**Birthday Celebration in Honor of:**

 **Konstantin**: 60 Years Young

 **May 18, 2019**

**Eden, This will be a happy event with folks talking, laughing, eating, etc. Once you are ready to speak, give everyone a moment to see you, and settle in. If you have to stand or sit there until everyone focuses in your direction, that is fine, no hurry. It shouldn’t be necessary to tap your glass with a spoon, if they do not quiet down, just raise your arm partially, they’ll see your intention. Speak slowly while making eye contact with as many folks in the banquet room as possible. This is family, these are friends, relax and enjoy the words you deliver.**

Welcome everyone to this celebration. I hope you’re enjoying the meal, and I want to thank our hosts here at ‘*name of restaurant’*. We always enjoy dining here, the food is as if we were magically transported back to the Republic of Georgia, and the service is like a family gathering.

Tonight, is a family and friends gathering, at which we’re celebrating a very special day. A birthday of a gentleman who I have the utmost respect for. I personally hold this man in the highest regard, not only because he is *family*, but most of all for his character as a man. I could not be more proud than to call this man my father-in-law, our *honoree* this evening, Konstantin, *raise your glass and look at him*, “HAPPY BIRTHDAY KONSTANTIN”.

Konstantin has reached a milestone, a birthday of special significance. Do you notice how delicate I am being to avoid an actual number? **(laughter**). I am doing that on purpose, as well as for my own safety, because I know all too well, regardless of his age, he can still come up here and kick my behind. **(laughter).**

In tributes and speeches like this evening, it is very important to tell the folks a true sense of who we are celebrating, who we are honoring. When I look at Konstantin, when I think of him as a good husband, great father, and wonderful grandfather, several characteristics rise above all others.

Konstantin has witnessed many different sides of humanity in his lifetime. His hometown of Smela, in the Ukraine, is a city located adjacent to the Tiasmin/Tyasmyn River, and at one time had burgeoning sugar and leather factories, as well as being the leading railway terminal in the region. But it was also a city that suffered from the tragedy of war and the sadness of persecution. Konstantin persevered in that environment and went on to serve for eighteen years in the military. And when I look at my father in law, I see him not only as an honorable veteran from his past military service, but a man who if needed or asked, would serve his country with honor today. This is a man whose strength is ever present. I see it in how he treats his wife with respect, I see it in the results of how they raised their daughters, and I especially see it when he is with his granddaughter. When Konstatin watches over her when we are out, or even when he takes her to piano, there is a look in his eyes that is unmistakable. A look of deep love, yet make no mistake, an intense look of will and determination that would protect her from anything that could cause her harm. Konstantin puts family first, and for that we are so very grateful.

There are easily four, perhaps five generations in this room tonight. And to those most senior here this evening, I thank you for what you are, and for what you have passed down to us. Konstantin and his wife’s generation have shown by example that values can be retained, then passed down. It is men and women like Konstantin who define integrity, honor, and dependability. It is men like Konstatin who exhibit quiet strength, patience, and confidence. It is people like he and his wife who provide for their families and contribute to their communities. He is the type of individual who we all can learn from, I know I do every day. I am very proud to be part of this family, and to have Konstatin as a father in law.

I want to also tell those who might not have known that Konstatin is very creative in his story telling. He has held the attention of not only the youngsters in our family with his wonderful tales, but he also can capture the adults too. And whenever there is a gathering of older folks, and the time comes for a yarn, a lore, or a captivating adventure to be told, we sometimes have extra company at the table. *That* is because Konstantin enjoys inviting added guests……..with names like *Glen-Livet*, or *Jack Daniels*, and there is even a guy named *Old-Forrester* who brings along his *Wild-Turkey*, **(laughter).** And if we have room at those get togethers, and we *always* do, we enjoy the company of some of our southern friends, like *BOLIVAR, COHIBA*, and even *MONTECRISTO*, **(laughter).**

Before I begin to get that look from my wife that I may have overstayed my time, let me conclude with this. Konstantin represents the best in humanity, the best in people, and the best in men. Whenever there is a need for quiet, strong, and balanced guidance, there is no better source of knowledge and wisdom, than from Konstatin. His firm handshake and encouraging look are always there, for **all** of us. *“Konstantin, I am proud to know you as a man, and I am proud to be your son-in-law”.*

Since I can see the exit door, and I think I can get there before he does, **(laughter),** I will end with this: **HAPPY 60th**. Konstantin, you’re just beginning, and we all love you very much.

**Enjoy** the rest of your evening everyone, **please** be **careful** on your way home tonight, **thank you** and **God Bless**.

 **Goodnight**.