**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**LUZ ESMERO**

Hello everyone!!! For those of you that hopefully can hear me and understand my accent.... but might not be able to **see** me... (**Wave and wait for the laugh**), I am Luz and I am Melissa’s mother.... what I may lack in height, I more than make up for with joy, love, respect, and pride for my beautiful daughter and her wonderful husband!!! I want to let you all know that, in addition to being so happy for our bride and groom, on behalf of my family... my husband Delfin and our other daughter, Judy, we are thrilled that so many of you have taken the time and made the effort to travel here to share this very special moment for Melissa and Scott. I would also like to congratulate Scott’s parents, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and as we welcome Scott to our family, it is also wonderful that Braeden is now part of our family too!!! Congratulations to all!!! I know that I speak us, Judy’s husband, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and for all of the Esmero’s as I say that we cannot wait to make and share a lifetime of memories as a new, happily extended family!

When I arrived in this country, many years ago, I literally had barely a dollar in my pocket and many, **MANY** dreams in my heart and my imagination. Thanks to my family, those dreams have come true, and to see the reflection of our culture, our heritage, and our shared strength in our daughters is the kind of thing that really makes life worthwhile. We came to this country from the Philippines to build a better life.... to know that my children, who, at the time, were just dreams themselves, would find their places, express their talents, and honor the dedication of their family members that taught them well, means everything. Judy and Melissa have more than fulfilled those dreams for us.

I remember when they were babies, and then little girls, as their personalities started to form and their talents became obvious, my pride in them grew as well. Early on, as she was growing up, Melissa showed us exactly who she was... and would become.... I’ve heard an expression that says something like, “Give me the child when she is seven years old and I will show you the woman...” Well, that was really true of my girls, and in particular, Melissa. She was always funny, always easy going, and committed to her love of tennis. She has always worked really hard, given her all.... and then some... and somehow found the will to continue, even when she was faced with challenges. While Delfin and I did whatever we could to provide a wonderful, supportive life for our girls, neither of them rested on what they had. They always sought to better themselves... try even harder... to improve their “game...” Melissa did what she could to follow in her sister’s footsteps... it seemed she was always where she wanted to be... in Judy’s shadow... trying on the moves of her big sister. They were both competitive.... with a very friendly rivalry... until, of course, one day Judy realized what she was up against with her sister, how well Melissa learned from her, and then decided to switch her interests!! But that was all good.... Judy went on to (**add Judy’s talent or sport**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Melissa went on to become a champion ranked college tennis player.... rising to challenges, beating odds, and learning that sometimes a lower score means.... **MORE LOVE**!!

As she grew up and graduated from college, Melissa chose to seek her fortune and future in a different place. She left life in Southern California and set off for Maryland....

As she established her life out here, and as she began her professional career, with less tennis in the picture, Melissa knew she had to find “**love**” somewhere else. As she concentrated her efforts on a rather “shallow” dating pool, and as she was about to give up, fate stepped in just in time... and so did Scott... and I think it’s fair to say, the rest is history.

You can imagine how it was when I first met Scott... I had heard so much about him... and although I was prepared to be impressed, I didn’t quite realize just how much I would **look up** to him.... No... **REALLY**... I **REALLY** had to **look up**... Let’s face it... Scott is over **six feet tall**... me??? I **LIE** when I claim **four feet nine and a half**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) (**NOTE: I have written out the heights thinking it may be easier for you to memorize or read**) ... I would say that I could step on a few nice, big telephone books to gain some height in order to see more “eye to eye,” but I don’t even think they’re made anymore!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... of course I tease... when I see the smile on Melissa’s face.... which, by the way, is a little **closer** to **my range of vision**... (**Wait for the laugh**)... it tells me all I need to know about how these two, and Braeden, adore each other... and **THAT** is what life is all about.

Melissa, you waited a long time to find your soulmate, and you have been blessed to find Scott. Today is really the beginning of the rest of your lives together. I want you to know that your marriage really is a blessing. You have always had faith.... in your family... in your talents... in the way in which you live your life with purpose and integrity... and now you get to officially share that life with your **destiny**...Scott. I once heard a line from a poem, “I am part of all that I have met.” Each one of you carries with you a part of each other... to protect and encourage you through life.

I want both of you to know that I believe in love, I believe in faith, and I believe in the both of **you**. Marriage has always been God’s idea and for that reason, God is always present and involved. To all of you, I want to say that God loved Scott and Melissa so much that he gave them what they greatly needed.... each other. It is very comforting to know that there is a master plan... that God works in strange and wonderful ways... and that, even when someone is just about to give up.... if something is meant to be... if it’s true destiny... nothing can keep those people apart.

Now you are married and a whole new official life begins with Braeden... We are all so happy for you and we feel the love you share.

(**If you want to make a toast, you can say**). I would like to invite you to raise a glass as I propose a toast:

To Melissa and Scott, there’s an old expression that teaches us, “People gain strength by standing together.” You now have each other. Here’s to a lifetime filled with lots of love and health, strength and unity, family and friends, good fortune, happiness, partnership, and more that you might ever wish for. Congratulations!! We love you!! Thank you!!