BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

HUBERT PEREIRA

Hello everyone. It is with great joy, happiness, love and appreciation that we are here today to commemorate a rare and wonderful milestone for an extraordinary and exceptional woman. Birthdays usually inspire celebration and this particular birthday leads the pack!! Today’s “Birthday Girl” was kind enough to have given this world SO FAR… NINETY incredible years of life, love, resilience, “class” and compassion in order that we all have plenty of practice in just how to acknowledge this stellar achievement. Pope Paul VI has been credited with saying, “The older the fiddler, the sweeter the tune.” Those of us that know her well have been enchanted and inspired by her kind, gentle and sweet “music.” Words can barely express the love and respect I have for my aunt Eva Dias, but as you might know, as my teacher, my second mom, one of my staunchest supporters and probably one of the sweetest, kindest people I know, she trained me well! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Birthdays are a time for giving gifts but for all of us that know and love Aunt Eva, she REALLY is the greatest gift we have all received. Material devotions pale when we take a look at the example she has set. In spite of considerable and seemingly insurmountable odds throughout her life, Eva always and consistently managed to find the purpose and grace in every challenge presented to her. Just the other day I saw an expression that said something like, “Sometimes when we find ourselves in a dark place we may think we’ve been buried, but actually we’ve been **planted**… to grow roots and learn and bloom again some day.” There is no more perfect example of this than the woman we celebrate today.

Throughout her life, Aunt Eva has always found a way to be there for others. In spite of all of the trials and tribulations that threatened to challenge her, she found her way through each one and somehow turned the adverse into opportunity. When I was a child our family went through a very difficult time. Aunt Eva and her husband, Uncle Archie, took care of us for five years and Aunt Eva lovingly earned the title of my second mom. My brother \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I will never forget her gentleness and kindness. I learned so much from her…. I had to!! …Especially since she was also my teacher in second grade!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Aunt Eva and Uncle Archie married in 1954 and moved to Bombay in 1955. Together they had six children (**Do you want to name them? If so do that here**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. When the family moved to Frankfurt, Germany in 1975 because of Uncle Archie’s transfer, Aunt Eva assumed her new responsibilities and duties with grace and aplomb. Although our uncle had a way about him…. a very meticulous and precise way, our Aunt rose to every challenge. While raising her family and coordinating her duties as hostess to many German dignitaries in the travel business, Aunt Eva never wavered from her ability to be kind and gracious while putting people at ease.

When our Uncle passed suddenly and tragically at the age of 52, it was Eva who single handedly raised her six children to be the fine people they are today. With their relocation to Canada in 1985, the Dias family continued to be guided by the true and inspiring light of their mother. Every challenge Aunt Eva faced strengthened her roots, as she shared her love of people, she continued to spread her compassion more than liberally, and found strength and guidance in her unwavering devotion to her Catholic faith. To this day, she still finds the strength to regularly attend mass. What a woman! It is a testimony to my aunt’s resilience and courage that her family remains so close and has made a collective success of their lives in Canada. It is all due to the resilience and courage shared so freely by this wonderful woman.

We can all learn so much from Eva Dias. There is no such thing as a scar to her. Every mark is a lesson. It’s a badge of courage and experience. We are all so blessed to have this shining example of humanity in our lives. Eva Dias is truly the gift.

I am honored and humbled to have the honor of proposing a toast to our extraordinary, friend, mother, sister, and aunt:

There is a saying that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” For those of us that have the privilege to know and love Eva Dias, our lives are blessed. Aunt Eva, you really are one in a million and we’re so blessed the odds of having you in our lives were in our favor!! Here’s to a happy, healthy, loving birthday. May you have everything you might ever want, may your roots continue to grow and bloom, and may your light shine on us for many years to come. Happy birthday! We love you!

Thank you all!