**ANNIVERSARY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JAMES JACOBS**

Hello everyone!!! I want to thank all of you for being here and joining in as we celebrate two people who mean so much to each one of us. Tonight we honor the joy, connection, humanity, and, of course **love**... of, and for, a couple who have been there for everyone in their lives... they’ve sacrificed, they’ve worked hard, they’ve encouraged, and they’ve made an indelible mark for all of us.... and whatever they did for us was possible because of the strong, unbreakable bond they have for each other. A lot has been said about the institution of marriage, but our parents, Jim and Sharon, could have literally written the book on honor, love, respect, and partnership.

Speaking of all that has been said about love and marriage, I’d like to share a few choice words... some have been wise.... William Penn, way back in revolutionary times, shared his wisdom... “In marriage, do thou be wise: prefer person before money, virtue before beauty, the mind before the body; then thou hast a wife, a friend, a companion; a second self.... Some have been witty... “A happy marriage is a long conversation which always seems too short...” And some have been downright true... I once heard someone say, “My wife told me the other day that I don’t take her to expensive places anymore, so I took her to the **gas station**....” (**Wait for the laugh)**.

Good, strong, healthy marriages are productive... they yield lots of love, encouragement for one another, and, if the couple is very lucky and really blessed, that love multiplies.... and is reflected in the hearts and souls of their devoted family. That has definitely been the case in ours.... I don’t think that Saundra or I could have asked for better, more loving, caring, devoted, involved parents.... I **KNOW** Dan and Beth got the **GREATEST** grandparents imaginable. Of course, all of the love and support we received inspires us to share... to carry on the legacy and lessons that our parents have instilled in us for our entire lives.

Fifty years.....lifetimes ago.... when things were very different in the world, these two met and married. They established an unbreakable bond... one that was strong yet flexible.... able to endure and grow even stronger through the tests of time. It’s a bond that has outlived decades of struggles and moments of crises and has only gotten better. Like the ripples on a pond, with each event and milestone, their love and strength spread to others... to Saundra, to me.... to Dan and Beth... and **you**.

A wise English poet once said, “I am part of all that I have met.” Our parents, Jim and Sharon, are part of all of us, and although on most days, we don’t make a big deal about it, in our hearts, their places, as a couple, as inspiration, are monumental. I will never forget the simple, sweet moments we shared while I was growing up. My parents always did whatever they could to “keep life interesting,” and whether it was trips to (**Name two or three places you went on vacation as a child**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or even sharing local football games, growing up, we knew we were richer for the experience and happier to have the blessings of being together with such great parents. .... And I have a very strong feeling that they enjoyed themselves too... and now we see that joy and fun rekindled as they share in so many of Dan and Beth’s activities.

**FIFTY** years... What an accomplishment. What a gift. ... and what a blessing to be able to honor these two. I would like to invite you to raise a glass as I propose a toast to my parents:

It’s been said that there is no greater thing in life than for two human souls to feel they are joined for life...to strengthen each other in all labor... to rest on each other through challenges...to minister to each other...to be **ONE**. To my parents, Jim and Sharon, congratulations on the **FIRST FIFTY**... here’s to many more celebrations and anniversaries... filled with lots of love and health, happiness and wisdom, laughter, family and friends, and more that you might ever dream of!!! We love you!! Thank you!!