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E te whānau, e ngā hoa, tēnā koutou katoa.

We gather today to remember and to honour Hemi Wiremu Rangi — our Dad — and to give thanks for the life he lived among us.

He was born on 5 July 1955 and left us at 68.
Raised in Rotorua, Te Arawa at his back, he learned early what it meant to stand with quiet strength and to serve without fuss.
He started his working life in forestry, hands rough with honest mahi, and later moved into teaching Māori arts at the local college.
There he found his calling — a patient teacher, a steady compass for many, and a man whose mana came from doing, not declaring.

Dad led kapa haka with pride and helped marae projects across our rohe, often the first to arrive and the last to leave.
A gifted carver and taiaha tutor, he shaped not just wood and movement, but people — especially our rangatahi — calling out their potential with a quick grin and a story that landed right where it needed to.

For 45 years he walked beside Mum, Mereana.
Together they raised the three of us — me, Tāne, my sisters Aria and Maia — and their circle widened again when he became Koro to five mokopuna.
At our table he was the calm at the head, the one whose voice would begin karakia and bring us together, especially when times were hard.

My favourite memory is simple.
Dawn at Lake Rotoiti, mist on the water, our lines quiet in the stillness.
Dad sang a waiata as the sun lifted over the hills.
No speeches, no lessons — just the rhythm of the lake, and a father teaching his son how to wait, how to watch, how to be.

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He loved waka ama.
He tended his kūmara and rongoā plants with the same care he showed his students.
He pulled out the guitar when the house was too serious.
And he cheered the Warriors with loyal optimism, a commentary all his own.

The values he carried are the ones we are called to carry on:
Whanaungatanga — relationships first.
Manaakitanga — hospitality that leaves no one outside.
Kaitiakitanga — guardianship of bush, lake, and people; he advocated for conservation and backed youth leadership because he believed the future deserved good ancestors.
Humility — do the mahi before the kōrero, and let your work speak.

What we will miss most is his voice leading us into stillness,
his presence steadying a room,
and the way he could offer gentle wisdom without making you feel small.

Today our service holds waiata and mihi, fitting for a life that wove people together.
In lieu of flowers, the whānau welcomes koha to the marae trust — a cause Dad supported in deeds as well as words.

Dad, you were our guide and our steady compass.
You taught us to keep our feet on the ground and our eyes on the horizon.
We will try to live in a way that would earn your quiet nod — hands busy, hearts open, and stories shared around the table.

Haere rā, e te matua.
Moe mai rā.
Your song carries on in us.

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