The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert is a grave marker that resembles a traditional tombstone in shape and size but is constructed of a block of transparent material having three vertical slots in which three stained glass panels are positioned. An alternative embodiment includes a stained glass panel encased in a block of transparent material with brackets attached to its bottom to facilitate mounting onto a traditional tombstone. A second alternative embodiment includes a cruciform decorative panel encased in a cruciform block of transparent material with a mounting plate attached to its bottom for mounting onto a traditional tombstone.
Fig. 1
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1960 - 2003

Fig. 3
TRANSPARENT GRAVE MARKER WITH DECORATIVE PANEL INSERT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to grave markers and, more particularly, to a grave marker constructed of a block of transparent material with a translucent decorative panel positioned vertically within the block.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] A notable drawback of conventional tombstones and other grave markers is the high cost of materials and labor. Conventional tombstones and other grave markers are typically formed from granite by cutting, carving, and then polishing the stone. But the cost of raw granite and the skilled labor required to form it is significant. Additionally, when erected in a cemetery, a conventional tombstone or grave marker appears monotone in color and typically presents a challenge for vandals who are thrilled by pushing over something that projects immobility and permanency.

[0005] Given the drawbacks of conventional tombstones, a tombstone or grave marker is desired that is less expensive to produce, more colorful in appearance and less inviting of vandalism.

[0006] U.S. Des. Pat. No. 191,248 issued Aug. 29, 1961 to J. Giolareta; and U.S. Des. Pat. No. 259,369 and U.S. Pat. No. 4,304,076 issued, respectively, May 26, 1981 and Dec. 8, 1981 to J. Splendor show grave markers that appear to be transparent blocks with cut flowers or other items permanently encased therein. However, because the contents of each grave marker cannot be removed after the grave marker is manufactured, the grave markers lack versatility.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 1,274,809 issued Aug. 6, 1918 to J. M. Storm, Jr.; U.S. Pat. No. 1,982,432 issued Jun. 10, 1933 to R. A. Hull and U.S. Pat. No. 5,546,710 issued Aug. 20, 1996 to D. J. Barry each teaches a grave marker with a recessed area covered by a window. However, like conventional grave markers, these grave markers are constructed of stone and therefore do not present an improvement in cost over conventional grave markers.

[0008] Likewise, U.S. Pat. No. 4,058,940 issued Nov. 22, 1977 to D. C. McBrayer and U.S. Pat. No. 4,227,325 issued Oct. 14, 1980 to L. Whittford teach, respectively, a stone grave marker with a protective plastic laminate and a stone grave marker with a tubular chamber for displaying photographs. Neither, however, avoids the expenses associated with conventional grave markers or provides post-manufacture versatility in terms of appearance.

[0009] Accordingly, none of the above inventions and patents, taken either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed and, thus, a grave marker solving the aforementioned problems is desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert is a grave marker that resembles a traditional tombstone in shape and size but is constructed of a block of transparent material having three vertical slots in which three stained glass panels are positioned. The invention avoids the high costs associated with grave markers constructed of natural stone while providing a more eye-pleasing colorful grave marker. Also, by not appearing as imposing and immovable as a traditional stone grave marker, the invention poses less of a challenge to vandals that seek to turn over something projecting immobility.

[0011] An alternative embodiment includes a stained glass panel encased in a block of transparent material with brackets attached to its bottom to facilitate mounting onto a traditional tombstone. A second alternative embodiment includes a cruciform decorative panel encased in a cruciform block of transparent material with a mounting plate attached to its bottom for mounting onto a traditional tombstone.

[0012] Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a grave marker that is less costly to produce than a conventional tombstone.

[0013] It is another object of the invention to provide a grave marker that is more colorful and eye-pleasing than a conventional tombstone.

[0014] It is a further object of the invention to provide a grave marker that poses less of a challenge to vandals that seek to turn over something projecting immobility and permanence.

[0015] Further, it is an object of the invention to provide improved elements and arrangements thereof for the purposes described which is inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing its intended purposes.

[0016] These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the marker shown in FIG. 1. FIG. 3 is an exploded, perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to the present invention, shown in relation to a conventional tombstone.

[0019] FIG. 4 is an exploded, perspective view of a second alternative embodiment of a transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to the present invention shown in relation to a conventional tombstone.

[0020] Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0021] The present invention is a transparent grave marker with a decorative panel insert, designated generally as 10 in the drawings, that is constructed in a manner that avoids the high costs associated with stone grave markers while providing a more colorful and eye-pleasing appearance. Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, the grave marker 10 includes a block of transparent material 20, three decorative panels 40, 42 and 44, three solar powered light assemblies 38 and a top plate 32.
The block of transparent material 20 is configured to resemble a traditional tombstone in size and shape. It 20 has an elongated rectangular base 24 from which a headpiece 22 extends vertically. The front, back and sides of the headpiece 22 are flat while its 22 top is arcuate. The headpiece 22 has three co-planar vertical slots 26, 28 and 30 which open to its 22 top.

A decorative panel 40, 42 and 44 is positioned within each of the vertical slots 26, 28 and 30, and a top plate 32 covers the top of the headpiece 22 to prevent moisture from entering the vertical slots 26, 28 and 30. Each decorative panel 40, 42 and 44 is translucent and colorful, and includes textual information, an image or both textual information and an image. The top plate 32 is secured to the headpiece 22 with screws 50.

The three solar-powered light assemblies 38 are attached to the base 24. Each light assembly 38 includes a light 34, a solar panel 36 and a battery 38 that is charged by solar-power. When natural light is absent, each light assembly 38 illuminates a corresponding decorative panel 40, 42 and 44. An on/off switch 52, allows the light assemblies to be turned off.

The grave marker 100 includes ground spikes 54 extending downward from its bottom surface to anchor it 100 into the ground.

The block of transparent material 20 is constructed of acrylic but can also be constructed of any hard, clear plastic or polymer. Each decorative panel 40, 42 and 44 is constructed of stained glass but can also be constructed of other materials including translucent plastics and polymers. The top plate 32 can be secured to the headpiece 22 by a set of two locks, with each lock securing an opposing end of the top plate 32 to the top of the headpiece 22. The light assemblies 38 can be encased within the block of transparent material 20.

By being constructed of a block of transparent material, the grave marker 10 appears less imposing than a traditional stone grave marker, and thereby poses less of a challenge to vandals seeking to knock over something projecting immobility and permanence. Each of the decorative panels 40, 42 and 44 can be removed and replaced with a replacement panel.

In an alternative embodiment 100, the grave marker is configured for mounting onto the top of a conventional tombstone T as shown in FIG. 3. The grave marker 100 includes a decorative panel 112 encased within a block of transparent material 110. The decorative panel 112 is translucent and colorful, and includes textual information and floral images. A set of mounting brackets 120 and 122 is attached to the bottom of the block to secure it to a conventional tombstone T. Each mounting bracket has an elongated main segment 130 and a vertical segment 132 and 134 extending downward from each end of the main segment 130.

This alternative embodiment 100 is used to add color to an existing traditional tombstone T. The block of transparent material 110 is constructed of acrylic but can also be constructed of any hard, clear plastic or polymer. The decorative panel 112 is constructed of stained glass but can also be constructed of other materials including translucent plastics and polymers. Although encased in the block of transparent material 110, the decorative panel 112 can also be incorporated in the block of transparent material 110 via a vertical slot.

A second alternative embodiment 200 of the grave marker, shown in FIG. 4, is also configured for mounting onto the top of a conventional tombstone T. In this embodiment 200, the grave marker includes a cruciform decorative panel 212 encased within a cruciform block of transparent material 210. The decorative panel 112 is translucent and colorful. A mounting plate 220 is attached to the bottom of the cruciform block 210 to secure the grave marker to a conventional tombstone. The mounting plate 220 is substantially flat and is dimensioned such that it extends beyond the bottom perimeter of the cruciform block 210. It has four apertures 222 through which the threaded portions of four screws 224 are inserted to thereby secure this embodiment 200 to a conventional tombstone T.

The cruciform block 210 is constructed of acrylic but can also be constructed of any hard, clear plastic or polymer. The cruciform decorative panel 212 is constructed of stained glass but can also be constructed of other materials including translucent plastics and polymers.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert, comprising:

   a block of substantially transparent material having at least one vertical slot, said at least one vertical slot adapted to receive a decorative panel; and

   at least one decorative panel.

2. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 1, further comprising a top plate and means for attaching said top plate to the top of said block of substantially transparent material.

3. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 1, further comprising at least one solar-powered light assembly wherein said at least one solar-powered light assembly illuminates said at least one decorative panel.

4. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 1, wherein said block of substantially transparent material is constructed of acrylic.

5. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 1, wherein each of said at least one decorative panel is translucent.

6. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 1, wherein each of said at least one decorative panel is constructed of stained glass.

7. A transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert, comprising:

   a decorative panel encased within a block of substantially transparent material.

8. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, wherein said block of substantially transparent material is constructed of acrylic.

9. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, wherein said decorative panel is translucent.
10. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, wherein said decorative panel is constructed of stained glass.

11. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, wherein said decorative panel is substantially rectangular.

12. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, wherein said decorative panel and said block of substantially transparent material are cruciform.

13. The transparent grave marker with decorative panel insert according to claim 7, further comprising a means for mounting said decorative panel encased within a block of substantially transparent material to the top of a conventional tombstone.

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