

**Good evening, everyone.**

I'd like to take a minute to personally thank each and every one of you for being here tonight to celebrate Mom and Dad's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

In a few moments, we're going to enjoy a champagne toast and some anniversary cake.

Before we do, I'd like to share a reflection with all of you.

**# # #**

**If you've ever wandered around inside a Hallmark store, you might have seen a display that tells you all the traditional themes for wedding anniversary gifts.**

For a couple's first anniversary, the traditional theme is **paper**.

Think of it as a **blank slate** for a young couple to write their own story ... a gentle reminder that a yearlong marriage has not yet stood the test of time.

Year five is traditionally celebrated with a gift made out of **wood**.

So Dad – quick – think back:

On June 25, 1965, did you make something for Mom out of walnut wood, I wonder?

As the years go on, the themes for wedding anniversary gifts get a little more **interesting**, and the traditional gifts a bit more **valuable**:

- There's tin or aluminum to mark year 10 ...
- Crystal for year 15 ....
- And china for year 20.

The 25<sup>th</sup> is remembered with silver,  
and the 50<sup>th</sup> with precious gold.

But the diamond — the diamond! — is reserved  
exclusively for couples that have made their love  
last for 60 years.

Like Mom and Dad.

**60 years.**

In case you didn't know, that's

720 months ...

3,120 weeks ...

21,900 days ....

OR

More than **half a million hours** of togetherness.

A rare feat.

Indeed, the diamond itself is rare.

If there was a geologist among us tonight, he or she might regale us with stories about the **physical properties** of a diamond.

**Diamonds are amazing.**

Because of their bright luster, they twinkle and sparkle.

They disperse white light into reds, greens and blues.

They are chemically resistant — and a perfect conductor of heat.

They are the **ultimate** mineral — the **hardest** substance in nature! — for **one simple reason**.

**Their bonds are strong.**

**Really, really strong.**

I'm no geologist, but I know this:

That **diamonds** are made of **carbon**.

Each carbon atom in a diamond is surrounded by — and powerfully connected to — 4 **other** carbon atoms.

**There's nothing else in nature like it!**

These **carbon-atom connections** are the **strongest** type of chemical bonds.

Each tightly bound arrangement repeats itself in three dimensions – over and over again – like billions of **spools** connected to billions of **rods** in a Tinkertoy set – only much, much tinier.

This molecular structure makes diamonds hard — durable! Everlasting! — because **their bonds are strong**.

**Really, really strong.**

And that's exactly what we're celebrating tonight with Mom and Dad on their diamond wedding anniversary.

**Strong bonds.**

## **The strongest bonds take YEARS to develop.**

In the case of a diamond?

It takes **millions** of years!

In the case of Mom and Dad?

Their bonds began to form when Dad saw Mom for the first time around 1945, when they were about 13 years old in Indiana.

Dad remembers it.

Because **HIS** dad had something that **MOM's** dad really needed:

A new part for their broken washing machine.

It was a part that couldn't be found anywhere else since World War II was still going on, and many things you needed were hard to come by.

So all because of a broken washing machine, the Armbruster family of Lawrenceburg and the Bachus family of Oldenburg got to know each other.

Years later, when Mom was a high school senior, she ran into Dad at her high school prom.

She thought Dad was a good looking guy!

But there was just one problem:

He was dating Mom's best friend Betty.

**In 1952 when Dad went into the Army, Betty was still in the picture off and on.**



But it wasn't serious.

So when a country boy got sweet on Betty, and told Jerry he ought to move along, **Dad saw opportunity!**

And took it as a sign.

He made a new decision.

From his barracks in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Dad started writing letters to Mom back in Oldenburg.

He wanted to take a chance on Eileen: a nice girl who was nice looking. Quiet. Not loud-mouthed or wild.

Mom wrote back. By then, she was working as a medical secretary for Dr. Daly's office right next door to the red brick house she grew up in.

**Whenever Dad came home on leave, they saw each other here and there.**

She thought Jerry was pretty neat!

Cool. Polite. Respectful.

And still VERY good looking.

In 1954, after Dad got out of the Army, he did odd jobs for a couple of years, rolling whiskey barrels at Seagram's Distillery in Lawrenceburg ... doing carpentry work for a local builder ... and training as a safety inspector at the Fernald nuclear plant outside Cincinnati.

But by then?

Dad had gotten just a little "too cool."

At least by Mom's standards.

They tried to keep dating.

But it was Mom who broke it off.

Not once.

But twice.

**In 1955, Dad left for Purdue to study civil engineering, and Mom went about her business at the doctor's office, going on blind dates every once in a while.**

They didn't correspond.

And they didn't see each other anymore.

**But then — some four years later ...  
on a Sunday afternoon in the summer of '59 ...  
straight out of the blue! –**

**Dad drove to Oldenburg in his black-and-  
white '55 Bel Air and wandered into the  
backyard of Mom's red brick house in  
Oldenburg.**

He stopped in for a minute.

Just to say hi.

Mom was stunned.

Her first thought?

**WOAH!**

Dad was **MORE** handsome.

**MORE** dignified.

But more importantly?

He'd grown up.

**Mom could tell.**

This is it! she thought.

So they started dating again.

Only a few months later – in December 1959 – after a romantic evening of dancing at the Coonhunters Lodge in Batesville, Indiana, Dad pulled off on the side of the road and presented Mom with a diamond ring.

There weren't any words.

**He** knew.

And **she** knew.

Dad put it like this:

*I always cared for her.*

*If I was going out with another girl, I was always comparing that girl to Eileen.*

*She never got out of my mind.*

**Strong bonds ...**

Really, really strong.

**The wedding was six months later, on a gorgeous summer Saturday, June 25, 1960.**

At 9 o'clock in the morning at Holy Family Catholic Church in Oldenburg, Jerry and Eileen made their sacred promises to each other.

Their guests – mostly family – were treated to a sit-down dinner at Hillcrest Country Club in Batesville.

And on Monday morning, Mom and Dad took off for a weeklong honeymoon in Escanaba and Mackinaw Island, Michigan.

**Everyone here tonight knows the rest of the story.**

For all of us are part of it.

And — as the story goes — they lived happily ever after.

Which brings us to today.

To tonight.

And to our toast.

**To Mom and Dad ... Grandma and Grandpa ...  
Jerry and Eileen:**

**Love that is true never grows old.**

Wishing you God's Abundant Blessings,

Continued Good Health and

Profound Happiness

on Your Diamond Anniversary.

**(RAISE GLASS)**

**Cheers to 60 Years!**