50TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

MARY BILSON

Hi everyone! I am so excited to be here to celebrate the **BIG ONE** with my fantastic, wonderful, kind, sweet, caring **OLDER** sister, Patty **(? Is this correct? wasn’t clear if the birthday girl is Patty or Kathy. I apologize if it’s wrong**). I have always looked up to Patty as my beacon, my trendsetter, my guide, my career counselor-my **EVERYTHING**. She’s funny and fun, she’s loving and kind, she’s spontaneous, adventurous, beautiful, loyal, responsible, thrifty …uh…more about that later! And best of all, she let me live!! …More about that later too! Let’s just say that I cannot imagine what my life would have been like without her- I probably would have been slumming in a yurt somewhere if not for her guidance, friendship and caring-let’s face it, whether she realizes it or not, I **LIVED** to walk proudly in the footsteps of my magnificent big sister, Patty. Think of it –she really established the blueprint of my life--she babysat for the neighbor’s kids, and then I took over. She worked for Davio’s as a waitress-I worked there as a hostess. She worked at FHP, and guess what? So did I!! She became a nurse-guess what I became? Yup! A nurse!! And it goes on and on and….

As I thought about this occasion and what I might say, I found some thoughts from others about sisters. (**Turn to your sister and say**) You know Patty, there’s an expression that goes, “Having a sister is like having a best friend you can’t get rid of. You know that whatever you do, they’ll still be there.” Nope…You really **CAN’T** get rid of me! Someone else said, “It’s great to grow up with a sister-someone to lean on, someone to count on…. someone to **TELL ON**…..!!! **OH**…I **KNOW** the feeling!!! And let’s not forget the poignant sentiment, “I smile because you’re my sister. I laugh because there’s **NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT**!!! **Mwwwwwaaahahahahahaaa**!!

But really, growing up with Patty was an absolute **BLAST**. Ah, the childhood games we used to play. She’d transform our bunk beds into forts. She’d roll back her upper eyelids and turn them inside out and **GROSS** us out. She’d take a flashlight and make faces and scare the **CRAP** out of us. But the best was… who can ever forget the genius game she invented? How many hours of sheer …fun? Mischief? Terror? …did we spend playing the legendary game “**Hot Dog**?” Hey Patty, remember **HOT DOG**? Well, I DO!!! Patty had this great imagination and one day she came up with this game called Hot Dog. She would roll us in layer upon layer of blankets and she would name each of the layers as the rolls grew fluffier and fluffier…”This is the mustard, and this is the ketchup and this is the relish…” and then she would push us off the top of the bunk bed or down the stairs and yell, “**HOT DOG**!!!!” I suppose in retrospect, we should be thankful for 2 things:

1. We’re still alive
2. At least she didn’t call the game “**PIGS IN BLANKETS!**.” (**Wait for the laugh**). Indeed…I’m grateful for little favors!

Yes, Patty taught us how to play and how to dream, um that is, she and Kathy were playing and imagining…. while I was sleeping and dreaming. I would hear stories of the poster with the magic castle that was in our room and every night a beautiful fairy would come out of the poster and take the 2 of them to a wondrous place where they were even able to fly and that apparently had the most delicious and decadent “**all you can eat buffet**” that a kid could want. Patty swore she really would have taken me, but she always said she didn’t want to wake me. Oh the tears I shed over **THAT ONE**!!!

And yes, chasing me around the house singing the Monkee’s song, “Mary, Mary, where are you going to?” …yep…that worked my tear ducts too, but growing up with Patty was not all missed opportunities for trips to Fantasyland and dive bombing in hot dog drag. Patty taught us all about anatomy as she experimented with finding the answer to, “How many fingers can I stick up my nose at one time for maximum gross out factor without actually ripping my nostrils off my face?” Or we explored burning fashion issues, like how badly would she beat the crap out of me if I dared to touch her stuff? And there was always the nightly suspense of, “Will she or won’t she?” …be home on time for dinner? With our father’s military zeal for dinner to begin at 6pm sharp-no excuses, Patty always walked the line… she was a pioneer in pushing the punctuality envelope as well as our dad’s buttons. I would pray she would arrive on time … or she would get some major discipline …. Like it really made a difference! …But somehow she survived our family’s dinner curfew…

Patty has retained her spirit, her humor and her joy throughout her life and I’m sure every person in this room has “Patty Stories.” She still inspires me and makes me laugh and I am so grateful to share her DNA …and so many experiences with her. I remember when we ran our first marathon together about 10 years ago. We trained passionately for the 5K, but wouldn’t you know, when we went to register, somehow we got on the wrong line and Patty, being Patty, talked me into doing the full marathon. The next day we ran 26.2 miles. **OUCH!!!**

Other cherished highlights with Patty include our recent trip to New Jersey to attend a wedding. All I can say is HYSTERICAL! Patty really knows how to check out a plane….from **Every**. **Single**. **Seat**.

(**Turn to Patty and say**) Patty, I love you. I love that you’re my big sister. I love the joy and passion and humor and love and caring you bring to life. You’re a wonderful mother-and I am sure your 4 fantastic kids would agree with me on **THAT**, you’re beautiful, adventurous, smart; you’re resourceful, you take care of others before you take care of yourself, you are easily the neatest coupon clipper I have ever known, and quite honestly, there is **NO ONE** on earth that I’d rather dumpster dive with (**UH OH**!!). I love that I can be silly, stupid, obnoxious with you and you’ll just think, “Eh, so what else is new?” … and accept me just the way I am. You have the biggest heart of anyone I know and you are, quite simply, **awesome**. I love you!

Patty, I wish you the happiest of birthdays and may we laugh and cry and clip and dive together for many, many years to come. Thank you for inspiring me throughout my entire life, and may you have all that you wish for.

**HAPPY BIG ONE!!**