**RODRIGUES SPEECH [EZ Speech No. 15314]**

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Remarks by Gerson Rodrigues (and Corina) on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary.

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Thank you, Pramila & Savio, for your very kind words; AND TO OUR DEAR SON, DAYLE, FOR WHAT I’M HOPING WAS A TOTALLY WONDERFUL AND ONLY A LITTLE-BIT-EXAGGERATED INTRODUCTION. WHAT A PRODUCTION! AN HONOR GUARD, NO LESS. [TO THE HONOR GUARD] THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH GENTLEMEN: WE’RE TREMENDOUSLY HONORED BY YOUR PRESENCE.

AND SO NOW IT FALLS UPON ME TO MAKE A SPEECH THAT’S SOMEHOW BEFITTING A 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. BUT WHEN I TRIED TO THINK WHAT AN “ANNIVERSARY SPEECH” SHOULD LOOK LIKE, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT *EVERY* ANNIVERSARY SPEECH HAS REALLY GO TO BE A “THANK-YOU” SPEECH. IT’S TRUE THAT MY DEAR WIFE, CORINA, AND I HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 25 YEARS NOW, BUT I DON’T THINK IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO BRAG ABOUT THAT HERE.

FOR ONE THING, I’M SURE YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW MUCH WORK IT TAKES FOR TWO PEOPLE TO NOT ONLY STAY TOGETHER FOR A QUARTER OF A CENTURY, BUT TO STAY DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH ONE

ANOTHER DURING ALL THAT TIME. AND FOR ANOTHER THING, WHILE IT’S A RARE FEAT, IT’S BY NO MEANS UNPRECENDENTED. SO EVEN A25TH ANNIVERSARY SPEECH ISN’T A TIME TO GO PATTING ONESELF ON THE BACK. RATHER, I THINK IT’S A TIME FOR GIVING THANKS FOR A LIFETIME OF BLESSINGS.

AND SO I MUST BEG YOUR INDULGENCE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BECAUSE MY THANK-YOU LIST IS A VERY LONG ONE INDEED . . .

[IF POSSIBLE, YOU SHOULD PREPARE A LONG, ROLLED-UP SCOLL OF BLANK PAPER, MAYBE 4-5 INCHES WIDE, TAKE IT FROM A POCKET, AND UNFURL IT TO THE FLOOR. THIS SHOULD GET A BIG LAUGH.]

. . . WELL, MAYBE NOT ***THAT*** LONG, BUT IT’S PLENTY LONG ENOUGH. FOR WE HAVE SO VERY, *VERY* MANY PEOPLE TO THANK, NOT ONLY FOR THIS WONDERFUL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, BUT FOR A LIFETIME OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT, OF SHARED JOYS AND — YES — EVEN SHARED SORROWS. THEY’LL BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR FOOD AND DRINK AND MUSIC JUST AHEAD, BUT FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, I’D BE SO GRATEFUL IF YOU’D LET ME TELL YOU WHY I AM, RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT, ONE OF THE HAPPIEST AND MOST BLESSED MEN ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

AT THE VERY TOP OF MY THANK-YOU LIST TONIGHT, THEN, I MUST PLACE MY GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, FOR IT’S ONLY THROUGH GOD’S GRACE THAT WE ARE HERE TONIGHT, THAT WE HAVE SURVIVED, AND THAT WE HAVE PREVAILED THROUGH GOOD TIMES AND BAD, THROUGH STORMY SEAS AND SUNNY DAYS, THROUGH BETTER AND FOR WORSE. IN THE WORDS OF THAT FAMOUS HYMN “AMAZING GRACE:”

 *“The Lord has promised good to me,*

*His word my hope secures.*

*He will my shield and portion be,*

*as long as life endures.”*

AND WHAT BLESSINGS GOD HAS BESTOWED ON CORINA AND ME! EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU HERE TONIGHT IS A BLESSING IN OUR LIVES, AS WERE THOSE WHO COULDN’T BE WITH US THIS EVENING — [YOUR OR CORINA’S PARENTS AND YOUR OR CORINA’S DAD]. it’s only because of OUR PARENTS’ total dedication to OUR GROWTH AND HAPPINESS THAT WE BECAME THE PEOPLE WE ARE TODAY. Truly, no amount of words can ever EXPRESS our gratitude for their love, commitment and sacrifices; and today we’re so VERY thankful TO GOD that our mum is here to share in our joy WITH US TOGETHER. AND I WEEP NOT FOR THOSE WHO ARE NO

LONGER WITH US, FOR I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT OUR DEPARTED PARENTS are looking down from their CELESTIAL HOME EVEN NOW AND ARE CELEBRATING WITH US IN JOY AND BLISSFUL HAPPINESS.

BEYOND THE BLESSING OF GIVING US WONDERFUL PARENTS, GOD ALSO BLESSED US IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY WITH THE BIRTH OF OUR SON, DAYLE. His arrival not only changed the course of our lives for the better, but it added a new dimension, a new meaning, more fun and less time for nitpicking and arguing. WATCHING him grow UP has not only filled our hearts with gladness, BUT IT’S also made us proud of his qualities of hard work, HIS honesty, HIS commitment to THE principles OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING, and to his family, his faith, his humility, and HIS generosity — traits that he has acquired in ample measure from his mother. Thank you Dayle, FOR BEING THE KIND OF SON EVER PARENT YEARNS TO HAVE. we love you MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY.

NEXT ON MY THANK-YOU LIST ARE ALL THE PEOPLE — EXCEPT FOR [FULL NAMES OF THE DEPARTED] — WHO WERE PART OF OUR BRIDAL ENTOURAGE A QUARTER-CENTURY AGO. UNBELIEVABLE AS IT MAY

SEEM, THEY’RE NOT ONLY STILL ALIVE, BUT MANY OF THEM HAVE MADE A TREMENDOUS (AND I SHOULD THINK SOMEWHAT EXPENSIVE) EFFORT TO BE WITH US HERE THIS EVENING. as I call out theIR names, I’D LIKE YOU to STAND AT YOUR SEATS, AND WHEN I FINISH THE LIST, WE CAN ALL ACKKNOWLEDGE THEM WITH APPLAUSE.

Let me start with our flower girls, Kimberley and Madonna. Kim now lives in Mississauga and Madonna has come from India [FINISH WITH THE REST OF THE LIST, AND LEAD THE GUESTS IN A BRIEF ROUND OF APPLAUSE.]

I’D also LIKE to ACKKNOWLEDGE Corina’s sister, Hazel and her husband who’ve ALSO come all the way from India to BE PART of THIS celebration TONIGHT. Thank you Hazel & Agnelo, it means SO MUCH to us THAT YOU COULD BE HERE.

Now you knoW, MY friends, an evening like this takes a tre-mendous amount of planning and preparation, as well as a TON of time and hard work. AND THE LION’S SHARE OF THE CREDIT FOR ALL THIS goes to our sister-in-law, Daphne, who has proven herself to be an event PLANNER *par excellence,* with AN attention to detail and an a can-do attitude THAT WOULD

BEFIT A STATE DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE. Thank you, Daph, for being the backbone behind this event. [LEAD THE AUDIENCE IN APPLAUSE.]

BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE! The artistic ability and creative skills that you see so beautifully portrayed against the backdrop HERE is the handiwork of our good friend, Christina [LAST NAME]. Thank you Christina FOR SUCH A BEAUTIFUL JOB OF WORK.

The lovely cake that you see here was prepared with a lot of love, care and patience by OUR DEAR FRIEND, Yolanda [LAST NAME]. Thank you SO MUCH, Yolanda.

AND ThankS, TOO, to Basil [LAST NAME], my classmate from school, for preparing the cakes YOU’LL BE GETTING WHEN YOU LEAVE as A REMEMBERANCE OF THIS EVENING AND tokens of our appreciation and love. Thank you, Bibbs, for your time and efforts.

I’M ALMOST AT THE END OF MY THANK-YOU LIST — WHICH I’M SURE *YOU’RE* THANKFUL FOR — BUT THAT’S ONLY BECAUSE I WON’T TAKE THE TIME RIGHT NOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE WODERFUL FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO’VE GATHERED WITH US HERE TONIGHT TO

CELEBRATE OUR 25TH. WE’LL MAKE SURE TO THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE YOU PERSONALLY DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENING FOR ALL THE LOVE AND SUPPORT, THE KINDNES AND FRIENDSHIP, AND THE UNDERSTANDING AND HELP THAT EACH OF YOU HAS GIVEN US, EACH IN YOUR OWN WAY, THROUGH ALL THESE YEARS.

BUT NOW I’D LIKE TO FINISH MY THANK-YOU LIST WITH THE PERSON WHOM I THINK YOU’D AGREE HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY LIFE: MY BEAUTIFUL, SWEET, KIND AND LOVING WIFE, CORINA.

Twenty five years ago I asked this woman to marry me, AND I CAN REMEMBER THE ALMOST CHILDISH THRILL I EXPERIENCED WHEN I callED her my wife for the first time. I can still recall ALMOST EVERY DETAIL of OUR WEDDING day, ESPECIALLY HOW MY HEART STOPPED WHEN I saw HER in THAT awesome wedding gown SHE WAS WEARING WALKING down the aisle.

In these LAST 25 years, we've done a lot together. We got a house of our own and planted a garden — WHICH IS TO SAY, ***SHE*** PLANTED A GARDEN. we’ve shared our household chores, she DOING the laundry AND cleaning and SHOPPING, WHILE I DO MOST OF THE COOKING AND ALSO COMPLETE A VERY LARGE NUMBER CROSSWORD

puzzles. (CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW MANY CROSSWORDS AND SODUKUS ONE MAN CAN GET THROUGH IN 25 YEARS?!?)

But most importantly, we learned to tolerate each other's FOIBLES and PECADILLOS, to say "I’M sorry" when WE KNEW WE WERE wrong, and TO SAY "I love you" EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES. We learned to cherish every evening spent WITH EACH OTHER AND OUR SON, DAYLE. AND WE LEARNED, AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL, THE TRUTH BEHIND CHAPTER 13, VERSE 2 OF 1 CORINTHIANS,: *“And if I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, [THEN] I am nothing.”*

SO THAT’S THE END OF MY ANNIVERSARY THANK-YOU LIST. [TURNING TO CORINA] BUT IF, MY DARLING CORINA, YOU’D LIKE TO ADD A THOUGHT OR TWO, I GLADLY YIELD THE PODIUM TO YOU.

**CORINA**

WELL, [YOUR NICKNAME FOR GERSON], I DON’T KNOW WHAT MORE TO SAY. I’D JUST WANT TO ADD MY THANKS TO EVERYBODY FOR JOINING US HERE TONIGHT, AND TO TELL YOU ALL THAT GERSON, DAYLE, AND I

FULLY EXPECT YOU TO HAVE THE GREATEST TIME OF YOUR LIVES THIS EVENING. SO LET’S GO EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY, AND GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE TOGETHER AND ENJOY THE LIFE HE’S GIVEN US.

THANK YOU.

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