80TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

HUBERT PEREIRA

Hello everyone!! Today we all have the very special pleasure and privilege to celebrate a woman who has devoted her life to making sure this world is a better place for those she loves. She’s gracious and generous, unpretentious and supportive. She is a happy, contented, devout, and humble person. Today we honor her for a life well lived and for attaining a very special milestone. I know you will all agree that having Olinda in our lives is cause enough for celebration. When I think that she has had eighty years to practice and refine her very special brand of love, friendship and joy and she’s still determined to radiate her goodness and light, it makes me even happier that I have the gift of Olinda in my life.

Somehow she must have been paying attention…. either that or Albert Einstein must have heard about and been inspired by Olinda…. because he said, “ Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” For literally her entire lifetime our friend and “birthday girl” has been building up to this day, except that those of us that know her well… and that would be **ALL** of us… know that **each** day in Olinda’s life is a celebration. I think that sometimes we may wonder about the secret to her happiness and satisfaction in life. She has been a close friend of mine for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years and her positive attitude is infectious. Although it might seem awkward to shine a spotlight on a woman who naturally lives her life in the service of her faith and the well being of others, today is the day we finally get to share all that Olinda means to each one of us.

The comedian George Burns, known for his sense of humor and for his own enduring and endearing longevity, had this to say about attaining this milestone. He said, “By the time you’re eighty years old you’ve learned everything. You only have to **remember** it.” (**Wait for the laugh**). Well, Olinda, the good news is that since it’s your birthday, you don’t have to do any of the hard work…. like remembering… even though I bet you have some pretty special stories of the times gone by and the adventures you’ve had. And instead of you wondering what you might want to remember tonight, let me offer you and everyone here a little gift. Let’s call it a “virtual memory box” and I will share some of the special memories and characteristics that have inspired me over the years.

When I think of people that have truly touched my life, of course I think of you. There is an expression that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” Meeting and knowing Olinda is one of life’s genuine blessings. Just ask her brother-in-law, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and sister-in-law, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Olinda was there with open arms and a helping hand when they really welcomed the support. We all go through challenges and difficult times, but knowing someone like Olinda is there to help us through is a priceless gift. We also know just how much Olinda treasures and values her friendships… with each one of us **(If you want, mention an incident that demonstrated Olinda’s loyalty and commitment to you**.). I will never forget back in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Olinda was there with a smile and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And of course the most gratifying acknowledgement of a life well lived is when we see such goodness reflected in the light of our children’s eyes. Olinda raised four amazing sons, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and now they have families and children to whom to pass the “Olinda legacy.”

Olinda, you are the kind of person that is an eternal optimist. Your dedication to all that you love in your life gives each one of us more purpose and more reason to be respectful, appreciative, and supportive to those people in our lives. You have left a tremendous footprint on this earth and with any luck and a little bit of determination, we, too, will spread the light of friendship, faith, and optimism in your name. You are a person that truly sees the glass as “half full” and at the wonderful age of eighty, that alone is a profound lesson for all of us to absorb.

I recently read a quote by Nelson Mandela. Very simply he said, “I never lose. I either win or I learn.” That reminds me of you too, Olinda. You have not been a “player.” You don’t participate in life to “win,” but by sharing yourself, caring so completely for others, believing in your faith, respecting your friends, and nurturing all of us around you, there is no contest. You are a rare and special gem and it has been one of my life’s great gifts to be able to call you my friend.

(**If you want to make a toast you can say, ”I would like to invite you all to raise a glass as I propose a toast …”. If not you can just say the last sentence**)

[**Here’s to a**] Happy eightieth birthday and may you have many, **MANY** more celebrations filled with health, happiness, and love. Happy birthday!