1. THE FIRST DECISION

The range of design in memorial art is unlimited. Books, catalogues, pamphlets, photographs, drawings and the vast supply of internet websites present a bewildering source of ideas and suggestions. The purchaser rarely has any previous experience to guide them, nor, is he versed in memorial art - a specialized branch of architectural design. The purchaser, quite frequently, becomes confused by the conflict of opinions among family members and suggestions made by well-meaning friends.

Obviously, it is not wise to make a hasty selection just to satisfy the moment. The results may be quite disappointing. Moreover, once the memorial is erected it will remain forever, not only as a tribute to the commemorated but, also, as a symbol of the culture and good taste of those who selected the design.

Sensible to these facts, mindful of the permanent importance of one's decision and confronted by an unbounded source of ideas and suggestions, the purchaser is prompted to ask: What is the logical procedure to follow in selecting an appropriate memorial?

THE METHOD

The solution of the problem lies in the fact that the millions of memorials, ancient and modern, may be grouped into three classes; Mausoleums, Monuments, and Memorials.

Instead of attempting to consider the host of isolated or unclassified examples, a purchaser should first select one of the above classes, then, look at the options within the particular class. When making that selection, there are three factors, or limitations, which largely govern one's choice: the Site, Appropriation and Requirements. The site may create limitations due to elevation of the landscape or, perhaps, trees, access and other various obstacles. The appropriation relates to the amount of room allotted for the memorial. The requirements would pertain to a cemetery that would have restrictions as to size and material being used.

According to function, all cemetery Memorials may be grouped in three major classifications: Mausoleums, Monuments, and the so-called Individual Memorials such as markers, headstones and other forms designed to mark the individual grave as distinct from the family, or, central Monument. By selecting one of these major groups first, we largely reduce the range of choice at the beginning. Let us, therefore, consider the merits of each in proper sequence.
2. **MAUSOLEUM or MONUMENT?**

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the function of the Mausoleum. Its purpose is to eliminate the ordeal of in-ground interment. Suffice it to say that where the element of cost is not a burden, the Mausoleum is an investment in peace of mind. Properly constructed, it offers a permanent and private place of interment for the family, clean, dry and sanitary. It is at once a Memorial and a utility, rich in possibilities for architectural expression, however modest it may be in scale. While a philosophical attitude toward death prevails in America today, nevertheless the sense of security and protection provided by the Mausoleum appeals to an ever increasing public.

In deciding between a Mausoleum and a Monument, the element of cost is a controlling factor in most cases. Needless to say, it is important to remember that a cheap and unsubstantial Mausoleum defeats the very purpose for which it is erected; and it is therefore a shameful waste of money and a menace to the cemetery. However inexpensive the building may be, it is of extreme importance to not cut any corners in design, materials, workmanship and construction.

Granite Mausoleums vary in cost from around $14,000.00 and upward for the building. Such is the range in design, the variety and finish of materials, the types of construction, location and other variable factors that it is impracticable to establish any minimum total investment one would have. A two crypt Mausoleum can be so designed that it will far exceed the cost of a building accommodating twenty. However, there are small Mausoleums which may be erected for considerably less than one might imagine.

In contrast to the cost of Mausoleums, the Monument, with a price starting below $1000.00, may be more in line with budget requirements; however, one would have in-ground interment when using a Monument.

3. **MONUMENT or INDIVIDUAL MEMORIAL?**

The term Individual Memorials refers to memorials designed to mark the individual graves as distinct from the central or, family Monument. The distinction is important because it is here that many unhappy mistakes are made.

Contemporary practice in both cemetery landscaping and memorial design gives preference to the use of a central Monument surrounded by flat markers at individual graves. This is a departure from the old custom of erecting important headstones and Monuments at each grave. In most modern cemeteries the regulations now restrict the size of Individual Memorials in the commendable effort to avoid that congestion of stonework which, in the past, made "God's Acre" a depressing stone-yard.

While sorrow and sentiment often prompt the placing of an important Individual Memorial, it should be remembered that once the precedent is established on a lot, it will invariably be followed in unsightly
accumulation of stone-work. Therefore, it is more appealing to have a single central Monument with low and inconspicuous markers of uniform design at the graves. This plan is not only more economical in the end, but, is decidedly more dignified and impressive in its uniformity and harmony. Still, another exception applies to plots where only two or three interments are ever to be made. Here the Individual Memorial may be used without danger of excessive stone-work.

In conclusion, the dominant point to remember in deciding between the use of Individual Memorials and a central Monument, is the ultimate appearance of the plot when all interments shall have been made.

4. **WHAT TYPE of MEMORIAL**

Assuming that the problem narrows down to the selection of a central, or, family Monument, the next step is to determine what type of Monument is best adapted to the site and the appropriation.

It will be recalled that all cemetery Memorials, of whatsoever description, period or source, may be classified into some 7 groups, or types. In considering these types, instead of the innumerable unclassified designs, we reduce the range of choice without confusion and uncertainty.

5. **THE GENERAL TYPES of CEMETERY MEMORIALS**

The following is a list containing the general types of Memorials used today:

- Tablets
- Monoliths
- Crosses, Cross Tablets
- Formal Garden Themes (sundials, bird baths, etc)
- Pedestal Monuments, etc
- Civic and Military Memorials
- Sculpted Memorials

There are countless examples of the above found in cemeteries, some large and small of each type. Bear in mind, you may not find the precise style of the type you may want, or, may appeal to you. An experienced memorialist can design for you a more accurate rendering of the memorial you would want.
6. FACTORS CONTROLLING CHOICE OF TYPE

As we have observed in selecting the type of memorial best adapted to the site and the amount to be expended, there are certain factors, or "Limitations", which control an intelligent choice.

Important among these considerations are the size and location of lot, number of interments to be made, character of Monuments in the vicinity, cemetery regulations governing the size and position of the Monument. In addition, such factors as personal taste, religion (which may, for example, dictate a Cross) and some particular sentiment or association that may suggest an historic type of Memorial, or some dominant symbolism may enter into the design. Select the type of monument that is best suited to the elements of design you want to be included.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR SELECTING THE TYPE OF MEMORIAL

A. Give preference to the type that offers a contrast to Monuments in the vicinity. For example, if the memorials on adjacent lots are vertical in appearance, you might consider adopting some horizontal form to give individuality and contrast.

B. Avoid types that are prevalent in the cemetery. For example, where there are many conventional tablet forms - a condition common to most cemeteries - it may be more desirable to depart from repetition of others and adopt some of the unusual themes such as the monolith, churchyard cross, garden bench and the memorial vase to name a few examples.

C. Visibility of the monument must be considered. Where a lot is situated well back from the roadway, with other Monuments obscuring the view, it is desirable to adopt a type that offers either sufficient height or length to be visible from the road.

D. On hillside lots, or wherever there is a noticeable grade, it is important to avoid lengthy bases. The monolith offers an ideal solution for such lots by eliminating the base altogether, thus avoiding the awkward effect of a high base on the low side of the lot and a buried base on the high side.

E. Investigate any cemetery rules governing the size and location of the Monuments on the lot. These rules are an important protection to you and to all lot owners. They deserve to be respected in the letter and spirit. The Superintendent will furnish you with a diagram showing the location of present and future interments, indicating the area reserved for a Monument.

F. Do not duplicate a Monument - particularly a Monument in the same cemetery. Imitation betrays lack of individuality and it is unfair to those who placed the original memorial. If some memorial in the cemetery appeals to you in design, or for some sentimental reason, use it as a basis for adaptation, not duplication.
G. When the Monument is to be placed in the center of a lot it is desirable to adopt some form that will not screen, obscure or minimize the importance of graves in the rear half of the plot.

H. Remember that architectural dignity, simplicity and individuality are the essence of good design - and economy. It costs no more, often less, to adopt a design that is architecturally beautiful in proportions and correct in detail. The memorial costing less in dollars deserves the same, if not more, study than the more costly memorials. See to it that your advisors are trained in architectural design and that they have specialized in memorial art. Remember that the memorial is a problem in design - not a commodity. Consult designers - not salespeople.