**BIRTHDAY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ROTHMOND TERO**

Hello everyone!!! **WOW**!!! It is so great to be here, together again, so many of us in one place at the same time, after many years and many “adventures!” This really is a “once in a lifetime” moment… so rare and so wonderful, and to have the gift of being able to come together to celebrate our mother’s **EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY**!!! … I’m sure I speak for everyone when I say what a joy it is to honor our mother… friend… auntie… grandma… mentor… neighbor… Adalinda. So many of you … including me… traveled from far and wide to be here for this rare moment. Talk about a **HAPPY** birthday!! I cannot imagine a better inspiration to put smiles on every face in this room today!!! This gathering is electric with celebration and acknowledgement, all brought on by the person who best connects us to one another… my mother, and even though, technically, we’ve had a lifetime to prepare for this day… our imagination and planning could never match the love, pride, and emotion I feel right now, for all of you, and especially Mommy.

There’s an expression that teaches us that people come into our lives for a “season, a reason, or a lifetime….” I am so grateful that each one of you is here, in my life…. **OUR** lives… for a **LIFETIME**, and the **REASON** is clear… we are **FAMILY**. No matter where we are in this wild world of ours, we are undeniably, and unbreakable bound to each other. Whether by birth, marriage, or friendship… we’re **FAMILY**. It’s so incredible to think of what this day means to all of us…. At the heart of it is Mommy …. an incredible, beautiful, powerhouse of a woman… someone who naturally brings people together… I mean… just look at this “small and intimate gathering!!!” … the “bare minimum” Seeto Clan consists of Mommy’ brothers and sisters…. there were **TWELVE** in all!! Boy!! Did we have a selection of aunties and uncles growing up!!! (**Do you want to name them?**)… I want to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for being here today.

Today, Mommy is our “Queen” and if we think of all that she has accomplished in her life, I would like to imagine that each one of her children… all four of us… plus her children by marriage… our respective spouses… and her **EIGHT** grandchildren are precious jewels in her crown. Throughout her life, Mommy has shown just who she is, and whether she was demonstrating her intelligence and professionalism in her medical career, raising her kids as a determined, devoted, single mom after our beloved dad, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ passed away when we were young, or being the most loving doggie mom to Abner… man!!! That dog was so devoted to Mommy!!… maybe even more so than us kids sometimes… I mean, I don’t think I ever followed our mom back and forth from home to the clinic **every day**… (**Wait for the laugh**), Adalinda Seeto Tero has been true to herself. Her love of orchids gives a hint as to who she is deep down inside…. An orchid is delicate, intricate, fascinating to observe, rare, and wonderful. So is Mommy. I cannot think of a time when she wasn’t the real, quiet, elegant, dainty, person she truly is. We have our grandparents to thank for that… I’d like to raise a “virtual” glass to Benito Seeto Sr and Estrella Seeto… here’s to the extraordinary DNA they shared with their daughter, and in turn, all of us!!!

An event like this takes a lot of planning… even though, as I said earlier, we had **EIGHTY** years to prep!!! This kind of event is also clearly a time of acknowledgement and gratitude. Along with celebrating the blessings we have with Mommy, there are others who deserve acknowledgement too… I would like to give special thanks to the following:

* To my cousin Garry who facilitates and organizes the caregivers for my mother. There are six of them shifting bi weekly and Gary does a great job making sure Mom is cared for.
* To my cousin Mai who organized this event months in advance and paid special attention to every detail… from booking rooms, hiring the great DJ and band, to creating and realizing the wonderful decorations… for all you have done, thank you!!
* To all the cousins that live far away and made time to come together for this special event
* I’d like to express a special acknowledgement to my beloved Aunt “Inday,” Mom’s youngest sister who is very dear to my mom who passed away two years ago. She took care of us when we were young since our dad passed away at early age and Mom went abroad. I can say with all sincerity, that she is always with us, in our hearts.
* I would also like to give a great big Thank You to a very close friend of Mommy’s, and that’s  Auntie Pering… while she may not be related by blood, that’s a minor technicality… it was Auntie Pering and her family who also helped raise us, so … clearly, she and her family really **ARE** our family too.
* I **ESPECIALLY** want to share my gratitude for my brother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ whose generosity has made this gathering possible by taking care of the first two days of accommodations… **TWENTY ROOMS** at this beautiful hotel!!! (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) I don’t know who’s happier… us or the hotel management!!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

Sometimes, when I get caught up in the details of just getting through day by day, I wonder what’s truly important… is it the people in my life or the **LIFE** in the people I love? I think occasions like this one… reunions … landmark birthdays…so rare and wonderful, show each of us what truly matters… love… family… and celebrating each other. I am so happy to be a part of the “Seeto Clan” and to be with all of you and celebrate Mommy at the same time!!! To all of us, and especially to our Queen, Adalinda…. Here’s to an incredible life, so well lived, and to **ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MORE**!!! Happy Birthday and **AMEN**!! Thank you!!