

****Processional****

****Words of Welcome****

Dearly beloved, we gather here today to celebrate the union of two souls, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], whose love has flourished over the years and has now led them to this sacred moment of matrimony.

On behalf of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], we thank you all for joining us on this most special day. We are all here because we have had the immense privilege of being part of this couple's journey in one way or another: Whether supporting from a distance or through close knit relationships. But you've all taken the time to travel here today and these two lovebirds can't tell you how much that means to them, so truly thank you.

****Acknowledgement of the Dearly Departed****

I would also like to acknowledge those that couldn't be here with us today- those that we may have lost. Though lost is not the right term to use here. I'll paraphrase one of my favorite quotes by author Jonathan Safran Foer: everything is illuminated in the light of the past. It is always alongside us, on the inside, looking out. In that way, those we love will always be alongside us and are here with us today. *We have set places for them accordingly.*

****Opening Remarks****

Now, as we move into the ceremony if you all would please take a moment with me to absorb this memory. A moment we will all be able to recall and remember so tenderly. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], take a moment to look around at the faces of your loved ones. Witness the love, admiration, and affection flowing all around us here on this gorgeous day. Savor it. Enjoy every moment because it truly is your day. With that, I'll give the couple a moment to soak it in.

It's an honor to be here myself, today, as I get to not only witness but officiate the marriage of my sister, and my friend. Someone I will be proud to call my brother.

But I'm not only gaining a brother today, I'm gaining sisters, nieces, nephews and more. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have acted as a bridge between the [REDACTED]s and the [REDACTED]s, connecting our two families with their love. What was already a huge group has suddenly gotten even bigger and the

connections and affection have only grown with it. Yes, another aspect of what makes this ceremony so exciting is that I not only get to welcome [REDACTED] to our family, but also [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], little [REDACTED] and the rest of the bunch. I would say welcome to the family to all of you, but it feels like you've already been a part of us for a long time.

I was surprised when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] approached me about this privilege. It was the day of their engagement so I assumed they had just had "a lot to celebrate." Who would be crazy enough to ask their brother to become a minister to officiate a wedding with no experience? [REDACTED]. And who would agree with her? [REDACTED]. That just shows you the bond between these two.

Again, I'm part of this lucky group, and I have gotten to watch this relationship blossom into what it is today.

Along that journey there have been so many times where I just saw how happy my sister was and knew this relationship was something special- moments where I realized how strong this connection was. What made me realize they were truly a perfect match was witnessing how they help each other grow. How they motivate each other.

[REDACTED] motivates [REDACTED] like nobody I've ever seen. He encourages her and believes in her and in turn makes her believe in herself. He is an amazingly supportive person and she's lucky to have that support for the rest of her life. I've never seen her more confident in every step she takes, than with [REDACTED] there at her side.

And then there's [REDACTED] not only encouraging [REDACTED] in his business, but taking an active interest by contributing. Not being afraid to try something new. She believes in him as much he does in her. The two of them have been learning together, growing together. It's been incredible to witness. And in witnessing it, I recognize the foundations of a strong marriage: A true friendship and genuine care for the well-being of each other. Whatever our souls are made of, theirs are the same. It's something magical.

And it's funny to me, that this relationship has been so long in the making. For those of you who might not be aware, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have known

each other for twenty-some-odd years. They went to school together, were friends, had moments together and moments apart. The timing seemed to always be off somehow in the universe's divine plan to bring them together. But to recall the quote I previously mentioned: everything is illuminated in the light of the past. Looking back now I'm sure they both can see how they were always destined to be together and that to come together, they had to grow as individuals first. But through that growth, a beautiful partnership has formed.

****Affirmation of the Community****

But this partnership is not alone. Two people in love do not live in isolation. Their love is a source of strength with which they may nourish not only each other but also the world around them. And in turn, we, their community of friends and family, have a responsibility to this couple. By our steadfast care, respect, and love, we can support their marriage and the new family they are creating today.

Will everyone please rise. Will you who are present here today, surround [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in love, offering them the joys of your friendship, and supporting them in their marriage? Please say we will.

All: We will

Officiant: You may be seated.

****Reading****

Love...love is what brings us together today. But what is the nature of love? A reading I'd like to share demonstrates the beautiful complexity of love and is a favorite of the couples'.

Love is a temporary madness; it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your root was so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being in love, which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

****Address to the Couple****

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], your love for each other is evident to all who know you. You have found in each other a partner, a confidant, and a best friend. Your commitment to supporting and encouraging one another is a beautiful foundation for a strong and enduring marriage. As you stand here today, ready to make your vows, remember the love that has brought you together and the love that will carry you through all the days of your lives. And that brings us to this moment...

****Vows and Ring Exchange****

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], please face each other and hold hands.

[REDACTED], please present [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]'s ring.

These rings are a symbol of the promises you are about to make to each other.

[REDACTED], as you place the ring on [REDACTED]'s finger, please repeat after me: "I, [REDACTED], take you, [REDACTED], to be my wife, my partner in life, and my one true love. I promise to cherish and respect you, to support and encourage you in all that you do, and to be there for you through all of life's joys and challenges."

[REDACTED], please present [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]'s ring.

[REDACTED], as you place the ring on [REDACTED]'s finger, please repeat after me: "I, [REDACTED], take you, [REDACTED], to be my husband, my partner in life, and my one true love. I promise to cherish and respect you, to support and encourage you in all that you do, and to be there for you through all of life's joys and challenges."

****Declaration of Marriage****

With the exchange of these vows and rings, and by the authority vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may seal your vows with a kiss.

****Benediction****

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], may your love continue to grow and deepen with

each passing day. May you find strength and comfort in each other's arms, and may your marriage be filled with laughter, joy, and shared adventures. As you embark on this journey together, may you always remember the love that brought you here today, and may it guide and nurture you throughout your lives.

****Closing Remarks****

May your marriage be a shining example of love and unity for all who know you. Your love story is one of hope, perseverance, and the power of destiny. As you step into this new chapter together, know that you have the unwavering support and love of everyone gathered here today.

****Pronouncement****

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to present to you for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED]

****Recessional****

As the newlyweds take their first steps as a married couple, let us celebrate this beautiful union and shower them with our love and best wishes.

Congratulations to you, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]! May your marriage be filled with love, joy, and an abundance of cherished memories!