FATHER OF THE BRIDE SPEECH/TOAST

FOR

KEVIN HENDERSON

Hello everyone and thank you all for being here to share this joyous occasion. Today our very special daughter, Stormie, has married the love of her life, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I know that both families are thrilled to witness and experience the love that fills this space. (**Turn to bride and say**) Stormie, your beauty, both inside and out, is stunning on an ordinary day. Today you are absolutely radiant, and I have to say, I can’t help but think, and declare in front of God and all of these witnesses…instead of just to your mother as usual…. together we made some pretty gorgeous kids!! (**Say this if you have more than one child. If only one, then say, “ together we made a pretty gorgeous kid)!!!**! And let’s face, as you’ve all seen Stormie do quite well for herself in pageants, she may take after her mother in many ways, but thank goodness she inherited my legs!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). (**Turn to the groom and say**) …And as for **YOU**, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a long time ago, I heard someone say, “The reason why daughters and dads love each other so much is so there is at least one man in the world who will never hurt her.” When Stormie met you I realized that she is blessed to have **TWO** men that love her **THIS** much! Welcome to the family!

This may be the last time that I can officially speak of my daughter as my “little girl.” Of course she’ll always be that in my eyes, no matter how poised, determined and resilient she might be. From now on, her life shifts gears and she and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will officially begin to build their home and family, so I want to make sure I get my message of love, admiration and respect for this beautiful human being that I still cannot believe I’m lucky enough to call my daughter…. **except** for when she drives (**Wait for the laugh**). (**Turn to your daughter and say**) Stormie … **QUICK**!! What’s the difference between a flashing yellow light and a flashing red light??? And honey… please don’t say, “The color!!” (**Wait for the laugh**). What can I say about my daughter that any one of you here today doesn’t already know? Not much, I suppose, because let’s face it, Stormie, or as I like to call her, Punkie, is my favorite subject, and now that she’s married to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I bet there are going to be many, **MANY** new legends and stories to tell as she transitions from my little girl to a loving partner, wife and mother. (**Turn to the groom and say**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ just make sure to get the full comprehensive coverage on any new auto policy that gets transferred over!! (**Wait for the laugh**) Okay… I think I’m done with **THAT**… maybe…. We already know that Stormie can be as tough as nails or as lovely as lace. Her devotion to her family, friends, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and interests is an inspiration to observe. Her word is her bond and once she gives it, she works harder than I’ve ever seen anyone work to make sure she reaches her goals. Even though I’ve already made enough jokes about her skills behind the wheel, ironically, it’s her **DRIVE** in everything else she attempts and accomplishes in life that really sets her apart and distinguishes her from so many others. And **THAT** drive truly sets an example for all of us.

The great football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.” Now, I have a feeling that Coach Lombardi wasn’t thinking of banners and crowns when he shared that thought, but my daughter Stormie takes her steely determination with her wherever she goes and whatever she does, whether she’s pummeling the competition in all state softball or charming the judges in beauty pageants…. just ask the people that helped he plan this wedding!!! **Ouch!!** (**Wait for the laugh**). I’ve seen the depth of her focus-and not just as her father. I also had the privilege to coach her in softball until she went to college and her toughness, concentration and athleticism are awesome, if I do say so myself. I had no idea when I laid eyes on that little bundle of joy way back then that I would be blessed to have such a beautiful, talented, funny, and tough daughter and best friend. (**Turn to the groom and say**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, You’ve really gotten quite a treasure as your wife!!! … And I’m sure you already know that!

Of course there are millions of expressions about the “family that plays together….” and ours is no exception. From hunting and fishing to enjoying football games and travel, or just hanging out at the lake or chillin’ by the pool, Stormie demonstrates her love for life and for her family. (**Name your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are so proud of “our masterpiece”… of course some may say she’s kind of “high maintenance,” but that wasn’t **MY** doing (**Make an exaggerated wink**)…remember I was the one coaching and taking her to practice and watching her bleed through her cleats while pitching a no hitter…. of course then again, there were those trips to Italy, Costa Rica, and Mexico where I could actually smell the friction burns on my credit cards…just sayin’… (**Wait for the laugh**)…. (**Turn to the groom and say**) Hey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, she’s all **yours** now!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) On second thought, on this subject, I once heard someone say, “There’s no such thing as low maintenance or high maintenance, just a bunch of women hoping for a capable mechanic.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I promise you that **EVERYONE** in this room truly believes that you’re the man for the job!!

Joyous occasions like this wedding are wonderful interludes in this life we each live. Every day we work to make something of our lives and whether we’re employers or employees, student, parents, homemakers, family or friends, times like these give us the opportunity to come together, take a deep breath, and stop for a moment to really look around-to really look at the people we know and love and respect and admire. It’s a time to acknowledge where we’ve come from, how we’ve grown, who we’ve nurtured or been nurtured by, and see how much we’ve learned. As I look at this beautiful couple, it’s hard to believe that only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years ago, we were watching your first steps and kissing your boo boos, checking your homework, and then frowning at some of those **OTHER** first dates. Ah…. who can ever forget \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?? (**Name one of the really awful guys that Stormie might have dated**) But I digress… I’m really trying to take in every moment of this day, because a chapter has closed, and although you and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be close by, it’s time for both of you to begin your unique life journey together. I want to invite everyone in this room to take a minute and think of the people in your lives, and I want to encourage you to appreciate what gifts you have in the people close to you. Most days we tend to take our primary relationships for granted, but today, in honor of the new Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I invite you to acknowledge the love you have in your own lives-for yourselves, your family, and your friends. Life is really short, and time does go by awfully quickly. There was a man named Jimmy V who shared his wisdom about life very simply. He said, “If you laugh, you think, and you cry each day, that’s a full day-That’s a heck of a day. You do that seven days a week, you’re going to have something special. Believe me, I have been doing all three every day for the past several weeks…and not only when the bills started showing up!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Punkie, you’ll always be my little girl, but I can’t wait to watch your evolution into a wonderful wife, loving mother, and most importantly of all….. a better driver…. sorry I had to!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

To (**Groom**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, welcome to the family**, SON**. Both (**name your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are thrilled to have you as our new son, and we’re so happy you two will be close by. Oh, and… The lawn mower is in the garage and remember-go easy on the treats for (**Name your dog**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and while we’re at it…the plants need watering (**or name 3 other possibly annoying chores you can ask them to do now that you’re “free”**) …and don’t forget Tuesday is pizza night…and you’ll be buying!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I also want to welcome our newly extended family (**Name the groom’s parents, siblings, and whomever you think is appropriate**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Let’s hope that today is only the first of many, many wonderful family gatherings and may we all enjoy sharing those unforgettable moments together.

Well, Stormie and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I think I’ve spoken long enough to give the band (**or deejay-whichever is appropriate**) enough time to freshen up, but before I go, I would like to ask all of you to raise your glasses as I propose a toast:

To Stormie and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it’s been said that getting married is the best thing that two people can ever do. You now have something more important than your separate selves; you have the marriage to unite your lives into one. We all wish you only the best as you find strength, love and your future happiness and fulfillment in each other. Congratulations, we love you!