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Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here to honor my dad, Robert James Miller—Bob to most of you, Dad to me.

We’re gathered to say goodbye, but also to recognize the good weight of a well-lived life. Dad was born on March 3, 1956, grew up in Des Moines, and built a life that was steady in all the best ways. He studied mechanical engineering at Iowa State, and for forty years he designed farm equipment—machines that did real work for real people. That suited him. He liked things you could hold, fix, and trust.

After he retired, he didn’t slow down in spirit. He traded deadlines for the hum of the community workshop. If something there wobbled, he leveled it. If a kid came in with a crooked birdhouse, he showed them how to square a corner without making them feel small. He believed skill was something to be shared, not hoarded.

He was married to my mom, Linda, for forty-seven years. That number carries a quiet power. It looks like everyday choices lined up over decades—coffee poured, arguments cooled, plans made and remade—until what you have is not a tally but a partnership. My sister Claire and I grew up inside that steadiness. And in recent years, we watched him become “Grandpa Bob,” a job he took as seriously as any blueprint. He carved a toolbox for each grandchild—his hands shaping the wood, his pencil marks still faintly visible if you look. Inside each one he tucked a note about building a good life. Not instructions—he never lectured—but an invitation to try, to mend, to keep learning.

If you’re wondering what he was like, the words come easily. Steady. Humble. Dry sense of humor—the sort that lands a second after he says it, when you realize he’s been gently teasing you the whole time. A patient teacher. Dependable to a fault. If Dad said he would be there at 2, he was there at 1:50,

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eating a granola bar because lunch would have to wait until your problem was solved.

One of my favorite memories lives in the garage. I was small and certain I could fix my first bike in ten minutes. Dad rolled up his sleeves and let me lead until I hit a stubborn bolt. He didn't take the wrench out of my hand. He just sat next to me and said, "Try smaller turns. Feel it." He showed me how to back off before you strip the threads, how to loosen, oil, and begin again. We were there for a long time, the two of us bent over that wheel. When it finally spun true, the lesson had sunk deeper than the metal. I learned that patience isn't the absence of urgency; it's the presence of care.

That was Dad everywhere. At Lake Red Rock with our fishing rods, he'd talk in that calm voice he used for tangled lines and also for moments when life felt like a tangle. He'd say, "Let the knot show you where it wants to open." We'd drift, the bobber the only drama, and somehow the day got lighter. He had that gift—making hard problems feel solvable, one careful turn at a time.

He loved small rituals that held us together. Saturday pancakes, where the first one always came out a little funny and he called it the "taste test." Cubs games on the radio, where he'd shake his head and say, "There's always next inning," and you knew he meant more than baseball. Wood shavings on the floor of his shop, the scent of cedar in the air. A toolbox on the bench, never quite finished, because there was always a grandchild to measure for.

Faith, for Dad, was quiet and worn-in—more like an old work shirt than a uniform. He was a Christian who preferred verbs to adjectives. He served, he showed up, he fixed what he could and listened when he couldn't. He prayed like he sanded—patiently, without announcing it, trusting that the rough places could be made a little smoother.

We will miss his calming voice—the one that could lower the temperature in a room without anyone noticing how he did it. We'll miss his capable hands, nicked and strong, hands that could reset a hinge and also steady a shoulder.

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We'll miss that dry one-liner he'd slide across the table just when we needed to laugh. Mostly, we'll miss the way being around him made you braver about trying again.

To Mom—thank you for the way you and Dad built a home that held more than furniture. It held us. To Claire—every time we solve something the way Dad would have, that's a way of saying we remember. To his friends and the folks from the workshop—he loved the plain talk and the shared projects. You were his kind of people.

Grief is sharp today. It should be. We lost a husband, a dad, a grandpa, a friend. But there is comfort even in the details he leaves behind. The pencil lines on his workbench. The Cubs cap on the hook by the door. The fish stories that somehow always end with, "We put the big one back." And those toolboxes, waiting for small hands to learn weight and balance and care.

If Dad could give us one more instruction, I think it would look like those notes he tucked inside the lids. Something like: Build carefully. Measure twice, but don't be afraid to start. Fix what you can. Hand someone the right tool when they need it. And when you strip a bolt, smile, back up, and begin again.

His life didn't need fanfare. It needed the things he loved—family around a table, pancakes on Saturdays, a cast that lands true, the sound of laughter in a garage. It needed faith that doesn't shout but shows up. He gave us that, over and over.

Dad, thank you for being my steady guide, my mentor, my fishing buddy. Thank you for teaching me how to feel the turn of a bolt and the turn of a hard day. Thank you for loving Mom with the same patience you brought to every project. Thank you for the quiet way you showed us what good work and good love look like.

We'll carry you forward in the ways that matter—in the way we speak to each other, in the way we tackle problems, in the way we serve without making a

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speech about it. We'll keep your Saturdays going. We'll keep looking for the knot and letting it tell us where it wants to open.

Rest easy, Dad. We've got the tools you left us. And we'll put them to good use.

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