you're not allowed to visit. Hmmm!)

Some of the Pet Angel families prefer to bury their pet's body in a cemetery or another location. Regardless of where your pet's final resting place may be, Pet Angel will happily assist you and guide you through the entire process.

You would never think to leave any deceased human member of your family at the doctor's office or hospital, so take the time to provide decent after death care for the one member of the family that has given you unconditional love, "with no strings attached".

Here is a guide to assist pet owners in choosing after-death care options for their pets

THE TWO MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN THE AFTER-DEATH CARE OF PET ANIMALS ARE:

1. Why wasn't I given other options besides clinic disposal; ie. animal control disposal, landfill, rendering?

2. How can I be sure I am getting my pet and only my pet's cremains returned to me if I choose cremation?

The information provided here should be helpful in answering those questions and provide you with the peace of mind you deserve.

In most states there are few, if any, regulations or laws covering the disposition of pet animal bodies. IT IS THE PET OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY to arrange for after death care of their pets.

Many veterinarians act as middlemen contracting animal body disposal service to companies such as; rendering, animal control or landfill operators. Many veterinarians are now using pet crematories cremation services for the removal of deceased animals from their clinics. It is up to YOU, THE PET OWNER, to decide if the service used by your vet is acceptable to YOU. If not, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND RIGHT

to take your pet, or have your pet handled by someone of your choosing. Find out who your veterinarian is using for cremation and for you and your pets sake, do your homework and ask the right questions. Don't find out later that you made a mistake that will forever haunt you.



BELOW ARE 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PERSON WHO IS OFFERING YOU AFTER DEATH CARE FOR YOUR PET. DO NOT ACCEPT VAGUE ANSWERS!

1. Does your service provide full after death care including; full service cemetery, on site cremations, caskets, urns, and memorials?
2. May I inspect the facilities where my pet's after care will be performed?
3. Can you guarantee that my pet will be cremated?
4. If I choose and pay for a private cremation, will my pet be the only one cremated during the cycle and will I receive a written guarantee that states such?
5. Can my pet's cremains be returned to me within 72 hours or sooner?

6. May I be present before and during my pet's private cremation?

7. If I choose a group cremation, can I be guaranteed my pet will not end up in a landfill or at a rendering or fertilizer plant?

8. If my pet is group cremated, what happens to the cremains?

9. If my pet's cremains are scattered may I visit the location?

10. If the service you are using cannot guarantee in writing all or any service they offer, why should I trust my pet's after care to you?

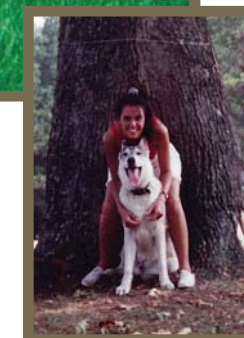
Throughout the U.S. there are many Pet Cemeteries and Crematories offering their services to the general public. Use this guide to check them out and check them out thoroughly! Why not recommend Pet Angel

Memorial Center to your vet and guarantee you and all the patients at his or her office receive the dignity and respect that all family members deserve. Ask your friends if they know what happens to their pets once they pass. If they don't know, enlighten them. I wish someone had told me.

Source: petrest.com



My Boy, Sequoyah



Me & "Quoy" back in the early days!

The loss of your family pet is, and will be, a traumatic experience. But it's also one event in the long life of joy, compassion, and companionship you and your family shared with your pet over the years.

Specializing solely in pet death care, Pet Angel treats you and your pet with the compassion and respect any family should be given upon the death of a very special member of the family.

Love Never LeavesSM

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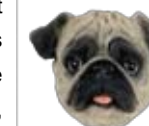
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