**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ANNELIE McCREIGHT**

**HS... see my notes/suggestions in purple... hope they help...**

Good evening and welcome!  For those of you who don’t know, I’m Annelie, Joe’s mom, and it is an honor to say a few words and offer a toast to the bride and groom. First and foremost, thank you all for joining us today. As I look around me, I am reminded of the role that family and friends play in our lives…and the importance of those relationships. Your presence has made a special day even more wonderful. I also want to acknowledge Joe for agreeing to have this wedding on a **~~beautiful~~** day when he could be out golfing. Joe, I know you were torn between your two great loves and I’m proud of you for making the right choice... **without even needing to consult the national weather service!!! That’s love!! (Wait for the laugh)** . Helene – what if it rains that day – how can this be reworded. Do I say, just as importantly, thank God for bringing Joe and Anna together and for giving us rain today so Joe didn’t have to choose between Anna and 18 holes at Mitchell Golf and Country Club. **HS- hope this works... removed beautiful so that you can work around whatever the weather is that day**

Weddings are about looking forward....They are about celebrating love... new beginnings and honoring age old traditions.... they focus on partnership.... as two people pledge to grow together and strengthen commitment. Weddings are also a time for a little nostalgia.... for recalling the memories and milestones that led to this wonderful moment.

Joe, as I look at you today, I see a handsome young man, dressed in a sharp tuxedo, poised to embark on the greatest adventure of his life.... but if I close my eyes for even half a second, I see you on another threshold... you’re five years old, heading off to kindergarten, wearing a backpack that’s almost as big as you. I blink my eyes again and see you’re graduating from grade 8, walking away with all of the accolades you’ve earned, including the leadership award. ... I blink again you’re a teenager and you and most of your hockey team have taken over my living room playing video games. I wouldn’t have minded, but I worked at home, so it was more than a little distracting. It was always an interesting balancing act running both VP Construction and a full video arcade in our house. And heaven only knows what the neighbors thought of the WWF trampoline tournaments that went on in our back yard.

My mind fast forwards to a few years later.... I’m picking you up at your college residence and I remember being horrified at the way you guys were living.  I considered going in and cleaning it myself.... but it was the weekend and I couldn’t get my hands on a hazmat suit and padded gloves.... (**Wait for the laugh**) then I thought of hiring one of those firms that cleans up natural disasters and crime scenes, but when I explained the conditions they mentioned something about an extra deposit and catastrophe insurance.... (**Wait for the laugh**). Fortunately, I came up with a better solution – the next time I picked you up for dinner, I sat in my car and waited for you to come out.

Your first job, at twelve, was working for our family business.  Construction is hard work, and Grandpa Van Pelt owned VP at the time, so he made sure you understood the work ethic of your Dutch roots. You met the challenge, getting up early and working your tail off.  After college, you pursued your career elsewhere, moving up the ladder and honing your skills. As so often happens in life, things come full circle, and a year ago we got to welcome you back as our General Manager.

As a parent, you hope your children will find partners who will not only love and support them but challenge them. Joe has certainly found that in Anna. She is kind, loving, generous, and we simply could not imagine a more wonderful daughter-in-law. ...And that’s not all...she **LOVES** golf and hockey. Joe, if I didn’t know better, I’d think you created her in a lab. The stars truly aligned for you the night of Neve’s hockey banquet where you first met.  Anna, I’d like to take this opportunity to officially welcome you into our family. You risked quite a bit to commit to this relationship, leaving your teaching position with the York Region School Board and moving to Mitchell, not knowing anyone. It didn’t take long for you to become an indispensable part of our community and our lives – and we’re so glad you did. You complete our family and you complete Joe in more ways than we can count. Also, I know every bride is beautiful but you are simply stunning....and if the care and thought you put into planning this event are any indication, you have your future well in hand. Plus, you’re a Red Sox fan, which means you’re not only loyal, but you understand life’s ups and downs. What more could a mother want for her son?

To Anna’s mom, Elaine, welcome to our family. We’ve shared a few holidays and you and Anna were gracious enough to include me in the wedding-dress shopping. You and your husband have raised an incredible daughter and we are blessed to have her – and you – in our lives. Thank you for your part in making today come together so beautifully.

Joe and Anna, you’ve now officially embarked on the adventure of a lifetime. It may not always fit your pictures, but with love, respect, resilience, and humor, I know you’ll stay the course. ...And if the going gets tough, remember the wisdom of Jon Bon Jovi who shared his secret to a rare, long, and healthy marriage... “My wife tells me that if I ever decide to leave, she is coming with me.'” (**Wait for the laugh**)...

**.... And speaking of music...** You **KNOW** it’s love when, despite Joe’s legendary two left feet, Anna **STILL** wants to dance with him, **so let’s get on with it!!** . Helene – is there another way I can transition so the audience knows I am almost done, At the pre wedding meet we were given 3 – 4 minutes for speech as a lot of money spent on live band – can I say something tactful – can we find another transition statement. **Let me** sum up with this ... since our family also has Irish roots, (Helene - can I start sentence with Since our family?) **HS... sure ... why not?? I think if it sounds natural and conversational to you, go for it...** **~~I’ll leave you today with~~ ...** a proper Irish blessing:

***May you always have plenty and never lack***

***May you both always have each other’s back.***

***May you always be healthy and rarely ill***

***May you, in each other, feel loved and fulfilled.***

***May your lives be long and full of grace***

***May you always seek the good Lord’s face***

***May both your heart and your home be warm***

***May peace and joy always be your norm.***

Ladies and Gentlemen, please stand and raise your glasses with me…. To Anna and Joe: Here’s to a lifetime filled with love, health, happiness, and more than you could ever wish for!!

(Helene – is this a long time to raise a glass? To I ask them to raise glass after the blessing?)... **HS - I moved this around.**

Congratulations!! We love you!!! Thank you!!