**BEST MAN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**CHRISTOPHER BRANCHETTI**

Hello everyone! To friends, family, and guests, it’s great to be here, with all of you, united in one common, joyful purpose, and that is to acknowledge our happy couple Lauren and Michael, and celebrate their marriage. I have a feeling we all agree that we feel honored to witness such an amazing affirmation of love! For those of you that may who do not know me, I am Michael’s brother, Christopher.  It’s been one of the great privileges of my life to have Michael as my brother. To be able to “stand up” for him.... to stand **BY** him, on this, one of the most important moments of his life, is really what this is all about....I’ve always, throughout our lives, done my best to be more than just Michael’s brother... and although I’m technically his **BIG BROTHER** .... and I mean that in the best sense of the phrase... I’ve watched over him, I’ve listened, I’ve commiserated and given the best advice I could think of.... and to be here today as best man, is an amazing acknowledgement... however, it’s kind of ironic... we **ALL** know who the **REAL** best man is...

The relationship that my brother and I have is very special to me.  Michael and I share a bond and lots of memories together. For years, since we were younger, I would challenge him to push towards greater accomplishments in whatever he tried, using athletics as a way to fuel and develop his skills, talents, drive, and competitive spirit... I encouraged him to determine whether he was either a **champ** or a **chump**.  Growing up in our family could not have been easy for him, especially since there was what could be described as a relentless, two-pronged strategic plan... pushed by both Dad and me. Looking back, I’d say that something must have worked... Michael has managed to find his way through so many challenges in life, and he managed to find the means to prevail with focus, courage, respect, and love.  We “guided” him in directions to make some big choices at a young age. We encouraged him to embrace change, using football as a vehicle to present him with a context for challenges that would have a positive, enduring, impact on his life... it would eventually create a new group of friends, and turn into the career of a lifetime.  Michael, what you’ve accomplished so far in your life is both **inspirational** and **aspirational**... Pardon the pun, but you’ve **tackled** the big stuff and you’ve done it with grace and purpose. Today represents your greatest accomplishment yet... you’ve entered and navigated territory that I, personally, have not yet charted... and now, I get to learn from you!!! With that said, Lauren, I want to officially welcome you to the family!!

(**At this point, I would add two or three examples of stories... just a sentence or two for each... illustrating Michael as a younger kid... anecdotes about the two of you, how you interacted while he was growing up. I don’t want this to be only about his accomplishments, I want it to be about him as a person of character, maybe a bit mischievous at first, the potential you saw in him that you wanted to develop, etc**.)

(**This will come towards the end**) Lauren, you complete Michael in the most amazing ways. You laugh at his jokes but not at his style. You encourage his dedication and persistence with regard to his career, and yet you can balance him in the ways he needs that equilibrium the most.  You not only know what is best for him, you **ARE** what is best for Michael

I have never met a man who is so complete and amazingly balanced in his relationship.  In closing, I speak for everyone in my immediate family here when this blessing " May your love be modern enough to survive the times and old-fashioned enough to last forever."   We wish you...