

Hello – for those of you that don't know me I am Nate's oldest sister Wendy Johnson. On behalf of the Katie, Natalie and Kaleb and our families I want to thank this community and our friends and families for all of the love and support you have offered during this extremely difficult time. It is not this tragedy that defines how my brother Nate will be remembered and that is what I want to express to you today despite how difficult it may be for me.

Before I get started I'd like thank Amy and Brent McCune for working so hard to get these tee-shirts here for us today and to give you all a little insight into how Nate got the name TOWN8R that you see on the back of them. It is really because the name T..O..E N8R was already taken for WI license plates. Yep.. Nate may have been rough and tough on the outside but he was a softy inside and had the best looking toes around. He actually loved to get a good pedicure, which many of the women in the family did to honor him yesterday at Natalie and Katie's request. You see he decided to get a TOW truck as a disguise for his love for his "TOES" ☺ Ok that may not be true but the pedicure part is just check out the pictures on his Facebook page for proof. It was those kinds of things that made Nate ... Nate.

I could tell you so many things about why I loved my brother. Like the fact that I waited four years to get him and the first time I held him and he cried I wanted my parents to send him back. Or I could tell you how thirteen months later, when our younger brother was born, I found out the "boys", as we have affectionately referred to them since, were staying and I would not have any quiet in my life again. Growing up we moved a lot and every time they were the constants. They were my companions, my playmates, my friends and my partners in crime. In fact, Nate sat in my "beauty chair" more than once and he had chopped off bangs to show for it. I of course blamed him. Years later I finally told the truth that I had cut his hair. I could tell you of all the happy moments with our parents growing up and how much my mom and dad loved him. My dad and Nate were inseparable and he got his love for mechanics and cars from my dad at an early age. He was always up to something and believe me when

he got something in his mind he did it. There was no stopping him. He was always there for me every time I needed him. He protected me, stood up for me, comforted me and was there for me in the toughest moments of my life. He was my “big” little brother and I was his “little” sis.

On the morning of this tragedy I sat in my chair with a cup of coffee, a bible, and my journal which I often do. I was up early getting moving on my day. My younger boys had just left for school and my husband was still sleeping after getting home at 3:30 am from a trip. So I had a few moments all alone and quiet which is rare. My heart was heavy and I thought about calling work to say I was sick. I just knew something seemed wrong. As I sat the word “REMEMBER” kept coming to my mind so I wrote the date Oct 20th at the top of the page and “REMEMBER”. I would like to share a few of the thoughts I felt God say to my heart as I wrote them and what they mean to me now....

Remember

God told me to remember I am his and what he has done in my life and to remember he is good.

Forget

What was before and unmet expectations and disappointments and **Forgive**.

Help me to bloom where I am planted – help me to see my mission as his– to love my family and friends and to invest in them.

Remember

What I love to do, what I am good at and what the Lord requires of me. He is able to do above anything I can hope or ask for. He is for me and not against me. He is my strength and without him I have no peace. Pursuing things are not going to bring peace or contentment. This world is temporary and I am

Christ's ambassador. I am strong and capable. He never leaves me and he has plans for my life. He knows better than I do what I need. He is in charge of my life and my schedule...

Reading these words now I realize God was preparing my heart for the difficult week ahead when my schedule and our lives would be turned upside down and forever be changed. He was telling me to remember He is good even when it seems impossible. He is in control even when it seems uncontrollable. He was showing me that we would have to forgive the man that senselessly hit my brother doing the job he loved. He was about to show me what it means to love and be loved by family, friends and neighbors. God was showing me the greatest commandments he gave us. In Matthew 22:37-39 it says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Nate did this. He chose God at a very young age to love with all of his heart. He chose to make him his Savior and because of that decision he will forever be with Jesus. I am confident in that. He may have been a tough guy on the outside but it was that heart and love for God that caused him to Love his family, friends and neighbors as himself. He selflessly worked for others. He helped protect others on the road every day and it became his ultimate sacrifice.

He loved his family more than anyone. Katie was the love of his life and Natalie was his little girl and Kaleb his "mini me". They were his world. He was proud of them. He loved to be with them and to spend time with them. He loved watching them in school events and sports. He loved watching the Pack with them. He loved being able to provide for them the things he always wanted like a nice home and toys. He loved his boat, snowmobiles and campers but not just because they were things to acquire but because he could use them to spend time with family and friends. He loved my mom and dad and

my brother Darin. He loved his nephews Riley, Chase and Carter and his great nephew Owen. He loved Katie's family as if they were his flesh and blood and they loved him.

He loved his friends like those who have surrounded us this week. His best friend and "other brother" Todd, Scottie, Roger, Benny, Nick and all of his coworkers he loved so much. He loved his fellow road warriors who tirelessly give of themselves on the roads each and every day. They all meant so much to him and us.

He loved his neighbors like Denise and Jake and Sierra and Brock. They became like family over the last year to Nate and Katie and their kids. They spent time together and invested in each other and their families. Denise has tirelessly served our family in love this week.

Nate loved and it is that love for God and for others that I want him to be remembered for not this senseless tragedy. It is what Nate would want us to do. I know if he had one more thing to tell us if only he could it would be to Remember. To remember he loved each of us, to remember to spend time doing the things you love to do, to choose as your savior so he can see you again. He would tell us to love our families, friends and neighbors as much as we do ourselves. He would tell us to serve others selflessly like he did. He would tell us to not cry but to celebrate and all the good things in our lives. He would to be remembered as a simple guy from a small town he loved who got up every day and did what he loved to do. He would want us to remember to "Move Over and Slow Down" because we have families too.

I will always love you little brother... until we meet again

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind always be at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

and rains fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His hand.