

In Memory of Tanya – Dave Hogan – March 18, 2006

When your personality leans heavily toward the introverted side of the personality spectrum, as most people do in the line of work that Tanya and I pursued, you tend to avoid speaking in front of people under uncomfortable circumstances. Today is about as uncomfortable as it gets. However, when I first thought I couldn't say anything at Tanya's memorial, I realized, that when I hope to see Tanya in heaven some day she might ask me: "Hey hoogie, how come you had nothing to say at my memorial". Rather than add to the list of things that Tanya could harass me about for eternity, I decided I had better say something.

As I just shared, Tanya rarely called me Dave, to her I was hoogie, hoogareeno or when she was more formal, "Mr. Hoogie. Or else my computer login "djh", or later our running joke "djh-pfh". Tanya was ttv or ttv-pfh. pfh stood for person face head, a long running joke of partially forgotten origin we had that reminded each of us how many things we had talked and laughed about over the years.

We both enjoyed endlessly teasing each other over things we had said or done. I first met Tanya on her first day at work in the summer of 1983. It was near the end of a long day for her in which she had been introduced to about 50 people on the project already and my office was one of her last stops. When we later became good friends she asked me my first impression of her that day and I told her that she looked pretty bored by all the introductions. She would never let me forget it and tried to tell me that I had actually said that she looked boring. When we were office mates Tanya once asked me what language I took in high school and college, I told her I took French. She then said to me, "Oh I didn't think you were the type". I asked what type is it that takes French, she said, "well ... cultured". That started the running joke of how she said I wasn't cultured. Tanya was probably right, but it was still great fun to tease her about it.

Tanya loved to tease me about the facial reaction our department head, Jacque, had when he first saw one of my early attempts to grow a beard. And she liked to remind me of the time our 6 foot 5 boss's eyes peered over the poster on our office door right as I was instructing Tanya how to shoot strung together rubber bands. And Tanya enjoyed reminiscing about our long ago lunch time Othello battles played against each other on the computer from opposite corners of our office and how people could sense the tension in the air as they walked in. And perhaps the most memorable assignment either of us had in our careers was, along with Nisar Yakoob, being members of the User Defined Reports Team on EADAS.

Tanya knew Micki's and my children and enjoyed watching them grow up. She would bring them presents every Christmas when she came over to exchange gifts. I think for 10 years or so running Tanya gave me something related to the Titanic. Every year when our now 21 year old son Alex would celebrate a birthday, she would always remind me of the design review that I was supposed to chair the day Alex was born, and how she chaired the review instead. We could hardly believe that day had been that long ago.

Tanya would often come over to our house to watch TV with Micki and I. Micki and Tanya loved to watch the Olympics together. Especially the opening ceremonies. Lately we had been watching Desperate Housewives and Gray's Anatomy on Sunday nights. I would often make Micki and Tanya tea. Tanya liked her tea decaffeinated and unsweetened. When I would bring the tea down to Tanya and Micki I would usually find them sitting together in the love seat in the TV room in the basement having a grand old time sometimes comparing notes and swapping stories about things that I did at work and at home and playfully picking on me about them. At the end of the evening in the winter, if it was very cold, sometimes Tanya would start her car to warm it up, come back in and hug Micki and I good bye, and delight talk of getting into her car or her home that was "nice and toasty warm".

Many of you know that Tanya loved cats. But it wasn't until just a few years ago that Tanya had any cats at her home on Mirandy Place. Inadvertently I had a part in her acquiring her first cat. We were walking out to our cars in the Lucent parking lot one evening and the conversation went something like this: (Tanya saying) Did you hear that? (Dave) No.... what. (Tanya) It sounded like a cat. (Dave) It sounded like a bird. (Tanya) No it sounded like a cat. Then she then began looking under cars and found this cold, wet, hungry, skinny gray homeless kitten. Tanya couldn't bear to leave the poor little thing in the parking lot. Before I knew it the kitten was in my van, since it was bigger than her car, and Tanya was following me to my house to get a pet carrier and some other kitty supplies we weren't using. Soon after that she adopted a second cat to be Tux's daytime companion while Tanya was at work.

We consoled each other over disappointments that occurred over the years at work, and helped each other realize that those setbacks were only temporary and we still had our friends.

There is nothing that can be said to take away our pain today, there is a time to mourn and losing a close friend or loved one is going to hurt deeply and for a very long time, even if we believe we will see them again one day in heaven.

However, we need to try to view life as a precious gift from God, no matter how short or how long, it is still an undeserved gift from our Creator. For those of us from a Judeo-Christian background, the book of Genesis tells us that our present world situation is a second chance that God provided to us after our ancestors rebelled against our creator and provider. For those of us from a Christian background we believe that God provided the fulfillment of that second chance to bring us fully back to him, in his son, Jesus Christ. In the words of Christ's converted follower the Apostle Paul, he wrote in his letter to the early Roman Church, summing up the salvation message with: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved".

I don't know everything that was in Tanya's heart, but I do know that Tanya was a woman of integrity. She was a class act from everything I know of her over 22 years, through good times and some very hard times.

There is a verse of scripture that reminded me a bit of Tanya's life, especially the last few years. When Jesus told his followers: "No one has greater love than this than that he lay down his life for his friends", while in context Jesus was foreshadowing his own sacrifice for us, so that we could be saved, and later his disciples martyrdom for him, it also reminded me of Tanya's love and service to her parents. Tanya poured herself out over the last few years for both her mother and her father. Even as her own health was failing she drove back and forth from Reynoldsburg to Huber Heights taking her parents to Doctors and clinics and looking after their other needs as well. Doing this at night, on weekends or taking vacation time from work to help her parents. She continually did this until finally her own health also gave in and she needed the support of others to try to get her help as well.

None of us know the mind of God, to know yet why he allowed this to happen now to Tanya at only 45 years old. But in spite of our time with Tanya being cut so painfully and abruptly short, we still can at least someday try to thank God for the privilege of having had Tanya in our lives, and perhaps maybe also take time to stop and think about what is most important in this brief stop on earth and use our time to direct our love and our passion where it matters most in our precious few days on earth.