ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SPEECH

FOR

ROGER GEORGES

Hello everyone!! I want to thank all of you for being here today to share in this celebration. I would like to congratulate and acknowledge all of the graduates who are here with us. I am sure we all appreciate the hard work and focus that each one of you has demonstrated in order to accomplish this important milestone. In particular, today we honor determination, dedication, and achievement as we recognize the accomplishments of our daughter, Shoorena, on the occasion of her graduation from (**What is the name of the school?**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with her PharmD.

There are many traditional and untraditional milestones in a person’s life and as we share our family’s happiness and pride, I would like to point out something. So many times we accept the situations, the circumstances of others, and the effects of life altering events at face value. We don’t always get to know what has led up to the celebration day nor do we always appreciate all of the hard work that a person has completed or the obstacles that have to be handled in order to accomplish goals. Friends and family know Shoorena as she **IS**… we know that she is a smart, bright, friendly, and eager young woman, but that is only the beginning of her success story.

Throughout life we are faced with challenges and situations and at any time each one of us can choose to accept circumstances and be ruled by them, or… in some cases… hopefully in **MOST** of them, we discover the alternative- the true test of a person’s inner strength is just how much any one of us is able to let our own unique light shine… even through the shadows. It’s been said that achievement is the child of preparation and **determination**. I know from being inspired by **MY** child, Shoorena, that those are very true words.

The Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle said, “Permanence, perseverance, and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this that in all things **distinguishes** the **strong soul** from the weak.”

Let’s take a little look back in time so we can get a small glimpse of what this young woman’s journey has included…what was life like for Shoorena as she grew up? What were the gifts she was given and what were the tests and trials she had to endure? Well, for one thing, Shoorena had a family that loved and loves her very much. She was particularly close to her Grandmother and that was a beautiful and nurturing relationship, but when Shoorena got to the first grade there were problems. She was confused. The teacher told us that our child needed to see a doctor. We were puzzled and wondered, “Why?” It seems that her grandma spoke only French. Instead of celebrating the close bond between generations and the rich culture that our daughter was inheriting, the teacher thought she needed **medical intervention**!! Can you imagine? But Shoorena bravely carried on with her schooling and her loving friendship with her fascinating grandmother. …. And then she got to the third grade…. and **THAT** teacher felt strongly that Shoorena must learn English and attend English as a Second Language classes!! For Heaven’s sake, she was born here!! There was some debate within the family as we decided whether or not to send our child to “English lessons” but our smart, sensitive, and caring daughter proved to all of us just how intelligent, intuitive, sensitive, strong and resilient she was and is. Through her school career she showed her strength and found the blessings in being bi-lingual. She proved to be an A student, she showed everyone that she did and does indeed know how to speak English, and here we are today, celebrating this most recent and special accomplishment.

Some people are so natural that they make life’s struggles and constant tests look easy. They are able to take life in their stride and find the bright spots. From an early age our daughter really showed us what common sense and true intelligence look like. Booker T. Washington, a man and inventor who managed to overcome more than a few challenges in his lifetime, once said, “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he… or she… has overcome.” I have also heard it said that it is the job of a parent not to clear the rocks from their child’s path but to teach them how to climb over them and to conquer them. I would like to think that Shoorena participated in and excelled in, some fairly difficult “rocks” courses. We are so thankful and proud that she has learned to prevail over each one of those rocks and roadblocks with determination, integrity, and grace.

We may think of a graduation ceremony as an ending to a chapter in a person’s life. He or she has finished school and they are ready to go off into the “real world” to fulfill their destiny. I invite you all to realize that these occasions are called “**Commencement**” exercises. They are not the end of something, but the **beginning** of an exciting, challenging, invigorating new chapter in life. Now that Shoorena has graduated from Pharmacy school, she has a golden opportunity to follow her heart and fulfill her destiny.

There is an expression that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” To observe Shoorena with her grandmother and to remember that special and close bond they shared really brings that expression to life. Shoorena and her grandmother shared more than DNA and a family history. While a woman and her granddaughter played and shared and bridged generation gaps, the little girl that grew into a strong, smart and compassionate professional was observing, loving, and taking mental notes from her inspiration and muse, her grandma. As her grandma advanced in years, Shoorena witnessed the slow but sad decline of the woman that meant so much to her, and it was because of this heartache that Shoorena once again found the gifts that life offers. You see it was her grandmother’s Alzheimer’s disease that fueled this talented young woman to become a pharmacist. Although Grandma passed away a few years ago, her life and love for our daughter lives on in Shoorena’s future goals. She hopes and intends that through her work in medicine that one day she might find the opportunity to research to find a cure for this disease and to help others through her mission.

Shoorena has lived her life with respect and regard for others. She is such a caring person and doesn’t fail to place the well being of others before her own. She speaks of going to Haiti at least once a year to assist doctors and other medical volunteers to give hope and healing and strength to those that need it the most. I am probably one of my daughter’s biggest fans. I can barely express how proud I am of her accomplishments, of her humanity, and of the woman she has grown to become.

Before I go I just want to say that pride is infectious…. but it’s a good infection… and one that spreads joy and happiness to all. My wife and I share that pride and the entire family does as well…

Shoorena, on behalf of our entire family and all of our friends and neighbors that are here today…. and even those that could not make it, I know I speak for everyone when I say that we are sincerely happy and inspired by your wonderful achievement. May you go forward in this world and do very, very well… but most of all, share the magic that is your unique gift and do **GOOD**!! The world needs smart, caring, and committed souls like you to make a **positive** contribution… Congratulations!! We love you!!