WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

JAMES STERLING

**••• if you speak at the rehearsal dinner I’ve broken this up into 2 parts:**

Hello everyone!! What a weekend!! We’re here to celebrate the marriage of my beautiful daughter April, to a wonderful man, Mark. It’s almost surreal when I think of April as a grown up, beautiful married woman, but major life moments like this one inspire reflection, remembrance, and recollections of precious times we’ve shared along the way.

It’s wonderful to see so many people here to witness April and Mark’s joy (**If you speak at the rehearsal dinner you can change this sentence to “it’s wonderful to see so many close friends and family…”**). Every one of you is close with either April or Mark… or both… each from a different, special and unique vantage point. Lucky for me, and I mean this, I have the honor of claiming April as my daughter. We had some great times as April grew up and each one was very special to me…. not counting the probably one hundred times we watched “Beethoven.” (**If you want to make a joke you can say**)… But it’s all good… and I’m so happy to see Mark as the groom and not a 185-pound St. Bernard instead! (**And wait for the laugh**). Hey you two… let’s plan a movie marathon… for old time’s sake!!

As she was growing up, April was a delight. We all know her as a very kind, generous, and thoughtful person who considers others before herself. Her generous personality inspired shared activities. It was so much fun coaching her grade school softball team… Those girls were truly in “a League of Their Own”… honey… maybe if you had only watched “Beethoven” like 85 or 90 times we could have squeezed in **THAT** movie… (**Wait for the laugh**). Those trips to Magic Mountain, Disneyworld, Chicago… the camping trips… I’m honored we had so many opportunities to be together… remember… this was **BEFORE** we could bring along a DVD player to watch “Beethoven” in the woods or on a plane… or in a teacup ride..… just kidding!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I was so proud of your skateboarding abilities that I built you a ramp in our backyard. And you know our father-daughter bond is unbreakable **in spite of the fact that you went to ASU**… All of the moments we’ve shared over the years are so vivid to me … even 100 viewings of Beethoven…. which, by the way, I wouldn’t trade for the world… and I look forward to our family making and sharing new memories with you and Mark… possibly even on the golf course…. as long as you don’t beat me, Mark!!

April, you are blessed with a big, crazy, mixed up family, all of whom love you. (**Do you want to mention family members? I left it out to avoid mentioning your ex-father-in-law**) We are all so happy to welcome Mark into our crew…. I know you’re marrying a wonderful man with character and integrity- someone who loves my daughter and that’s all that any father could ask for in a son-in-law… **(If you want to make a joke you can say**) Stay on my good side and maybe I’ll let you win! (**And wait for the laugh**). All jokes aside, you’ve already won the best thing in life and that’s my daughter’s heart and soul.

**Toast at the wedding:**

For those of you at the rehearsal dinner, that was just my warm up… I’m ready to take this to the BIG ROOM… right here, with all of you as I invite you to raise a glass. I would like to propose a toast to our bride and groom.

April and Mark, you bonded over a love of baseball and you’re about to build a life based on a wonderful, sweet, love and respect of each other. The French author Andre Maurois said, “A happy marriage is like a long conversation that always seems too short.” May your conversation last longer than 10 lifetimes … or a million viewings of “Beethoven”… here’s to extra innings filled with love, health and happiness!! Congratulations we love you!