FATHER OF THE BRIDE SPEECH

FOR

TOM HILEMAN

Hello everyone and welcome to this joyous occasion for the Hileman family!! Lauren and James had their dream of how they wanted their wedding to be, and although duty and circumstance may have “inspired” this ceremony and reception to be later than they might have originally wanted, the anticipation, planning and determination all paid off!!! James, we are so proud of your work in the Navy and we’re so inspired by Lauren’s devotion to you…. or was the motivation all of that great traveling you guys got to do??? (**Wait for the laugh**). For whatever the reasons and situations that existed, and we all know how admirable they are, we’re here, in this spot, right now, celebrating this beautiful; couple and the love they have for each other. It’s funny how weddings tend to bring people together…. (**Make an exaggerated wink and maybe an elbow gesture and say**) watch out when love is in the air!! Cupid is hovering very close by and who knows? He just might strike again today…. I just want to say it appears to be a new Hileman tradition!! (**Wait for the laugh**) It’s so great to see so many of you that have traveled from so many far off places and we’re honored to share this moment with all of you. Of course, we all know that Lauren, our marathoner/athlete, probably would have run all the way from Germany if she could have…of course it might have gotten a little wet between Calais and New York but….

Someone once said that as a father raises his daughters, there’s something like a fine gold thread that is formed by the words and wisdom he shares with his little girls. As they grow up and the years go by, the thread of those thoughts and that love grows and grows until finally we can almost imagine that we can pick it up, find the end, and weave the cloth that feels like love itself. Lauren, as we watched you and encouraged you while you were growing up, we knew you were special. Your energy was off the charts and your athleticism was an inspiration. From your competitive dance career in high school to your perseverance in running the 2012 Chicago Marathon, I get tired at just WONDERING how you do it!! Like I said, if you could have run here from Germany…. !!! Your interest in life and work is inspiring and I love to hear about all that you tackle and conquer. Today is an acknowledgement of all that you’ve accomplished and all that you have become and will be, and we are so excited to share the adventures you and James are building on and about to experience. Remember that as you travel, no matter where you go or what you do, that veil of love made by those golden threads will be there to protect you and advise you, teach you patience and teamwork and the importance of having a partner that loves you so much-one who is really willing to work **with** you.

And speaking of Cupid!!! A few minutes ago I mentioned that he might strike again-he has a habit of doing that at Hileman weddings… I don’t know how many of you know this, but Lauren met James at her sister \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s wedding. Like I said, love was in the air then… and it’s back-right here in this beautiful and magical setting!!! To all the single people out there tonight, all I can say is… work it!!! You never know who’s sitting right next to you!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) James, that fateful meeting six years ago turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to this family-not only did I gain a wonderful new son-in-law who is a dashing Navy pilot, who knew that by the time that wedding was over, I’d be welcoming **ANOTHER** dashing and brave Navy pilot into the family!!! (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) It makes me feel a little like Prince Charles…. he has the “Heir and the Spare” and I have two terrific wingmen!! How many people can claim **THAT?**?? (**Wait for the laugh**) In all sincerity, I want to say that you know how much I love you and we’re so happy that you’re so good to our daughter. The both of you make a wonderful couple. You’re both such good sports… really… and I am very proud that you’re a part of our growing family.

I think it’s time to get back to the festivities but before I sit down (**You can say**) ... or get the hook… I’d like to propose a toast to our bride and groom:

To Lauren and James, Socrates may have said, “By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you’ll be happy….” You know how I fell… No need to complete the quote!! We wish you a lifetime of love, health and happiness!! Congratulations!! We love you! Let’s enjoy!