**EULOGY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**MIKE NEKAHI**

Hello everyone. We are here today to celebrate the life of someone who left a tremendous footprint on this earth. My mother, Sakineh Aziza Nowbar may have been under five feet tall and less than 100 pounds … if we stuck weights in her clothes … (**Wait for the laugh)**, but her presence and impact on everyone that knew her was gigantic. I may have towered over her petite frame, but boy, did I **look up to her**…. As did everyone who knew her. She lived a remarkable life. She was a teacher… by profession and just naturally. Everything she did enriched those around her. That’s how she lived her life. Come to think about it, I take that back. Remarkable **doesn’t** **even** **BEGIN** to describe my mother!!! I mean, let’s face it… she was 82 years old when she passed…She was still working and fully independent. She was an active grandmother, a brilliant colleague, a wonderful friend, and an irreplaceable parent.

There are so many words I can use to describe my mother… Energetic…. Courageous … Determined…. Principled…. Proud…. Loving… Honorable… Adaptable… yet no matter how many words I can find to describe this “**tiny titan**,” the picture of this woman isn’t complete without the most elusive element of all, her spirit. My mother possessed that indefinable **something**. She had “**it**” in abundance. And everything she did, every gesture she made, every lesson she taught…. and learned, was infused with a love and appreciation of life and her people unlike anything I’ve ever witnessed…. Boy, was I blessed to have her as my mother!!

She faced challenges and adversity throughout her life… and overcame all with that indomitable spirit and grace. As a first generation Iranian American who came to this country in her 40’s…. arriving to the strangeness of a foreign land, the United States, with all of those challenges and almost instantly becoming a single mother with two kids…that’s a pretty full plate!!!! Yet she persevered… she learned English, found her way to continue her teaching profession that she began in Iran…..managed to raise my sister, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and myself, paid the bills…. and somehow had something left over to save so that we would not want for anything. She did it all with a seemingly endless supply of determination and drive. Her integrity and principles preceded her and shone through all that she did and said.

While it may have seemed that she didn’t have many hobbies to occupy her in her spare time, as I think about it, **LIFE** was her hobby. People were her hobby…. If you were lucky enough to be her friend, you were truly a friend for life. She absolutely loved her work and took great pride in being in the world of academia. She loved to cook and entertain and make delicious meals… Lucky us!!! Mom (**or use the term you would call her**) brought her love of learning, research and observation to everything she did… down to her analysis of the best prices at the grocery store on any given day… we may not technically have had much financially growing up, but you wouldn’t know it based on my mother’s expertise with a budget!!! … And everything she did became a life lesson for us. As we got older, if I wanted something, the rule was that if I wanted it badly enough, I would have to pay for half and she would take care of the rest… no matter how big the desired or needed object was. Looking back, I sometimes wonder what kind of magic she performed to see to it that we had all that we did… especially the vacations…. New York… Hawaii… Mexico… Europe…. Disneyland… Disneyworld… cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean… we went… we saw…. we learned…. It was incredible….

And her energy didn’t stop with her kids…. Apparently we were just the “dress rehearsal…” she was also the **MOST AMAZING** grandmother!!! The first 71 years were just a warm up… the dress rehearsal to her greatest, most cherished role of grandma… to my son, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and my sister’s daughter, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Maybe because each of us had one child, our mother took on the part of “designated playmate,” and she did it with all of the love and energy people a third of her age would have struggled to demonstrate. She could play with our kids for hours and sometime we thought that playing might get a little rough…. After all, they were just kids… Grandma had to ease up a little (**wait for the laugh**)… that she could relate to them on their level…. Oh right… she was only five feet tall … that helped a little (**wait for the laugh**). She remained actively engaged…. And I mean **ACTIVE**… tubing, jet skiing, enjoying the rides at Legoland, Disneyland, all of those places… however, for her 80th birthday, when we all celebrated at Lake Tahoe, we had to draw the line when she wanted to go rock jumping….. she rarely accepted the word, “NO,” but that was just non-negotiable. **SORRY**!!

While it’s been healing to honor my mother today, I don’t lose sight of the fact that grief is another form of expression for love. I am so grateful to have been blessed with having her life and presence within me, and I take comfort in knowing and really believing that my son, our niece, and all of you, carry her with you. I look back on so many of these memories of my mother with such fondness and admiration. I miss her terribly, but as we talk about her, she remains alive in our hearts. I once read a quote, “I am part of all that I have met.” I am so grateful that I am a part of Sakineh Aziza Nowbar and that she is a part of all of you. Thank you all.