**Mac Manus Speech [EZ Speech No. 15675]**

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Remarks by Mary Mac Manus on the occasion of her parents’ 50th wedding anniversary.

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ON AUGUST 10, 1966, MAUREEN AND DONAL MAC MANUS GOT MARRIED RIGHT HERE IN BELFAST CASTLE. FIFTY YEARS, 12 CHILDREN, AND 22 GRANDCHILDREN LATER, THEY’RE STILL MARRIED, AND ARE TONIGHT CELEBRATING THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY. AND I THINK IT’S SO WONDERFUL THAT WE CAN ALL BE HERE THIS EVENING TO CELBRATE THIS MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT WITH THEM TOGETHER?!

NOW, IT MIGHT WELL BE ASKED: HOW DO TWO PEOPLE — IN THIS DAY AND AGE — MANAGE TO STAY TOGETHER AND STAY HAPPILY MARRIED FOR 50 YEARS? THE ANSWER CAN BE SUMMED UP IN TWO SIMPLE WORDS: LOVE AND FAITH. THESE ARE TWO QUALITIES THAT OUR PARENTS HAVE HAD IN ABUNDANCE ALL THEIR LIVES, AND QUALITIES THEY’VE PASSED ALONG TO US, THEIR CHILDREN AND GRAND-CHILDREN. THROUGH GOOD TIMES AND BAD, THROUGH

TIMES OF PERIL AND TIMES OF PEACE, THROUGH ALL THE UPS AND DOWNS AND VICISSITUDES OF LIFE IN IRELAND DURING THE LAST HALF CENTURY, THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER AND THEIR ABIDING FAITH IN GOD HAVE NEVER WAIVERED. THEIR LOVE AND THEIR FAITH HAVE BEEN A BUTTRESS AGAINST ALL TRAVAIL, AGAINST ALL PAIN, AND, SOME WOULD SAY, AGAINST ALL ODDS.

MY FATHER, DONAL MAC MANUS — SMART AND WITTY AND CHARMING — ALWAYS MANAGED TO KEEP BREAD ON THE MAC MANUS TABLE, WORKING BY DAY AS A HOUSING EXECUTIVE AND BY NIGHT AS A BOOKMAKER AT THE [NAME] TRACK IN BELFAST. LATTERLY, HE HAD BRIEF SPELLS AS AN [OFF?] LICENSE OWNER, A POLITICAL CAMPAIGNER, AND THE AUTHOR OF QUIZ BOOKS. BUT HE ALWAYS HE MADE SURE THAT HIS CHILDREN WERE WELL FED, WELL EDUCATED AND BROUGHT UP RIGHT. ONE OF MY FONDEST AND MOST POWERFL MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD IS THAT THE FAMILY

ATE TOGETHER ALMOST EVERY SINGLE NIGHT, SHARING FOOD, JOY, AND PRAYER IN EQUAL MEASURE.

MY MOTHER, MAUREEN MAC MANUS — STRONG, POWERFUL, AND DETERMINED — KEPT THE MAC MANUS HOUSEHOLD IN ORDER AND RUNNING SMOOTHLY IN THE MIDST OF THE CHAOS OF A FAMILY THAT AT ONE TIME NUMBERED 14 SOULS AT HOME. A MOTHER AND A HOUSEKEEPER *PAR EXCEL-LENCE*, SHE AMAZINGLY THEN EMBARKED — ONCE THE CHILDREN HAD BEEN RAISED UP — ON A WHOLE NEW CAREER, EARNING A [LEVEL] DEGREE IN [FIELD] FROM [NAME] COLLEGE IN BELFAST, AND SPENDING THE LAST [NUMBER] YEARS OF HER PROFESSIONAL LIFE AS A LECTURER IN [FIELD] AT [NAME] COLLEGE.

MAUREEN AND DONAL MAC MANUS HAVE BEEN THE BEST PARENTS ANY BROOD OF CHILDREN COULD POSSIBLY ASK FOR, AND WE ALL FEEL BOTH BLESSED AND PRIVILEGED TO HAVE THEM AS OUR MOM AND DAD. AND AS GRANDPAR-

ENTS? . . . WELL, THE WORD “DOTING” HARDLY COVERS IT. WITH 22 GRANDKIDS IN THE FAMILY, MAUREEN AND DONAL ARE PROOF POSITIVE THAT LOVE IS AN INFINITELY EXANS-ABLE COMMODITY.

AND NOW THAT THEY’RE BOTH RETIRED, THEY’RE ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF THEIR WONDERFULLY PRODUCTIVE LIFE BEYOND FAMILY. AS WORLD TRAVELERS, THEY’VE MANAGED TO VISIT DUBAI, TOKYO, NEW YORK CITY, AND SPAIN. BUT OF COURSE, MAUREEN STILL KEEPS BUSY ORGANIZING THE FAMILY AND LOOKING OUT AFTER EVERYONE.

LET ME CLOSE MY LITTLE SPEECH BY PARAPHRASING JUST A LITTLE A COUPLE OF OLD IRISH TOASTS, IN WHICH I HOPE YOU’LL ALL JOIN ME [RAISING A GLASS TO YOUR PARENTS]:

THE TEST OF GOLD IS FIRE.

THE TEST OF TRUTH IS TIME.

THE TEST OF GOD’S LOVE ARE THE HEAVENS ABOVE, AND

 EVERYTHING SUBLIME.

TREASURES IN LIFE ARE MANY, DREAMS REALIZED BUT FEW;

BUT I KNOW THE TEST OF GOD’S GOODNESS IS WHEN HE

 GAVE US PARENTS LIKE YOU!

SO MAY YOUR GRASS ALWAYS BE GREEN, AND YOUR SKIES FOREVER BLUE. MAY GOD BLESS THE IRISH, AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU!

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