

Good afternoon, everyone,

thank you for gathering to celebrate the retirement of our colleague and friend, Michael Carter—though most of us know him simply as Mike.

Eighteen years is a long time to measure, not just in projects and tickets closed, but in habits formed, standards raised, and the quiet expectations we now take for granted because someone showed us how things ought to be done.

Mike joined us in 2008 as a Support Analyst.

A difficult role to start with—high volume, high stakes, and very little margin for error—yet he approached it with the same calm precision that would become his hallmark. Within a few years, in 2012, he led the Phoenix CRM rollout, a project that touched nearly every corner of the business. Many of us remember the planning sessions that looked more like orchestra rehearsals than status meetings—every section tuned, every handoff rehearsed—because Mike would not send anything live that he wouldn't be proud to sign his name to.

In 2015, he was promoted to Senior Systems Specialist.

Titles never mattered much to Mike, but the work did. He became our go-to subject-matter expert for client integrations—the person you called when a legacy system insisted on being itself or a partner API changed with no notice whatsoever. Some of us learned to recognize the way he'd pause before answering a question, tracing the path of a packet in his head, and then give a reply that started with "Let's test that assumption first," which usually saved us six hours.

A turning point came in 2019, when he mentored fourteen new hires and built

our onboarding [playbook](https://myretirementspeech.com). It was more than a set of checklists. It carried his voice—specific, steady, almost conversational—and it anticipated the moment a person would get stuck and suggested a way forward. That playbook still lives on our intranet, annotated and current, because he wrote it in a way that invites improvement instead of pretending to be finished.

Those milestones sketch a career, but they do not fully describe the person behind the work.

What stands out, consistently and unmistakably, is Mike's reliability. Not the dramatic kind that shows up in a crisis—and yes, he did that too—but the everyday craftsmanship of doing a thing properly, even when no one is watching. He is humble in the way people are who care more for the outcome than for being credited. And he is, above all, team-first. He shares context before he shares opinions. He measures twice, not to slow a project down, but to save everyone from the rework they did not have time for anyway.

There is one story many of us tell because it captures his character with almost architectural clarity.

During the 2019 data-center migration, a mislabeled rack threatened to delay the cutover by a full day. There was a moment where you could feel the room tilt toward panic—dashboards were turning red; the schedule was losing its grip. Mike didn't raise his voice or look for someone to blame. He opened the panel, traced the lines, and quietly rewired it from memory. The screens steadied. The room exhaled. And when most people would have called it a night, he stayed late to document exactly what had gone wrong and how to prevent it. He did the visible fix and the invisible one—the part that makes sure the next person has a better day than you did.

That instinct has shaped our culture. It's there in our runbooks, our integration templates, our diagrams that make sense to people who didn't draw them, and the habit we now have of closing a task only after we've left breadcrumbs for the next person. We sometimes say, "Future us will thank us." In truth, future us

has been thanking Mike for years.

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Even in this final week, he's handing off his knowledge through recorded Loom sessions—clear, methodical, and somehow personable even on video—and hosting a brown-bag Q&A to make sure nothing gets lost in the shuffle. That, too, is Mike: leaving a place stronger than he found it, with fewer mysteries and more shared understanding.

Outside these walls, he is a person of many crafts.

In the workshop, shaping wood to fit the exact curve it was meant to have. On weekend trails, taking the long route because that's where the good view hides. With a jazz guitar, chasing a line that bends in a way only he can hear. And at the community makerspace, guiding others from idea to object, letting their hands do the learning while he stands just to the side, noticing the detail that will make the difference.

If you want to understand how he thinks, look at a finished cabinet with a hidden joint that will never split, or listen to the way he plays a standard—holding a steady rhythm underneath a melody that drifts and returns. It is the same mind that approaches a system: structure first, then improvisation; guardrails, then freedom. Reliability and curiosity in equal measure.

Today is not a goodbye to that mind or that presence—it's a marker.

A line between chapters. A chance to say aloud what we sometimes only imply through a quick nod in the hallway or a Slack emoji at 7 p.m. Thank you, Mike, for the hours you gave and the standards you set. For the bugs you fixed and the ones we never had because you designed them out. For mentoring not only new hires but also those of us who arrived years earlier and learned something new every time we asked you a question.

To the team, there is celebration ahead. We'll raise a glass properly in the fourth-floor lounge on Friday, and we will tell the stories that didn't make it into

this speech. I expect at least one disputed origin tale for a certain integration script. Bring your best version.

And to you, Mike, our wishes for the road ahead are simple and specific, in the spirit of how you work.

Long mornings in the workshop, when the light is good and there's time to let the plane do its quiet work.

Great trail weather, the kind that shows you the world in layers—shadow, fern, creek, sky.

Plenty of unhurried afternoons to teach your grand-nephew those first guitar chords, the ones that turn a hand into a song.

May you keep building, even if the plans now live entirely in your head. May you keep listening, even when the only sound is the scrape of a chisel or the click of a hiking pole on granite. And may you keep doing what you have always done best—making things that last, and helping people find their way.

On behalf of everyone here,

thank you, Mike, for eighteen remarkable years.

Enjoy the next chapter.

You have more than earned it.

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