

She Had The Final Word

For anyone who knew Emily Curtis well has at times encountered her fierce, stubborn determination get get things done **HER WAY!!!** Every band show, choir song, organ piece, musical scene everything down to the minutest detail had to meet with her demands. She was the teacher that you either loved or hated but always respected. Her devotion to family, country, students, everyone she touched was stronger than most; very few could match her will and strength. This profound quality showed in true fashion in the memorial service that she orchestrated herself.

The prelude music was traditional Ma. From the religious to the patriotic to musical theatre to CHRISTMAS? was all there. You heard correctly... Christmas. The woman had Christmas trees in every room of her house every year... yes, even the bathroom. "Silent Night" closed every holiday concert she ever directed. The choir (be it high school, junior high, or elementary) stood in the darkened auditorium with lighted candles and sang all three verses alternating from English lyrics to the traditional German. I also heard "O, Holy Night."

The Broadway pieces also were typical. "You'll Never Walk Alone" from Carousel would fit most funerals and is a regular piece in many church hymnals. I also heard "Edelweiss" from The Sound of Music which was the last lyric that Oscar Hammerstein II wrote. I was half expecting to hear the guitar opening the overture of Jesus Christ Superstar, but must have come in late.

On to the service itself. I'm sure that Emily chose each reading herself. However, the point that drove the whole thing home was Amanda's "Time of Remembrance." Her mother asked her to deliver it.. they did everything together. At the end of her delivery, Amanda took out a micro-cassette

player and pushed "Play." then, Emily's voice filled the church as she told of her love of family, country, and large support group. She ever joked about her need to have the final word. She never gave up her battle with leukemia. The doctors and nurses at the James Center on the OSU campus were all amazed at her fortitude. They dubbed her either "princess" or "general." They knew her well, too. Unfortunately, the disease finally defeated her.

The music played during the service was also quite unusual for most... but not for Ma's. A violinist played "Carmen Ohio" (the Ohio State alma mater). Although she was a graduate of Miami University of Ohio, Emily was a traditional Buckeye... she bled Scarlet and Grey.

Following the internment service, a large number of people returned to the church to celebrate and remember Emily. Teachers... remarkably who found subs for the day (probably 15 total), family, friends shared some personal memories. My mother told me that we had until 1.45 because she had to get back to drive the school bus. I can honestly say that I am a stronger person because my life has been touched by Emily and her typical lunch of fat-free pringles or honey mustard pretzels and her can of Diet Coke (I would not want to be around her if she did not have her can of Diet Coke). So many great, profound, life-affirming memories that will last forever. **THANK YOU MA, I LOVE YOU...SON2.**