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Family, friends, neighbours, thank you for being here today.

We have come to say goodbye to my husband, Daniel James Campbell.
To Dan.
To a son, a brother, a dad, a friend.
And we have come to say thank you for his life.

Dan was born on 14 March 1981 and left us far too soon, at 43.
He grew up in Durban, schooled by wind, salt and the easy grin of that city.
He studied civil engineering at UKZN, because he believed that work should be useful.
Then he moved to Johannesburg, rolled up his sleeves, and set about getting clean water to communities across KZN and Gauteng.
That was Dan’s way — less talking, more doing, and especially for people who are too often left waiting.

He was gentle.
Steady.
With that dry humour that arrived like a slightly raised eyebrow before the joke.
He was deeply dependable — the one you phoned when your plan fell apart, when the tap wouldn’t stop dripping, when you needed someone to arrive exactly when they said they would.
He was quietly brave, which is the best kind.
The kind that doesn’t need a drum roll, just shows up, again and again.

We were married for 18 years.
Best friends and partners in everything.
When I think of our life together, I don’t see a montage of grand moments.
I see smaller ones that made a home.
His early-morning rustle in the kitchen, the hiss of the kettle, and then our

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unhurried coffee chats before the day grabbed us.
The way he greeted the kids with a bear hug at the door, even if he had cement dust on his sleeves.
Our braais in the backyard, Dan with a guitar, turning three chords into a whole evening.

My favourite memory is our Garden Route road trip.
Canoeing on the Knysna lagoon at sunset, the water gold and still, and Dan steering us a little skew on purpose just to hear me laugh.
Later we cremated the braai bread by accident and laughed till we cried, sitting on the stoep in the dark, eating the inside part with butter and jam and far too much pride to admit we were hungry.
That was Dan’s talent — to turn the ordinary into a keepsake.

He loved Springbok rugby with a level of analysis that could rival a coach’s whiteboard.
He ran trails in the Magalies, coming home muddy, calm and convinced there was a better line we should all be taking through life.
He could fix anything with his toolkit and a muttered “ag, give me a second”.
Light fittings, a gate that sagged, a child’s wobbly bike seat — he liked the feeling of leaving something sturdier than he found it.

Work mattered to him because people mattered to him.
He believed in ubuntu, not as a slogan, but as a schedule.
He made time.
He mentored young graduates, never showing off, just nudging them to be thorough and fair.
He coached youth cricket at the local club, teaching cover drives and patience and how to lose with grace.
Some of those kids will walk differently through life because a man named Dan showed up, week after week, with cones, a bag of scuffed balls, and encouragement.

To Peter and Linda, he was a loving son who phoned on Sundays and pretended

he wasn’t checking in so you wouldn’t worry.
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To Claire, he was your older brother who teased you precisely the right amount and then defended you like a wall.
To Liam and Emma — your dad adored you.
He loved your stories, your sport, your music, your questions.
He was the loudest whisperer on the side of a cricket field and the softest singer at bedtime.
If you remember only one thing, remember this: he showed up for you, always, in a way you could feel — and that is love made visible.

Dan’s values were simple and stubborn.
Integrity.
Fairness.
Ubuntu.
Showing up for family and neighbours, even when it was inconvenient, especially then.
If a meeting ran over and he was meant to collect a pump or fetch a child, he’d find a way to do both and still ask the security guard at the gate how his daughter’s exams went.
He didn’t discuss his principles; he practiced them.

He carried a quiet Anglican faith that grounded him.
Not a loud faith, not a list, but a way of walking.
He believed we are held, even when life feels unsteady.
And he trusted that the work of our hands — the pipes we lay, the children we teach, the kindness we choose — is its own prayer.

We will miss his warm laugh.
Those bear-hug hellos that lifted you off your feet.
And our morning coffees that took the rush out of the day.
We will miss the way he stood slightly sideways when he listened, giving you all his attention, as if there was nowhere else to be.

There is grief today, and there is gratitude.

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Grief because Dan is not here to argue over the braai flames, to tune his guitar, to jog out onto a dusty cricket pitch with a baggy hat and too much sunscreen on his nose.
Gratitude because we got him at all.
Because taps run in places where there were once only buckets and hope.
Because children learned to keep their eyes on the ball and their hearts open.
Because our home, and many others, are stronger for his hands and his heart.

In a little while, we'll hear Johnny Clegg's The Crossing.
Dan loved that song.
It sounds like walking forward together, even when the way feels hard.
It sounds like what he believed: that love and courage make a path.

So how do we honour him?
We keep our word.
We make the extra call.
We fix the small things.
We stand on the touchline and clap for someone else's child.
We pour the coffee and take the time to ask, How are you, really?
We choose fairness when no one is watching.
We show up.

Dan, my love, thank you.
For the steadiness.
For the mischief.
For the work you did quietly and the joy you gave loudly.
For 18 years of partnership that felt like home.

We let you go with aching hearts.
And we carry you with us in all the ways you taught us to live — gently, bravely, and together.

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