

September 25, 2005

Dear John,

I was so sorry to see the notice in today's newspaper that your father had died. I know he meant the world to you. What a wonderful man he was! He was an example to us all. All those years when we were growing up, it was your dad who took us water-skiing and made sure our summer days weren't so boring that all we could think of was making trouble. His little "projects" we all hated—like scraping barnacles off the ski boat over spring vacation and painting your garage before we went back to school—I remember now as some of the best times of my youth.

I don't know if I ever told you this, but your dad helped me during one of the lowest times of my life. I had just graduated from college and was at a loss to know what to do. By then you were already in the Marines and away a lot. As you know, a life with that kind of structure would have driven me crazy, so that option was out for me. Your dad was so proud of you! But he also realized that the armed services were something I couldn't do. He was so generous with his time as we worked together rebuilding that old Dodge he bought. I got to know him really well during that long summer. What I didn't realize at the time was how well he was getting to know me. It was your dad who helped me get started as a graphic designer. He got me my first job and later on he helped and advised me as I set up my own agency.

There have been many people in my life who mean a lot to me. They include my family of course, the people I worked for, and the people who work for me. But your dad will always have a special place in my heart. He never tried to take the place of my dad, or treat me like a kid. He was always more a friend and mentor.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help. And let's get together some time soon. I am free for lunch every Tuesday. I will call you in a couple of weeks.

Sincerely,

Mark Smith