



**Memorial Service for
Amy Hulse MacDonal**

**Monday, March 31, 2014
National Cemetery
Fort Smith, Arkansas**

GREETING

Good afternoon, and thank you so much for being here to remember, honor, and celebrate the life of Amy Hulsey MacDonald.

READING

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes:

3:1-2 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die...

7:2-3 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity, consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other.

BACKGROUND / OBITUARY INFORMATION

Amy was born Amy Lee Oxford on December 18, 1925, in Van Buren, Arkansas. She died January 8, 2014, in Canton, Georgia. She was 88 years old.

Amy is preceded in death by her first husband, Gwenn Hulsey, as well as her second husband, Malcom "Mac" MacDonald. She is survived by one daughter, Patricia (and her husband, Randall) Davis; two grandchildren, Amy MacNeill and Jesse Davis; and one great-grandchild, Liam MacNeill, all of Canton, Georgia.

A PERSONAL STORY

In sitting down last night to write about today's service, I kept scratching my head, typing out a sentence or two about Amy, then starting all over again. After all, how do you pay proper tribute to such a beautiful life? About midnight, this story began to come together.

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There once was a young boy who lived in an unsure world. His life, at first, was predictable, filled with finger painting, puppies, popcorn balls at Halloween, and an older sister who didn't always like to share. In 1985, when the boy was four, his parents built a new house with a laundry chute, and the boy and his sister would stick their heads in it and look up to the third story. Later, when the boy was two blocks away, he looked up to the sky and saw smoke—his new house was burning—and his life became less predictable than it was before.

A year later, the boy's mother was very ill and went somewhere far away to get help. And the boy was very confused about his unpredictable life in an unsure world, for he had not yet learned a great lesson—that when life takes something away, it always gives something else in return.

For the boy and his sister, that something else was someone—a sixty-year-old woman named Amy Hulse. The boy and his sister, well, they called her Granny, and for the longest time, she took care of them. She whistled while she packed their lunches and drove them to school each morning. She loved to whistle. Each day, the children would find a handwritten note from Granny in their lunch boxes. It was always something simple, something like "Roses are red, violets are blue, I hope you have a good day at school, and I miss you too." In the afternoons, Granny would French braid the sister's hair, and they would talk about the day. At night, Granny would tuck the boy and his sister into their beds and sing *The Lord's Prayer*, her voice as soft and comforting as a gentle breeze.

Every day, there were the poem in the lunch box. Every night, there was *The Lord's Prayer*. And before the boy knew it, life was a bit more predictable, the world a bit more sure.

Years went by, and the boy and his sister grew up. Granny had long since moved away, but she would still write at times. And as the children got older, they had time to reflect about the woman who moved all the way from Georgia to Arkansas in order to help take care of them.

The boy's sister (who now has her own son to make lunches for) said, "Memories about Granny come to me mostly in emotions. She made me feel special. And now I sing *The Lord's Prayer* to my son because she sang it to me."

As for the boy, he had no idea that he one day be speaking at Granny's memorial service, that he'd be so honored as to help "tuck her in" to her final resting place. And when he sat down with Granny's family, her learned a lot about her.

They told him her first husband, Gwenn, used to call her Dood, short for Doodlebug. She was independent, **loved** to talk, and could give you "the look." They said that when she

remarried in her seventies, she would embarrass them because she and her husband were so affectionate in public. But that wasn't really unlike her because when she loved, she loved completely. She held nothing back.

Of course, she had a sense of humor. Near the end, when Granny had to call 9-1-1, her room was full of paramedics and firemen, and one of them was helping her get into bed. She said, "It's been a long time since I had a man this good looking in my bed."

And the boy loved these stories, but he wasn't surprised by them, wasn't surprised to hear the family say that the most important things for Granny were her family and her faith. That she never had a bad word to say about anyone and that she always found the good in people. After all, the boy remembered her as a loving person, and those are things that loving people do.

THE END

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COMMENTS

As we look back on the life of Amy Hulsey MacDonald, we all have our own memories, our own stories about her. Mine is just one of them. But I would venture to say that for all of us, the world often seems unsure, and life unpredictable. And certainly when we face something like the death of someone we love, that is the case. But let us be reminded of a great lesson—that when life takes something away, it always gives something else in return.

So we grieve, and we mourn, and we miss. And we laugh and we cry. And, I think that if we are wise, we reflect—How was my life changed because this person was in it? How can I give to others the way this person gave to me? How will I spend the time I have left?

Surely our time on earth is limited, and these questions are worth our strong consideration. After all, it's an inescapable fact—that which is born, dies. This need not scare us, however, as Proverbs says,

“Surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.”

Saint Teresa of Avila said it like this:

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things pass away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
He who has God
Finds he lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

So let us not be tempted to put our faith in material things, which is to say, anything we can see, taste, touch, smell or hear—anything the world has to offer, including our own bodies. Rather, let us place our faith in that which is unseen. Certainly, Amy did this, and surely her faith was summed up in one of her favorite passages, Psalm 46.

READING FROM PSALM 46

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

²Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

⁴There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

⁶The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

⁷The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

⁹He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

¹⁰Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank you for the life of Amy Hulse MacDonald, for the love that she gave, and the example that she set. May she rest in peace in your capable, loving arms.

We ask that you comfort her family and those who cared about her, and we thank you for drawing near to the broken hearted. May we use her life as a reminder of our own capacity to love and to grow in love, even as we are reminded of your love for us.

Amen.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Thank you again for being here today. Please greet the family and each other.