



Ethan Nathaniel Fontanez

August 11, 1992 - July 16, 2019

Family and Friends,

To maintain the wonderful spirit and creativity of my husband, I have chosen to write his obituary, uniquely, in the form of a letter to you. As it was with Ethan's life, this obituary is meant for something greater than a declaration of death—it will serve as a declaration of life and life abundantly. Rejoice knowing that Ethan gained this abundant, eternal life on Tuesday, July 16, 2019—the day that he was completely, totally, and perfectly healed from cancer in the name of Jesus.

Ethan's story is one of tremendous victory. Though most of you do not know this, Ethan was from the Northern Hill Tribe in Burma. Internal conflict within the country prompted Ethan's birth parents to flee from Burma into Thailand in hopes of a safer, better life. During their plight, Ethan's birth father had contracted and died of malaria while his birth mother was captured and placed on a refugee camp in Thailand. Being pregnant with Ethan at the time and having just lost her husband, Ethan's birth mother decided to have an abortion. God's hedge of protection over Ethan did not allow this to happen; however, since the security guards on the refugee camp encouraged her to consider adoption...encouraged her to choose life! Through the grace of God, she agreed, and on August 11, 1992, Ethan was born. He was adopted by Eddie Fontanez and Kathy Lay—two loving, supportive, and virtuous parents—and he was brought back to the United States to live a full, victorious life. This full life consisted of my sweet husband battling and overcoming addiction

as a teenager; giving his heart, life, and soul completely to Jesus; going on mission trips to Africa and letting the children climb all over him; playing the drums on the worship team to bring glory to God; singing praise music with his guitar late into the night (not even knowing I was listening); photographing local companies, animal shelters, and families often free of charge; working at Church on the Move, Verizon Wireless, and Artesia General Hospital; and being a leader within our marriage. Ethan led a full and victorious life!

Whether he was a baby, teenager, or adult, my sweet husband spread the light of God to everyone who interacted with him. Ethan fearlessly stopped strangers on the side of the road to discuss Jesus. He boldly asked fast-food workers if he could pray for them. He encouraged, uplifted, and spoke life into the broken, the lost, and the suffering. He saw the best within the people who normally were looked down upon by others. He generously gave to others—so much so that I often feared he would give away our entire house if he could. He was the first to apologize and the first to forgive. Even when cancer robbed Ethan of his strength, he still found the energy to sow seeds of life into others. Ethan was a bold and faithful man of God who exemplified an unconditional, sacrificial love to each individual within his life.

Throughout Ethan's battle with cancer, he and I stood on the promise that he would be completely healed through the blood and stripes of Jesus Christ. Although it is not in the way we initially imagined, God kept His promise, and Ethan has been perfectly healed in Heaven. Family and friends, do not let your faith waiver due to Ethan's passing. Ethan would not want that to happen. One of the last things Ethan told the hospital chaplain was, "Whether I live or die, to God be the glory." God is still faithful even when we do not understand His purposes, and if you live a life like Ethan—dedicated to God—you will see my sweet husband once again.

Ethan was preceded in death by Forrest and Virginia Arnold (grandparents). He was survived by Loretta Fontanez (wife of two years), Eddie and Adriana Fontanez (father and step-mother), Kathy and James Lay (mother and step-father), James and Joyce Lawson (mother- and father-in-law), Tessa

Fontanez (sister), Robert James Roberts (brother), Stephen Roberts (brother), Gary Lawson (brother), Joe Lawson (brother), Mateo Fontanez and Maria Colon (grandparents), Nestor and Elsa Gonzalez (grandparents), and his fur-babies, Appa (the dog), and Momo (the cat). Ethan was loved dearly by many other family members, friends, church members, and coworkers across the country.

Please join us as we celebrate Ethan's life on Monday, July 22, 2019, at 10:30 AM at Church on the Move in Roswell, NM.

In lieu of flowers and honor of Ethan's generous spirit, my family and I ask that you make a donation to Drake Robert's mission work (one of Ethan's best friends). He is helping to plant a church in a small village in India. Through Ethan's passing, we can bring life and life abundantly to the hurt, loss, and suffering. Donations can be made two ways: (1) Electronically on https://www.gofundme.com/f/ethan-fontanez-church-plant&rcid=r01-156354853968-4342cc80bea24224&pc=ot_co_campmgmt_m, or (2) Checks made to Drake Robert and sent to 4674 Petra Circle, Pensacola, FL 32526.

Family and friends—Speaking on Ethan's behalf, I'd like to thank you for the support, prayers, and love we received since his diagnosis in September.

Ethan and I love each and every one of you. Thank you for fighting with us.

With Love,

Loretta Fontanez and Family

Please take a moment and share a kind thought or memory with Ethan's family at www.andersonbethany.com.

Ethan's tribute was beautifully written in his honor by his loving wife and family.

Tribute Wall



“ *Ethan Nathaniel Fontanez*

December 29, 2022 at 05:26 PM



“ *I love this young man, and I intentionally use the present tense. He is in heaven. When I see him he will be healthy, young and strong just as he was the last time I walked in church and he greeted me with that beautiful smile and big bear hug! Ethan, you made people long to have what you had. Inner beauty and communion with the Lord. What a witness! ~Dara Lynn Hartigan*

Dara Lynn Hartigan - July 25, 2019 at 03:12 PM



“ *I remember his smile and the way he lit up the room. I'm so sorry for your loss.*

Sally Walker - July 20, 2019 at 02:31 AM



“ *I will always remember Ethan as the kind man who always had a sweet smile on his face. When he smiled at you, you had to smile back! I am honored to know this family and see the strength that each of you have had in the midst of the storm. Loretta and Kathy, you both inspire me!! My prayers are with you all!! I am happy to know that I will see Ethan's smile again in heaven!! 😊*

Julie Smothermon - July 19, 2019 at 08:25 PM



“ *Pink Lily and Yellow Rose Mix (Silk Cemetery Flowers) was purchased for the family of Ethan Nathaniel Fontanez.*



July 19, 2019 at 03:16 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Kathy Lay - Ethan's Mom - July 19, 2019 at 02:28 PM



Beautiful picture!!

Julie Smothermon - July 19, 2019 at 08:18 PM



“ *I once asked Ethan how he knew what beautiful music to play on his drums and he very simply said, "It comes from my heart."
He lived with Ken and Julie Arnold in Florida during some of his trying times, which was where I met him and was truly impressed by him.
We know he is with Jesus now and I miss him every day,
Irma Sheid*

Irma Sheid - July 19, 2019 at 01:45 PM