90TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

KEVIN KESSLER

Hi everyone!!! We’re all gathered tonight (**today?**) to celebrate this amazing milestone… my dad’s 90th birthday… Well, he THINKS we’re here to celebrate his birthday, but the truth is, we needed an excuse to get him out of the house for a few hours to give the house a little rest. No handyman work today!! I think I just heard Mom breathe a sigh of relief!! (**Wait for the laugh**) All jokes aside, this is a monumental moment in life and I am so proud to have Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Kessler as my father, and even prouder to have inherited his genes! As we all know, he has led an exemplary life filled with service, intelligence, humor, compassion, and even a little fix-it prowess….my mother might say **very little…** and he has maintained his joy for life for 9 inspirational decades.

Although his beginnings were humble, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has shown how a person can build a magnificent life with determination, resilience and humor. He began his existence on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**date and place**). He was born poor and learned at an early age what it meant to work for what one has. After serving is country in World War II in the Air Force and earning a purple heart for valor, he proudly flaunted his tenacity and re-enlisted for another tour. After that it was on to medical school, meeting and marrying Mom, and then…. along came the kids-us. It has been one of the greatest gifts of my life to have this man as my father, and apparently, I tested and trained him well. He may have seen action in World War II, but folks, he didn’t know what action was until he met me!!! Of course, my sister \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is great, but one of life’s true tests is the one where you have to raise a kid who is a handful, and that was me. From the time I was 3 years old, I provided opportunities for my parents to learn, grow and hone their patience genes. They tried to tame me at 3. They did their best to attend to me and heal me through “the hernia years” at 5. By the time I was 8 years old, my “saintly and patient” father threw me off the baseball team for cursing. I didn’t get it. I thought it was creative use of vocabulary at the time! (**Wait for the laugh**) By 12 I was dangling off the edge of the Grand Canyon, and at 16, I was in 5 car accidents and had received multiple tickets. Somehow I made it to 19 and was almost arrested for **EVERYTHING**. …And through it all, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Kessler was there, steadfast and true, patient and virtuous. Yes, he was the “good” parent as my mother polished her elocution and vocal projection!! Now I have 3 kids of my own and I can only aspire to be half the father to my kids that my father has been to me. Of course, there is the possibility that payback is something that rhymes with “stitch,” so I hope my kids’ ears were covered during parts of this speech! (**Wait for the laugh**).

(**Turn to your father and say**) Dad, there’s an appropriate irony when we consider the path you chose in life. You became a doctor and were surrounded by “**patients**,” yet you taught everyone in life who you touched what a real virtue “**patience**” is. Your selfless dedication to your family, friends and neighbors has healed and calmed and supported people for most of your life (and theirs). You were there for everyone and anyone who needed you and now, with love and pride, we are here for you, to celebrate and honor, you, husband, father, (**brother?**) healer, friend. I am sure that although birthdays are usually an occasion for the birthday boy to receive gifts, everyone in this room would agree that **YOU** are the best gift any of us could ever want.

(**If you want to make a toast, you can say**) Here’s to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Kessler Have a happy, healthy birthday, and although Bob Hope once said, “I’m so old they’ve cancelled my blood type,” you will always be **OUR** type! We love you!

Thank you!