**RETIREMENT SPEECH**

**FOR**

**PHILIS PALMER**

Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, colleagues, fellow professionals, students, and distinguished guests, I would like to acknowledge all of you for being here today and for taking some time out of your busy lives to give me a good, hearty send off!!! I know that all of us almost always have someplace else to be.... with something more urgent to do, so the fact that you’ve chosen to share this precious time on this occasion, is humbling, gratifying, and, well, very affirming!!! For those of you that have traveled considerable distance, I want to acknowledge you for your efforts.... to our esteemed guests.... \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, President of the Union, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Prime Minister of the Bahamas, Dr and Mrs Ron Smith of the Southern Union and Dr. Lincoln Edwards, President of the NCU, I want you to know that if I had any idea that any or **all** of you would be here to share this moment with me, **I promise you**... I would have retired sooner!!! (**Wait for the laugh).** Of course I’m just kidding... as we know, everything has a season and a reason, and all that we experience, when we experience it, shape who we are, the lives we live, and the impact we have on our families, friends, and communities. I am so grateful to have made my mark in ours.

President John Kennedy had said, “We must find the time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.” I am proud of the friends I’ve made and of the colleagues I hold close. It has been the experience of a lifetime to share duties and find mutual support right where we all needed it... within our professional community. To all of the people I’ve worked with, learned from, and tended to, I want you to know of an expression I’ve learned. A famous English poet shared the thought, “I am part of all that I have met.” To Dr. Patricia Rennals, Ms Cynthia Rose, and Janet McCollum.... how happy and proud I am to take with me parts... memories... encouragement... unforgettable stories and wisdom from each one of you!!! In turn I hope you’ve been inspired to carry little bits and thoughts of me with you.... and I hope history and time will be kind to **ALL** of us!!! The people that enter our lives... whether they leave fleeting impressions or lasting impact, all act to shape us. For that I am grateful!!!

Sometimes it feels like the voice in my head leads me, directs me... and narrates my life story... in real time.... as it takes place.... as it so happens, today, there’s an **ACTUAL** narrator for my life sequence... To Hannah Walker-Johnson, thank you for doing a beautiful job of bringing my story to life.... you did an incredible job... even **I’M** impressed with myself!!! Boy!!! Did **THAT SOUND GOOD**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

There’s one word that keeps coming to mind during this entire process... from retiring from my nursing career to beginning my “**NEW**” professional life as I celebrate receiving my PhD in Public Health, and that word is **GRATITUDE**. I’m grateful for the opportunities I have been able to take... for the crises I have had to endure... for the lives I’ve helped to save and for those that provided me with the privilege of witnessing and supporting birth. I’m thankful to the critics and to those who insisted on testing me, and most of all I am thankful to the people who encouraged me, laughed with me, gently corrected me and taught me about life and service along the way.... and while nursing is in so many ways a difficult, stressful profession, I would not have chosen another career in which to make my mark and take my stand in the medical profession. I have so many memories of my career.... especially as a nurse in labor and delivery..... Who will **ever** forget rushing to a CS section call with my colleague, Angela??? (**Say a little more about this and give another example**). I can also remember so vividly when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

To take some inspiration from Maya Angelou, “Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome life’s challenges.” Through faith and belief in the good we have the power to do, if we come together and align on a common purpose, we **can** heal the world. I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to have a fruitful nursing career and now I will take that experience and those lessons and apply it to my work in the public health sector. I cannot think of a more satisfying way to focus on, and serve our community. To all of you, once again, I want to express my most sincere thanks, and may we meet again in service to a higher purpose!! Thank you all!!