

September 25, 2005

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

I know we don't know each other, and please forgive me if this is an intrusion. I just had to write to you about my experience with your husband, John.

I worked with John several years ago on a project both our companies were invested in. We met in trying circumstances while we were both attempting to gather enough information to make a business decision that would both help our companies and us as well. We had a short and intense relationship as we worked figures, interviewed people more knowledgeable than ourselves, and finally came to conclusions that were surprisingly satisfactory to all parties.

I admired John more than any man I ever met. He was quiet and effective. He was also caring. He often reminded me that everyone counted, and it was up to us to find the best solution, not just a solution. John refused to be hurried on his way to those solutions, reminding me that: "A quick jump gets a canary eaten by the cat." It was sort of hokey, but it was pure John.

I haven't seen John in several years. We used to meet for lunch now and then, but I got transferred to a new city, and then got a job with another company. At that point we completely lost touch. A mutual friend called me this morning to tell me of John's passing.

I hope you and your daughters can find peace. John spoke of you all so often, and he missed you so much when we were working in New Mexico together. I am so sorry that he passed so early in life.

I wish you all the best.

Derek Smith or Joan Smith