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Family, friends, neighbours, thank you for being here today as we say goodbye to our beloved Oupa Pete — Peter John Matthews — and as we celebrate the life he lived so fully.

I speak as his granddaughter, one of the six lucky grandchildren who knew him not just as the man at the head of the table, but as the steady pair of hands that helped raise me, the voice across the stoep on a Sunday, and the companion for long chats over rooibos tea.

He was born on 15 March 1942 in Port Elizabeth — Gqeberha — and left us peacefully on 7 April 2024, 82 years old and still teaching us things without saying much.
He grew up in the Eastern Cape, trained as an electrician, and in the 1970s packed up courage and toolbag for Johannesburg.
There, he built a small electrical business with a simple reputation: honest work, done properly, at a fair price.
No fancy branding, no fuss, just a ring-bound notebook, a bakkie that always started, and a promise kept.

He married Margaret — our Gran — and for 58 years they were a team.
Three children came along — David, Karen, and Michael — and later we grandchildren arrived to raid the biscuit tin and pull him into our games.
If you want to know what love looks like over decades, you saw it when Oupa would make tea for Gran before the sun was up, or when they'd sit in quiet companionship after supper, chuckling at the same joke they'd told each other for forty years.

After he retired to the West Rand, his garden became legendary.
Legendary not because it was fancy, but because it was generous.
Tomatoes that tasted like summer.

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Marrows he’d pretend to be surprised by — “Ag, look at this guy, he got away again.”
A row of spinach that somehow fed half the street.
He’d send you home with a brown packet and instructions that sounded like a recipe and a blessing at the same time.

What defined him?
Steady.
Patient.
A witty sense of humour that arrived dry and perfect, like rain on a dusty road.
He was a practical problem-solver: if something broke, he didn’t panic; he fetched the right screwdriver.
Quietly generous, too — the kind of generosity that doesn’t need a speech.
He mentored apprentices who turned up nervous and left with pride.
He fixed neighbours’ kettles and stove plates and never wrote an invoice for it.
He believed in Ubuntu — help where you can — and he lived it like a daily habit.

Some of my clearest memories with Oupa live in the garage, where the smell of oil and sawdust became its own kind of comfort.
He’d hand me the torch, and I’d hold it badly, and he’d shift my elbow without a word.
He taught me to rewire a plug — not just which wire went where, but why honesty matters when no one is looking, even in the small jobs.
We ended with a high-five that made me feel ten feet tall, and he paid me in Peppermint Crisp.
It’s funny, the currency of childhood is chocolate, but what he gave me that day was confidence.

Sundays were for braais.
He braaied for the whole street if you let him.
Meat done just right, garlic bread warm enough to burn fingers, and that familiar dance of smoke and laughter.
He’d stand poised with the tongs, watching the coals, explaining the Springboks’ chances like a coach and a poet combined.

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On Saturdays he did the crossword in ink, the audacity of a man who trusted his instincts.
And whenever the Boks played, he held his breath at the anthems, then shouted at the TV with absolute courtesy.

He loved freshwater fishing in the Eastern Cape — patient, watchful, content to come home with a story even if the fish had other plans.
He respected elders, kept family first, and asked for little for himself.
His lamingtons at Christmas were proof that electricity wasn't his only magic — coconut everywhere, crumbs tracked through the passage, no regrets.

What will we miss?
His warm hugs at the gate, the way the world reset when his arms closed around you.
His calm voice when things broke — household things, and sometimes hearts.
That slow "Let's have a look," which loosened the knot in your chest before he even found the spanner.
We will miss the way he turned worry into a to-do list.

He built more than circuits and cupboards; he built people.
He showed us that honest work is honourable, that you don't need to be loud to be strong, and that a good joke lands best when it's kind.
He showed his sons and his daughter what a father's steadiness feels like.
He showed his grandchildren what patient love looks like, unhurried, with time for another cup of tea.

In these past days, I've found myself doing small things the way he did: tightening a loose hinge, checking the gate latch twice, making sure everyone has enough to eat before I dish for myself.
It's his way of living that comforts me now.
Because he's there, in the habits we keep and the care we give.
He's there every time we help without being asked, and every time we say, "Family first," and mean it.

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His favourite hymn was Amazing Grace.
It feels right today.
Not because we need to be carried past our sadness — though we do — but because grace is what he practised.
Grace in the lift he gave you without judgement.
Grace in the patience he offered the young and the frail.
Grace in the way he forgave mistakes — including mine — and simply showed you how to try again.

To Gran, to Margaret — thank you for sharing him with all of us, for walking beside him for 58 years and letting your love shape this family.
To Dad, to Karen, to Michael — and to all of us grandchildren — the best way to honour Oupa is to keep doing what he taught us:
Be honest.
Look after one another.
Respect those who came before.
And help where you can.

After the service, we'll gather in the church hall in Roodepoort.
Please come and share your stories — the loose plug he fixed, the braai he rescued, the joke he told that carried you through a hard day.
Those stories are his legacy, stitched into ours.

Oupa Pete,
thank you for the hugs at the gate.
Thank you for every Sunday braai and every cup of rooibos that turned into a life lesson without feeling like one.
Thank you for the high-five and the Peppermint Crisp that made me brave.
We'll keep your garden growing.
We'll keep your tools clean.
We'll keep your kindness moving through this family like light along a wire.

Go well, Oupa.
We'll take it from here.

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