50TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

FOR

MOHAN KAMATH

Hello everyone!!! Today we are all blessed to be together to celebrate “Mohini and Mohan-The First 50 years!!” Just the thought of that stuns me!! I cannot believe that we have known each other and have been together for half a century!! It’s impossible!! (**If you want to make a little joke, you can say**) How can this be? Mohini looks young enough to be…my younger sister!! (**Wait for the laugh**). But in all sincerity, if you are in this room with us today (**tonight?**), you are close enough to have witnessed the “magic” that is Mohini and Mohan Kamath. I am blessed to be married to a woman who makes life very colorful and who keeps me on my toes! In the early years of our marriage, she beautified our world with her wonderful oil paintings and stained glass creations. She has enchanted us with her magnificently decorated cakes and her wonderful and delicious cooking, and she graces the rooms she enters not only with style and a joy for life, but we all know that her way with flower arranging lights up our lives as well. She is educated and truly interested in life and the world around her, and loves to talk and make friends with so many of the people she meets. Her selfless devotion to all of those in her life is an inspiration, and whether she is participating in temple festivities, caring for our grandchildren, or reading and learning as much as she can about Vedantha, the world is a richer place thanks to the contributions of my wife of 50 years. Although Mohini had a rich and long career in the ABC Unified School District and was adored by the school staff and students alike, she has earned her down time and she has now chosen to tackle and perfect her skills in water aerobics and bridge. An active mind and body energizes and inspires all of us, and as far as I am concerned, I am in awe of the pace she keeps and all that interests her! She is perpetually engaged in the joys of life, and quite frankly, it’s no surprise that these past 50 years have flown by!

I would have to say, and I am quite sure that Mohini would agree, that the two greatest “productions” of our marriage are our wonderful children, Mithra and Murali, and thanks to them (and their spouses) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we have been four times blessed with our adorable grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! When we look at them and see the promise of the future in their eyes, I know that both Mohini and I are overwhelmed with pride as we think of the beautiful family we have created and maintained throughout “the first 50 years.” I admit that we have been very protective and attentive to our children and grandchildren, but clearly caring for them is what we were born to do, and the great part of being grandparents is that we can visit them a few times a week, help out and play with the children, and then invoke “Grandparents Privileges”-in other words, we get to leave just as the going might get a little tough!! (**Wait for the laugh**). In all sincerity, we love our roles as “Ajja” and Bapama” and wouldn’t have it any other way.

For our 30th wedding anniversary in 1992, Mithra and Murali surprised us with a fantastic party. In 2002, we all celebrated our 40th, and here we are today, blessed with a beautiful family, wonderful friends, and the good health to enjoy and savor every minute of our lives and this special celebration. Thanks to my career in medicine for the past 35 years, I have had the privilege of working with many patients and really seeing other sides of life. My dermatology practice brought me close to many situations and having the privilege to care for people when they needed attention, and to help treat their medical issues gave me a special view of the world and really increased my appreciation of life and family. When I think of family, career and all of the travels we have been so blessed to experience-from our trips to Europe and Hawaii with our kids, or the many trips we made to places like Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, South Africa with our doctors’ group, I know that every mile traveled equals 1,000 smiles and great memories. More of those memories were made and enjoyed on our most recent trip to the Baltics, Helsinki, St Petersburg and Moscow. We love the company of our friends-yet another blessing in our lives, and special credit goes to Shalini Rao.

So, I am sure some of you may be wondering, “50 years…How’d they manage **THAT**?” I’ll tell you. We have our good days and challenging days, our differences of opinion and arguments, but after all is said and done, at the end of the day, we look at each other and know that the 2 people standing there are best friends and **partners**. We’ve built a beautiful life and our children and grandchildren are a reflection of our commitment to each other. Ultimately, it comes down to the words of Swami Chinmayananda, who said, “To love and be loved is the greatest happiness,” and “Happiness depends on what you can **give**, not what you can get.”

We thank you all for giving us your love and good wishes on this very special occasion and we look forward to the next 50 years of love, happiness and being with all of you! Thank you all!