WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

JIM RICHARDS

REVISED

Hello everyone and thank you all for joining us as we celebrate the wedding of our beautiful daughter Kevlyn to the kind, sincere, and devoted Ryan Somers. Lots of twists and turns, plotting and planning, laughs and discussions, and of course tons of love, excitement, and energy have finally gotten us to this day and as a proud and emotional father, although I may have some mixed emotions, we really know that we’re not losing a daughter, we’re gaining a terrific son.

Yes, plotting and planning played an integral role in the events and intrigue that have led up to this day, and all I can say is fortunately, I’m an early riser!!! You may be wondering what that has to do with anything so I’ll share a little back-story. On February 26th of this year, I had a meeting with a young man I had known for quite some time. We met at the Bay Cafe on Fisherman’s Terminal at 7 am. He proceeded to tell me he was very much in love with my daughter and was fully prepared financially, emotionally, and in every conceivable way possible to share his life with her. He was asking for my blessing and because I knew him and knew his character and sincerity and I knew he truly loved my daughter, I gave him my blessing for him to ask for her hand in marriage. Unfortunately I couldn’t stay too long as I had a meeting at 7.45 two blocks away from Fisherman’s Terminal at the Starbuck’s at Dravus Street. Waiting for me there was Ryan Somers and there was something he had to discuss with me. Ryan told me he was very much in love with my daughter and was fully prepared financially, emotionally, and in every conceivable way possible to share his life with her. I guess you can all imagine that at this point I was feeling very grateful…. Or very, very concerned for my cognitive powers. DID I JUST HAVE THE SAME CONVERSATION TWICE IN ONE MORNING WITH TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE? WAS I DREAMING? I mean it WAS early in the morning but not **THAT** early… I was pretty sure I was fully awake! What are the odds of this happening **TWICE** in **ONE** day… and **BEFORE 8 AM???** (**Wait for the laugh**). I had known Ryan for almost five years at that point. I knew his character, his honesty, and his sincerity, and now I had confirmation of his love for my daughter and his determination!! I naturally gave him my blessing. Neither young man knew the other had planned the same clandestine meeting for the same morning. You can just imagine that I began to wonder what the REST of the day would hold….

Yes, in addition to being the object of a touching and heartfelt proposal discussion that day, Kevlyn is quite popular and very busy, and of course, as her father, I think she’s quite special!! There are lots of adjectives that can be used to describe her: beautiful, intelligent, loving, funny, energetic, dependable… but the one word that to me is the essence of Kevlyn is **enthusiastic**. Ever since she was able to get up and stand on her own two feet, the joy she brings to every challenge is an inspiration and her amazing, wide-eyed, embrace of an opportunity is infectious. Early on in their relationship, when I saw that Ryan completely understood and accepted this phenomenon, it let me know that he grasped her determination and we both had that silent bond with each other that said, “just buckle up and enjoy the ride…. Here we go again!!”

It’s this amazing enthusiasm that makes Kevlyn so unique and her genuine appreciation of participating in even the simplest adventure has served her well. She’s distinguished herself in the classroom, in the swimming pool, and in life, and the more I got to know Ryan, the more I was able to see that they shared this very special bond. I think we would ALL agree that their combined enthusiasm is infectious!!! In a great way…. and it’s clearly the real deal!!

Susan and I first met Ryan at a going away party for one of Matt and Carol Brown’s daughters, our niece Stephanie. We both felt even that early on that Ryan was a great person and Kevlyn seemed so happy to be spending time with him…. of course being a baseball player was icing on the cake! Having him with our family has been a natural fit since the very beginning. As we got to know him more and began to bump into his parents John and Beth at Seattle University baseball games, it was clear where his fine character came from. Ryan is a natural leader on and off the field and as team Captain he set a fine example for the younger players. We’re so proud of him for graduating Cum Laude and being in the first class to graduate from Seattle with an MBA.

Ryan’s enthusiasm, amazing attention to detail and demonstration of his love for our daughter was clear in every step of the proposal as well. He had planned to ask for her hand on their fifth anniversary. He secretly flew his parents in from New York. Our “assignment” was to clandestinely meet them at the Cactus restaurant on Aiki Beach, Kelvyn’s favorite. He carried out his mission to propose on the beach on their favorite spot (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) and I bet he even made preparations to protect his knees from those rocks as he got down on one knee!! (**And wait for the laugh**). His attention to detail didn’t top there…. he had also planned a party at Kevlyn’s apartment after the surprise dinner that was after the surprise proposal!! What a guy!! But probably the sweetest and most wonderful thing these two have done was to choose to be married on my father’s birthday. Grandpa \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would have been 92 today and I am positive he is smiling down with love and appreciation for being honored in this very sweet way. We are all so thankful that Grandpa is a part of this wedding.

It’s been said, “Daughters soften their daddy’s heart.” I suppose you can just imagine that between (**name your daughters**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and Kevlyn, my heart is in competition with a bowl of **pudding**…. especially today. (**Wait for the laugh**). (**Turn to Kevlyn and Ryan and say**) Honestly, I wouldn’t have it any other way. Susan and I … as well as everyone here… are so happy for the both of you. The respect and love you have for one another is an inspiration and the energy and enthusiasm and passion for life that you share is irresistible. We are so happy to welcome the Somers family to ours and we are blessed to witness, before the eyes of God, with our hearts full of love, that our family has grown again. Susan and I have another son and our daughters have a new brother. We love you Ryan!! Here’s to Ryan and Kevlyn Somers!!!

(**If you want to make an allusion to your other daughter and the other proposal you can say**) Isn’t love wonderful??? I could really get used to this!! … If you know what I mean!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

(**HS 8/9- Didn’t know if you wanted to leave in the below so I gave you an alternative above**).

 ~~(~~**~~If you want to make a joke about your other future? son-in-law you can say something like~~**~~) and to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we love you too, but let’s face it, Ryan’s got some really good son-in-law game~~!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

Thank you all!!