



Dear Calder,

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Senior Pastor of Nicholtown Baptist Church/ Executive Director- P...



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Calder, I know you're in heaven making everybody smile, and I don't want to be selfish and ask you to pause from your jubilation. But I thought I'd write you a quick letter to say thank you. I'd like to believe that you have made friends with everyone in heaven and you'll call a few of them to the side as you read this letter out loud.

Calder, last night, we had the Annual Furman Upstate Diversity Leadership Award Banquet. We had a blast. You would be delighted to know that the award recipients are sensational people/organizations that are revolutionary and transformative in their work. I was honored to receive an award in your name, just as many other people who came before me. Words can't explain the felicity of my heart. I don't know what can explicate the merriness of my soul. Calder, I'm truly humbled. I'm a better person because of what I heard you say, and what I saw you do. The way you lived your life left a pattern for all of us to emulate. Again, I say thank you.

I got a chance to hug your friends/colleagues Benny, Megan, and Don last night and they looked great! I didn't see Juan, but I'm sure I'll run into him soon. You would be so ecstatic to see what Nika White, Jil Littlejohn and Zachary Brewster have been able to accomplish. David Taylor is doing some incredible things as well. Those are just to name a few. But I think everyone whose life you've touched, they're making a major impact in their own way.

Calder, are you still reading? Are your heavenly friends still next to you? Good. I want you to lean in close for the last few lines of this letter because I think you should know

your wife Glenda.

After the ceremony, as I was exiting out of the room, I had a moment to spend with Glenda. Calder, I promise you, the moment I looked into her eyes it seemed like everything stood still. It was as if time had lost its purpose and an eternity of love and compassion was staring me in the face. I was getting ready to try and say something to her, but before I could get out two words she said: "I know" and then we embraced each other. When she said "I know", instantly something started to heal inside of me.

Calder, your wife Glenda made me feel like what I had to say was not that important. But instead, she made me feel like who I was as a person, was more important than any words that I could ever utter. Calder the first intimate conversation you and I had, I told you how growing up I always felt like my life didn't matter. I felt black sheepish in every way. And to be honest, my entire adult life has been spent trying to prove the world wrong about me. But last night, when I made eye contact with Glenda, I felt a healing take place. Her eyes spoke to my soul. When we embraced, it felt as if her heart pierced through my 37-year-old heart and hit places that had been wounded and neglected. I kept trying to walk past her, but her compassion and grace were magnetic, and I kept going back for more hugs. And with every hug another judder of healing took place.

While she didn't say many words, her eyes, her presence, her grace, and her dignity said more to me than anything I've heard in 37 years. She was the real hero in the room. I'm not sure if she even realized what was happening. The last gesture she made was, she kissed her fingers and placed her fingers on my cheek. I can still feel the compassion of her touch on my cheek. Calder, she is a remarkable woman. In my humble and personal opinion, Glenda won an award last night for helping start the process of healing a wounded heart.

Well, Calder, I think I've held you and your friends up long enough. I'm looking forward to the day when I can see you again. The Upstate is a better place because of you. So again, I say THANK YOU... Now carry on with your jubilation. We are looking forward to experiencing it with you one day.

P.S. If you happen to see Jennie Ve Boatright, Christine Blue or Herman Jefferson, will you tell them I MISS THEM...

Your friend... Darian Blue





Senior Pastor of Nicholtown Baptist Church/ Executive Director- Phillis Wheatley Assoc.
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