



## Tarlise Noelle (Tarlle) Townsend

April 5, 1991 - May 30, 2022

Tarlise Noelle Townsend (Tarlle) of Bloomington, Indiana left this earth far too early on May 30, 2022 from a rare form of melanoma. Tarlle was the partner of Henrique Harman, beloved daughter of James and Lisa Townsend, and half-sister of Philip, Pamela, and Joan Townsend, and Gabriel Rodriguez. She was born April 5, 1991 in Bloomington, Indiana.

As a youngster, Tarlle attended Campus Children's Center and subsequently, St. Charles Elementary School, during which she made many lifelong friends. At age 9, she accompanied her parents to the Hanse Institute in northern Germany where she began her deep embedding in the German language and culture.

After graduating from Edgewood High School in 2008, Tarlle attended Indiana University as Edgewood High School's first-ever Wells Scholar. At IU, she majored in neuroscience and Germanic Studies with a minor in mathematics. She was a member of the university's presidential advisory council, the Board of Aeons. Tarlle graduated Phi Beta Kappa and was Summa Cum Laude in 2012.

The following year she accepted a position as a DAAD Scholar (an elite award for free study at a German Institution) at the renowned Max Planck Institute in Berlin, Germany where she began her evolution as an expert in social policy

by studying the cognitive and social dimensions of climate change.

Tarlie deepened her knowledge as well as contributions to science and the world when, as only one of eighteen candidates nationwide, she accepted the prize of the extremely prestigious Henry Luce Fellowship. This award afforded her the opportunity to live and engage in research in Hanoi, Vietnam. To reveal the level of her commitment, we note that she was one of only a few Luce Fellows that year to opt to live with a non-English speaking Vietnamese family, where she became highly fluent in the Vietnamese language. During this year, she also traveled extensively throughout Asia, visiting Myanmar, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, and China.

In 2015, Tarlie began her graduate work at the University of Michigan where she earned an M.S. in Public Policy and then a Ph.D. in Health Services Organization and Policy and Sociology, with a minor in Economics. Her solid background in mathematics paid off in her intensive study of statistics and methodology pursuant to her advanced degrees. She completed her Ph.D. in 2020 and accepted a coveted post-doctoral fellowship at New York University. She is the author of 12 academic papers, nine first authored and has given more than twenty talks and invited addresses on her research on important health issues, especially in her specialty, opioid addiction in the US.

Her research has been covered in TIME magazine, the NIH Director's Blog, Medscape and other outlets. Recently, she was offered, and she accepted a faculty position at New York University. As academic folk will immediately understand, it is highly rare for a person to be offered a position where they obtained their Ph.D. or postdoctoral training.

Although Tarlie only graced this earth for a mere 31 years, it was a life jam-packed with all the things she loved. If one were to have a checklist in life, Tarlie checked nearly all the boxes: she lived on three continents, traveled to

over fifty countries, spoke four languages (yes, she picked up Spanish as a hobby!), was an avid SCUBA diver, made deep and lasting friendships with people across the world, and—just weeks before her death—earned her skipper’s license so that she could captain a 40-foot sailboat. And after dozens of first dates with braggart New Yorkers, she found the love of her life in Henrique Harman.

Perhaps her most striking and deep-seated attributes were her strong desire to help humanity and her personal kindness, as revealed in Tarlie’s advocacy work. In addition to her academic work, Tarlie served on committees and boards representing patients at Memorial Sloan-Kettering (Sloan Kettering’s Patient and Family Advisory Council, or PFACQ) where she was being treated for her cancer. She also labored at straightening out and improving the way in which medical personnel interact with their cancer patients at all stages, including at the final hospice stage of their disease. She was a tireless voice on opioid prescribing practices for cancer patients, she advocated for a change in the pain management scale, and she was a champion for better doctor-patient communication—openly criticizing clinicians for their optimistic future talk as a way to deflect discussions on end-of-life.

Tarlie faced her cancer head-on and was clear from the very beginning about how she wanted to live in light of her diagnosis. To quote her blog, *A Study in Blue*, “I don’t want my cancer experience to be just a sad thing that happens. Rather, it is (I think/hope) an opportunity to gain a new clarity on life, purpose, and self. A blue sky, in a way. A chance for close study.”

Needless to say, you can deduce that her parents are very proud of our darling Tarlie indeed, and she will live in our hearts forever.

In lieu of flowers, the family would be delighted if you would consider a

donation in memory of Tarlie to the Sycamore Land Trust, an organization she enthusiastically supported. <https://sycamorelandtrust.org/donate/>  
Sycamore Land Trust, P.O. Box 7801, Bloomington, IN 47407-7801

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory have been entrusted with arrangements.  
Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

# Tribute Wall



“ We at the Wells Scholars Program at IU are just devastated by this incredible loss, but we also take pride in all that Tarlie has achieved. Her brilliance will continue to shine. We wish you comfort and peace--Christoph Irmscher, Wells Scholars Program Director.

Christoph Irmscher - August 23, 2022 at 11:32 AM



“ I did not know Tarlie, but her obit inspired me to make a contribution to Sycamore Land Trust in her memory.

Victoria Hilkevitch - August 21, 2022 at 07:15 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Kathy Gorr - August 20, 2022 at 08:27 AM



“ Lisa, our deepest condolences. She certainly lived a full life but I feel her loss will be felt by us all. I will never forget the justifiable pride you showed when you introduced her at a Museum dinner. Again our deepest condolences. Sally and David Gray

David Gray - August 18, 2022 at 08:34 AM

NM

“ We are in shock. Tarlise was such a bright light, and she had that infectious smile...Our thoughts and prayers are with the Townsend family.

Nick McCammon - August 17, 2022 at 01:54 PM

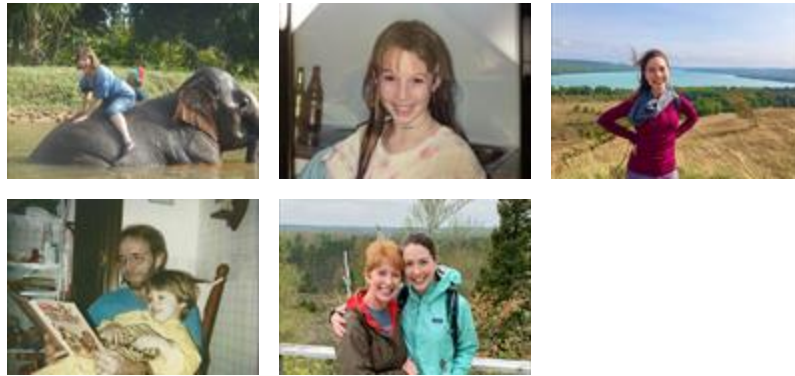
LM

“ My deepest condolences.

Lorelei Meeker - August 17, 2022 at 07:00 AM

LT

“ 17 files added to the album Memories Album



Lisa Townsend - August 16, 2022 at 06:07 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Allen Funeral Home and Crematory - August 16, 2022 at 05:40 PM

MA

*The obituary for Tarlise is one of the most beautifully written I have read, and her life story is stunning. I send my heartfelt condolences to her family and her beloved partner. I will honor her with a contribution to the Sycamore Land Trust.*

*Most sincerely, Marianne Ackerson*

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**Marianne Ackerson** - August 26, 2022 at 01:50 PM