**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**BARBARA PABIS-JENDRZEJ**

Hello everyone. Tonight we’re celebrating the marriage of our son, Matthew, to his beautiful bride, Sarah. My husband, Roman and I want to thank you all for your love, support, and good wishes for this wonderful couple. We are thrilled to welcome Sarah to our family, and although we have never had our **own** daughter, I could not have wished for someone better, sweeter, or smarter than Sarah. (**Would you like to congratulate Sarah’s parents? If so, say**) To (**Name Sarah’s parents**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Roman and I would like to congratulate the both of you on the marriage of **our** children. Thank you for raising such an exceptional and lovely daughter. We look forward to sharing many more special moments with you and your family.

It is now, as Matthew and Sarah exchange vows, and Sarah **officially** becomes the most important woman in his life (**If you want to make a little joke, you can say**).... I know, I know...but I will **ALWAYS** be his **MOTHER** and he will **ALWAYS** be my “little boy,” **NO MATTER WHAT** (**and wait for the laugh**) no matter the mark he makes in life... no matter the professional respect he has earned... no matter how he continues to learn and grow, with Sarah and within every phase of his life... and Sarah... that goes for you too... just ask if you need me! ... It’s now, at this time, that I think back to all of the women in Matthew’s life that meant so much to him... don’t worry, Sarah... It’s **NOT** what you’re thinking!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... but it’s still good to know that throughout his life, Matthew has had the companionship and support of strong, smart, women that truly love him. Sarah, after I tell a little about these people who loved and cared for Matthew so well, you will see you’re in very good company. Matthew, all three are now in heaven, but I know they are looking down and smiling, and so proud of the man... and **HUSBAND**.... you have become.

For those of you that may not know, Roman and I are from Poland. We emigrated forty four years ago. We just celebrated our fortieth wedding anniversary, and not long after, we were blessed with Matthew’s birth. Roman and I were mostly alone in this country, so as we continued to build our family, we needed some love and support from family members.

My mother, Babcia, was there from the beginning. For the first three years of Matthew’s life, there was Babcia...she came over from Europe... she left my father to take care of himself.... don’t worry... he managed!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) and Babcia started to build the foundation that has helped to make Matthew just who he is today. It was Babcia who taught Matthew to walk.... and when she had some “challenges” trying to keep him from running into the walls... yes, even back then, he was a “**go-getter**”.... (**Wait for the laugh**) Babcia devised a pillow system for the “crash course” formerly known as “our home.” To avoid continued injuries, she attached pillows to the corners of our walls....she also ran “interference”. That is, she ran in front of him to protect him from “impact.” Babcia taught Matthew how to pray and how to have faith. She was a loving, caring beacon in his life and in my heart, I know that Babcia still watches over Matthew... she’s still running in front of him... still guiding him... still protecting him.... and for that I am very grateful.

The second of “Matthew’s Angels” was Baba.... and although she was a stranger we found from an ad in a newspaper, she was a true gift.... a woman that loved Matthew as if he were her own. Baba also taught Matthew lessons of a lifetime.

Baba was with us for four years, and in that time, (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**) Matthew went from bouncing off the pillows on the walls to sustaining **OTHER** injuries as Baba taught him how to ride a bicycle. ... maybe these pivotal moments inspired Mattew to go into medicine? (**Wait for the laugh**). Anyway... the bicycle years... those first few lessons were painful... he practiced getting bloody noses more than “wheelies,” but Baba was always there, running by his side, always encouraging and reminding him “You better pick up your **PUPCIA** and **TRY AGAIN**.” Ladies and gentlemen, I think you can guess what part of the body the **PUPCIA** is!!! Baba was an incredible person and absolutely devoted to Matthew. I know and believe that whenever Matthew tries something new, Baba is close by, watching carefully, praying for him, and gently reminding him to “watch his **PUPCIA**.”.... and he **HAS**!!

The time came for Baba to return to Poland, and so Matthew’s **THIRD** angel, Ciocia Hanka, came to care for him as he was becoming a teenager. This wonderful woman opened Matthew’s world.... to **ANIMALS** and **PETS**...ahhhhhh... yes.... Matthew’s first pet was a mouse.... named Skweke... Matthew and Skweke were **inseparable**... the dynamic duo... Skweke was always to be found in Matthew’s pocket and I will never forget when my mother-in-law came to visit from Poland and she was greeted with the sight of her grandson Matthew .... and Skweke.... **ON A LEASH**... you can imagine the reaction... she rolled her eyes and proclaimed, “This is **AMERICA**.” (**Wait for the laugh**).

Although we are all reconciled to accepting that no one... not even Skweke, lives forever.... well, in our hearts they do, but when Skweke passed and found his way to the rainbow bridge... or rainbow **rat wheel**... or wherever mice go when they leave this mortal ground, Ciocia Hanka was there to support Matthew in providing the greatest send off a mouse has ever seen... or **NOT SEEN**. The funeral was elegant and dignified and fitting for a Hapsburg prince... or mouse. The shoebox we used was the finest in all the land...well... at least the best one we could find in the house at the time... of course the most outstanding tribute for Skweke was the statue of Holy Mary glued to the top of the box.... it was a sight to behold... Matthew and his friends, I suppose they were honorary pall bearers, dug a grave in the backyard for Skweke’s final resting place.... and even as he got older, when he was sad or needed to think, Matthew often found peace and solace in this same place.

They say that people... and mice... come into one’s life for a season, a reason, or a lifetime. I know we were all so blessed to have such wonderful guides and influences for our son.

Matthew has also been blessed to have a father who is supportive, loving, and encouraging.... Roman has always and unconditionally been there for Matthew... he gave Matthew great guidance and allowed him to explore... to find things out on his own... those are the most valuable lessons...As a child, Matthew’s curiosity sometimes led him places... he’d want to play with sugar and objects on the dining table, and while his grandparents forbid those explorations, his father led with the upper hand... with patience and wisdom... “Let him experiment and learn...” and that sense of faith probably led to Matthew’s incredible and productive curiosity that he demonstrates as a man in both his profession and his life. I’m so grateful that Matthew has a father like Roman as one of the great influences in his life.

Sarah and Matthew, as I mentioned earlier, Roman and I have now been together for over forty years, and if I had to share a little wisdom .... which you **KNOW** I will (**Wait for the laugh**), it’s this... marriage is the greatest partnership in the world... it’s best friends who love each other more than anything.... staying interested, being interesting... allowing independence but honoring the closeness only you two share. It’s having the space to disagree while learning from the other’s point of view, and there is a meeting of the minds as well... shared goals, shared concerns, and happily shared responsibilities. I know I don’t have to tell you all of this, but I’m your **MOTHER**... try and stop me!!!

Here’s to a wonderful future for the two of you, filled with experiments and challenges, life lessons and love... and most of all, more happiness and good fortune than you ever imagined. Know that we are **ALL** watching over you... “Matthew’s Angels” are now Sarah’s Angel’s too... Congratulations!! We love you!!