WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone! Welcome to the wedding of Elizabeth and David. The atmosphere in this chapel is filled with the energy of joy and promise. Each one of you is present because you mean something to our wonderful couple and it is my privilege and pleasure to invite all of you to witness the official joining of hands and hearts of two people I have the honor of calling my friends. Today it is our bride and groom’s turn to take their place in the pantheon of marriage as they express their mutual love, commitment and devotion to one another. Our bride, Elizabeth Joy Malburg and our groom, David Ridgway Anderson, are each the embodiment of what it means to be noble...to have a good soul, to appreciate and respect family, friends, and colleagues, to live their lives with integrity, and to be completely committed to each other’s happiness and well-being. Oh… and they both **REALLY LOVE** to have a good time…so here’s to having great party in a little while!

It’s fun to be in these ‘historical” surroundings and this atmosphere is ripe for some inspiration from Shakespeare. In “Loves Labor Lost” he presents us with an image:

“When Love speaks, the voice of all the gods

Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.”

(**If you want to make a joke you can say**) Harmony and romance are definitely speaking to all of us tonight thanks to the electricity generated by Elizabeth and Dave, but before the heavens get **too** drowsy and intoxicated from all of this love, we have **some work to do**!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

At times like these, when we have clear confirmation that love is real, commitment is honored, and devotion is mutual, it’s important to take a moment to recognize the alchemy that goes into the processes and elements of destiny: Being alive, being conscious and present, being open and receptive, and being aware, willing, compassionate and trusting. We have all heard stories and witnessed instances of couples that meet and fall in love and then find out that even before they were “aware” of one another they were connected. I once heard a story of a young woman who was a nurse and a young man who happened to be a gym teacher was admitted to the hospital with a broken leg. He was placed in the section in which she worked. There was a spark and there was clearly an attraction… and it wasn’t the pain meds talking… (**Wait for the laugh**) . At the time no one put two and two together when they learned her sister’s husband was called in to substitute teach because “some gym teacher broke his leg in another part of the city.” As the patient was discharged a few days later, he wanted to know how he might be able to contact the nurse on a more “personal” level. She told him the street she lived on-fortunately it was an unusual name. To make a long story short, the two young men knew each other, the nurse and the gym teacher **really** hit it off, and now some thirty plus years, three children, a grandchild and several pets later, they are as enthralled with each other as they first were back in that hospital room. Their love and connection was real and it grew and took root and now their story is working on its third generation.

There is a reason and a season for everything in our lives. Legend has it that Elizabeth and David grew up in the same town, albeit on opposite sides. They had mutual friends but didn’t meet until they were in college. Some say love happens when we’re ready. Some may think it’s serendipity. One thing I know is that what’s meant to be is meant to be.

Both Elizabeth and David are people of character and substance. They love their family and friends. They both take their jobs seriously and do the best they can. They love each other, and most of all they love life. You can see it in their smiles and gestures, in their open hearts and willingness to be there for each other and for those around them. They are blessed to be nurturers and as such they have a deep appreciation for their environment and their surroundings. And those of us that know and love them know how they love to laugh with them, share with them, and be there for them as they are there for us. Their love for each other creates a ripple effect around them. It’s been said that true love is transformative. It’s a process that amplifies a person’s capacity to cherish not just one person but all people. Love makes us stronger and has the ability to lift our spirits as well as expand our ability to think, feel and act as individuals. To the extent that we can surrender our hearts and spirits to the “safety net” of true love, that will determine the depths that we can feel and share in other aspects of our lives. From all accounts and from what I’ve observed with this couple, their love grows and deepens every day… as it should. It’s what we all live for.

Today very well may be one of the most important, special, unforgettable moments in Elizabeth and David’s individual and married lives. And it would be wonderful to think that this intoxicating feeling of love and devotion will last forever, and on some levels it will, but the challenge to maintain the mutual vision begins when the lights go out in this venue, when the honeymoon is over, when the guests have been thanked for their warmth and good cheer and when these two look soulfully into each other’s eyes and say…. “What’s next?” **AHA**!! How do we keep the magic? How do we keep the “**hula hoop of love**” from hitting the ground? (**Wait for the laugh**). So much has been written and debated on the subject. There have been ‘How To” books and “How **Not** To” books, there’s been volumes published by pundits and doctors and stand up comedians and each bit of advice, if taken with an open mind and a willing heart can work to keep you aware, but that’s the secret in a nutshell…**stay aware**. Remain vigilant about the way you speak to one another. There is no room to take each other for granted. Remember to honor each other… even when you think you may not want to. Remember to empathize…. that is, put yourself in one another’s shoes…. Now David, before you remind us that you don’t wear high heels or Elizabeth, before you complain that David’s feet are bigger than yours, remember to try and see situations from the other’s point of view. Treat others, especially your spouse… as you would want to be treated.

It’s been said that “Of all the ways we define love, there is perhaps none more honest and powerful than this: **Great love is rooted in great partnership**.” Remember that partnership is kinetic. Relationships constantly morph and transform. It’s a dance that does not stand still. The only constant is the two people committed to that partnership-marriage. It’s so important to acknowledge your love of one another often and sincerely, but at the same time it’s dangerous to constantly seek approval… and that goes for both of you. You are still viable, dynamic individuals. Maintain your independence and use it to enhance your partnership, just never lose the connection that is the foundation of your marriage. As the French author Andre Maurois said, “A successful marriage is an edifice that must be rebuilt every day.”

There was lots of information I found while doing some research for this event. These next tips for a ‘Perfect Marriage” may seem more like a math lesson, but hey- some of it might work… at least you will remain aware of making each other a priority- no matter how hectic life may become. Ready? The first thing I would add is to say that there is no such thing as the “perfect marriage” so lose the word perfect and diminish your stress

* Say, “I love you” at least ten times a week… to each other… not the dog… (**Wait for the laugh**)
* Kiss at least ten times a week also… once again, this is for each other and **NOT** the dog (**Wait for the laugh**) and maybe while you’re saying I love you or spread it out and alternate… remember Practice makes… well maybe not perfect but really **REALLY** happy!
* Have at least ten deep and meaningful conversations per month. yes… with each other and **NOT** you know who… (**Wait for the laugh**) I’m SURE he gets **PLENTY** of attention…Have more… Have less… just be engaged, interesting and **interested**!
* Have at least three date nights each month, three arguments, and 2 drinks together….. Hmmmm I would probably spread these suggestions out a little… like don’t argue while you’re drinking or on date night! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Socrates said, “By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you’ll become happy; if you get a bad one, you’ll become a philosopher.” Well David, looks like you won’t be a philosopher anytime soon… as far as I can tell!!” (**Wait for the laugh**). When I think of the two of you, I have some clear pictures of what you’re like individually and as a couple. (**I think it’s important to add some of your personal experience of Elizabeth and David individually and together. If you send me the information I will add it here)**.

I am sure that each person in this room also has a funny, touching story about our bride and groom. Each story acts as a mirror for the couple; a chance for them to see their reflections in another person’s point of view. As those impressions and reflections build, they can act as a means for Elizabeth and David to step outside of themselves and work to experience what being their friend or partner is like. And as they grow as individuals and as a couple they will learn to continue to step outside their own experience of themselves in order to be more present for the other. It’s something we should all consider doing… especially as we are all headed for greater periods of insular singular experience thanks to the tech revolution. Just also remember you’re both married to real live people… not your Smartphone!!

Maurois also said, “A happy marriage is a conversation that always seems too short.” If there’s one thing I know about the two of you it’s that your conversation… whether it’s spoken or implied, romantic or otherwise, is never ending. The two of you have a wonderful connection that, with time, patience, and care, will just get stronger and stronger.

Homer… the Greek philosopher- not the Simpson… (**Wait for the laugh**) had this to say about marriage. He said, “ There is nothing nobler or more admirable than when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife, confounding their enemies and delighting their friends. I have to say that I don’t know of any enemies either Elizabeth or David might have, so let’s just say this union absolutely delights and enchants all of their friends!! Having the privilege to stand up for this wonderful young couple really does give us all hope for the future. It’s so reassuring to know that the sanctity and heritage of marriage continues; that in spite of the challenges we all face in life, love prevails; that no matter what opportunities or issues or gifts present themselves, two special people have vowed in front of all of us, that they will love and honor and stand by each other no matter what.

The wedding ceremony and marriage itself is an age-old tradition that transcends time and cultures. It’s a rite of passage and an expression of mutual commitment for two people and every gesture and symbolic feature connects the newlyweds to all that have walked down the aisle before them. History tells us that in ancient times, instead of flowers, brides would carry a garland of garlic and dill…. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**)… I think we’ll leave the pickle making to the caterer… (**And wait for the laugh**). It’s thought that the tradition of wearing a round wedding band with no beginning or end symbolizes that love and commitment will last an eternity. It’s believed that the Ancient Romans initiated the tradition of wearing the wedding ring on the wearer’s left “ring finger.” Some have explained that there is a vein, known as the “Vena amoris,” or “vein of love” that runs from that finger to the heart…. please tell me there are no doctors present, because you just **KNOW**, especially in this day and age of rampant fact checking… especially among non-romantics, that someone **might** check, thus blowing the idealistic notions of all of the lovers that have existed for the past several thousand years!!! Either that or the reason to exchange wedding rings and celebrate anniversaries was a plot perpetrated by the forerunner of the modern day greeting card, **Hallmarkus Cardius** (**If you want to slip in and extend the joke… I made that up-** **and wait for the laugh**). All of the legacies and traditions are great, no matter where they may find their roots, and today we begin a new and special tradition for this very special couple.

Elizabeth and David, in front of each of you, you will see a container of glass crystals. Each are different- the vase represents your separate lives, your friends, your families. The pieces of glass hold their own meaning…. every shard is unique. Glass is one of the oldest materials on earth. It protects and it allows the light to shine through. It cuts and it feeds. Its adaptability can allow us to see more clearly. It’s an integral part in our nourishment on every level. It’s a material to be respected, protected, and cherished. Glass represents nature’s four essential elements: earth and fire, liquid and air. I will now ask that each, of you, in unison, pour the contents within your own vase into the middle vase. As the glass bits from each individual vase are blended together, please keep in mind that this process symbolizes the joining of your separate lives, friends and family, into one union, one context- the beginning of your new journey together as husband and wife.

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout their lives Elizabeth and David have been two colorful, complete, amazing people all on their own - just like the individual vases filled with glass that we first saw. …But today is special; today Elizabeth and David have become husband and wife and have “officially” created a new, beautiful combination of their attributes, refracted light, and colors. After their ceremony today this unique collection of mixed bits of glass will be made into a one-of-a-kind sculpture as special as their love for one another. The pieces of their personality that complement each other will be reflected in the glass sculpture they can display in their home forever. This new sculpture will be a physical reminder of the merging of their beautiful personalities, love and commitment to each other and of the moment they were joined together forever. Alfred, Lord Tennyson said, “I am part of all that I have met.” In this work of art, Elizabeth and David will have a permanent memento of this special day, and of the blending of all of the elements of their lives, which, of course, includes each one of you represented as part of all that they have met and love.

And because I’m a romantic, a characteristic I have in common with Elizabeth and David, I would like to share some thoughts from Nicholas Sparks. Now I know I’m **NO** Ryan Gosling, but these sentiments are no less touching and moving when read by someone like me, and they’re words the romantic in each one of us either wants to hear or say. As expressed in “The Notebook,” keep this passage in mind when the going gets tough or when the going doesn’t get tough. Remember these words to honor each other: “I love you. I am who I am because of you. You are every reason, every hope, and every dream I’ve ever had, and no matter what happens to us in the future, every day we are together is the greatest day of my life. I will always be yours.” And with those touching words (**if you want to make a joke you can say**) … and most definitely NO Academy Award in my future, I want to congratulate the new Mr. and Mrs. David Anderson. May you have a long, happy, fruitful marriage and may you grow stronger and more loving every day you are together. Congratulations!