**Tomasello Speech [EZ Speech No. 16027]**

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Remarks by Mr. Lou Tomasello upon receiving the 2017 Construction En-gineer of the Year Award from the New Jersey Professionals in Construc-tion.

[to gerard] thanks, gerard, for those very kind words of introduction. i must say, i’m a little surprised that you didn’t choose to mention my habit of consuming sev-eral bean burritos at 6 o’clock in the morning, and how my collection of hot sauces stunk up the whole office.

[after the chuckle, if there is one, to the audience] la­dies and gentlemen . . .friends and family . . .fellow work-ers . . . and respected colleagues:

i’m enormously honored and truly humbled that my peers in new jersey’s construction industry have se-lected me to receive the 2017 bonhag award. the list of past winners of this award is truly luminous — a veri-talbe “who’s who” of new jersey’s construction industry — and for me to now be included on that list is certainly one of the greatest highlights and most humbling exper-iences of my professional career.

as most of you know, i’ve been in the construction indus-try for more than a quarter century — [as an aside] *Jeez!* [or *damn!*] has it really been *that* long?!? — and during that time, i’ve had the opportunity to work with a whole lot of really wonderful people. i don’t think any of us gets very far in this life, or in any profession, without a ton of help from others. this is certainly true in my case, and so this evening i’d like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the people who’ve meant the most to me, personally and professionally over this last quart-er-century.

now, i hope you’ll be just a little patient with me here, because my list of VIPs IS a bit long. and it begins with my wonderful wife and my dear children. rebecca is the most selfless, caring, and giving person i’ve ever known. without her support and encouragement, I could never have had the wonderfully fulfilling career that i’ve en-joyed. she’s been a rock for me, and for so many other people in her life. she’s also one of the most nurturing and sensitive mothers i’ve ever known, and i know that danielle and lauren both feel damn lucky that i had the great good sense to marry this wonderful woman some 18 years ago. [to rebecca] thank you, [my] dear, for all the love and sup-port you’ve given me over the years. there’s no way i could’ve become a bonhag-award winner without your helping hand.

danielle and lauren are the most wonderful daughters a dad could ever ask for. it looks like danielle’s leaning toward becoming a nurse; and lauren’s a terrific artist, who’s also got a bit of a mechanical mind, so it’s entirely posible that she might end up folowing in her old man’s foot-steps and become an engineer. [to your kids] dan-ielle and lauren: your love and support has meant the world to me, and i want you to know that everything I do, i do for you. i want you kids to have things that i didn’t have when i was growing up, and i hope i’ve done at least a decent job of raising you, teaching you the value of hard work, and being a good role model for you as you advance in your own careers, whatever those might end up being.

of course, i wouldn’t be here at all this evening if it weren’t for [the wonderfully loving childhood provided by] my mom and dad. I only wish that mother could be here with me this evening, because i know she’d be enorm-ously proud.

next to my family, i must thank gerard and nicki burdi, owners of the union paving & construction company, who’re two of the hardest working men — and greatest bosses — you’d ever want to meet. the tremendous suc-cess upc’s enjoyed since [year], when they first bought [took over] the firm, is due largely to their hard work and their dedication to excellence. [to the burdis] i’m truly grateful, guys, for your having brought me into the firm in [year of hire], and — most importantly — for having the confidence in me to trust me with some of our company’s largest and most technically complex pro-jects.

you’ve assembled a wonderful group of top-notch pro-fessionals at upc, many of whom, i’m happy to say, have become not just coworkers, but dear friends. I’m bless-ed beyond measure that i can count dan lemmon, mke wat-ers, and nick caporusso as my buddies. [to that group] i’m sure you remember all our AC[?] trips together . . . all those dinners at chef vola’s with their huge bowls of ravioli . . . those metal shows at the starland ballroom . . . that time i got bonked on the head in a mosh pit . . the weekend rides of the infamous “555” mountain-bike club: great times that i’ll cherish forever, and i’m so glad you were all able be here this evening.

as secretary of the njpec, i owe a debt thanks and grati­tude to joe griffin, who first brought into the organi-zation, and also to sergio cuoto and dan healey; they’ve been an absolute joy to work with, and i treasure my re-lationship with all of them, as i do the friendships i’ve forged with mke marks, john clearwater, and vittoria collins — terrific people, one and all.

i also must thank — with sincere gratitude — [names] marucci, who gave me my first engineering job back in [year]. It was a leap of faith, which got me started on a career that, ever since, has been filled with great chal-lenges, great projects, and, i think, some notable suc-cesses.

one of these successes that was especially important to me involved the demolition of [city]’s route 21 viaduct at broadstreet. the task involved the removal of sev-eral girders and other structural elements, but the problem was figuring out where to situate the manitwoc crane that would do the heavy lifting. there weren’t a lot of options, so our first thought was to drive the crane onto the newly-constructed broadstreet ramp and work the demolition from there.

i can’t tell you to this day why i decided to check the load-bearing capacity of the bearings of that ramp but i did. and what i discovered, after much calculating and recalculating, sent a chill up my spine. remembering — as most civil [mechanical] engineers do to this day — the horrific tragedy of the hyatt-regency’s walkway col-lapse in kansas city back in 1981, I took my findings to ger-ard.

after reviewing the numbers, he agreed with me that the approach we’d been contemplating just would-n’t work. the numbers showed, unequivocally, that ramp’s bear-ings would’ve been at least 400% overstressed had we put the crane where we’d planned. as it turned out, the demo job was originally designed in English units but was bid out in metrics, and no one had bothered to convert pounds to newtons.

one potential tragedy averted — and as an added bonus, we got a substantial change order from [name of client/ customer] to replace a portion of the ramp’s bearings. i’ve gotta tell you: there’re are times, like this one, when i’m just damned proud to be civil engineer.

Well . . . i think i’ve talked long enough by now, so i’ll simply ask those whom i should’ve thanked but didn’t, to forgive the omission. And with a quick shout-out to my dear pals, and mike and di cingari; to my sister, lucy, and her husband joe; and to my cousins anthony and their wives — [name] and [name] respectively: thanks for being here. I means the world to me that you were able to join me at this happy occasion*.*

my thanks to you all from the bottom of my heart, and especially to the members of the njpec for bestowing this wonderful honor on me. now let’s all enjoy the rest of this evening’s festivities.

thank you.

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