**Liss Speech [EZ Speech No. 16451]**

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Remarks by Mr. Andrew Liss at the retirement ceremony for his long-time Administrative Assistant, Jill Simpson.

what do you say about a person who’s been a loyal, hard-working and enormously competent professional for more than 30 years?

how do you recognize a person who’s been the “face” of [name of your office/firm] for more than three decades, welcoming every client, every vendor, every visitor to our offices with charm and grace and a wonderfully welcoming smile?

what expressions of gratitude could suffice for a person who was almost never late for work, who slogged her way to the office even on the worst days of new jersey winters, and never complained?

how do you thank someone who graciously welcomed her replacement, linda [last name] into the firm, showed her the ropes, and filled her in on all those little secrets and stories that only office administrators know but mainly keep to themselves and share only on “need-to-know” basis?

and how do you recognize a partner who took in stride the acquisition of second “boss” when my son, jordan, joined our team? not everyone would have handled that kind of change with jill’s grace and aplomb.

and so, ladies and gentlemen, i find myself standing up here at jill simpson’s retirement ceremony with nothing to say. Well . . . that’s not entirely true, because i *could* tell you a ton of stories about her that would tickle the hell out of you. but in the interests of time, let me just tell you one.

as many of you know jill simpson hates being cold. the problem is that jill simpson is *always* cold. even when it’s 100 degree fahrenheit outside, jill is still cold. and what does jill do when she’s cold? she turns on the space heater next to her desk. it’s hot as hades outside, and to us, thanks to the marvelous invention of air conditioning, it’s very comfort-able in the office. but nevertheless, jill’s got her space heater on! i eventually bought a thermometer that I hung on the wall, just to prove to jill that it wasn’t as cold in the office as she insisted it was. didn’t matter. when jill felt cold, the space heater went on, and that was that.

well, in time, we mostly got used to this little pecadillo of hers, but there was one time when it led to a minor disaster. it was just after our computers had been eqipped with word-processing. i needed a six-page letter typed up, and even though jill was a terrific typist, she was not what you’d all an “early adopter” of modern technology; so it fell to another staffer to type up my letter. Well, she’d almost finished when jill’s space heater suddenly decided that it was too cold in the office, and automatically turned itself on, blowing a fuse, crashing the new word processing app, and losing my letter in its entirety. i won’t recount the details of the brouhaha that ensued, but it was a *battle royale*, i can tell you!

jill is a wonderful mother to her son jordan, and an equally beloved mother-in-law to tommy’s beautiful wife, samantha, also known as “sam.” [to that couple] it’s so great that you could be with us here today!

you know, it’s not easy being a single mom who’s got to work full-time to support her family, but thank god, she had some wonderful help. after her divorce from tommy’s father, [first names of jill’s parents] took her and tommy into their home and provided them a warm and loving space in which they could both thrive. [to jill’s parents, if they’re present] jill’s often said that she doesn’t how she’d’ve been able to make it without [your/ their] loving support. Having [you/them] as parents was perhaps the single luckiest break jill ever had in her life.

mike [last name], jill’s loving and constant companion, is also here with us, and all I can say, Mike, is that your partner’s a wonderful, wonderful woman, and you’re lucky to have her. [to mike] so goodonya, buddy, and i hope that you and jill will have a wonderful life together. and toward that end, i’d like to give you just one piece of advice, and that is: don’t touch that thermostat!!

while i’m giving some shout-outs, i’d also like to recog-nize and thank jim hughes [his title] and terri payne [her title]. i’m so grateful you took the time to be with us here today. i’m sure you both know and appreciate what a great representative jill simpson has been for merrill lynch for through all these years.

let me wrap this little speech by summarizing the life and career of jill simpson in a very simply way:

Jill is someone who doesn’t know the meaning of the words “mpossible task.” she doesn’t know the meaning of the words “lunch” and “break” when used in tandem. she doesn’t comprehend the phrase “regular hours.” and she simply does not understand the meaning of the word, “no.” and that’s why we all got together and bought Jill a dictionary!

but seriously, folks . . . there’s no gift, no honorarium, no recognition that could come close to reflecting the esteem in which we hold jill simpson. but as inadequate as it may be, i’d now like to present — on behalf of the entire staff of [name of office] — this [gold/diamond/etc.] tiffany necklace to you, jill. and as i do so [handing jill the gift] let me just close with an ancient irish prayer:

May you always have a sunbeam to warm you, a moonbeam to charm you, and a sheltering angel at your side so that nothing can harm you.

we love you, jill, and we’ll miss you. god’s speed on whatever new journeys your life has in store.

thank you for being here, everybody.

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