Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is [Your Name], and I had the luck of being Mike’s college roommate who somehow never moved out of his life. For more than 20 years, we were best friends.

Michael James Carter was born on September 3, 1987, and he left us far too soon at 37. He grew up in Ohio, found his stride studying computer science at Michigan State, and chased big skies and bigger ideas all the way to Seattle. There, he wrote code that wasn’t just clever—it was kind. He built tools for small nonprofits, mentored young coders, and every week he found his way back to a youth center to help kids discover what they could build, and who they could become.

He was loyal. Quick-witted. Patient. The person you called at 1 a.m. when your laptop wouldn’t start—or when your heart felt the same way. He was always the first to show up, usually with a thermos of espresso and a joke that made the room lighter. If you knew Mike, you knew his easy laugh, the way it wrapped around you and made you feel included, seen, in on the joke and part of the team.

To Thomas and Elaine, and to Rachel—thank you for sharing your son and brother with so many of us. We felt the warmth of your family through him. And Emily, his fiancée, we all saw how he lit up around you. Mike talked about the future with you with that quiet, steady joy he carried—plans for hikes, for a home filled with friends, maybe a little espresso bar in the corner he’d over-engineer for the fun of it.

Mike had a way of finding peace in stillness. He wasn’t loud about faith, but he carried a reflective spirit. He’d slip into community services on holidays, lend a

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hand with interfaith outreach, and then wander home in the drizzle, content. He knew that whatever we call the sacred, it lives in how we care for each other.

My favorite memory is the one that, in many ways, defined him for me. After finals one year, we took a spontaneous road trip in a car that had no business leaving the parking lot. Somewhere in the middle of nowhere, it broke down. Night fell. It should’ve been a disaster. But Mike shrugged, found a safe pull-off, gathered some wood, and turned it into a campfire storytelling night. He passed around instant ramen like it was a feast, convinced a couple of stranded strangers to join us, and by midnight we were a small community, laughing under a sky that suddenly seemed generous. That was Mike: we can’t control the storm, but we can share the umbrella. He used to say that all the time. That night, he proved it.

In Seattle, you could catch him trail running at sunrise, then comparing espresso grinds like a scientist, then breaking out some obscure indie board game and making room at the table for whoever wandered in. Weekend hikes in the Cascades were his reset button. He could talk load balancers on the way up and point out wildflowers on the way down, and somehow both conversations felt equally important.

Professionally, he was a brilliant software engineer. But what mattered most to him was impact—open-source projects anyone could use, tools that made it easier for small nonprofits to do big things, a generation of young coders who found confidence because he took time to sit beside them. If you ever watched him mentor, you saw patience in motion: a calm voice, a gentle nudge, a laugh when you got stuck, and genuine celebration when you figured it out.

What will we miss? The late-night troubleshooting calls, yes—but also that easy laugh, that instinct to widen the circle, his knack for turning hard moments into shared ones. He was the guy who brought an extra umbrella because he knew someone would forget theirs. He was the friend who noticed when you were quiet and stayed until you didn’t feel alone.

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To everyone grieving, I hope we can hold on to the ways Mike loved. Let’s keep mentoring the next person in line. Let’s keep showing up first. Let’s keep making room at the table. Let’s lace up for a trail when the mind is crowded, and brew coffee for a neighbor who needs it. Let’s live that small but mighty wisdom he carried: we can’t control the storm, but we can share the umbrella.

Mike’s life was a short chapter, but there are so many footnotes written in other people’s stories because of him—kids who now believe they’re capable, colleagues who learned to lead with kindness, friends who found their people. That’s legacy. That’s love made visible.

Thomas, Elaine, Rachel, and Emily—may you feel the community he built surrounding you now. And may all of us carry forward the best parts of him: his loyalty, his wit, his patience, and that reflex to help.

Thank you, Mike, for the road trips and the campfires, for the hikes and the coffee, for the code and the kindness. We miss you. We’ll keep sharing the umbrella from here.

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