**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**RICHARD JONES**

Hello everyone!! I’m Richard, father of the bride, and on behalf of my wife Claudia and our family, welcome to this joyous celebration. Witnessing one’s very special daughter marry a fine young man happens every day.... all over the world, but to us, there will never be another moment like this one. Kristen is a wonderful, smart, generous, funny and accomplished young lady.  I have witnessed her grow from a tiny baby in my arms to my precious daddy’s girl to an accomplished scholar, successful career woman, and now, today, a beautiful bride.  She has found a man whom we have come to know and love as exceptionally kind, intelligent, thoughtful, strong, adventurous, and brave. I am honored to welcome Mike into our family. Jim and Cindy Meyer, you raised a fine son. It’s an honor to welcome you into our family as well, and to celebrate with you and see our children so happy.

Claudia and I are so proud of the woman that Kristen has become, and she has clearly shown us her heart and soul were and are in the right place by falling in love and marrying this very fine man.  Before Mike asked Kristen to marry him, he was thoughtful and respectful enough to ask for my permission.  I deeply appreciate this gesture.  I had just one question for Mike before I could give him my blessing, however.  I asked him if he thought he could support a family.  He told me that he could easily take care of himself and Kristen but that unfortunately Claudia and I were on our own.... (**Wait for the laugh**).

We are blessed to have so many friends and family here with us today.  We are especially thankful that Kristen’s grandmother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 93 years young, is here to celebrate with us.  People have traveled from all over the country and the world to share this moment with us, and being together with all of you makes this day that much more special. I’d like to acknowledge that Susan and Colin Basterfield have come from New Zealand to celebrate with us today, along with all of you and is a testament to the love and support Mike and Kristen can expect throughout their lives together as husband and wife.  I want to take a moment to especially thank my nephew Scott and his lovely wife Hillah for being here, along with their family.  You see, after many years of hard work, Scott graduated earlier today from the doctorate program at UCLA with his PHD in archaeology.  Please join me in congratulating Scott.

Several years ago, Claudia and I were lucky enough to visit Scott on one of his excavations to Anacapa Island where he was doing a field study on the Chumash.  Among other things, Doctor Sunell is an expert on our local Chumash Indians and knows just about everything Chumash... from the ancient construction techniques they used to build their boats to the odds of winning a new Lexus at the casino this week. (**Wait for the laugh**).

Speaking of nature and ancient traditions, I hope you agree with me that this vineyard is a very beautiful and fitting setting for today’s wedding.    Wine has been a part of our history for over 7,000 years.  It’s origins are traced back to ancient China and the Middle East.  The production of wine and its transportation accompanied the advancement of all of the ancient empires and civilizations.  It was consumed by the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews, and the Christians.  In fact, the very first miracle performed by Jesus and recorded in the bible involved wine and took place at a wedding celebration just like this one.  When the host found that the celebration was running out of wine, Jesus’ mother insisted that he do something to help.  It was then that Jesus, somewhat reluctantly, is recorded as changing water into wine.... and here we are, fulfilling that legacy...

Another time honored tradition that we observe today is one that involves the process... the rite of passage... the copious organizing invested in order to pay fitting tribute to the love and connection that we celebrate today... I want to take a moment to give special thanks to my beautiful wife, Claudia, for her months of hard work in planning and putting this day together.  There are literally infinite details necessary to make this event possible, and clearly, nothing was overlooked   (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**).... in the coming millennia, when Scott’s future archaeological colleagues excavate these hallowed grounds, they will **KNOW** that once there lived a woman named Claudia Jones, who really **KNEW** how to plan a party!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Please join me in thanking her.  Claudia was assisted by many people including Kristen and her sisters, Aubrey and Amie, and by Mike’s mother [**and]** Cindy Meyer (**please clarify... is Mike’s mother Cindy? Is there someone else? In the beginning you introduce Cindy as the mother... just checking**).  We thank you all.

I also wish to acknowledge the wonderful job that the wedding party did in making this special day so incredible and want to particularly acknowledge the children, Colton & Elin Brown, Beau, Brody, and Wyatt, Neill and Kyle, Jake and Luke Johnson. All of you will also go down in history as being such great attendants!

We are also very honored today to be in receipt of a special wedding message from the Office of the President of the United States, in Washington DC.  I will read it for you now:

**“Congratulations on your wedding. We join your family and friends in celebrating this joyous occasion and your love and commitment to one another. May your hearts grow fonder and your love deeper each day, and may God continue to bless your life together.”**

-President Donald J. Trump and First Lady of the United States Melania Trump

Finally, I think it is appropriate that we all share in a brief moment of silence and reflection as we remember those family members who have gone before us and are unable to be with us today.  We recall Kristen’s grandfather, Robert Ewing Jones, her aunt Jennifer Wentz, Grandfather Joseph Bende, Grandmother Margaret Bende, and cousin Tom Brandt.

And now, I’d like to invite you to please raise your glass, stand, and join me in congratulating  Mike and Kristen Meyer with a very special wedding toast:

To Kristen and Mike, here’s to a life filled with love and friendship, family and partnership, health, happiness, and good fortune... may you have more than you might ever wish for.... and with that, **CONGRATULATIONS**!! We love you!