BEST MAN SPEECH

FOR

BERNARD LAMOUREUX

**(Regarding the idea of opening with a very thick binder, if you want you can kick that concept up a notch or three by having one or two waiters roll in a table with a couple of stacks of bankers boxes-as long as it would be stacked high enough to be seen by EVERYONE and the magnitude of the presentation is completely outsized…. perhaps include those binders on steroids as well?)**

Good evening everyone!! It’s such a joy to be here to celebrate this wonderful occasion. I know I share the common sentiment that we are all so thrilled for this happy couple, my dad Robert and the wonderful, witty, caring and compassionate Nelia, and as you can imagine…. (**Have the staff wheel in the** **table with the stack of boxes or binders…** **or BOTH! and say**) I’ve got A LOT to say about **BOTH** of them…. It’s a lucky thing for everyone here that the Bernstein bar mitzvah (**or whatever occasion would be funny and appropriate to the** **venue**) starts in three days, so I’ll have to be brief…. (**Wait for the laugh**). Yep… it’s true… our bride and groom have a habit of living life to the hilt, sharing their collective joy and humor wherever they go and now they get to do it with the same last name!! That’s so fantastic… (**If it fits you can also say**) and it makes monogramming so much less complicated!! (**And wait for the laugh**)

In life we all have our share of challenges and times of struggle and grief, but it is a testament to the strength of the human heart that two people, both who have experienced their share of crisis and great loss, have been able to find the faith to heal. (**Do you want to mention your mother and Nelia’s husband? If so, you can do it here)** Both my mother \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Nelia’s husband \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were very special people and were taken from us too soon, but it is an inspiration to witness the resilience and such genuine joy for living that we’ve all seen in Nelia and my dad. It’s **REALLY** special to have faced life’s gauntlet and still have the capacity for each to find that “better half” with whom to go on and share life. Dad, Nelia, how did we all get so lucky to know the both of you and feel your impact on all of us?

If I could reach into my bag… or box… or binders filled with tricks… or dirt… there would be A LOT to find and even more to talk about. Both of you have had remarkable and noteworthy lives. Let’s face it… I know I’m a full fledged adult, but how many of my peers can claim…. “My step mom was on ‘Romper Room?!?!?!’” I can!! **(If you can get an old picture of Nelia as Miss Nelia on the show, you can photocopy it and place it in a big ornate –but cheap- frame and whip it out of one of the boxes and say**) Told ya so!! (**And wait for** **the laugh**). That’s only one highlight of Nelia’s incredible life. The woman is and has been a force of nature. She was a Biology major at Ripon College. She proved that knowledge was more important than awful weather when she studied for her Masters in Special Education in Alaska, and legend has it that her sunny personality and warm smile **thawed** the atmosphere as she learned to ski, hunt, fish and canoe (**you can say**…**notice I didn’t say “ice” fishing**.)…. Oh and she also learned to cook-but she had plenty with which to practice… like 600 pounds of moose meat!!

I have to back track a little here. I’ve hardly begun singing the praises of this remarkable woman and… do you all realize we’ve barely scratched the surface and I’ve said “Romper Room” and “moose meat” in the same passage? Can anyone else claim such distinction? WOW!!! Am I glad she gets to be in OUR family now!! Her accomplishments go on and on. She’s traveled to 48 states… only Maine and New Mexico are left. She had a distinguished career in telecommunication sales for 19 years at ROLM/Siemens and Rockwell. She’s active with her passions for photography and Pilates. Her devotion to her family, both old and new, knows no bounds and now that extended family includes us! Boy, are WE lucky!! Her commitment to her neighbors and her community is tireless. Nelia has been a volunteer senior advocate for twelve years, serving the senior community where it counts-at the Center for Excellence in Aging and the Lifelong Health Board, with the Senior Center RIDES program, through her participation with the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, and so much more! And in her **SPARE** time (**Wait for the laugh**), she’s a dedicated member participant in her church’s activities, from Choir to Christian Ed committee; from teller to feeding the homeless, Nelia is the epitome of a woman who is fully engaged in life. Someone once said, “Love the moment and the energy of that moment will spread beyond all boundaries.” That’s the way Nelia lives her life and I am privileged to observe her in action. (**Turn to Nelia and say**). How can anyone adequately acknowledge you for all the good that you’ve done in this world? Besides marrying my fantastic father, there’s only one thing I can think of…. (**Reach into a box or binder-whatever you choose, and pull out a Bruster’s ice cream coupon- I have a link that I will send when I upload the speech. If you think it will work, try to enlarge it so it’s really big… like a LOTTO or sweepstakes check)** great enough toshare the spotlight with someone as amazing as you. As a memento of this very special day, I’d like to present you with **THIS**… (**Take** **out the Bruster’s Ice cream coupon**, **present it to her and wait for the laugh**).

And what man could be worthy of a woman so full of life? Who in Heaven’s name could even attempt to keep up with her? I’ll tell you who… our super Dad Robert. Dad, your credo in life has been ‘**PERSISTENCE**.” You are the ultimate pathfinder and (**name your brother**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have so much to thank you for as you showed us the way throughout our lives. You’re known as “the Storyteller Extraordinaire,” and even with that Boston accent you’ve somehow managed to always make your point. (**Wait for the laugh**). You’re loyal, faithful, honest, trustworthy, caring, wise, and kind… and up until now you were humble…. we all hope you will remain so even after that last sentence (**wait for the laugh**). Your wit is quick and your sense of humor is rare… so if these guests aren’t laughing at these jokes, we all know from whom I got this gift!! Let’s blame the groom!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

You’re the type of person who always has someone’s back and would give the shirt off yours if it were needed (**If you want to make another joke you can reach** **back into a box and say**). I just happen to have barely worn button down blue Oxford cloth shirt right here…. (**And wait for the laugh**). I love to see how your eyes smile when you’re happy and I’m happy to say I see that when you’re with Nelia. You’re a fine example of what it means to be a strong family man and none of us could ever have wished for a more proud father, father-in-law, and grandfather. You are stoic and reliable and devoted to exercise your religious rites and religiously exercise your callisthenic rights. Your education in International Masters Studies at George Washington, University Elliott School and Harvard University School, JFK School of Government, your 31-year Naval career from Seaman to Captain, Fighter Pilot; Destroyer Commander, 2 tours in Vietnam, your time at the Pentagon Office, Secretary of Defense, Deputy Comptroller, DSAA, your tenure at Mc Donnell Douglas/Boeing Corporation as a Director for 16 years all add up to one thing…. your versatility, dedication, ability to adapt to a variety of situations, and of course your incredible foresight and vision can only mean …… that you are perfectly suited to be married to a moose

cooking, civic minded, compassionate and concerned dynamo that’s a former Romper Room host!! What a team!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Dad, (**name your brother**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are proud to have you as a father and we’re even more proud to be able to stand beside you as you marry Nelia. The both of you have so much to look forward to…. community involvement, adventures in real estate… you would think that between the two of you, with all of the combined connections you have, that one of those properties would have a “**SOLD”** sign on the lawn by now (**Wait for the laugh**), long nature walks, quiet time spent together… at the doctor’s office waiting room…. your thirst for reading and knowledge … I hope those doctors got some new magazines… (**Wait for the laugh**). I would be remiss if I didn’t mention your shared passion for equal rights and privileges, so Dad; I have something special for you too (**take out a 2nd Bruster’s coupon for your father and** **wait for the laugh**)… All in the spirit of equality!!

We are all so thrilled for the both of you. Our favorite “Dynamic Duo” is official. May the both of you continue to charm and conquer and serve the world and your family and friends with the intelligence, wit, and devotion that make you both so special. Here’s to many more years of fantastic adventures and we all wish that you have everything your hearts desire. May your love and light continue to shine on all of your family, friends, church and community. We love you both! Thank you!