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- Memorial Products
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# Memorial Products

BY FINCH GROSS

*Using sublimation to create everlasting products*



Finch Gross started full-time at Condé Systems Inc. in 2020, where he continues to serve as a Sales & Marketing Specialist with a focus on social media content and new product development. He received his bachelor's

degree from the University of South Alabama in business administration. When he's not busy sublimating, Finch enjoys disc golf and playing music on his banjo.

**W**hile working Condé's Sublimation Kiosk at a recent trade show in Lafayette, Louisiana, I noticed one attendee having technical difficulties sending her image. When I asked to see the image, she showed me two separate photos of the same house.

At first, I must admit it surprised me. Why would she want to print out two pictures of the same house? Since I love stories, I simply had to ask why — and her story was one of remembrance. She explained that her father, who had passed away earlier this year, had taken impeccable care of the pictured house and the property that surrounded it.

I listened as she spoke highly of her father and all of the hard work he put into maintaining the house and yard. After he passed away, the house and yard went into disarray, causing her much sadness and anxiety. One of the photos was of the house and property after he passed, and the other was taken after she hired an entire crew to clean it up. I couldn't help but get emotional. I didn't know pictures of a house could mean so much!

I knew right then that I had to figure out how to get these images printed. Since it was going to take a little more time than usual to prepare the images, I asked her





Image courtesy of Sandy Livingston – Living Image Solutions

to come back by the end of the show, and I'd have her item ready.

With a little photo editing, I was able to combine the two photos into one so that I could transfer them onto a product for her. When she came back later that day, I eagerly handed her an 8" x 10" ChromaLuxe desktop photo panel with her images on it. She was blown away by the photo panel! Her reaction caused both of us to get emotional right there on the show floor!

I've heard similar stories at trade shows, and I am always amazed at how powerful sublimation imprinting can be. It can preserve cherished memories of late loved ones.

Sublimation imprinting is much more than taking a photo or graphic and putting it on a product. Sublimation imprinting is a method of preserving meaningful memories. When graphics and cherished photographs come together to form an item that brings tears to the customer's eyes, we know we're selling more than just a product.

### Indoor memorial products

Sublimation transfer offers a unique and heartfelt way to honor and remember our departed loved ones. The technology is capable of transferring full-color, photo-quality images onto hundreds and hundreds of specialty products ranging from jewelry to blankets to large photo panels.

The ability to add unlimited text and graphics assure that you'll be able to personalize the selected products in a way that faithfully pays tribute to the departed while also bringing joy and comfort to the remaining loved ones.

With so many choices, selecting a product may be the most difficult part. Puzzles, bookmarks, fridge magnets, and holiday



Image courtesy of Kevin Jackson – Glory to God Designs



Image courtesy of Jessica De Leon



Image courtesy of Mary Hodges



Image courtesy of Nancy Cranmer – Squirrel Squared



Image courtesy of Ja-Printing

ornaments may not pop into your head as memorial products at first, but they can actually be powerful and useful ways to keep images of loved ones close at hand. Here are a few of my favorite memorial products for indoor use...

**Christmas ornaments:** Christmas ornaments, imaged with a favorite photo and text, are a great option and can be displayed every year when the tree goes up. There's lots of single and double-sided shapes to select from and they come in a variety of base materials including metal, hardboard, FRP, natural wood, glass, acrylic, and more. These personalized tributes become cherished heirlooms, passed down through generations, ensuring that the memory of our loved one's lives on.

**Plaques:** Sublimated memorial plaques provide a dignified and lasting tribute. They can be created using materials like metal, acrylic, or wood, allowing for a wide range of design options. These plaques can feature a beautiful photograph of the departed, along with their name, dates, and a heartfelt quote.

**Blankets:** Transforming cherished photographs into sublimated blankets offers



Image courtesy of Mady-Jays – Jessica Simpson

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comfort and warmth during difficult times. These blankets can be adorned with full-color images, allowing for a striking and detailed representation of the departed. They serve as a loving reminder that our loved ones are always with us.

**Jewelry:** Sublimation allows for the creation of personalized memorial jewelry pieces such as pendants, charms, dog tags, and cuff bracelets. These can feature a photograph or an engraved message, enabling individuals to always keep their loved ones close to their hearts.

**Keepsake boxes:** Sublimated memorial keepsake boxes provide a special place to store treasured mementos such as letters, photographs, or small personal belongings of the departed. They can also be used to store the ashes of loved ones. These boxes can be customized with meaningful images and text, creating a personal and intimate memorial.

### Outdoor memorial products

As you know, some memorial products such as graveside decorations and memorial wall plaques are intended for outdoor use, posing a frequently asked question from those interested in sublimation transfer: “How long will a sublimated image last?”

If you’ve been in the sublimation world for very long, you know that UV light will cause a sublimated image to fade over time. Sublimated products left directly in the sun will fade faster than if they are in the shade.

This is where you need to be as transparent as possible with your clients and tell them upfront to help eliminate customer dissatisfaction via perceived false advertising. While most clients will understand, others may be overly cautious about outdoor memorial products. To reassure them, you could offer to replace the item if the image fades within a specific amount of time.

For memorial products with known intentions of being left in the sun (such as a gravesite or garden), consider offering your clients a product that has more temperance to UV light, such as ChromaLuxe Outdoor metal prints.

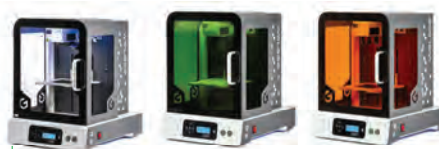
## Gantry & Galvo Lasers



LS100



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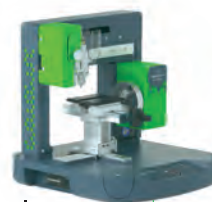


Welase Galvo Laser

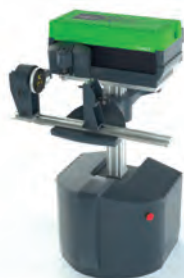
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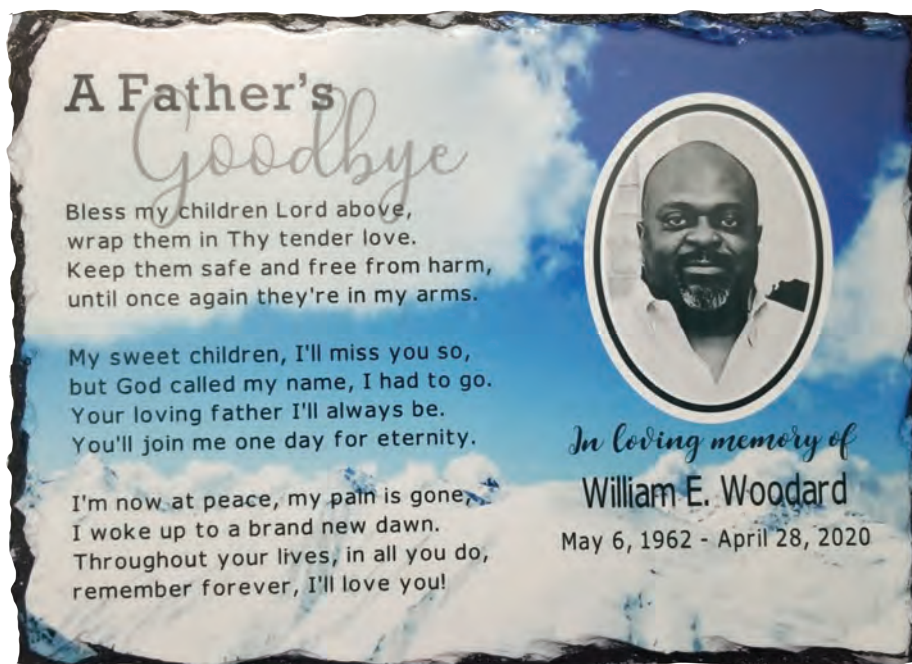


Image courtesy of Jacqueline Pitts



Image courtesy of Ashwood Boutique



Image courtesy of Ron Edelbrock - Benton-Trophy-and-Awards, Inc



Image courtesy of J. Brown



Image courtesy of Karla Wyss

Without going down a complex sublimation rabbit hole, I can simply say that ChromaLuxe Outdoor now features a five-year outdoor rating when used in conjunction with Sawgrass SubliJet-UHD inks. These metal panels also deliver scratch, graffiti, and chemically resistant finishes rivaling other decorating technologies.

**Garden stakes:** One of my favorite outdoor products due to their resistance to UV light, garden stakes are a simple way to add an image and text at a graveside, in a flower arrangement, or included in a roadside memorial.

**Garden flags:** Garden flags offer a large imprint area for including a name, photograph, and/or a heartfelt message. Some are available with double-ply fabric for the option of transferring the same image to both sides or a different design on each side. Having multiple flags produced also allows the customer to rotate them based on the time of year. An attractive wrought iron garden flagpole that fits both flag sizes is sold separately.

**Slate:** Slate (or SubliSLATE), a rock-like substrate that is hand carved and then coated for sublimation transfer, is one of my all-time personal favorite substrates due to its durability, rustic look and feel, and fantastic image quality. The beauty and diversity of slate are undeniable!

Unique and impressive, slate is offered in a variety of traditional and non-traditional shapes, including tablet, half oval, oval, rectangle, left or right contour, square, round, and a rectangle with a clock mechanism.

They are also available in your choice of a matte or gloss white sublimation coating. Most sizes come with black stands for convenient desk, mantle, or tabletop display, while others are designed for hanging.

**Design**

There are four major design variables that appear on a typical memorial product:

**1. Name** — Whether the individual being remembered is a human or an animal, getting the name right is important. For humans, asking your client how exactly they would like the name

*These personalized tributes become cherished heirlooms, passed down through generations, ensuring that the memory of our loved one's lives on.*

to be displayed is not a dumb question. Sometimes nicknames can be added in quotes.

**2. Photograph** — Getting a high-quality photo shouldn't be too difficult in this day and age. Strive to obtain the highest-quality image the person has available. Larger products may need high-resolution images to look their best.

**3. Background Image** — Having pre-made templates with graphical backgrounds will help tremendously. Try and offer only 2-3 choices for backgrounds as too many choices can make it more difficult than helpful.

**4. Text** — Whether you're helping a client make a memorial item for a Christian funeral or secular service, be ready to ask what words they would like on the memorial. Offering font choices can help as well. Ask for text that makes a defining statement, such as a poem or Bible verse.

One question we get is, "What if my client only has a printed photograph of their loved one?" In situations like this, you have some options:

1. You can scan the printed photograph and then edit in your graphics program to make it sublimation ready.

2. You can insert the printed photograph into a sublimated photo frame. This way, the printed photo can rest in the frame that's been customized with any artwork, Bible verse, or poem that they wish.

## QR codes

Another great way of preserving someone's memory is to add a QR code to a product. When scanned, it pulls up a video or image gallery of the loved one or fur baby being remembered. Some real-life examples are to take a video and create a private YouTube listing.

For an image gallery, you can take a Google image and make it a URL or use an iCloud link to share the images to the QR Code. I decided to make a memorial slate for two Golden Retrievers we lost a couple years ago and if you scan the QR code, it takes you to a video and an image gallery of some of my favorite memories with Brinkley and Sophie.

## Marketing

So, how do you get the word out that you produce memorial products? Photographing all the products you make and posting them to your Facebook and Instagram pages is a must. Also, always make sure potential clients know that you can personalize all of the products with full-color text, photos, and background patterns and that you can provide quick turnaround.

Generally, all memorial products can be divided into two categories people and animals. Knowing this, you can target your approach respectively towards one of the two or both. Some businesses that you can approach to market your products are somewhat obvious, like funeral homes and pet groomers. Some others, such as churches and military veterans' organizations, are also looking for businesses to help with memorial products. Every year for Easter and Christmas, Christians around the United States memorialize lost loved ones by offering the congregation poinsettias during Christmas and lilies during Lent.

If you're unfamiliar, you can submit the name of a lost loved one, and the church will provide the flowers and card with the

loved one's name. You could approach the florist or the church and offer them a sample garden stake with a name and Bible verse; this provides a great opportunity to add value. Once the flowers have withered, there is still a personalized item that the family can have.

## Emotional impact

Sublimated memorial products hold a profound emotional impact on those who receive them. They serve as tangible reminders of the love and memories shared with the departed, providing comfort and a sense of connection.

These personalized tributes become cherished heirlooms, passed down through generations, ensuring that the memory of our loved one's lives on. Whether it's a plaque, blanket, piece of jewelry, or a keepsake box, sublimated memorial products encapsulate cherished memories and ensure that the legacy of our loved ones endures.

Whether you've been producing memorial and/or remembrance products for years or you're just starting out, I hope this article will inspire your creativity and provide insight into the sublimation memorial products industry. **GP**



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