**Luke Speech [EZ Speech No. 16561]**

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Remarks by Mr. Leon Luke at the 70th wedding anniversary of his parents.

what can you say about a marriage between two lovers that began in the midst of a world war, in a country ravaged by a foreign invader, at a time when it was not at all clear, from day to day, if there’d be food on the family table, and that endured through a separation of more than ten years, when the only communication between them was a few sporatic letters, and later on, a couple of transoceanic phone call?

that is the story of my amazing parents, don and ting gee luke, and even today, as i think about their incredible story, it’s still hard to believe how — even through such hardship and separation — their marriage and their commitment to each other endured.

in 1953 dad was finally given permission to emigrate from china, but mom and her three children — owen, loy, and nancy — were not allowed to accompany him. dad said that, in that case, he wouldln’t leave. he wouldn’t abandon his wife and kids to poverty and a very uncertain future. but mother ting gee would not hear of it! she insisted that her husband leave at once, for she knew that — given the conditions in china at that time — the opportunity to emigrate might very well not ever come again.

and so, in the [month] of 1953 father boarded a small boat to hong kong, on his way to catch a plane to canada. but on the way, he heard that one of his sons was not feeling well, so he cancelled his trip and telephoned mother ting to tell her that he was coming home. once again, mother would not hear of it, and she insisted that he continue on to canada to build a new life, believing in her heart that, one day, they’d be together again.

and so he did. Mom supported the family back in china by growing crops and selling them to raise money for the family. everyone had to work on the farm. but even with all their efforts, it was barely a subsistence living, and the kids remember how they were always hungry. i’m sure that owen, loy, and nancy will tell you a little more about what life was like back then for them in china.

then, One day in 1963 the government gave permission for the family to leave china. ting gee gathered their few belongs and boarded an old and overloaded steamer for the trip from [their departure city] to Hong Kong, in probably the most trecherous journey of their lives. the boat took on water all the way, and it was a close thing whether they’d ever reach their destinatiion. but Needless to say, they finally made it to Hong Kong and then on to [city], Canada, where don and ting lee were finally reunited. and since that happy reunion, they haven’t spent a single day apart; i think they’re *still* making up for that lost time!

soon after the family was put back together again, they had two more children — joanne and yours truly — and the two of us are enormously proud to be first-generation canadians.

but i think we’re even prouder of our wonderful and resilient parents, who kept their love and their commit-ment to one another alive through so muich hardship and travail and through years of painful separation. indeed, when i asked my dad what the secret to their marriage was, he said, very simply, “our commitment to each other and to family.” He also credited their mutual ability to allow one another to be themselves, in good times and bad, and to accept one another’s little flaws, to forgive and forget for the greater good of their marriage and their familly.

so to you, our dear mother and father, i thank you for being the wonderful parents and role models you’ve been for all of us — your five children and your [no.] loving grandchildren. you couldn’t possibly have given us a better example to follow in life, and i know that, i for one, try as best i can to live up that example every single day of my life.

and now i’d like to turn the podium over to [next speaker(s)] who’ll share [his/her/their] thoughts with you on this unique and wonderful occasion.

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