Wedding speech

Hello everyone! On behalf of Arlene and I, we want to welcome all of you and thank you for taking time from your busy lives to join us and share this incredibly special moment with us. We’re so moved that you have made the effort to be here and we appreciate the sacrifices you've made to come to Arizona for this destination wedding… you've traveled from near and far to honor Alison and Bryan as they join hands and hearts.

It's no accident that we’re here in Paradise Valley… in many ways this place IS paradise, especially tonight, and it holds a very special meaning for our bride and groom. The scenery is majestic, the atmosphere is filled with love and hope for the future. We have so many blessings and they include all of you… thank you.

While some people may dread standing before a crowd and giving a speech, especially like the one I'm about to give, on such an emotional occasion, I have to say that personally I've looked forward to this day for almost 30 years.

Growing up, we tend to dream about many things. We dream about the future… about where we’ll be and about what our life might look like. As I spent my youth growing up in a loving home, I dreamt someday that I, too, would find someone who I would love more than life itself. I realized that dream when I met Arlene in college. We have been married now for 36 years.

Thank you Arlene for making one of my dreams come true.

I dreamt of the other normal things like having a good job, traveling, owning a home, having a nice car, etc. … and I'm so thankful that over the years Arlene and I have done very well and achieved those dreams.

I also dreamt of having a couple of children, hopefully a boy and a girl. Again, with some creative work on my part, Alison and Luke fulfilled that dream. As they grew up and developed their personalities and passions, I continued to dream of what the future would hold for them. Luke has “done us proud” in so many ways and as he fulfills his dreams for his life, Arlene and I continue to count our blessings.

Now Alison.

I might be a little biased and I may be more prone to speak in superlatives today, but I have to say, Alison is a very special person. She’s as beautiful as she is smart… she's as compassionate and caring as she is filled with life and enthusiasm…. She's dedicated, determined, athletic…. Did I mention she takes after ME? …

Actually she's a wonderful blend of the best of her mother and me, and I can easily say, she is my female pride and joy and the best daughter I might have ever dreamed for.

Growing up, Alison demonstrated an enthusiasm for life and for all she did, she fully participated… and still does. In high school and through college, she was the captain of those soccer teams and even made MVP in college. She’s truly a team player which explains why she is so loved and respected…she has lots of good, strong friendships…. I smile when I see all of your familiar… and new faces here with us today… Alison has a great outlook on life and her maturity manifests in her curiosity and compassion… as she has traveled the world to learn and to participate and to share her skills and compassion for those in need. We were so proud of her when she traveled abroad to study in South Africa and so moved that she chose to give of her time and her SELF to volunteer at an AIDS clinic while she was there. Alison is the kind of person who is truly engaged in life….

And speaking of engaged…. As Alison went off to attend PA school at Philadelphia University, there was someone else in attendance… a great guy named Bryan… destiny worked its magic…. And, once again, if dreams came true…. and clearly they do, I couldn't have wished for a better husband for our daughter. Bryan, thank you for loving our Alison and for understanding just how special she is. Thank you for treating her with kindness and love and respect and for caring for her as you do. As Arlene and I welcome you to our family as our son, we also want to congratulate your family and acknowledge our mutual joy and new bond.

I also have to say that each time I observe Alison “in action,” I become more and more impressed with the woman she has become. I've observed the full spectrum of her genesis to her childhood… when she rode her bike… WITHOUT training wheels… at FOUR YEARS OLD…. to her athletic prowess, her performance in school, her determination to do good in South Africa … and to her precision planning and execution of the plans… with her mother… for this wedding. I didn't have to be told, “Back off… we’ve GOT this,” it was clear everything was under control. She was a “take charge kid” and she has only gotten more adept at getting the job…. ANYJOB done. My guess is by the time you get home, your thank you cards will be in your mailbox. Arlene and I always felt, in our hearts, that Alison was special as a kid, and as she has blossomed, she has not disappointed…. And yes, all of her… and Luke’s… best traits encourage me to keep dreaming… BIG.

Alison, I remember when you were in college, of course you were very social…. You had… and still have… many friends, and you dated, but you just didn't seem to find THE ONE…

At the time, did you also know that your Mom and I had your back, and we NEVER stopped wishing and praying and DREAMING for you to find all that you dream for in life? And when that last relationship ended, do you remember what I told you?

“I might have to wait, I'll never give up

I guess it's half timing and the other half’s luck

Wherever you are, whenever it's right

He’ll come out of nowhere and into YOUR life… “

That's from Michael Buble's song " I still haven't met you yet"

And so he did…, he came out of nowhere and into your life, and here we are in a place that means so much to Bryan and you. When Bryan proposed to you, there was symbolism and deep meaning all around… surrounded by this incredible scenery… the strength and permanence of the canyons and mountains… drifting into the sky in that balloon, representing endless possibility…”the sky’s the limit” … knowing that anywhere life and circumstance may find you, together you are ONE. And now it’s time for THIS new generation and THIS new family to express YOUR dreams for your future.

Alison, tonight Bryan and you begin as husband and wife, but you and I have one last rite of passage as “Dad and Daughter.” Just remember I will always be there for you… and Bryan… and as the song goes,

“From the first breath she breathed

When she first smiled at me

I knew the love of a father runs deep

Someday you might know what I'm going through

When a miracle smiles up at you

I loved her first.”

Inspired by Heartland's song " I loved her first".

Please raise your glasses.

To Alison and Bryan…. May you have a life filled with love and good health, friends, family, compassion and respect.

Never, never, never stop learning… never, never, never stop loving…. And NEVER, never never quit.....dreaming… congratulations! Love ya, mean it!