

Eulogy of LeAnn Christina Emry  
Memorial Service – February 9, 2010

First, I want to thank you all for coming today. We are here to pay tribute to a young woman who I believe is worth remembering.

I am here to talk about the life of LeAnn Emry. I am her father and if I get emotional, please forgive me. Some of you here never met LeAnn and know little about her life. In preparing this eulogy I thought how in a few minutes I could possibly tell you about who she was including her accomplishments, her aspirations, and her dreams. Well, I can't. I can only mention a few important moments in the life of my daughter, LeAnn.

She was born in Weiser, Idaho on March 24, 1978 as LeAnn Christina Emry. On January 29, 2003 she was murdered in a remote canyon in southern Utah. She is one of four people who were brutally killed by a serial killer over a 1 ½ year period. From January of 2003 to October of 2007 LeAnn was listed as a missing person. In 2007, however, I was notified by the FBI that she was probably a victim of a psychopath named Scott Kimball. In March of 2009 LeAnn's body was finally found in a remote canyon near the Utah/Colorado border. The FBI plans to release her remains soon. The man who killed LeAnn and the others is now serving a 70 year prison term in a maximum security penitentiary in Colorado.

This, however, does not say who LeAnn was. To begin, she spent the first five years of her life in Marsing, Idaho and two years later in Boise. In 1985 we moved to Denver, Colorado where LeAnn spent most of her life.

People said she was a beautiful baby and was a smart, energetic child. Of course as a father I could not disagree with them. Although her life ended tragically, she lived a happy childhood. In school she loved science and music. LeAnn attended Eaglecrest High School in Aurora, Colorado where she was a straight "A" student. She graduated from high school a year early. As a music lover she sang in the high school choir and performed many solos in church. Among her favorite singers were Amy Grant, Twila Paris, Michael W. Smith and Garth Brooks. LeAnn also liked helping people and upon graduation she received an award from President Clinton for her outstanding community service as a volunteer at the University of Colorado Medical Center and at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. She also was a member of the Girl Scouts of America.

After attending high school LeAnn went to Arapahoe Community College preparing for a career in physical therapy. While in college she earned straight "A's" and was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society sorority. After completing two years, however, she decided that she could help animals more than people and became a veterinarian technician at a no-kill animal shelter in Denver. However, whether it was toward humans or animals, LeAnn had a compassionate heart, especially toward those

less fortunate than herself. If she had lived today I believe her life would have benefited many people. LeAnn also loved the outdoors and camping. She was a volunteer for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science as a field worker and up to the time of her death she was an active member of the Colorado Grotto Society and was an avid caver. She loved the challenge of exploring caves in her spare time.

LeAnn also loved animals, all kinds of animals. Sometimes our home looked more like a zoo than a home. LeAnn especially loved her Dalmatian, "Shadow". She dreamed of some day owning her own animal shelter.

Although LeAnn accomplished many things during her short time on earth, I believe the highlight of her life occurred during a church retreat in 1994. It was there that she received Jesus Christ as her lord and savior. To non-Christians this may not seem important, but as a Christian, all of LeAnn's other accomplishments can not compare to this. While recently looking through LeAnn's personal bible I noticed that she had highlighted John 5:24-27. In it Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man" (New International Version). Because she received Jesus as her savior, I believe LeAnn has crossed over from death to life.

As LeAnn's father I have learned two lessons while coping with her murder. One concerns guilt. I believe a parent's greatest responsibility is to protect his or her children. If you love your children you will do everything you can to see that they are safe. When LeAnn was murdered I felt that I had failed in that responsibility. Guilt possessed me and along with it came depression. Then God helped me to realize that there are times when no matter what you do as a parent bad things can still happen to your children. When this happens you can not blame yourself. God has helped me to accept LeAnn's death and to give the burden of guilt to Jesus.

Not long ago David Roper, director of Idaho Mountain Ministries, wrote an article in the Idaho Statesman on how to cope with tragedy. He wrote: "Does God promise that we will not feel pain? Not in this life. Does he feel our pain? The Incarnation is the final, irrefutable proof that he does. We can cast our care upon him knowing that our sufferings matter to him, that he cares. Sometimes that's all we need to know. There is great relief in laying our burden down, even briefly, in the presence of someone who understands and cares"

LeAnn's murder has also taught me the lesson of forgiveness. When I learned the name of the man who murdered LeAnn and how he killed her in a brutal, degrading

manner I hated that man. He is a psychopath who kills without remorse and I wanted revenge. This is a normal reaction when someone hurts those you love.

But God kept telling me that I can not hate this man for hatred and resentment will not affect him or his actions, but it will hurt my relationship with God. This hate would eventually destroy my soul. I still have moments of sadness for what happened to LeAnn because I will always miss her, but God has given me the strength to forgive the man who caused this grief.

I pray that the perfect peace and happiness that LeAnn did not find on earth she has now found in paradise in the loving arms of Jesus.

Howard L. Emory