**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**MARIAH PINTOS**

Hello everyone! I am Mariah, and I am the mother of mother of our very handsome, brave, dedicated, strong, groom, Nathan. (**If you want to make a joke, you can say**) I may also be his biggest fan.... but thank goodness I have a lot of company! (**and wait for the laugh**). I am always inspired by the way people speak of Nathan! And with each word of praise and commendation, I grow even more proud. Although I am not really used to speaking in front of such a large crowd, this is such a very special moment for our family and for Nathan and Farisha that I am happy to express some of my thoughts and memories.

Before I begin, I would like to express my thanks to Jack and Nim. Thank you for your hospitality, your generosity, and most importantly, for raising such a beautiful, fine daughter. Ever since Nathan was a little boy, I wondered what it might be like when he grew up, became a man, and found his wife...... well, now we know and I have to say, Nathan's father and I must have done SOMETHING right! We raised our children to understand that a worthwhile life is about caring for family and to cherish relationships with people who understand, as do we, the importance of love. When we met Farisha, we knew that she too, was raised the same way. We are all so happy to welcome Farisha to our family, and we are equally as happy to extend our embrace to all of you. I also want to take a minute to say that I am honored and humbled by the presence of so many of our friends and family who have come from California and Oregon to share this most important event in our family, and if it's even possible, your being here, to witness our joy and to dance at this wedding, makes this even more special.

Throughout my life, I have been blessed with many gifts and accomplishments, but by far, my most important achievement has been to be a mother to our daughter Vanessa, and of course, our son, Nathan. Nathan, from the day the doctor gave us the "news" that you were on your way, I have loved you. I love you so much that it was even a pleasure driving you to swimming lessons....gymnastics.... karate.... t-ball.... baseball.... hockey.... football.... Nathan, all I have to say is.... we **GOT AROUND**!! **(Wait for the laugh**).

I joke, but Nathan, you know how much you and Vanessa mean to me. Weddings are a chance to think back on life, and that really holds true with our family because we are so close. We have family sayings... " One team, one fight..." "No regrets...." (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) " Stop teasing your sister!! (**Or mention something something he used to do to annoy her and wait for the laugh**). ... thought I might throw that in....

I remember when I would drive you and Vanessa to school every morning and I would hold your hand. Those simple, sweet memories mean so much now. Even from a very early age, I knew you would become a man of integrity, and my thoughts were right! ...And I **REALLY** knew that Dad and I **MUST have done** **something** **right** when Coach Vic made a point to pull me aside one day... he praised your integrity and good manners.... and that's not always so easy, especially when hockey and football schedules overlapped.... you were late to football and the rule was... there was a penalty and that was to run two laps... while the other latecomers did whatever they could to pretend they were on time to get out of laps, that wasn't you. You knew your duty. You did your laps. You took responsibility. It didn't go unnoticed.

Mr. Van meter, the pastor and principal of Christian Community Academy also had something to say.... he said, " whatever you're doing with these kids, keep on doing it! You two have always made me so proud. You always showed your strength of character. You missed football practice to study for a biology test, even though there was a big game the next day and you wound up being benched, you knew you had to do the right thing. I also learned you were very "clever." Remember how I packed your lunch for you every day? Well, it wasn't until your senior year that I found out you sold those lunches every day.... for a handsome profit!! If I had known... we could have been partners!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Nathan, you have always been so full of life and when you got involved, you went all the way.... remember your eighteenth birthday? You invited your **entire** high school class....**TWO HUNDRED KIDS**!! I'm just grateful you didn't go to a **REALLY** big school! (**Wait for the laugh**)

A couple of years later you chose to enlist in the military and you dedicated three and a half years to serving your country. You were stationed in Germany and then you called to serve in Iraq. **TWICE**. imagine how a mother.... **THIS** mother felt... but you came to me and we had a talk and you told me that you had a dream and you said, "God told me that I must go back, and I knew that if he said that, then I **KNOW** he will bring me back home". Thank God... that's all I can say.

Farisha, I have to say, I offered to choose Nathan's wife for him. He politely declined (**Wait for the laugh**). I want you to know that I am so glad he chose you. You make him laugh. You're by his side.... you really fit into our family. An old pastor of ours used to repeat the old saying, "A son is a son til he takes a wife...." well.... the good Lord has given us a second daughter. We are blessed!

To Jack, Nim, and Jay, we've gone from a family of four plus two dogs to a family of eight plus three dogs... now we are one big happy family and I look forward to our future.... to Nathan and Farisha, thank you for showing us again and again of the importance of love and the meaning of family.... may the two of you have nothing but health and happiness for your entire lives..... with unending love, Mom. Thank you all.