**Ikeolapo Akinsooto**

 **Birthday wishes to** **SHola**

**Ikeolapo,…..This is a fun evening for everyone. There will be a lot of talking and laughing. When you are ready, wait until everyone is looking at you before you begin. Talk slowly, there is no hurry to finish. And when you talk try and make eye contact with everyone in the room. When you mention your husband, Shola, look at him directly. Just pretend you are speaking to a few people at home, that will make you more relaxed. You will do just fine.**

Hello everyone, welcome, welcome. Thank you all for joining us this evening, I am so pleased you were able to be here.

Before I begin, I want to thank our hosts here in this beautiful room. I thank the banquet manager for helping in all the planning, and I thank our servers for being so professional and friendly.

This is a very special day for our family. It is a special day for **one** member of our family. It is a day we celebrate the man who guides and protects my children and me. It is the day my **best** friend, my **mate,** the **father** of our children, and **my love**, was born. It is the birthday of my husband, **Shola**.

When I thought about what I wanted to say regarding him tonight, a vast amount of thoughts came into my mind, and into my heart. I certainly want everyone to know what I think and feel about Shola.

First, he is very much a man, a very handsome man, strong, bright eyes, and confident. You can see how lucky a woman I am, **(laughter).**

And underneath that good looking guy, is a man who loves and protects his family. His complete dedication to me and his children is his life. Every day, every hour, he plans and carries out what he believes is the best for me and the kids. I believe if we lived for two hundred years, he would work and care for us for two-hundred and one years.

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I truly believe that God brought us together. He and I are deeply in love, and we are partners under God’s blessing. Not partners as in business, or partners as in sports. But we are partners in family, life, and as parents to our children. Shola opens the doors, he finds the ways, he sees opportunities, all for the betterment of his family. Then he comes to me for my opinion and my thinking on many of our decisions. And I have to say, when he tells me his ideas, they are already **almost** perfect. Then when I hear his plans, I put in **my** opinion, and **then** the plan becomes **perfect**. (**laughter).**

As Shola’s wife I never take for granted what we have. Our good fortune did not just happen. Our good fortune happened because Shola created it. He did not wait for opportunities to come knocking on our door. He went out into the world, and knocked on the doors of opportunities, and **he knocked** **hard**. If you are a good person, and a dedicated person, the world holds many opportunities for everyone. And Shola is not only good, he is **very** good, and dedicated. So, he did go out, he did locate ideas and opportunities, and he brought them home. He did this by working hard, working smart, and being an **honest** man.

And during all of this he made time for his children and me. He puts twenty-seven hours into a twenty-four-hour day. He never forgets why he works so hard; he always remembers it’s for us. He provides what we have, but more importantly he gives us himself, his time, his patience, and his love.

But, if anyone ever has something to say about Shola that isn’t a compliment, it might be that he is a perfectionist. He does his work with perfection, he plans perfectly, and sometimes he expects others to do the same. Some people like perfectionism, some people do not. I do agree on one of the most important perfectionist decisions he made in his life, and it certainly was perfect,……..because he **picked me** to be his wife, **(laughter).** And **I** have some perfectionism in me **too**,…because **I picked him** for my husband, **(laughter).** And he may not know this, or admit to it, but **I picked first**, **(laughter).**

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If as a little girl I had a wish, a vision, a star in the sky of how I wanted my life to be, then that wish came true for me with Shola and our children. For all of you who know him, then you can understand as his friends and his family what a good man he is. As his wife, his love, and the mother of his children, I can tell you that you are right. Everyone here tonight is fortunate in some way or another to know Shola. And we, our children and I, are the most fortunate of all.

 Shola, **Happy Birthday**, please enjoy the company and love of all those who have joined us tonight. Everyone here wishes you *good fortune*, *good* *health*, *happiness,* and a *life fulfilled*.

I love you, and will celebrate these days with you **for eternity**, and **beyond**.

Now, please everyone, enjoy the food and beverage here tonight. Please when you do leave, be careful on your way home later.

Thank you **ALL** for making this such a **special** night for Shola.

And after many years of plans and projects we accomplish together, we have done very well as a team. A husband and wife who want only the best for our children.