WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

ALICIA MARTIN

Hello everyone!!! It is so wonderful to see all of you here tonight and to welcome you to Haley and John’s wedding. (**If you want to make a joke and ease the tension for yourself you can say**) ... and it would be even **MORE** wonderful if I weren’t quite so nervous… Let’s face it… I have literally waited my … and Haley’s **whole life** for this moment… I probably should have practiced just a little more!! (**Wait for the laugh**). We all know that laughter is the best medicine and I am really hoping it’s an effective tranquilizer… so if it even seems like what I am saying might be the slightest bit funny, charming, amusing, whatever… please!!! Laugh!! (**Wait for the laugh**). And besides, some wise man once said, “Only those who dare truly live” and I guess this is the most “daring” thing I’ll do for a while, so let’s hear it for the spokesperson for Haley’s side!

Haley and John are each blessed with wonderful families that are now joined. We are so happy to have our loved ones here. There is an expression, “I am part of all that I have met” and that’s especially true with family. When I see Haley I see the reflections of generations who all have had a part in giving us the beautiful bride and wonderful and accomplished woman we see today. Just mentioning her name calls to mind my mother and her side of the family… the Haley side. We’re so thankful to be able to share this day with Grandma Jean, known as ”Meme” and Step Grandpa Jerry. All we have to do to see the reflection of the Leefers side of the family is to think of Haley’s middle name, Luann as she was named that in honor of her (**Do you want to say “father’s mother” just to mention him in an indirect way? Or you can say paternal grandmother**) her father’s mother. (If you want to mention your father you can say). Of course another facet of Haley that I see is the reflection of my father, John, and I know he is with all of us in spirit.

What can I say about a young woman that’s beautiful, intelligent, caring, responsible and full of life…. besides she takes after me? (**Wait for the laugh**). If she does, even in a small way, I want to say it is an honor to be Haley’s mother. She has always been bright and energetic, involved, and unflappable. From National Honor Society to captain of her high school basketball team hard working bartender, Doctor of Physical Therapy to Army Reserves enlistee, her experience is wildly diverse and all contribute to making her so unique. It’s no wonder Haley can get a little impatient at times… we are mere mortals in her wake… and now she adds the best new descriptions to her life’s resumé… wife, homemaker, partner…. and … who knows??? Let’s see what the future brings.

I think one trick that Haley has employed in simplifying life to the point where she can manage so many accomplishments and achievements is that, with the probable exception of her brother Mitchell, just about every man she knows or is related to is named John. Sweet. Simple. Easy to remember. Her grandfather’s name was John. Her father’s name is John. Her best friend’s father who is like a father to her… guess his name? John! Her stepfather… John! So when she met a young man at college and they hit it off… apparently he was **TOAST**! No… that wasn’t his name… it was…. wait for it… **JOHN**. A sign from the heavens that this is a perfect fit!

And now you, John 5, as you shall be known… As if you’ve just ascended to a position of great significance… and you have, are officially part of our family. On that note I would like to welcome John’s parents Fred and Sarah. Thank you for raising a wonderful son. To John’s sisters Hannah and Afton we are thrilled to have you and your families blend with ours. To John’s grandmothers Judith and Elaine, we look forward to learning the family stories, especially where the name “Bags” comes from… !!! It’s a good problem to be blessed with so many family members… And there are almost too many to mention. … Now if we had some more named John… (**Wait for the laugh**).

(**Maybe it would be funny if you make a little presentation of a beautifully wrapped package of socks as a welcome gift and say**) John 5, you’ve married Haley and now you are officially my son. I want you to know how happy I am that you and Haley love each other so much. And I want you to know that since you **ARE** now my son, I will watch out for you… you know… keep an eye out for your well-being. Now, I don’t want you to get embarrassed, but yes, Christmas has come early this year…. (**Hand him the package**) and I want you to know how happy I am for my “Pretty Princess” and “Eat-a-Buddy.” What a dynamic duo!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Before I give up the floor to our next speaker… I’m kind of getting used to this…I would like to invite all of you to raise a glass as I propose a toast.

To Haley and John, Here’s to a life filled with health, happiness, love and peace. May your life together be an endless and fascinating conversation. Congratulations! We love you!