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Family, friends, and all who knew and loved Michael James Carter—our Mike—thank you for being here today.

I stand here as his sister,
his younger shadow for as long as I can remember,
and one of the many who counted on his steady presence.

Mike was born on March 2, 1985, in Toronto,
and we grew up in a home where the front door never quite latched in winter
and the kettle seemed always on.
He was my older brother and my lifelong protector,
the one who could fix a jammed zipper,
a lopsided shelf,
and, most memorably, a scared little sister.

My favourite memory is of High Park, a spring afternoon that smelled like mud and lilacs.
He was teaching me to ride a bike.
He jogged beside me for what felt like hours—hand on my seat, running, breathless, patient.
Every time I wobbled, I heard his voice:
you've got it—
don't look at the ground—look where you're going.
At some point, he let go.
I didn't notice right away.
I looked up, and he was cheering from a few steps behind,
hands on his knees, laughing that quiet laugh of his that said more than words.
That was Mike:
beside you until you didn't need him,
and still close enough if you did.

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He carried that same constancy into every part of his life.
After high school, he studied mechanical engineering at the University of Waterloo.
He loved that program—loved that it turned curiosity into problem-solving,
ideas into structures that hold.
His first job took him to Calgary, to energy work and big-sky horizons.
He learned the city by its rinks and hardware stores,
and he never stopped calling us on Sunday nights to ask if we'd eaten,
and what he could send for the garage that we didn't know we needed.

Then he moved to Ottawa,
closer to family—closer to the ordinary, essential rhythm he cherished.
By then he was more than an engineer.
He was Emily's partner in every sense of that word,
a beloved husband whose best evenings were the ones spent at the kitchen table,
planning the week.
He was a devoted dad to Noah and Sophie,
who knew their father not by his title but by the way he knelt to see them at eye level,
the way he made pancakes into initials,
the way a day could be fixed by a skate before breakfast.
He was a cherished son to Patricia and Gordon,
and brother to Daniel and to me,
each of us held in a slightly different way by the same wide, quiet care.

Professionally, Mike took pride in doing things properly.
He believed integrity in work mattered as much as the work itself.
He mentored new grads because someone once showed him where the blueprints lived,
how to ask a better question,
and he wanted to pass that along without any fuss.
He had a gift for finding practical solutions and a calm in meetings that lowered

the temperature just by being there.

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Weekends held their own rituals:
Saturday morning hockey,
a toque pulled down, a grin under it,
the scrape of fresh ice promising a better shot next shift.
Canoe trips in Algonquin,
where his entire voice would relax two notches at the first loon call.
Woodworking in the garage, one careful cut at a time,
sawdust on his sleeves like a badge.
Backyard BBQs that always ended the same way:
someone insisting they were fine with paper plates,
and Mike insisting on real ones because “things taste better when you do them right.”

He coached minor hockey with the patience of a long bench and a short memory for mistakes.
He believed in showing up,
in tying a skate tight enough that a kid could stand taller.
He was generous with his time, loyal to his friends,
and he gave back quietly, because noise was never the point.

What we will miss most is deceptively simple.
His reassuring laugh—the one that told us perspective had arrived.
His practical advice, delivered not as a lecture but as an offered tool.
And the early-morning check-in texts,
often before the sun,
that said “How’s your day looking?” and meant “I’m here.”

For all of his care for others,
Mike was humble to the core.
He did not measure a life by big declarations.
He measured it by follow-through.
If he said he’d be there, he was there.

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If he didn’t know, he’d learn.
If it was broken, he’d fix it,
and if it couldn’t be fixed, he’d sit with you until the sharp edge dulled a little.

We lost Mike on January 28, 2024.
He was thirty-eight.
There’s no way to make that number feel right.
But there are ways to carry him forward that feel true to who he was.
We can choose family first,
in the everyday choices that build a home.
We can insist on integrity, especially when no one is looking.
We can be loyal,
not as a slogan, but as a practice.
We can give back without keeping score.

When I think of that day in High Park,
I realize the lesson wasn’t balance or brakes.
It was trust.
Trust that someone is beside you long enough to help you find your own way,
and trust that, when they let go, what they’ve given keeps you upright.

To Emily,
thank you for loving Mike in a way that let him be fully himself.
To Noah and Sophie,
you carry the best of your dad—the careful hands, the gentle humour, the courage to try again.
To Mom and Dad,
I see your steadiness in him,
and I’m grateful for the roots you gave us.
To Daniel,
we will keep each other close, the way he always wanted.

And to all who have asked how to honour him:
in lieu of flowers, donations to the Heart & Stroke Foundation would reflect

Mike’s wishes and spirit.

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Today we say goodbye to a brother, a son, a husband, a father, and a friend.
But the work of his hands,
the way he listened,
the way he steadied a room—
those do not leave with him.

They live in the children he raised,
in the colleagues he guided,
in the players who learned to lace their skates and hold their heads high,
and in all of us whose lives run a little straighter because he once jogged beside us.

Mike,
thank you for the years you gave,
for every early text,
for every solved riddle under a sink,
for every quiet laugh that brought us back to ourselves.

We will look up.
We will keep our eyes where we’re going.
And we will carry you with us,
one sure turn of the pedals at a time.

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