70TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

JOSEPHINE RODRIGUEZ

Hi everyone and thank you all for being here with us on this very happy and momentous occasion. Today we celebrate the 70th birthday of our father, grandfather, husband, friend (**add brother if appropriate-I also can’t tell from the attachment if his mother, your grandmother, is still alive. If so, of course add the word son**) and humanitarian, Dr. George Laquis. (**Turn to your father and say**) Dad, I know you like to keep a low profile, but please allow us this opportunity to acknowledge you for all that you mean to us and for all that you do. You have spent your life giving to others and it is our turn to recognize all of the goodness and joy you’ve given to so many people.

It is not difficult for me to speak proudly or boast about my father, and I am sure my brothers, Georgie and Johnny and my sisters, Gaby and Joanna would agree (**Do you want to mention the child who passed? It is mentioned in the attachment-not sure if you want to include this**). Having George Laquis as a father has been the gift of a lifetime. Everyone in this room is blessed to know him. He has lived a life of devotion and faith, intelligence and compassion, for the past seventy years and this is just the **beginning**! Although he really is a family man and scholar, he is committed to making a lasting and positive impression to his patients, neighbors and country. We are so proud of his work for the people of Trinidad and Tobago and even more proud that he is this year’s recipient of the Chaconia Gold Award in Medicine. That’s quite an honor and one that has been earned and deserved for his lifetime commitment to serve his community.

Someone once said, “The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.” Dad, I have to say, and I am sure this is obvious to everyone, you definitely have that covered!! (**Say this with a little exaggeration and wait for the laugh**). We grew up in a household that was filled with love-where it was obvious how much Mom means to you, and it has inspired each one of us to appreciate and nurture the love and respect of and for other human beings. Although we know that you had your share of casual girlfriends growing up, you have said that the happiest day of your life was the day you met your best friend, your wife, our mother, Jacqui. We know how important family is to you and we are so proud to be a part of your joy.

You can tell the measure of a man by his legacy, and dad, you have clearly left your mark on this world. We all treasure the family that you and Mom have built. From the five of us to all fourteen grandchildren, each one of us cherishes the times we spend together. For the past nine years, we have been taking a family trip and I am sure we would all agree, that the memories we make each year on those trips are the most precious moments each one of us will remember.

As I said earlier, we all know that you prefer to live a more humble, or let’s say more introverted existence, but someone of your stature, integrity and wisdom must allow us to “glow” just a little. We know you’d probably rather be reading and learning something new, or taking a walk with Mom and discussing life, but consider this celebration as a way for you to learn. It’s a way for you to learn and really know how much you are loved, appreciated, respected and honored. Everyone deserves to know that. It’s a way for you to learn how much you mean to all of us, and it’s a way for you to learn that your life and legacy have been an inspiration and a rare gift to so many people. I guess we can also say that it’s ironic that someone so content with the simple things in life has such a grand acknowledgement as this party, but there you have it!!! Enjoy!!

(**If you would like to propose a toast, you can say this**) I would like to propose a toast to our honored “birthday boy”:

To our Father, Husband, Grandfather, Friend (**add brother if appropriate**) and inspiration, Dr. George Laquis, We wish you a happy, healthy birthday. May you have every single thing your heart desires and may we all be together for many, many more happy, healthy, inspired, unforgettable birthdays. Here’s to making even **MORE** great memories in the future! Amen!! We love you!