

July 2, 2000

236 6th St.  
Weyburn, Sask.  
S4H 2N8

Prime Minister Jean Chretien  
House of Commons  
Parliament Hill  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

**RE: THE DEATH OF MY FATHER AS A RESULT OF CANADA'S BIASED  
AND ANTI-FAMILY COURT SYSTEM**

I am the 14-year-old daughter of Darrin White, the father who recently took his life in British Columbia as a result of the frustration and hopelessness caused in dealing with Canada's family justice system. Although the justice system was not 100 percent the cause of his death, based on what I and members of my family have seen, it was the biggest factor. My father took his life mostly in part because of the injustices being perpetrated against him by what many Canadians say is a biased and morally corrupt Canadian family justice system. Our family justice system seems to allow good fathers to be destroyed while it allows vindictive and revengeful mothers to rule over the courts.

Prior to my father's death, he told me of the anguish he was going through trying to see his children. He told me of the abuse that his wife subjected him to. She did not want him to have a relationship even with me, his own daughter, because she was jealous. He told me of the frustration in dealing with the courts and the lawyers. He told me how the court did nothing except put further barriers to him seeing his children.

Now, I too, am being blocked by my step mother from making contact with my own brothers and sisters who live with my father's second wife. I am up against the same barrier that my father faced when he tried to contact his own children before his death. It is very upsetting to be denied access to members of your own family. Keeping children from seeing their parent and other family members is child abuse. It is criminal and it should not be tolerated. Yet, it seems our justice system seems all too tolerant of mothers who do this everyday. While parents are forced to go to courts just to see their children, the lawyers get rich of the misery of the children and families who lives they destroy in family court. Maybe if our courts showed some backbone and stood up against these mothers who are abusing their children that maybe the problem would begin to correct itself.

As a young Canadian I can only say that I am utterly ashamed to see how the country I call Canada treats fathers in its courts. It is a disgrace! I know my father was a good man and a good father. He did not deserve to be pushed over the edge as he was. He did not deserve to be kept from seeing his children. He obviously reached a point where he could see that justice was beyond his reach and for reasons that only God will know, decided that taking his life was the only way to end his suffering.

From what I have learned about the family justice system in this country, Canada is not the home of the proud and the free. In my view, Canada has become a safe haven for corrupt lawyers and biased

judges who think nothing about the lives of the children and parents they destroy every day in our family courts.

I have learned that Canada's Justice Minister, Anne McLellan, has been stalling legislation about shared parenting which is intended to prevent the kind of tragedy that has been forced upon my family. I understand that a special committee recommended that the justice department should promote a concept called shared parenting. If shared parenting had been in place before my father took his life and if our system of justice guaranteed the rights of children to see their parents, I have no doubt in my mind that my loving father would be alive today. All he wanted was to see his children, but it seems that our justice system would not give him that.

For this, the Justice Minister should resign. Maybe someone with children and with some knowledge of the problems facing families in our courts today would make a better Minister. What kind of justice can families expect from a Ministry headed by a person without children and in addition, a lawyer? Without children, how can the Justice Minister even begin to understand what it is like to love children and to appreciate the importance that parents play in the lives of their children.

It's time for this country to start waking up to what's going on in our family courts and its time that something get done about it.

Although I am only 14 years of age, I too will join the ranks of those who are fighting this evil system of justice. This is not the kind of Canada I or other Canadians want to see. This country's justice system has robbed me of one of the most precious gifts in my life, my father. I will not let his death be in vain.

Things need to change for it seems that all fathers in family courts are being put through this same thing. We need to change things now. Too many kids are going without a father because of the injustice in our family courts. Too many kids are being hurt. I may be 14, but I know what is right and wrong. There are good and bad mothers and fathers but it seems that most fathers are considered bad by our family court system and this is wrong. Please don't let my Dad's death be in vain. Children have the right to the love of BOTH of their parents, both moms and dads. The ONLY reason why a child should not be able to see a parent is when there is PROVEN abuse, not allegations.

I would very much like to hear what your perspective as a Member of Parliament is on this problem. I would like you to tell me what you intend to do to fix this problem. One thing you can do for me is to ask that the Minister of Justice resign. As the Minister of Justice, she should be held accountable for the dismal failure of our family justice system and its destruction of children and their families.

In memory of my loving father,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashlee A-D Barnett-White". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ashlee A.D. Barnett-White