Obituary for a once proud word
AWESOME WILL BE LAID TO REST

MICHAEL TURTON
Beacon, New York

(April 1, 2009) The word awesome was taken off life support today and declared legally dead. The demise of the incomparable word that once caused users to quake when appropriately employing its meaning was announced at a press conference hosted by Thesaurus.net and Dictionary.org.

For centuries regarded as perhaps the most powerful word in the English language, awesome eventually succumbed - not a bad word in itself - to abuse, inappropriate use, overuse and nearly-universal lack of respect.

"It is very difficult for me to utter these words, but the sense of loss is truly awesome" commented overwhelming, a close friend of awesome. "How ironic that it took awesome's downfall to prompt the first correct use of the word in years," overwhelming concluded. For years there have been rumors that awesome and overwhelming have enjoyed a near-synonymous relationship, however editors at Dictionary.org have consistently refused to confirm or deny those reports.

Details of the funeral were also announced at the press conference. Breathtaking, astonishing, amazing, majestic, wondrous, and magnificent will act as honourary pallbearers.

As was its wish, awesome will be depicted for the final time in calligraphy on a single piece of parchment and then shredded both vertically and horizontally before being thrown over Niagara Falls. It will be a most fitting end for the once proud word, who, in its hay day, was quoted as saying, "If I were a place rather than a word, I would be Niagara Falls...it is the definition of awesome." Due to a freakish spring snow storm the Grand Canyon could not be reached for comment.

Dictionaries from around the world will be represented at the funeral by a veritable who's who of synonyms including exceptional, extraordinary, outstanding, remarkable, preeminent, singular, towering, uncommon, unusual and appalling.

Awesome's mentor, Diction, will deliver the eulogy. "I don't plan to mince words. It may be hypocritical of me but this is one time I will not choose my words carefully; people need to realize the consequences of their verbal abuse," a distraught Diction stated. Diction went on to say that he will list the top ten abuses that led to awesome's demise. "I think the downward spiral began ten years ago when someone flippantly described a cheeseburger as awesome. The linguistic perversion came to a nauseating culmination when the phrase "totally awesome dude" made its pathetic debut. It made me wretch" Diction lamented. He then revealed that the decision to end life support came immediately after a conversation was overheard in which someone asked a friend, "How
was the movie last night?" When the friend responded "It was nothing special, maybe two stars out of five" the questioner replied, "That's awesome, I have to see it!"

The Mediterranean Island of Achos, which derives its name from the Greek word for fear, awesome's oldest known ancestor, announced that it will send a special envoy to the services.

The room was filled to capacity for the press conference. To show their respect, adjectives arrived early and completely dominated the first several rows. Adverbs, nouns and verbs co-mingled in the middle rows while articles and prepositions were relegated to the back of the room. In a move that offended some, acronyms were not allowed to attend. A formal protest has been filed with SPOCTA, The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Acronyms.

Not everyone at the press conference was devastated by awesome's passing. Longtime antonym, banal was humdrum in its response, initially saying only, "Whatever..." before yawning and adding, "I was never that impressed."

For years linguistic critics have pointed their finger at the firm of Vulgarity, Colloquialism and Vernacular Ink for having demeaned the mightiest of all adjectives. Company spokesman Slang attended the press conference and in a terse, prepared statement said, "We were just doing our job. No one complained when we changed the meaning of cool. And 'that sucks' has been an unparalleled success. Words are nothing more than a collection of letters. This whole thing has been overblown – it’s really quite cheesy."

The aggressive, unrepentant statement caused a stir. Onomatopoeia snapped and sizzled and many feared it would actually pop banal in the vowels but it kept its distance, simmering in the background. Network glared at Slang and shouted that it was incapable of attending awesome's funeral due to the stress caused by the firm's distasteful and unauthorized use of network as a verb. "I will never 'network' you moron! I am a network for god's sake" it cried.

Vulgarity, Colloquialisms and Vernacular is also hearing grumbling within its own ranks. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a low level minion with the company had this to say: "I'm just a grunt here, you know, a worker-bee; but back at the office, even Slang admits that this time we went too far."

Awesome is survived by awestruck and awful. They have requested that in lieu of flowers, people simply think about the words they use before uttering them.