

**Remarks given at the funeral of Tye Noorda**  
**Stephen Jones**  
**April 10, 2014**

I am honored to be with you today to remember and reflect on the beautiful life of Tye Noorda.

It was through conversations in her living room that I came to know Tye. I have known her for only a tenth of her time here on earth, yet in that time I was privileged to hear her speak often about the rest of her rich and interesting life experiences.

I would like to touch on her early growing up years, and the way they shaped the rest of her life. Tye was born into a family that loved music. She spoke with fondness about her brother Blythe's great skill as a pianist and her high school music teacher, who encouraged her to play the viola and to sing in the chorus.

She spoke of feeding the chickens, whom she described as her most appreciative audience and who responded so positively when she recited poems and plays to them.

Her talents broadened beyond music when after high school she moved to Salt Lake City and there had several of the most formative experience of her life. After some encouragement and after a heart-felt prayer on the steps of the church, she wrote an impressive talk titled, "The Glories of Latter-day Saint Womanhood," which won an important church speech contest in the 1940's. The closing words of her speech, which was written as a prayer, petitioned Heavenly Father to help us "live that the light of Thy Gospel will shine forth so brightly that all the wise and humble men of the earth will turn and follow it as those wise, humble men followed Thy light when Christ, Thy Son, was born."

Her moving speech received two compliments which she said she never forgot. One was from a member of the First Presidency of the Church. The other was from Maude May Babcock, then retired as chair of the Speech and Drama Department at the University of Utah. Babcock took Tye into her home and taught her speech and drama. Those experiences developed her natural gifts and positioned her to later travel to New York and there enjoy success as an actress.

In discussing these experiences with Tye, two things became very clear to me. The first was that at a very early age, she developed a strong testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a testimony that never wavered. The second was that the mentors in her early life were critical to Tye's development as a person and an artist.

After her marriage and during the years she raised her children, Tye's love of music, speech and drama was manifest in the songs, plays and poems she wrote. In them we find a woman of faith, fun, and with a heart of tremendous caring and

compassion.

I am a composer by training. When I first learned Tye was a songwriter, I immediately asked to see her songs. She pointed me to the piano bench, and immediately we began to explore her creations.

I learned if you want to come to know the heart of Tye Noorda, you only need to come to learn her songs.

Written for occasions of all kinds and at the invitation of church leaders or neighbors or friends, they speak of family, of love for others, and of love of God. They reveal a special concern for those who were outside the circle of popularity and prominence, who labored through life being different or challenged, who had suffered loss or felt pain in some way. There are songs for Primary aged children that speak of the joys of singing and the need to keep smiling, even when things don't go your way. They teach humble lessons about friendship, prayer, prophets, obedience, love, truth, scripture study, patience and humility. And without a doubt, they offer her witness of Jesus Christ and invite us to come unto Him.

I told Tye these songs needed to be preserved for her children, extended family, and friends. I told her I could help with that, and she gratefully accepted the offer. What were isolated, individuals songs and sketches eventually became a book of over 200 pages that is a fitting and beautiful tribute to her life, her faith and her family.

Today, with the help of Taylor and Bailee Morris, Jon Rose, and Brianna Boyd from the BYU Young Ambassadors we want to perform for you six of her songs:

Du Duddle  
Smiling  
My Mirror  
What is a Friend  
I Will Go and Do, and  
Why Did you Have to Go?

The last song, "Why Did You Have to Go?", was written while he son Andy was on his mission. The husband of a woman in the ward where Andy was serving had died, and Andy gave Tye her phone number and suggested it might be helpful if she called this woman. Tye said of this experience,

I've never heard a sadder voice and she kept repeating the same things:

"Why did he have to go? - Why when I loved and needed him so much did he have to go away? I know I'll be with him some day---but the nights they just seem so long" and then she would start crying.

I'm not sure I was able to help her any but that night I couldn't sleep thinking

about her and got up and wrote the song “Why Did You Have to Go?”

I debated about sending her a copy and decided it would be better if I just wrote her a nice letter -- but during the last month since my husband died the nights often “seem so long” and I’ve thought about the song “Why Did You Have to Go?”

Like many of you, Tye did wonder why Ray left her. She complained and worried and wondered, given all she had to take care of after he departed. Now, she is no longer separated from Ray. Those tremendous worries about business dealings, family, her health and decisions about philanthropy are no longer hers to bear.

On the occasion of her brother Blythe’s funeral, Tye penned a poem for him. I close today with some of the lines of that poem:

***Blythe***

Quietly and gently you slipped away...  
But then quiet and gentle--was your stay on this earth.  
And your final worth?  
Very small by the usual worldly measure  
But how can anyone ever gauge pleasure.  
The pleasure you brought--  
To those you taught.  
In 30 years how many students did you reach--  
And inspire to practice, perform and teach?  
How much time spent on others you’d please--  
As they enjoyed your skills on the piano keys?  
How many times did you stay up late at night--  
Because for another, music you’d promised to write?  
Composing---Playing---Teaching  
Death has not decreased your worth--  
Your attributes can be used eternally  
While riches must remain on earth.

Tye had access to all the riches of the earth she could need, but her life was not characterized by worldly goods or the comforts and pleasures of this life. Indeed, she and Ray and their children gave these to others, built their community, and quietly blessed countless individuals and institutions. The money they had acquired meant nothing to Tye. She sights were focused on greater things: family, testimony, and service to God and humanity.

Like her praise for Blythe,

Death has not decreased her worth, for the attributes she has developed – a life of loving, caring, and sharing, can be used eternally, while riches must remain on earth.

Tye' poem, **Five Years Old**, expresses this thought:

Do you think that you and I could help  
To change the world a bit,  
And know that living can be fun  
If you really work at it?

We get a lot of help you know  
From God, who want us to  
Come back to Him in heaven  
Where there's important work to do.

I testify that God lives, and that Jesus Christ, His Son, has been resurrected. Because of Him, we will all live again. As Tye has so simply stated, God wants us to come back to Him in heaven, where like here on earth, there is important work to do.