

From Collin Sanders:

Death and I have never been terribly well acquainted. I've never had to witness its slow inevitable march, or confront its brutal finality. The loss of my father, Jim Sanders, has pushed me into uncharted waters. One of the cornerstones of my world has been spirited away somewhere unreachable. The void left in me by my father's death cannot be filled by words or memories. It is a hole in my being, a piece of me carved away.

Though that may seem bleak, it is a thought from which I draw great strength. While that missing part of me will never be repaired, there are other parts of me that have grown stronger through this. They are the parts of me that exist because they were also parts of him. They grow stronger every day that I recognize just how much his wisdom, his compassion and his character shaped the man that I am, and the man I aspire to be.

I cannot express how much the tributes left for dad have meant to me and Barbara, my mom. I knew my father was a man who left his mark on the world. I knew there were people who looked up to him, who admired him. But I never could have known just how far and how deep his influence stretched. When I read the dozens upon dozens of beautiful tributes that all of you have written, I'm struck by the realization that his greatest legacy is not his work, his awards or his accomplishments. His legacy is me. His legacy is you. His legacy is every woman he inspired, every man who reached for something more because of his guidance, every person he pushed to greatness.

Thank you all for being a part of that legacy. Most of all, thank you for showing me just how far that legacy reaches.