**ANNIVERSARY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ROBERT PAGE**

Hello everyone and thank you all for joining Luke and me as we celebrate our very special **sixtieth** wedding anniversary. This is an incredible moment for us and we are so thrilled that all of you are here to share this with us. You've all been an important part of our lives over the course of the past six decades and knowing each one of you has added to the richness and fullness of our lives. Life was very different back in 1967 when "two crazy kids" .... well, maybe one wild New York kid and one Southern young lady met, dated, planned, and married. We both signed on for the adventure of our lives and in every way, it has been that and more. Some people say that "90% of marriage is just shouting '**WHAT???'** from the other room" (**You can say that with a little shouting gesture and wait for the laugh**) but I'm not gonna lie... our marriage has been so fascinating... so interesting... so engaging.... that most of the time I find I **WANT** to get up and really hear what Luke is saying.... after all these years she still holds my attention... she still captivates me... and I **DO** want to hear.... and listen to anything and everything she wants to tell me. We've been blessed with four wonderful children: Kendall, Porter, Whit, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and they have contributed immeasurably to our lives as well.

Now that I think of it, being married for sixty years to the same wonderful woman is an enormous accomplishment.... for both of us. There are so many factors I can credit for our longevity, but in the end, the simple truth is, I believe, that we are still **INTERESTED**.

We are interested and engaged in life and we are still interested in one another... at least I know **I AM**.... (**Wait for the laugh**). Studies have been done that examine the essence to a long marriage. It seems that these studies claim that about twelve percent of marriages last past fifty years.... yes.... Luke and I are in rarefied company.... and we wouldn't have it any other way. Similar studies have shown that the "secret sauce" to an enduring marriage can be defined as "The Four C's...." Chemistry, Commitment, Communication, and Compromise.... I think Luke would agree with me that a fifth C should be added, at least in our case.... Children. Our brood really supported us, whether they knew it or not, in realizing and practicing the other four C's... and it's true on every level that compromise is the most important one.... being able to know when to concede... when to encourage the other, when to realize that being right isn't as important as having an open, honest, supportive exchange with one's partner. Certainly Luke and I have faced a myriad of challenges and adventures in our marriage, but knowing we have each other for moral, intellectual, and spiritual support has seen us through many uphill climbs.

We met at a fraternity party at Chapel Hill. I was... and am.... from New York City... that begins the "cultural diversity" we first encountered.... I promise you, New York is quite different than that "new place" I had found myself. .... I must have done something right because a little while after our first meeting, Luke called and invited me to a party that was to be given by her sorority... in classic, good old fashioned, American style, we dated for a little over five years, in that time, I served in the Navy and was stationed in Alaska. Upon my return, we married.... SIXTY years ago... we had our children shortly thereafter while I was in law school.

There are many barometers that can be read as a way to gauge a successful marriage. I think one obvious gauge is that Luke and I love each other and make a great team. As I said earlier, if we have to base success on the four C's, we've got those bases covered. Over the years we've learned the importance of chemistry ... remember that light that was sparked at that fraternity party? ........ , **DEFINITELY** Commitment.... that goes without saying, communication.... and **EVERYTHING** is communication- every side glance, every shrug, every smile and every poker face become language that must be parsed in order for the marriage to remain strong.... and then there's compromise. ..... without it, we would all be alone!

And then there are the four other reasons to celebrate our marriage every single day.... Kendall, Porter, Whit, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (**Say a sentence or two about each child**). Kendall, as our first born (**is this correct? Going by order in instructions**), you were our " laboratory," our launching pad, our "maiden voyage..." by the looks of things, we did really well!! (**wait for the laugh**). We are so proud of you for your intelligence, compassion, and ethics, and while I **practiced** law, you came in and were able to take over the company! (**Wait for the laugh**). You have given new life to the firm and both your mother and I are thankful and impressed at your skills and ability to fulfill the legacy presented to you. Porter, (**Say two or three sentences about Porter**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). Whit, you've brought your own unique gifts to this family and because of you, (**Say a few sentences about Whit**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and of course, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.... you came into our lives \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Luke.... do you remember those days back in 1957? In some ways it seems a lifetime ago, but as we reminisce, maybe it was just yesterday and all of this has been a wonderful dream.... Elvis Presley was beginning to hit his stride with "All Shook Up" while Pat Boone counterbalanced that craziness with "Love Letters in the Sand." (**Do you remember " your" song? If so, mention it**). I remember our song was, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The world was a different place back then... we were on our upward trajectory building our lives and starting our family, and while "Gunsmoke" was number one on TV and J. Beresford Tipton ran a distant seventeenth place as the "Millionaire," we concentrated on building the foundation for our home, our family and our future together. I don't think I could have wished for a better companion to accompany me on my journey through this life.

The humorist Sam Levenson once said, "Love at first sight is easy to understand; it's when two people have been looking at each other for a **lifetime** that it becomes a **miracle**." (**Wait for the laugh**). Luke, thank you for being that sorority girl at that fraternity party all those years ago, and thank you for being my perpetual "miracle" for the past sixty years. On the other hand, Mark Twain said, " love seems the swiftest but is the slowest of all growths. No man or woman really knows what perfect love is until they have been married a quarter of a century." I think we start off as young adults thinking that Prince or Princess Charming will come along.... we might have expected bells and whistles and claps of thunder, but sometimes true, deep love evolves over the years. If Twain is correct in his declaration, we've been so blessed to have the opportunity to have more practice than most. We've had the chance to choose to continually learn about one another, to listen, to compromise, to partner, to support, to nurture, to give strength and comfort, and to allow the other to take as needed. The "**first sixty**" have been wonderful practice and I can't imagine this journey with anyone but you by my side. Luke, thank you for taking this New Yorker and encouraging me into being a "**Southern gentleman**" (**do you feel comfortable saying this?**) I wouldn't have it any other way. And to all of you.... Kendall, Porter, Whit, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**name any other important relatives, in laws, grandchildren, old friends, etc**), thanks for sweetening the ride with all of your love, attention, and support. We are truly blessed. Here's to our next chapter!! Thank you all!