**FELLER SPEECH [EZ Speech No. 15184]**

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Toast by Mr. Steve Feller on the occasion of his son’s wedding.

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GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY. IT’S SO GREAT TO SEE YOU ALL HERE WITH US TO CELEBRATE THE WEDDING OF MY WONDERFUL SON [FIRST NAME OF GROOM] AND THE EQUALLY WONDERFUL AND VERY BEATIFUL [FULL NAME OF BRIDE].

NOW AS I THINK MOST OF YOU KNOW, [GROOM] AND [BRIDE] ALMOST LITERALLY RAN INTO EACH OTHER ONE DAY BACK IN [YEAR THEY MET], WHEN THEY WERE BOTH TRAINING ON THE RUNNING TRAILS OF MOUNT BEACON UP IN DUCHESS COUNTY. BOTH OF THEM ARE ACCOMPLISHED TRAIL RUNNERS, AND THEY’RE BOTH ULTRA RUNNERS AS WELL. AND I MUST SAY I THINK IT’S PARTICULARLY FITTING THAT THIS MARRIAGE BEGAN IN THIS WAY, BECAUSE — IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT — MARRIAGE AND RUNNING ACTUALLY HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.

FIRST OF ALL, RUNNING — AND ULTRARUNNING IN PARTICULAR— TAKES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF COMMITMENT. YOU DON’T RUN STEEP TRAILS LIKE MOUNT BEACON’S OR SIGN UP FOR ULTRAMARATHONS AND RUN YOURSELF TO HEART-POUNDING EXHAUSTION WITHOUT ONE HELLUVA LOT OF COMMITMENT TO YOUR SPORT. WELL, MARRIAGE IS LIKE THAT, TOO. EVERY GOOD MARRIAGE, EVERY LASTING MARRIAGE, IS BASED ON COMMITMENT — TWO PEOPLE COMMITTED NOT JUST TO THEMSELVES, BUT TO THEIR PARTNER’S HAPPINESS, THEIR PARTNER’S FULFILLMENT. OF COURSE, MARRIAGE CAN ALSO LEAD FROM TIME TO TIME TO A LITTLE HEART-POUNDING EXHAUSTION, TOO, BUT THAT’S A DIFFERENT STORY!

RUNNING AND MARRIAGE ALSO BOTH REQUIRE DEDICATION. LIVING TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER PERSON ISN’T ALWAYS EASY, THE PATH ISN’T ALWAYS FREE OF ROCKS AND PITFALLS, AND THE JOY SOMETIMES SEEMS TO GET LOST IN THE TRIBULATIONS OF THE MOMENT. BUT ALL GREAT SPOUSES, LIKE ALL GREAT RUNNERS, NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THEIR DEDICATION TO THEIR VOWS WHICH, HAVING BEEN TESTED, END UP BEING ALL THE STRONGER FOR THE TESTING.

AND NEEDLESS TO SAY, BOTH MARRIAGE AND RUNNING REQUIRE ENDURANCE. YOU DON’T WISELY ENGAGE IN *EITHER* PURSUIT WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU’RE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL. INDEED, MARRIAGE IS, OR AT LEAST OUGHT TO BE, A *LIFETIME* COMMITMENT. AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER — SOMETIMES SOONER, SOMETIMES LATER — EVERY RUNNER REACHES THE END OF HIS OR HER CAREER: THE BODY JUST CAN’T TAKE IT ANYMORE. BUT LOVE HAS NO EXPIRY DATE, NO MATTER HOW OLD OR FEEBLE OR INCAPACITED THE BODY MIGHT BECOME, LOVE ENDURES . . . ALWAYS, LOVE ENDURES.

AND I THINK A FINAL CHARACTERISTIC THAT BOTH RUNNING AND MARRIAGE HAVE IN COMMON IS JOY. THERE’S A SPECIAL KIND OF JOY, OF HAPPINESS, OF FULFILLMENT THAT ALL RUNNERS EXPERIENCE, EVEN AS THEY COLLAPSE AT THE END OF A ROUGH TRAINING SESSION OR AT THE FINISH LINE OF A DIFFICULT COMPETITION. IF YOU’RE NOT A RUNNER, THEN I GUESS YOU CAN’T REALLY KNOW WHAT THIS PARTICULAR KIND OF JOY IS. BUT EVERYBODY IN THIS ROOM, RUNNER OR NOT, CAN EXPERIENCE THE SPECIAL KIND OF JOY THAT A HAPPY AND FULFILLING AND SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE CAN BRING.

YOU KNOW, IT WAS CHRISTMAS DAY OF [YEAR] THAT [GROOM] BROUGHT [BRIDE] HOME TO [GESTURING WITH “AIR QUOTES”] “MEET THE FAMILY,” AND I’LL NEVER FORGET HOW HE INTRODUCED US. “DAD,” HE SAID, “I’VE GOT A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR YOU THIS YEAR, FOR I WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET THE SOON-TO-BE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE FELLER FAMILY, MY ULTRARUNNING SWEETHEART AND FIANCE, [FULL NAME OF BRIDE].” WELL, YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE THE THRILL! FOR NOT ONLY WAS MY SON GETTING MARRIED TO A LOVELY AND TALENTED WOMAN WHO WAS PERSUING THE TRULY NOBLE CAREER OF TEACHING AND COACHING, SHE WAS *ALSO* A FINE ATHLETE AND ULTRARUNNER INTO THE BARGAIN!

WELL, I CAN TELL YOU, I’VE NEVER GOTTEN AS WONDERFUL A CHRISTMAS PRESENT IN ALL MY LIFE. [BRIDE] AND I SAT AND TALKED RUNNING FOR HOURS, AND IT WAS CLEAR TO ME RIGHT AWAY THAT SHE NOT ONLY NEW ONE HELLUVA LOT ABOUT A SPORT THAT, AS YOU KNOW, AN ABSOLUTE PASSION OF MINE, BUT ALSO THAT SHE WAS WELL AND TRULY IN LOVE WITH MY SON, [GROOM]. IT WAS, YOU MAY BE CERTAIN, A CHRISTMAS THAT I SHALL NEVER FORGET!

AND SO [FIRST NAMES OF BRIDE AND GROOM], LET ME JUST CLOSE WITH AN ANCIENT IRISH TOAST, WHICH IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES AND WHICH I OFFER TO YOU THIS EVENING AS A FATHER — AND SOON-TO-BE-FATHER-IN-LAW — WHOSE HEART COULDN’T POSSIBLY BE FULLER WITH JOY THAN MINE IS NOW. [HOLD A WINE GLASS TOWARD THE BRIDE AND GROOM] . . . I WISH YOU ALL THE JOY, ALL THE HAPPINESS, AND ALL THE FULFILLMENT THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER. MAY YOU LIVE AS LONG AS YOU WANT, AND NEVER WANT AS LONG AS YOU LIVE!

**# # #**

**Instructions:**Wedding\r\nI am the Father of the groom\r\nBride only has friends at wedding No family\r\nGroom has family and friends \r\nBoth Bride and groom met on Mt Beacon doing trail running training (both are trail runners)\r\nfather of the groom is a trail runner also\r\nwedding in Brooklyn NY in the Green building a wedding venue\r\nI would like humor and some deep feelings at the conclusion. Bride will be a special addition to the grooms family\r\n\r\ntheme should be running or trail running/ultra running most of the friends invited are either trail or ultra runners\r\n\r\ngroom brought the bride home on xmas day after there second run together \r\n\r\ngrooms father is also a trail and ultra runner so groom says dad here is you xmas present another ultra trail runner grooms dad sat with the bride for 2 hours going over races and talking ultra running.\r\n\r\ntrail running brought the bride and groom together both love the outdoors and running in the woods \r\n\r\ngroom quiet and somewhat shy bride very outgoing and smart \r\ngroom owns 2 true value hardware stores bride is coaching high school and college running and recently high school swimming (new experience)\r\nboth previously engaged for almost 5 years and broke up their previous relationship almost the same time\r\n\r\nmost all the guests are aware the father of the groom, groom and bride are ultra trail runners