Afternoon, everybody. Thanks for squeezing into the conference room. I'm Dana, and I've worked with Gary for fifteen years, which is long enough to know exactly which story to tell.

The mug.

Gary has been drinking out of the same mug since 2011. It's chipped in two places. The handle has a crack you can see daylight through. It says something on the side that hasn't been legible since the Obama administration.

During the office move in 2018, facilities threw it out. Reasonable people would let that go. Gary filed a written request. In writing. To get a mug out of a dumpster. And he won, and that mug is sitting on his desk twenty feet from this room right now.

I want everyone here who is under thirty to understand something. That is not a story about a mug. That's a story about a man who does not let go of things that are his, and that includes people.

I've watched him do it for fifteen years. When Priya's project got cut, Gary spent a week arguing it back to life. When we lost two people off the team in one month, Gary is the one who stayed late and covered it without mentioning it to anyone above him. Every single person hired onto this team since 2014 has had Gary walk into their cubicle in the first week, sit down uninvited, and ask them how they were actually doing.

There was a conference in Phoenix where the fire alarm went off at four in the morning, and I came out into the parking lot to find Gary in a hotel robe, taking attendance. Actual attendance. Counting us.

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Coach, you're sixty today. You've got a truck in your garage that has been almost finished for six years, a fishing spot you refuse to tell any of us the location of, and a grandson who is going to be a much better shortstop than you were.

My wish for you is that the countdown to retirement moves slower than you expect, because a lot of us aren't ready.

Everybody, raise whatever you've got. Even if it's a chipped mug.

To Gary. Happy sixtieth.

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