

# High-tech tombstones let loved ones live on, virtually

June 26 2013, by Brigitte Dusseau

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Rick Miller kneels in front of a grave and uses his cell phone to scan a small barcode on a tombstone. Within seconds, he's looking at photos and videos of a lost loved one. But that's not all.

Without leaving this vast cemetery in a suburb of Philadelphia, he can listen to the deceased's favorite music, read remembrances, write in a guest book and even share pictures and feelings on [Twitter](#) or Facebook.

Here at Sunset Memorial Park, everyone equipped with a smartphone or tablet can do the same, provided they download the proper app.

All it takes is a simple scan of a [QR code](#)—a square, black barcode stuck to the tombstone—to learn about Lance Clinton Erb, laid to rest beneath a bronze plaque engraved with the years of his birth and death—"1947-1990"—and a picture of his beloved pet Labrador.

For almost a year now, Miller and his wife Lorie—Erb's stepdaughter—have specialized in the sale of QR memorials through their "Digital Legacys" business—one of just a few to offer such a service in the United States.

Giving a grave that high-tech edge doesn't take much. All one has to do is email the couple photos, videos, documents and music linked to the departed, which they then assemble into a tribute on a secure website.

Surviving family members then get a tag with the QR code - complete

with a heavy duty, weather-resistant adhesive—in the mail.

The installation takes a mere 30 seconds.

"It's very simple," Miller told AFP. "It is a great idea for a lot of reasons, particularly for young children who have had family members that they never got to know."

Using this technology, their young daughter can become familiar with her grandfather who passed away several years ago, he said.

"She can be at the cemetery and scan and remember somebody that she never met, and be able to see that person and learn about that person."

## **Eternity for \$149.99**

If loved ones want to update their online memorial, the Millers can take care of that, too.

"People love the idea," Miller said in the grassy, peaceful setting marked by dozens of miniature US flags fluttering near the final resting places.

"It is such a great way to mix technology with the legacy of somebody, and have the ability to remember them and see them up close."

"It's a kind of lighthearted way to remember," Lorie Miller added.

"People come to the grave, talk to people, look at the pictures, and say 'I remember that wedding,' or 'I remember that suit'..."

And the price tag for this digital legacy? A lifetime subscription sells for \$149.99 and encompasses the QR code and the online memorial. A year is \$99.99.

Buyers can add a password so that only [family members](#) have access to the material.

The Millers started the project to memorialize their loved ones in a different way, but don't plan to stop there.

Since starting their business, they have received inquiries from around the United States—and even as far afield as Australia.

Some older cemeteries have an interest in the technology because they can display tags on historic graves, enabling visitors to learn about events long ago associated with those laid to rest there, according to Rick Miller.

Lorie Miller is also considering using QR codes to tell the stories of celebrities.

"People give us ideas, ask us about different possibilities," she said.

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