**FATHER OF THE BRIDE SPEECH**

**FOR**

**NEBAS RAMIREZ**

Hello everyone! Melody and I want to thank all of you for being here to witness and celebrate this very special moment for our family. I'd like to thank Lindsay for being such a great help in coordinating this wonderful wedding and for paying such careful attention to all the details that have made this evening (**? Please change as necessary**) so beautiful and special. Talk about military precision! Lindsay and her team did a wonderful job “securing the perimeter” (**or use another appropriate military term and wait for the laugh**) ….I mean reserving this great venue and making sure that this beautiful and special setting was available and ready to witness this joyous occasion. (**Do you want to acknowledge Newman Marcus? If so you can say**) Melody and I are so thankful for the way everything turned out that if…. And that's a **BIG IF**…. we ever decide to have more kids, we just might name one **Neiman** and the other **Marcus**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

To know the Ramirez clan is to experience the true meaning of family… and that is to place each other first, and to honor traditions, to love and learn from past generations, and to embrace new beginnings. Pope John XXIII said, “The family is the first essential cell of human society.” Anyone can see that we have contributed many loving cells… and souls… to the “human society” that Pope John XXIII so respectfully mentions. The patriarch and rock of our family was my dad, Nebas, God rest his soul. He, along with my mother Jennie, the heart of all of us… and after this event, we can say she’s also the muscle and brains of the operation (**Wait for the laugh),** built a family based on love, respect, support, integrity and honor. Dad devoted his thirty five year career to the military and through his dedication to his mission and devotion to all of us…. And there was **A LOT** to whom to be devoted!!! … seven children, thirty two grandchildren… he and Mom managed to guide and support all of us to have meaningful lives. Of course with a man like that, children are everything and he was the father to one son, me, followed all in a row by three daughters. He mentioned to me that the same thing that happened to him…. One son, and then three daughters, would happen to me, and so it came to be.

Our four beautiful children, Dominic, our oldest, Mellora, and Marrissa all paved the way for our youngest, our bride, Mahlia (**Is this correct spelling? Instructions had it this way**). Mahlia has always been a wonderful, sweet, considerate, and bright spot in our lives (**Mention some traits of Mahlia’s if these aren't accurate and tell one or two sentences about what she was like as a child**). As a child, she \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we would always be able to count on her to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. When Mahlia met Scott, and as we got to know him more and more, we knew that he really loved our daughter and would be a wonderful addition to our family. Scott, i would like to officially welcome you as my son. We are thrilled to know that our traditions and close ties will continue to future generations. We also want to congratulate your parents, Robert and Lori. We look forward to sharing many occasions and events with you while making the memories that mean so much to all of us. Welcome.

Mahlia, Scott, by demonstrating your love for one another and by making that declaration “official,” you not only affirm your mutual commitment, but you also acknowledge that you too, respect the sanctity of marriage and family. Your wedding is also recognition and testimony to the relationships that inspired you throughout your lives. Mahlia, you know that your mother and I would do just about anything for you and your brother and sisters, but on top of that, you have been blessed to be inspired and guided by your grandmother Jennie, a woman that, well, let's be honest about this…. puts the Energizer bunny to shame… (**Wait for the laugh**). Your Grandma is a constant source of “renewable energy” and at **EIGHTY-SEVEN** years old, we are all beyond blessed that, thank God, she is still going strong and has contributed so much to make this day so special for you. She is our matriarch, our leader, and let's face it, her presence here is almost as important as yours…. It is such a gift to share this moment with her.

Mahlia and Scott, in Proverbs 31:10, we learn, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” Scott, I know **YOU** know you have married a **gem**…a woman of truly fine character…. and you get all of us in the package… **what a deal!** (**Wait for the laugh**). All jokes aside, I know I speak for everyone here when I say that you have married one of the most precious gifts I might present to anyone. Now it is up to the two of you to find your way in this world as a loving, committed, respectful, supportive team.

Mark Twain said, “To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.” The two of you have each other. Remember, as another wise man said, “Love must be as much of a light as it is a flame,” Guide each other…. Support each other… learn from each other… and remember… the Beatles said, “…. And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.” I know I speak for everyone here when I say that for the two of you, the journey has just begun. You have your guideposts to show you the way. Just don't ever lose sight of the feelings you have for each other right now. No matter what, remember your vows. Honor the depth of your mutual commitment. You're now officially “in this together,” and what a blessing!!! Congratulations! We love you!