**BEST MAN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**MICHAEL NEKAHI**

Hello everyone! For those of you that might not know me…. yet…. I am Michael Nekahi, the proud best friend… since childhood…. and honored best man of our groom, Michael. Since I've known him for so long, this really is like a “family affair” to me. To Cheryl and Merit, you've been like a second set of parents to me, and I am so happy to be here **(if you are married, should you mention your wife and instead say, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are so happy to be here…”? I think it would be fitting to mention your wife.**) to celebrate Michael and Molly and to congratulate the two of you and to share your joy. Let me take a moment to congratulate and acknowledge Bobbie and Brian Wilson, Molly’s parents. I’d like to invite all of you to raise your glasses as I propose a toast to the four people directly responsible for today’s events. To Cheryl and Merit, Bobbie and Brian, the four of you have raised two really fine people who have recognized the meaning of family, the importance of love, and the honor of making and keeping lifelong friendships. This beautiful celebration is a reflection of the love and respect you have for each other, your families, and those of us honored to be in your circle. Thank you!

Michael and I met back in 1990. We were twelve years old. We were each riding our bikes home from school and our paths converged on 88th Street. We went our separate ways that day but we've been inseparable ever since. That was **TWENTY-SEVEN** years ago!!! **WOW**! Does **THAT** make me feel …. Uh… **OLD**!!! It's really amazing how time flies, but what is even **MORE** amazing are the memories we've made along the way… the adventures… the “hi-jinks” we pulled… the trips we took… the places we went… the lessons we learned… all experienced **together**. I am the kind of person who really cherishes the bonds of friendship and I am so thankful that ours has endured throughout our lives…. Especially considering some of the episodes we shared…. But you know what “they” say… “What happens in the backyard… with BB guns, at Wild Waves, on train tracks, in buses, and at Senor Frogs… in penthouses and Whistler, and Mazatlan and Roche Harbor…. stays in all of those places….” Except tonight!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… Don't get nervous, Michael…. I’ll just do a little walk through of some of the highlights…. But first, I'd like to acknowledge…. again… my “surrogate” parents, Cheryl and Merit, for their continued demonstration of wisdom and strength… knowing we were two young “wild and crazy guys,” but trusting that we were raised right by giving us a leash long enough for us to get into a little bit of trouble… but still teaching us to be responsible and to always watch out for each other. Fortunately we didn't screw up too badly, but **BOY**!!! Did we have fun!!

And may I say…. From BB guns in the backyard at twelve years old…. We were off and running… and there was no looking back. Michael… remember our “first adventures in alcohol?” It was Black Velvet and it really left an impression. Or how about when we had those Old English 40 ounce’s to accompany us as we walked down the train tracks for five miles to meet some girls…. I just remember we tried really hard not to get hit by a train in the process. Yes… we learned at an early age… it’s essential to “hydrate” while taking a hike… (**Wait for the laugh**). We had so many amazing times together…. How great that there are too many to recall… but the pool parties…the trips on the boat to Roche Harbor… Fireworks at the cabin on Whidbey Harbor…those were some precious times…. We went to junior high, high school, and then attended University of Washington together… roommates… fraternity brothers… partners in travel… to New York, Mazatlan, Whistler, Vegas, Park City, Cancun, Cuba…. Boy we got around…. And not always so…. uh… legally…. Who will ever forget the time we “borrowed” your father’s car …. Were we really **just** fifteen?? **WOOPSIE**!! We went to meet girls…. and then one of them left an unfortunate “gift” on our friend Louis’ lap…. Thank goodness it missed most of the car upholstery… (**Wait for the laugh**). Ah, Mike… every name I can think of for best friends can apply to us… “ride or die” …. “brothers from another mother…” partners in everything… we may have been competitive with each other… in sports… in school … with girls… and by the way…. It didn't really help that at puberty you had the body of a **SCHWARZENEGGER**…. (**Wait for the laugh**), but through it all… the only thing better than one Michael is two….

Mike, throughout the years I have been there as you challenged and encouraged me and found your footing on both the real and virtual train tracks that lead us through our lives…. We've clowned around together, learned together, dared together, and we've witnessed each other evolve into the men we have become. After all of this, I don't even think I have to say that you are a great guy… smart, fun, resourceful, caring, entrepreneurial…. I want to give you credit for taking risks and for taking on and breathing life into your family’s eighty year old business. Part of that evolution for you was definitely to be present, aware, and willing when destiny brought you and Molly together. We have to believe that the universe provides, and it did an incredible job when it made sure your paths crossed. Molly, you are now officially Mike’s **better** half. Trust me. I know. (**Wait for the laugh**). We've known each other for seven years now…. And I couldn't be happier for the two of you and for all that the future holds. I know you are everything Mike could ever want or wish for in a wife… you're beautiful, bright, caring, sincere, and patient…. Basically one might say you're probably out of Mike’s league, but **good for him!**! (**Wait for the laugh**). All jokes aside, you make a great couple and hopefully someday, we will all get to see what a great mother you will be too. Just try to make it sooner than later…. Mike isn't getting **any younger**…. (**Wait for the laugh**).

I know I speak for everyone here when I say that we wish you two a lifetime of happiness, love, partnership, and more than you might ever wish for. Congratulations… we love you!