

# *In memory of all good fathers*

**Speech given by 15-year-old Ashlee White, daughter of the late Darrin White  
Presented March 11, 2002**

My name is Ashlee Barnett White. I am the daughter of late Darrin White, the loving father who committed suicide because of unjust treatment from the family court system. I would like to thank everyone for coming here today and for joining in to not only remember the death of my father, but more importantly to help bring hope for the many other children who suffer now as a result of family court injustices or will at some time in the future.

I am here today not only to speak for my father, but for all fathers and all non-custodial parents who have suffered injustice because of the family court system. The destruction of parents, mostly fathers, is a plague on our nation. It is no less than a national disgrace. To have parents who cannot see their children in a civilized country is nothing less than barbaric. To have a family court system that destroys families and punishes good loving fathers is not acceptable.

I know that if my father was alive today he would be proud to see me up here and speaking in front of a group of supporters for this is not an easy thing to do. I know that he would be thankful to see that his death was not in vain but that it has served as a rallying point for a more noble and just cause. My father was a good man and would be happy to see me fight for something he believe in – Justice.

Let me tell you about my father. He was a loving and devoted father who only wanted to have what most fathers want – a family that he could care for and love. In the time before his death the thing he wanted the most was to have contact with the children he loved. He was a father who I know loved me.

Probably the biggest fault of my father was that he trusted and believed in those around him. He trusted his wife, only to have her leave him, take his children and prevent him from seeing the children he loved and adored. He trusted the court system to bring him justice for he believed that Canada's family court system was supposed to be one of the best justice systems in the world. But he was wrong. The family court system took his money and rather than giving him justice, subjected him to the most harsh and cruel punishment. He trusted his country, Canada, for he believed that Canada was supposed to have rights and freedoms to protect its citizens. But he was wrong. His country did not come to help him but trampled on his rights and freedoms and supported those in the family court system who were subjecting him to the injustice. His county let him down.

Since the death of my father, I have found out much about our family court system. I have found out that the circumstances surrounding my father were not isolated events. I have learned that many other fathers in Canada are being subjected to the same cruel torture by the same biased family court system that destroyed the heart and soul of my father prior to his death. I have learned that many other fathers have taken their lives as well just so that they can stop the pain and suffering.

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. They are there to share the birth of their children and to see them take their first steps. The first day of school and the first tooth are events that father's share with their children. There are countless children who can remember how their father taught them to ride their two wheeler bikes. Many fathers are there to give hugs, to say good night and to tell bedtime stories. Lets not kid ourselves, when it comes to raising kids, fathers are important.

Let all of us pause for just a minute and close our eyes and think for one moment. Think of something good about your father when you were little and bring it fresh into your memory...(Pause)

Now think of a few more things you remember about your father when you were little...(Pause)

Now imagine if your father was not there in your memories. Imagine that all the good thoughts you just had were never there. Imagine your father being ripped away from you ....forever. Would your life not be missing something?

Every day in Canada, this very thing is happening to young children across Canada. Every day children are being ripped away from their loving fathers as a result of a family break up. Every day hopes and dreams are being torn away from children. What is most disgusting is that very our family court system allows this to happen. When this is allowed to happen children are destroyed.

How many girls, like myself, have been robbed of their father to walk them down the aisle when they get married? How many boys have been robbed of their father to guide them and to make them honest and caring men themselves? How many children have been robbed of their fathers who will help them fix their toys and be there to hug them? How many grandchildren have been robbed of their grandfathers?

As a young Canadian, after seeing how the court system and the country that support this court destroy my father and how it continues to destroy other children and their families, I can only say that I am utterly ashamed. As a Canadian, I am ashamed as to how the justice system continues to ignore the wishes of its own people and continues to delay implementation of much needed changes to our divorce laws, changes that Canadians want. As most of us know the Justice Department has deliberately delayed implementation of the Joint Senate/House of Commons report on Custody and Access.

We have a challenge ahead of us. We must stand together. We must fight together. We must fight to return justice to Canada's family courts for the sake of the children of Canada and for the sake of Canada itself.

Now let's spread the word and on behalf of all the children in Canada, let us continue on with our fight and to let our government know that if Canada is truly is to be a place that families can be proud to call home then our family courts must understand only one thing, and that is Shared Parenting. Let us not ever forget that Kids Need Both Parents.

Thank you and God Bless. [end]

***This speech was presented by 15-year-old Ashlee White before a crowd of supporters in front of the Brandon, Manitoba Courthouse on March 11, 2002. Ashlee's father, Darrin White, committed suicide in March of 2000 as a result of persecution and injustice against him by Canada's biased Family Court System. Darrin was being denied access to his children by his former wife. As a result of the failure of the family courts to protect the children's relationship, Ashlee's former step-mother still not allow Ashlee and her siblings to contact each other.***