

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

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(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 honorary 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.