**RETIREMENT SPEECH**

**FOR**

**REGINA CLEMENTE**

Hello everyone!!! It’s so great to be here… **FINALLY**!!! Madsy…. We all know you like to procrastinate… but **TWO YEARS**?!?! We had to wait **TWO YEARS** to **FINALLY** celebrate you, give you a send off, and eat some birthday cake ?!?!? (**Wait for the laugh**). There’s an expression that goes, “We make plans and God laughs….” It’s kind of like He was with you on this one!!! The pandemic slowed down our schedules, but behind every cloud, there’s a ray of hope…. We plotted and planned…. Waited and wondered… FaceTimed and Zoomed…. And now we’re together, and I can’t imagine a sweeter reason.

“Some people wait a lifetime…. For a moment like this….”… so sang Kelly Clarkson. And for you, Madsy, you’ve waited your entire professional life… **PLUS** 2 years…. to reach this day and this celebration. As your younger sister (**you can say**) … **YES**… I’ll **ALWAYS** be **younger** (**and wait for the laugh**) … I spent my entire life watching, learning, and observing, how you give **EVERYTHING** your all, so when I saw that I would have an opportunity to say a few words about my big sister, I was **READY**…. And then I got **TWO MORE YEARS** to think… and dig… alright… alright… I’ll stop with the pandemic references.

How lucky was I to have such a wonderful sister as Madsy? I literally cannot imagine life without her. Madsy was a great role model and guide… I learned so many skills and techniques just from being in her presence….I learned the art of negotiation….As a kid, if there was something that I really wanted and was too afraid to ask our parents, my big sister would be my champion and spokesperson…. Madsy would literally do my bidding for me and sometimes, if the situation demanded, she would even buy the thing I couldn’t live without with her own hard earned, saved up allowance.

I learned the gentle and important skill of organization… thanks to Madsy… as many of us know, our Madsy can be quite the party animal…I’m sure we will probably see remnants of that today!! Anyway, when she was in high school, every Saturday night there was a new party to go to… a new crowd…. tons of fun to be had. Of course, the major point of going out is to have the right **LOOK**… and that took lots of trial and error… testing outfits… changing a top… rejecting a certain pair of pants…. Trying on three more things until the outfit was worthy of the fun that lay ahead…. And, of course, all of those rejected clothes wound up on her bed… and guess who got to clean up the mess??? Yes… me… but behind every cloud… I learned to fold and organize Madsy’s clothes and put them away. The added bonus of doing this??? I kept a mental inventory of what she had and knew what my options would be when I was ready to “borrow” her clothes…. I might have been the younger sister, but I had my methods and I definitely got to enjoy her wardrobe!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Of course, we also had our moments… I remember the time when I wore her brand new espadrilles to school  without asking. I had no idea that she was going to wear them that same day I took them, and **BOY**, did I get in trouble with her.  Oh… did I mention that when she was younger, she kind of had a bad temper?? I eventually learned not to mess with her, and she thankfully outgrew that phase and got better as she got older, but I suppose I was no angel either.

I also learned what it meant to be a hard worker, and a determined and dedicated employee. Madsy worked so hard most of her life and always knew and honored her responsibilities. I remember when she first moved to the US, she had three jobs at one point- a full-time job at Robinson’s department store and two part-time jobs. Even after she had Ryan and Jet, she kept a part-time job.  She worked in accounting at PIP Printing, and worked on weekends at Hertz Car Rental. Did I mention determination?? When Madsy worked at Hertz, she wasn’t driving yet. I still wonder, to this day, how she managed to park those rental cars… because I **KNOW** there were times when she had to when there weren’t other options.  Thank goodness the rental car gods were watching over our girl!!! Madsy worked pretty much 7 days a week, and of course, I had to help with taking care of her sons, Ryan and Jet.  I would usually pick them up from the babysitter after work on Friday evenings then take them home with me and they stayed with me until Sunday afternoon.  That was a real bonding experience!! Those two were definitely a handful, but a joy to have around! And like their mother, they taught me so much as well, and of course, I got great practice for being a mother!!

I cannot imagine anyone on this planet more worthy of such a grand retirement as Madsy. After all of the years of hard work, sacrifice, dedication, prayer, patience, and perseverance, Madsy, your “golden time” has finally arrived. What a gift!! … and now, it’s **YOU** time…. Time to enjoy the fruits of a life well learned and earned. It may not have been the easiest at times, but all of the struggles and challenges helped you to find your faith and appreciate your blessings… you have a wonderful family … and **SEVEN** grandchildren!! … and they are all about to get the best of you!!! New stories to tell… new memories to make.

The past two years have been filled with stops and starts, wondering and praying, waiting and planning, and now, finally, you get to celebrate being **SIXTY**… **AGAIN**… and celebrating a much earned retirement… I can’t think of anyone more deserving of todays double acknowledgement. I am beyond proud to be your sister and to finally and officially celebrate with you!!! **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**!! **HAPPY RETIREMENT**!! We love you!! Thank you all!!