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Good afternoon, everyone.

I’m Sam, and after 28 years with this company—since 1998—it feels both humbling and a little surreal to stand here and say: it’s time for me to retire.

I joined as a junior analyst in Operations, wide-eyed and very sure I knew far less than the people around me.
That turned out to be true—and also the best possible starting point.

Along the way, I had the privilege to lead the data migration during the 2008 platform overhaul.
It was a test of patience, checklists, and coffee, and it showed me that good architecture is really just disciplined teamwork in slow motion.

In 2013, I received the Service Excellence Award.
I keep it not as a trophy, but as a reminder of the standard my colleagues set for me every day.

That same year gave me one of my favorite memories.
During the final days of the product launch, the printer gave up on us.
So Priya, Mark, and I sat on the floor and labeled test builds by hand—marker fumes, bad jokes, and all.
We shipped on time.
We learned that persistence—and some good humor—solve most problems more reliably than any single tool ever will.

In 2020, I helped coordinate the cross-department QA initiative that cut defects by 35 percent.
What mattered most wasn’t the metric; it was watching silos loosen, voices get louder, and people own outcomes together.

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If I have a proudest contribution, it’s helping build a culture where new voices are heard.

Over these years, I’ve mentored more than a dozen new hires.
They taught me as much as I taught them.
If any of you are in the room: thank you for asking the questions that made our work better—and for reminding me that integrity, reliability, and craftsmanship are daily habits, not slogans.

I want to thank Karen Lewis for steady guidance and trust, and the Operations team for the backbone you provide every single day.
You made it easy to show up fully, even on the hard mornings.

What’s next for me?
A bit more sawdust and a few more trail miles.
I’m looking forward to restoring a couple of stubborn old radios, volunteering at the local makerspace, and finally finishing that cedar canoe that’s been patiently waiting for fresh ribs and a proper varnish.
Most of all, I’m excited for more time with my family, who have quietly supported every late night and early start.

To everyone here—thank you for the work we shared, the standards we kept, and the laughter that carried us through crunches and curveballs.
Hold fast to teamwork.
Keep mentoring.
Insist on integrity.
And keep making room for the next voice at the table.

It has been an honor to be your teammate.

Thank you.

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