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54/07/08 Doctor in Tears After Funeral for Slain Wife

Cleveland Plain Dealer

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Doctor in Tears After Funeral for Slain Wife

BY PAT GARLING

The heavy morning rain had subsided to a drizzle at the gray-stone Knollwood Mausoleum in Mayfield Heights yesterday when Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard arrived.

Dr. Sheppard, among the last to appear before the funeral services began, was assisted from a station wagon and into a wheel chair, which was carried up the mausoleum steps into the white marble-walled chapel inside.

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Doctor in Tears After Wife's Rites

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He was wheeled down the center aisle between the rows of folding chairs. There he sat in the center of the aisle immediately before the bronze casket containing the body of his wife, Marilyn Reese Sheppard.

A floral wreath decorated the casket top. Behind stood full baskets of varied-hued gladiolus. A male relative placed one arm consolingly across the doctor's shoulders.

Huddle in Chapel

Members of the Sheppard family, stationed at the chapel doors to prevent the entry of any but family members, retired to their seats.

They had requested no music. There was only silence in the dim light of the room until the minister appeared.

The services were conducted by Rev. Alfred C. Kreke, pastor of Bay Methodist Church. The 22 mourners sat huddled at the front of the small chapel as Rev. Mr. Kreke, standing at the right of the casket, addressed them.

His voice was almost inaudible at the rear of the room, where the funeral director and his assistants stood with Police Sergt. Jay Hubach of the Bay Village police department, dressed in plain clothes.

The minister's words that occasionally reached the ears of those at the rear were of faith, of hope and of love. He recited a poem. He told of a widowed light-house keeper's wife who continued in the performance of her dead husband's duties. The message to the mourners was lost to those at the back of the room in the lowering of the minister's voice.

Handkerchiefs Appear

Not even a cough disturbed the even flow of the sermon. The soft-spoken words swept over the bowed heads. Occasionally a crumpled white handkerchief would move and a head bow lower.

The services were brief. Rev. Mr. Kreke had spoken for slightly more than 20 minutes and it was 3 p. m. The minister retired to the rear of the chapel. The mourners were left alone, the casket dominating the scene.

Shortly there was a stir. Dr.

Richard A. Sheppard, father of the bereaved husband, and Mrs. Sheppard moved to their son's side. He appeared to be in tears.

The relatives began to leave. Dr. Richard N. Sheppard, another Sheppard son, stood at the door to bid them good-by. He brought a white handkerchief to his face for a moment and returned it to his pocket.

Moments later the wheel chair was turned around. Dr. Samuel Sheppard, his neck encased in a leather collar, had tears in his eyes. He was wheeled out down the steps and assisted back into the station wagon. Relatives hesitated briefly to watch and then departed.

Site to Be Purchased

An aunt from the Reese side of the family remained behind as the funeral director and cemetery officials wheeled the casket away from the flowers and out of the chapel into a marble-lined corridor behind.

There, as the aunt watched, the casket bearing the body of Marilyn Reese Sheppard was slid into its temporary resting place in the wall. No final resting place has yet been purchased. The husband is to make the se-

lection when his health returns, it was reported.

When the mausoleum was closed it was raining again outside. The police, reporters and photographers and all the automobiles were gone.

The only immediate signs of life were the white swans drifting casually in the cemetery lagoon among the water lilies.