**[EZ Speech Writers No. 15436]**

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Remarks by Mr. George Nicolas on the occasion of his daughter’s graduation from California State University, Fullerton.

[TAPPING ON A GLASS]

COULD I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. [AFTER THE ROOM QUIETS] THANK YOU. I HOPE YOU WON’T MIND MY STEALING JUST A FEW MINUTES FROM THESE FESTIVITIES TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST COURAGEOUS AND REMARKABLE AND DETERMINED PEOPLE I’VE EVER KNOWN IN MY LIFE . . . OUR GORGEOUS AND WONDERFUL DAUGHTER, OUR HERO, HANNA.

AS YOU ALL KNOW — ‘CAUSE THAT’S WHAT THE INVITATION SAID — HANNA’S JUST GRADUATED FROM CAL STATE/FULLERTON, WITH HER BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN [FIELD/SUBJECT], AND HER MOTHER AND I COULDN’T BE PROUDER OF HER! AND I KNOW I SPEAK FOR HER THREE BROTHERS, [FIRST NAMES OF BROTHERS], TOO, BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW WHAT A MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT EARNING THAT BACHELOR’S DEGREE WAS FOR HANNA.

COLLEGE WASN’T EASY FOR HER. SHE’D BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU THAT SHE STRUGGLED IN SCHOOL. PERHAPS IT WAS BECAUSE SHE

WAS BORN SO EARLY IN HER MOM’S PREGNANCY AND SO IN SOME WAYS ALWAYS FELT LIKE SHE HAD TO PLAY “CATCH UP.” BUT SHE STUDIED VERY HARD, MAYBE TWICE AS HARD AS ANYONE ELSE IN HER CLASS. SHE STUDIED AND SHE LEARNED AND SHE APPLIED EVERY OUNCE OF HER WILL AND ENERGY AND BRAINPOWER TOWARD EARNING THAT DEGREE. AND SHE DID ALL OF THIS WHILE SHE WAS *ALSO* EARNING HER OWN WAY THROUGH COLLEGE!

I TRULY WISH THAT HER MOTHER AND I COULD’VE PAID FOR HER COLLEGE EDUCATION, AND FOR HER BROTHERS’ AS WELL. BUT WE JUST COULDN’T AFFORD IT. YET WHAT HER MOTHER, PAM, AND I *DID* HAVE WAS A DEEP AND ABIDING LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR ALL OF OUR WONDERFUL CHILDREN. AND WE MADE SURE THAT THEY WOULD ALL FEEL SECURE IN THAT LOVE THEIR WHOLE LIVES THROUGH.

EARNING HER BACHELOR’S DEGREE WAS ONE HELL OF AN ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR A LITTLE GIRL WHO CAME INTO THIS WORLD TWO MONTHS BEFORE SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO, WEIGHING ALL OF FOUR POUNDS AND THREE OUNCES! BUT EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS BORN EARLY, SHE WAS ALSO BORN DETERMINED — DETERMINED TO SURVIVE . . . DETERMINED TO SUCCEED . . . DETERMINED TO MAKE SOMETHING OF HERSELF. AND, BY GOD, HAS SHE EVER!

AND NOW SHE’S OFF TO GRADUATE SCHOOL — NOT SURE WHERE AND NOT SURE WHAT HER MAJOR’LL BE. BUT THAT SAME DOGGED DETERMINATION AND COURAGE THAT’VE BROUGHT HER THIS FAR WILL, I’M QUITE SURE, SEE HER THROUGH TO SUCCESS ON WHATEVER PATH SHE ULTIMATELY CHOOSES.

[RAISING A GLASS OR GESTURING TOWARD YOUR DAUGHTER] MY DEAR HANNA, I’M SO VERY PROUD OF YOU. YOUR PARENTS’ HEARTS ARE OVERFLOWING WITH LOVE AND ADMIRATION AT THIS MOMENT, AND WITH GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR HAVING BLESSED US WITH SUCH A REMARKABLE DAUGHTER AS YOU. AND IF YOU WOULDN’T MIND JUST A BIT OF FORMALITY FROM YOUR OLD DAD, I’D LIKE TO ASK ALL THE WONDERFUL FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO’VE GATHERED HERE WITH US THIS AFTERNOON TO RISE AND JOIN ME IN A TOAST.

TO HANNA: MAY YOU CONQUER EVERY NEW CHALLENGE YOU FACE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIFE JUST AS YOU’VE CONQUERED THIS ONE; AND MAY THE REST OF YOUR LIFE FOREVER BE BLESSED WITH HAPPINESS, JOY, LOVE, AND PEACE. I LOVE YOU!

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