***ANNIVERSARY SPEECH***

***FOR***

***PHIL COATES***

Wow!!! I can't believe it's come to this!!! Who would have thought all those years ago, back in 1964, that we'd get to this point.....It's so exciting to see all of you together, in one room, in one place in time, to, of all things, celebrate US and our wonderful milestone anniversary!! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are truly touched ... but that's a whole other subject!!! We are thrilled to be here... And as the saying might go for others in similar shoes-others who might not be as lively and enthusiastic and as engaged in life and all it's adventures... We'd be thrilled to be anywhere!!! But for those who know us and love us best, and that would be ***all*** of ***YOU***, we're pretty sure that even though the wedding may have been an astonishing and landmark ***fifty years ago***, to us the party has JUST BEGUN!! We welcome all of you from places near and far and each mile that you've traveled to commemorate this day with us represents the endless blessings we count every day just by having you in our lives. As I look around the room I see a veritable United Nations represented... With friends and family from all over the world....let's see..... There's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the UK......... Over there I see our distinguished guests from Latin America........ and of course we have several delegates from our neighbors up north...... Let's hear it for the Maple Leafs in the house!!! and just think of the number of cities and regions of the US representing and celebrating with us right here, right now.... I don't know about YOU.... But to me... It looks like we could have our very own anniversary celebration to rival the WORLD CUP!! ***(Wait for the laugh***) Grab those vuvuzelas and let's make some noise!!!! .... Hmmm ... On second thought.....(***Wait for the laugh***)

It's been a wild and wonderful ride for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and myself for these past "few" years. Before I go any further, I think it's essential to ***recognize*** my beautiful, patient, brilliant wife..... Oh ***(look in her direction and say***) there she is... The blonde in the red dress... ***(Choose appropriate hair color and dress color and wait for the laugh***). I'd know her **ANYWHERE**!! ***(Turn to your wife and say***) Honey, I once heard a woman say that the best thing in life is to be married to your best friend.... Who doesn't remember a thing you say... Do you think that's true of us? I try to remember SOME things... I even listen to you on occasion...really!! ***(Wait for the laugh***). All jokes aside, as sports enthusiasts, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are completely aware of the benefits of being part of a cohesive, committed, successful team and at this point, we've lasted almost as long as those New York Mets ***(or find another 50 year old team that you relate to***)... Albeit with a better record, might I add !!

And speaking of Casey Stengel, the legendary manager of many a great baseball team including the Mets, he once said, "Finding good players is easy. Getting them to play as a team is another story." And that day back in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, when I met, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I knew I had found the person who, to me, would be the greatest teammate a guy could ever wish for....or to paraphrase Yogi Berra, "Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good too." He also said, "I guess I've got a pretty smart wife." You know what Yogi?? Me too!!! When we met it was "the dawning of the 'Age of Aquarius,'". Times were changing, a new world was emerging and a revolution, or "youth quake" was taking place... There was a young woman ***(describe how you met and what first impressions you remember and what you found intriguing***) and she was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I'll never forget she \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and when we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that was it. I knew my goose was cooked. And when we got married it was the swingin' sixties and there was an explosion of culture that showed itself in music, fashion and in the liberated ways we discovered to find the "groovy" in life. It was an exciting time to be alive and as young adults the new world we were inheriting gave us the foundation to really appreciate the diversity and vibrancy of all that was emerging and blossoming around us. Those times gave us the opportunity to begin our lives together colorfully and with unbridled optimism, and here we are, fifty years later and the colors and the music and the joy still resounds within us! Back then \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I were just two kids with a dream and a great soundtrack to inspire us on our journey as the road map of our lives stretched ahead of us waiting to be navigated.... And that's just what we did... We worked and we traveled and along the way we had three amazing children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. As our team expanded, we continued to count our blessings and strategized our next moves.... We technically may not have had enough players for a baseball team, and certainly not enough for a football team. We possibly could have eked by with a basketball team, but apparently our expansion plan was and possibly is, still in the works. What more could a man ask for than an amazing, lovely wife, 3 gorgeous children, and a life full of adventures, travels, great friends and interesting challenges??? Stir in some adorable grandchildren and they just throw that happiness train meter over the edge!! Thanks to wonderful children-in-law ... I think I just made that word up!!! ...Apparently celebrations bring out my creative side!! .... Like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we've been quadruply blessed with four awesome grandsons!!!!!! To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, remember the words of the humorist Sam Levinson when he said, "The reason why grandparents and grandchildren get along so well is because they have a common enemy...." But if you tell your mother or father I said that, I'll deny it!!! ***(Wait for the laugh).*** Oh dear...I just remembered something else he said...."Elephants and grandchildren have something in common. They never forget!"

You know, in planning what I was going to say today, I looked around and heard of stories of other married couples and how they celebrated their landmark anniversaries. It was funny, but the other day I overheard two men talking. The first acknowledged that they were about to celebrate another BIG anniversary-yes...as BIG as this one is for us. The second gentleman politely asked how his friend commemorated his twenty fifth anniversary, which of course, was quite an achievement. The gentleman wistfully replied, "Aaaahhhhhh.... Unforgettable.... I took my wife to Hawaii." The second gentleman was understandably impressed and replied, "Wow!! That sounds wonderful! How could you ever top that? What are you planning for your 50th?"... To which the first gentleman responded..... "I'm thinking of going back to get her!!" ***(Wait for the laugh***). Of course that would never and will never happen with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. First of all, we love being together and second of all, she knows too much!! That also reminds me of one of the classic lines from Henny Youngman who said, "I take my wife everywhere.... But she always manages to find her way back." ***(Wait for the laugh).*** You know what? I kind of feel bad for Henny, but then again, if he was married to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, he wouldn't have had his career!!

So once again, here we are, and as I look back on the past fifty years, I honestly have to say, I think I got a better deal than even Colin Kaepernick!! I mean, what's a guaranteed 61 million dollars when you could be married to a one in a zillion woman like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.... Oh... Let me take that back- you Can't be married to her...she's MINE!!! So Colin and everyone else will just have to settle for second best!! .... Especially those of you that dare to endorse the competition!!

I think you would all agree that to a large extent, the Beatles really were the troubadours of the sixties and speaking of the soundtrack of our lives, their lyrics had a way of allowing us to define and recognize what was going on within our circles of life. There are so many songs that became anthems, but when I think of how my life turned out, I'm happy to recall "Obladi,"

***(Recite as much or as little of the lyrics as you see fit- perhaps a couple of stanzas and the chorus***)

 Desmond has a barrow in the market place

Molly is the singer in a band

Desmond says to Molly "girl I like your face"

And Molly says this as she takes him by the hand

Desmond takes a trolley to the jewellers stores

Buys a twenty carat golden ring (Golden ring?)

Takes it back to Molly waiting at the door

And as he gives it to her she begins to sing (Sing)

In a couple of years they have built

A home sweet home

With a couple of kids running in the yard

Of Desmond and Molly Jones

(Ah ha ha ha ha ha)

Happy ever after in the market place

Desmond lets the children lend a hand (Arm! Leg!)

Molly stays at home and does her pretty face

And in the evening she still sings it with the band

Yes, ob-la-di ob-la-da life goes on bra

La-la how the life goes on (Ha ha ha)

Hey, ob-la-di ob-la-da life goes on bra

La-la how the life goes on

Yeah, happy ever after in the market place

Molly lets the children lend a hand (Foot!)

Desmond stays at home and does his pretty face

And in the evening she's a singer with the band

Yeah, ob-la-di ob-la-da life goes on bra

La-la how the life goes on

Yeah, ob-la-di ob-la-da life goes on bra

Thank you all for being in our lives and sharing our joy. We love all of you!! Here's to the next 50!!!