CELEBRATION OF LIFE

SPEECH FOR

BILL BRYAN

REVISED

Good afternoon and my special thanks to you all for being here today to celebrate the life of my wonderful wife and your friend, neighbor, colleague and family member, Kerry. Kerry influenced and inspired … and was inspired by, just about everyone in this room and she lives on through the sparkle in the eyes of her children, Tyson, Kacey, Jamie, and Seana and Kari, my daughters from a previous marriage-Isn’t this an awesome blended family? She lives on in the laughter we hear from her grandkids, Devin, Quin, Kyle, Olivia, Reid, and even Maeve, our newest grandkid, who is starting to smile and laugh and reflect the joy that Kerry shared. She lives on through the generosity she spread freely and the compassion she evoked in all of us. We are all blessed to have known and loved Kerry and today we have reminisced about the times we’ve shared and the gifts she’s given to all of us. Today it is clear that Kerry Bryan’s life was one well lived and was filled with gifts both received and given.

I have been the most blessed individual to have been the husband, best friend and companion of Kerry Bryan. We were married on September 23, 1995 in the backyard of our home in Chino Hills. That day marked the beginning of the most wonderful journey of my life. Kerry and I shared a special mutual love and respect and I have no doubt that I am a better person for having been blessed with Kerry’s love and support. God may have tried to give Kerry a “HEAD’S UP” about me and he may have hinted that I might be a handful, but I’m sure he also told her that I would love her as no other, and I did, and I do, and I will. No one has had such a profound impact on my life. I know that even though we had known each other throughout our lives-and I had even worked with her father, Ray, destiny truly did bring us together to share a very special place in time and I am so blessed to have shared my life with this beautiful woman-my true companion.

What made Kerry so special, besides **EVERYTHING**? Well, let’s see.

Kerry genuinely loved people and dedicated her life to celebrating her friends and family. She was easily the kindest and most caring person I have ever met and her consideration for her “nearest and dearest” was beyond words. She loved nothing more than gathering our family and friends to acknowledge birthdays, graduations, and special landmark events in our children’s and grandchildren’s lives. Family was tremendously important to Kerry and so was tradition. She loved to commemorate celebrations with the family, and being together on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with all of her decorations adorning every room were some of the highlights of her year. Oh yes, Kerry had more Christmas decorations than you can imagine, saved over many years with new ones collected along the way. The same ritual occurred every year and somehow, she found a place to store them in a small attic area in our game room. Just getting in and out of there and storing 20 + boxes was a challenge. It would have been good training ground for Navy Seals in close encounter logistic training. Our home had holiday decorations in every corner, and it transformed that period into happiness, family, togetherness and appreciation of the overall beauty that time of the year evokes.

The Super Bowl was always a big event in our household and became lovingly known as the annual “chili cook-off.” Kerry was the embodiment of family spirit and celebration and she gave us all some wonderful memories because of it. Kerry was also as selfless as she was generous and made a point to give to those not as fortunate as we were. She devotedly contributed to many worthwhile causes like World Vision, Shoes that fit, Marine Corps. Semper Fi injured Marine fund, Inland Humane Society, Foundation for Kids just to name a few. She also taught our grandchildren to be thankful and give back and each year Kerry made it a tradition at Christmastime to give charitable contributions in honor of each child. Several years ago she had the idea to eliminate exchanging gifts among the adults but initiating a drawing in the current year among the family – the winner would name their charity on Christmas Eve and the rest of the family made contributions to that organization. Of course she made the winner give a speech to tell everyone why he or she selected his or her particular charity.

Kerry was compassionate and approachable and always had a shoulder and an ear to lend when someone needed advice. People knew that Kerry had an innate sense of intuition and common sense and even though someone else may have been weighted down to bear the burden of others; Kerry was steadfast in her moral and emotional support of those who needed her.

Kerry loved to travel and being who she was, wanted to share that passion with others. She and I had taken countless trips to the Islands and many cherished memories come to mind from those great tropical days we spent together relaxing, exploring and enjoying each other, but remember… Kerry also loved occasions and celebrations! In 2010, after she had completed her chemo treatments, we spent about 10 days on the big island and, Kerry, being **Kerry**, had the brainstorm that it would be great to return the following year with all of our family, and that’s exactly what we did! We gathered the entourage-from my 90 year old Mom to our youngest grandchild Reid ….and even including our future yet to be born granddaughter, Maeve Annalise, and off we went …AND HOW-WEE, it was WOWIE in MAUI!!! I know all of us are so thankful for the time we got to spend together and for the indelible memories that have been etched into our hearts forever. Kerry and I had many other travel adventures t through the years. It didn’t matter if we were rained out in North Carolina for 10 days –and I only got to play golf 3 times, being with Kerry in the shelter of the porch of an old southern mansion was blissful…except there was **a little less** golf than I would have liked… (**say this a little dejectedly and wait for the laugh**). From trekking the rolling green hills of Ireland and Scotland to navigating the crowded streets of New York with our granddaughter, Devyn, from motor home trips up the coast to amusement park experiences with our kids and grandkids, multiple summer vacations on the beach in San Diego and elsewhere, life was a celebration and Kerry was the consummate hostess and companion. We had a number of journeys planned after retirement that did not come about due to health impacts (**crises? issues? restrictions? Please choose 1-I don’t know if impacts is the right word**) however there was never a regret on either of our parts. We lived as one and found greater comfort in the space we shared regardless of where we were.

Kerry was a brilliant light in all of our lives. She was even incandescent when she was working. I loved to watch her conduct her business at SCE. It didn’t happen that often, but I loved the further insights I got as I observed this magnificent woman manage a professional situation. And although she tried to tell me, “Billy, you know I really am an introvert,” she was also a poised professional who was adept at managing all situations with warmth, compassion, articulation and grace.

I know it may seem that we lived an idyllic and harmonious life **ALL** the time, and for the most part we did, although we did have our “moments.” Let’s call those “duets” “**OPINIONCIZE”** for lack of a better word. Whether we practiced our debate skills immersed in spirited discussions about remodeling and adding those final touches that make a house a home, or which plants to put where in the back yard, or where and how to place pictures-you get the idea, we wrangled, we pro’d, we con’d we caved….or should I say, **I** was usually the one to cave in…. I have to say that although we weren’t resolving the issues of the world; even a “contretemps” with Kerry is a cherished memory. Thanks to one of the fights…I mean **debates,** I conceded, there is now a large pair of flip-flops above our bathtub, and you know what? I like them!!! They suit the space…Darn it! She was **RIGHT**!

When Kerry was diagnosed with cancer, it was certainly something we never expected, actually, who does? But once again, even a life-threatening crisis was handled with optimism and dignity. She approached adversity as she had done with other journeys in life-with strength, commitment, spiritual faith, consideration for her family and others and of course, her innate grace. Naturally, in private she wondered why it was happening, but Kerry’s strength always supported her. Even when I had my own health challenges at the same time as she was working through her own treatment and recovery, she focused on the positive and in taking care of me. Words cannot express how blessed I felt to have this wonderful companion in my life.

Kerry was a courageous, compassionate, caring, open-minded and resilient woman who was an inspiring matriarch, a wise consultant, a trusted friend and a cherished **companion**. I believe that the love Kerry and I shared is one that is not often found. We enjoyed each other, laughed together, understood, respected, and loved one another for who we are; we were true **companions** (**partners instead of companion? I don’t want to repeat companion**) and I am forever grateful for having her in my life. If God had said, “You can only have 17 years of marriage in this life with Kerry,” I would have accepted that immediately.

She was as genuine as they come and the faith that she freely shared and the gift of her spirit will live on in her legacy-her children and grandchildren, and in the memories and moments she shared with all of us.

We are all better people for being blessed by the unique and loving touch of Kerry Bryan and she will never be forgotten.

“I give you this one thought to keep”

I give you this one thought to keep

I am with you still I do not sleep

I am a thousand winds that blow

I am the diamond glints on snow

I am the sunlight on ripened grain

I am the gentle autumn rain

When you awaken in the mornings hush

I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight

I am the soft stars that shine at night

So not think of me as gone I am with you still

In each new dawn

Thank you Kerry. We love you.