**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**AL HERMANN**

Hello everyone! It’s so wonderful to be here and to share this very special moment with all of you. To have the privilege of being a father is a true gift. To have the honor of having a wonderful son is a blessing…. And to have that wonderful son marry such a beautiful, smart, loving and supportive young woman… well, that’s what life is all about. As most of you know, my wife, Mike’s mom, Mary Ellen, is no longer with us, but I know that her presence is felt all the time, and in particular right here, with us, tonight. I also know that Mike’s mom loved Lauren from the minute she laid eyes on her and I am very sure that today fulfills a very important dream of hers.

 I truly cannot think of two people I would want to honor more than Mike and Lauren and I am sure each one of you feels the same. I'm so happy to see so many of you that made the trip to be here. Things seemed much simpler back when Mary Ellen and I got married, but today… there are websites, destination weddings… like this one… and all sorts of options to ponder when planning the perfect wedding…. It is especially heartwarming that all of you… all of **US**… have traveled to this special place to share this moment. Mike and Lauren are savvy and determined, and as we are all having such a good time, I am also quite sure that the Galena, Illinois Chamber of Commerce would like to thank you for this week’s spike in tourism! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Mike, growing up, you were a great son and a terrific kid. Your mom and I always did what we could to give you a strong foundation and a real good look at the world, and especially at our beautiful country. We travelled in our RV on various adventures and though we moved around a bit, each place, from New York to Dallas and on to Kansas City and beyond… every place we lived and each town we visited gave us all a chance to truly experience the lessons we might learn from each unique destination we visited and the people we were fortunate to meet. We taught you the importance of having a strong foundation of faith, family and education. You met a terrific group of young men when you attended Rockhurst Jesuit High School… throughout your early life you learned and practiced adaptability and humility as you were taught how vital it is to be educated.

You learned the importance of attending college very early on…. Probably within the first couple of days at the University of Missouri…. Because two doors down….there was a young woman…. And unbeknownst to either of you, you BOTH were about to embark on a quest to get the greatest education life might offer. Although I hear the two of you hit it off right away, the lesson for you, Mike, to learn, was patience. As the legend goes, Lauren was at school to concentrate on her books…. And not men… Hmmmm. But honestly…. Even Lauren could not resist the charm of Mike Hermann for long…. And that’s the GOOD NEWS!

Five years have passed since that fateful meeting and here we are. As these two grow as adults and partners, each advancement… each accomplishment, makes me more and more proud of my son and my new daughter… Lauren, as you continue your studies and get your Masters in Education…. Mike, as you continue to distinguish yourself in your career, you both manage to inspire and impress with your choices and maturity. I'm particularly proud that you've bought a home together in Webster Grove.

Marriage can be the greatest learning experience of a lifetime, but the two of you have had great examples. Mike, I hope you learned a lot of positive lessons from your mother and me and Lauren, I want to congratulate your parents, Kim and Frank Sr., for doing such a wonderful job raising you and your sisters and brother (**Do you want to name them?**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Mike, there is some wisdom that has been handed down from generation to generation. For instance… you’ll learn that the two most important words in the language of marriage are “Yes dear.” (**Wait for the laugh)** … Kim… areyou taking notes for these two? **( as an aside you can say)** For those of you that may not know, Kim is a court reporter…comes in handy! **(And wait for the laugh)** You’llalso learn the importance of a strong foundation… Frank, you can guide them on that…since you're in construction…. **( If you want you can add)** Me? I was in auto parts… you may think my advice is just full of hot air …. **(And wait for the laugh).** And when all else fails, just remember, “Happy wife, happy life.”

So now it's up to the two of you to begin your life together with love, respect, humor and partnership. You've both had great exposure to the world in which we live and marriage is another opportunity to learn, to adapt, and to teach… one another as well as yourselves. You’re each well on your way to distinguishing yourselves as productive, vital, responsible adults, now it's time to show he world just how “dynamic” this duo is and will be. It's time to start writing your own rule book while being inspired by those that have loved and guided you through the first phases of your lives.

As your father I am happy and proud and you know I will do whatever I possibly can to provide wisdom and support, but I have a feeling you two will be the ones to teach me. May you both… and Emmett, have a wonderful, happy, healthy and satisfying life together filled with insights and joy, and may you have more good fortune than Emmett has spots! Congratulations! We love you!