RETIREMENT SPEECH

FOR

PATRICIA JOHNSON

Hello everyone and thank you all for being here to celebrate this long awaited milestone. I am \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am honored to speak to all of you about our great family member and friend, trusted colleague, and dedicated employee, Patricia Johnson. I have known Patricia for \_\_\_ years and I have witnessed the dedication and respect that she brings to every task and relationship in her life. This is a tremendous milestone for her and I suppose we can say that she **really** has worked her entire life to get to this point. I know she is so proud and humbled to have this opportunity to share this moment with all of us. There was a well-known poem written by Alfred Lord Tennyson that reminds us, “I am part of all that I have met.” That is certainly true of Patricia’s life and careers and it includes each one of us. As we all eagerly wait to see the wonderful adventures about to greet Patricia in the newest phase of her interesting life, I would like to take a few moments to look back on the varied and dedicated body of work that Patricia leaves as her professional legacy. We all know how Patricia has been blessed with spirit and determination and she really brought everything she had to each assignment she accepted and fulfilled. This is a thrilling time for Patricia… that long and winding road has led to this point and the future is bright and open for new discoveries.

The author and journalist Gail Sheehy has said, “When men reach their sixties and retire, they go to pieces. Women go right on cooking.” By cooking I am sure she meant it in every sense of the word… creating, inquiring, exploring, and sharing. Ms. Sheehy also said, “If every day is an awakening, you will never grow old. You will just keep growing.” Patricia has shown that this is the way she has lived her life; one that started back on March 6, 1956 in Lancaster, Virginia. Upon graduating from high school and Smithdeal Business School in Richmond, Patricia was off to Baltimore to find employment and begin her career. After one year in a local bank, Patricia found her place in the City of Baltimore Bureau of Purchases and it wasn’t long before she was recognized for her enthusiasm and willingness to learn and grow. She was promoted from senior clerk stenographer to principal clerk stenographer and she was on her way. Being the kind of person and professional that keeps an eye out for growth potential and new chances to learn, in 1978 Patricia chose to join the Army National Guard in their Civilian Acquired Skills Program. Upon her graduation as Private First Class, she was assigned to Company A, 58th Support Bn in Pikesville, Maryland. After a transfer to the Maryland Military Academy, she ultimately retired in 1999 as Sergeant First Class, 71L Administrative Supervisor, but that’s not all. Patricia received several commendations and medals during her National Guard career: Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Armed Forces Reserve Medal to name a few (**Select and name the 3 most important medals**).

Showing a considerable amount of versatility and determination, while in the Army National Guard Patricia also found her place and contribution with the US Postal Service beginning in 1985 as a letter sorting machine clerk. Throughout her tenure at the US Postal Service, Patricia has distinguished herself in several capacities such as LSM clerk, Bundle sorter clerk and Manual Distribution clerk.

Apparently Patricia is the embodiment of the phrase, “The more you do the more you **CAN** do,” and by 1993 she began to invest in real estate. She has been a property owner since then … but wait… there was still more that Patricia found time to do!! Our “super woman” Patricia saw another opportunity and began part time employment in the aviation industry as a Customer Service Agent working for the now American Airlines since June of 2001.

Such longevity and determination in professional life is exhausting for most and inspirational to all, but did our Patricia sacrifice an enriching life for her busy and fruitful career? Not at all!! Even with all of this work history… or I should say **HERstory**, Patricia has managed to indulge in her hobbies like dancing and world travel and has been all over the world from Paris, France to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia…. from Lima, Peru to Dubrovnik and Johannesburg and so many places in between.

Henry Ward Beecher taught us, “We should not judge people by the peak of their excellence; but by the distance they have traveled from the point where they started.” Today is the official acknowledgement celebration of those past experiences and travels and this party signifies the beginning of the next adventures yet to be determined. Patricia has come a long way since she began this journey as a young woman. As she now embarks on new destinations, mainly a move to the Atlanta area to be closer to her son, I know you all join me in wishing her an exciting, amazing continuation of a life well lived. Congratulations Patricia!!! Thank you all!