HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY

SPEECH FOR

ANNE MARIE SHEELEY

Hello everyone and thanks for being with us to share this **rockin’** birthday celebration for the best brother in the world, my brother John! I hope you’re all ready to party and dance like there’s no tomorrow, because today we celebrate… **YESTERDAY!** And speaking of “yesterday,” given the theme of this birthday celebration, and given the names of my 2 great brothers, John and Paul, I wonder why our parents stopped at 3? All we needed was a Ringo and a George and we could have had the 2nd set of Beatles in our family!! So to paraphrase my brothers’ namesakes, (**Turn to John and sing**) “They say it’s your birthday…. We’re gonna have a good time!!!”

John, I know that everyone here today is so thrilled to wish you a very happy birthday. Many of our guests have been there to celebrate your achievements and milestones since the beginning (**If you want to inject a little humor to make the speech a little easier for you and to ease the tension a little, you can say**) – Of course this means we know how old **THEY ARE**….me? Well, **I’ll ALWAYS BE YOUNGER**! Spoken like a true little sister!

John, whether you realize it or not, you have been my role model and my guide through life. I have always been inspired by your enthusiasm, tenacity, and sheer joy you get from just about every experience you have, and I was watching and learning all the time. Even though Paul did what he could to watch over both of us, having you as my big brother has prepared me for life in the most unlikely of ways. Let me give some examples. Who in this room has ever been challenged by John to arm wrestle? Show of hands-if you can still move your arms… uh…that would be just about all of us, right? Well, I arm-wrestled with John too… **LOTS OF TIMES**. And guess what I learned? John taught me **tenacity**. He tackled each challenge as though mine was the **last arm on earth** and no matter what-my arm would be **pinned down**. He just wouldn’t give up until he won. He **never** let me win … Thanks, John! I carry that image with me every day and I am inspired to fight on when necessary. I also remember there were times when we were kids, and some other kids might have teased him, I realized that those incidents taught me **advocacy**. They taught me tolerance. They taught me that when the going gets tough, be proud of your family-even though one of them might try to break your arm every couple of weeks. (**Say this with a little exaggeration and wait for the laugh**). And John, I remember Christmas mornings so clearly. I remember that as we were opening all of those seemingly **zillions** of presents waiting for us under the tree, your favorite gift was a calendar. Who knew that observing your appreciation of that undemanding, simple gift would teach me about **gratitude**. John, I know today is your day and right about now, everyone thinks you’re great-and **YOU ARE** (you, too, Paul!) but there were other lessons you taught me. How about all of those times when we needed you to do something, and you JUST. DIDN’T. WANT. TO. And you folded your arms, dug your heels in, stood firm and **REFUSED**. **GUESS WHAT**? I learned from those times too! I learned the delicate art of **negotiation**!!!

There are so many other life lessons I learned from you, and because of you, I am a better person. I know how much you love work and I always admired your dedication to your job. No matter the weather-snow, sleet, rain … and we all know how much you **HATE** the rain; you refuse to ever miss a day of work. Your dedication to your responsibilities is AWESOME and I owe a great deal to you for teaching me incredible work **ethics** and **responsibility**. I guess you can say that I am who I am today because of you. Any admirable qualities I possess- devotion, tenacity, ethics, **biceps** (**Wait for the laugh**) is all thanks to you. You are an awesome older brother and I cannot imagine what life would be like without you.

I also know how much you love to dance, so as the Beatles said in that birthday song,

“Yes, we’re going to a party party….

I would like you to dance….

Take a ch-ch-ch chance…..**Dance**!!”

(**Walk up to John and say**), John, **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** from the bottom of my heart.. May I have this next dance!!! (**If you can play and dance to “Birthday” by the Beatles, that would be great).**

Thank you all for sharing this great day with us!