MAID OF HONOR SPEECH

FOR

JAN GARDNER

Hello everyone!! What a thrill it is to be here to celebrate the wedding of my dear friend Melody to this wonderful man Bert!!! What an occasion this is!! What beautiful, vibrant lively surroundings!! It’s a perfect setting to honor this great couple and take a little time to acknowledge and reaffirm the gifts that life has to offer. I know we have all heard that “what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas,” but I have to say, **THIS** time, I’m gonna talk when I get back to Hawaii!! (**Say this with enthusiasm and wait for the laugh**)!! …Not necessarily about any forbidden or “juicy” stuff.... but about the atmosphere that’s so alive with color and energy, love and celebration… It’s not every day that I get to stand in front of so many happy people all here united for a purpose- to celebrate the flourishing of love and commitment between two of the most deserving people I know.

I met Melody about fifteen years ago when I worked for the FDA and was assigned to inspect her warehouse. At the time Melody was an importer of food products from the Philippines. Little did I know when I walked in to check around and see what I might find that I would end up with a lifelong and dear friend, and **THAT**, ladies and gentlemen, is what I call a productive day’s work!! (**Wait for the laugh**). To know Melody is to love her… just ask Bert… and her family and friends. She is smart… I’m sure you all know that Melody has her PhD from the University of Hawaii on **TOP** of the education she received in the Philippines, she’s resourceful… having come from a family of seven siblings…she’s interested AND interesting…between her duties at the State of Hawaii Environmental Department and her own successful importing business, this lady keeps busy!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… But she’s never too busy to show her love, devotion, and support to her family and friends. Thanks to her success in business, Melody has demonstrated her commitment to her brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, and many of them have fulfilled their own dreams of attending college thanks to Melody’s generosity.

She had lived a blessed life personally and professionally for many years, but when she met Bert about thirteen years ago, that was really the icing on the cake! Bert had been a Senior Navy Non Commissioned Officer during his military career and I think we can all agree that when these two met, it was the chance of a lifetime… for all of us that know and love these two to see just how much better life and love can get with the right partner by one’s side. Melody will be the first person to say how her business really thrived when Bert took over running the warehouse. And that is just a metaphor for the magic this couple makes together- their lives thrive thanks to each other. They are true partners in life and it is a privilege to witness this very happy moment.

Being in Las Vegas can be an overwhelming experience, especially here at the Bellagio. The sights, the sounds, the tastes… the **SLOTS**!! All conspire to create a never-ending party. As we arrive and reach the lobby and look up, we’re greeted by Dale Chihuly’s masterwork in glass. There are 2,000 colorful, clear, vibrant, carefully hand-blown flowers made of glass. In a way this piece of art is also a metaphor for this happy couple. Those glass blossoms took a long time to lovingly create and assemble. Like pieces of a delicate puzzle, all of the shapes fit together. They are fragile but with the proper attention and respect they will shine and dazzle for many years. Those flowers are truly a thing of beauty to behold and they were created with great imagination, dedication, and patience. It sounds like the relationship of our bride and groom, doesn’t it? This couple has nurtured and cared for all of the many facets of their relationship for all these years and now we all get to bask in the glow of their happiness.

In honor of the bride and groom I would like to invite you to raise a glass as I propose a toast:

To Melody and Bert, there is a song lyric that tells us, “Some people wait a lifetime for a moment like this.” Thank you both for sharing this moment with us and showing us that love and happiness transcends time and age. Thank you for renewing our faith in marriage and partnership. Here’s to a lifetime of all that the two of you could ever want. Congratulations!!