80TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

GINNY QUATTLEBAUM

Hello everyone!!! I want to thank all of you for being here and sharing this big, wonderful celebration. It’s taken me **EIGHTY YEARS** to get to this day, and I am **THRILLED** to be here!! (**If you want to make a joke you can say**)… or as Groucho Marx would probably have said…”At **MY** age it’s a thrill to be **ANYWHERE!!** (**And wait for the laugh**). By the way, that joke demonstrates the perks of being my age…. I’ve had the privilege of laughing at bad jokes like those throughout **EIGHT** decades! It’s taken a lifetime of living and loving, learning and experiencing for me to get to this point and none of this would have been possible without the wonderful people I have had in my life. I do believe that the goodness and soul of a person is reflected in the people who surround them. As I look around this room I am stunned by the **riches** I see in front of me. (**If there is anyone named Richard in the crowd you can point to that person and say**)… yes… That includes **YOU**, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!! (**And wait for the laugh. …Or you can mention your granddaughter Rachael and make a similar joke by saying**) Not only am I blessed with such riches… I’m lucky enough to have **RACHES (short for Rachael)!**!! Yes, they’re my jewels- Rachael and Hannah, Chuck, and Helen and John, Dan and Grace, or as I like to think, they’re not just my grandchildren; they’re **really** the **SEVEN WONDERS** of **MY** world!! I would also like to take a moment and thank my two talented and clever granddaughters, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who have demonstrated their innate organizational skills by planning this great party. Thanks so much girls!

Of course I would be remiss if I didn’t mention those four brilliant muses, the people who are my true pride and joy… the generous souls who not only warm my heart every day but who also are so gracious to be footing the bill for this once in a lifetime shindig, (**If you think it’s better, choose more suitable, adjectives for each child and son- or daughter-in-law)** the fabulous Libby and her handsome husband Dean, brilliant Mike and his wonderful wife Bonnie, dignified and earnest Tom and his devoted wife Susan, and of course the very **dashing** Jeff (**you can add a little joke if you want**) … and come to think of it, let’s hope they **ALL** don’t decide to be **dashing** once the bill arrives!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

The French actor Jean Reno once said, “The advantage of being eighty years old is that one has had many people to love.” Truer words have never been spoken. As I continue to look around the room I am so happy to see people that I have known just about all my life, people like (**Name your kindergarten friends**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Can you imagine? We all go back to **KINDERGARTEN**!! If **THAT’S** not a blessing, I don’t know what is! We share a deep and rich history with each other and we truly know each other’s roots and secrets (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**) Of course we all have an unspoken pact… “I won’t tell if you won’t!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

There have been so many incredible experiences and memories made throughout my life and I treasure the wild, bold moments like (**Mention something really adventurous or exciting and unusual that you did**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as well as the simple and precious ones. The times spent with family and friends stay with me. I’ll never forget those adventures to the North Shore of Lake Superior with my parents, the trips we took to stay at rustic but special cabins on Lake \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**name the lake**), family celebrations for milestones like graduations, the cruise to Alaska with a ship arriving with invitations at Christmas…. and now I have this party to join all of those keepsake moments that I continue to hold close to my heart.

Bob Hope had a signature song and all of us who watched him and knew his work associated “Thanks for the Memories” with him. Those lyrics ring true for me today as I look back on all I’ve seen and done and while I may not have lived as exotic a life as he did, I give thanks to the lyricist who said:

**“Many's the time that we feasted**

**And many's the time that we fasted**

**Oh well, it was swell while it lasted**

**We did have fun, and no harm done**

**So thanks for the memory**

**Of crap games on the floor, nights in Singapore**

**You might have been a headache, but you never were a bore**

**I thank you so much”**

I have one last thought before I go. I realized that I am now in the company of some very distinguished women who make being eighty amazing. One of those women is Sophia Loren…. Yes, I can **FINALLY** acknowledge we’re in the same league!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). It is with wisdom, passion, and love that she said, "There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will truly have defeated age." I cannot think of a more wonderful group of people with whom to share my life, adventures, wisdom and love. Thank you all for everything! I love each one of you! Here’s to the next eighty!!