

Dear Mom + Dad—

6/10/06

It is likely impossible for any outsider to truly + fully comprehend another's marriage, but as a close observer of yours for the last 46 years of its now 50 year measure, I believe I know it as well as any could. I have seen you weather trials, troubles and tragedies, not to mention triumphs, celebrations, and moments of joy. We have been together through the extraordinary and the mundane— if any moment with the two of you could ever be described as mundane. Realizing how young you were when you married, in an odd way I feel as though I literally grew up with you. Through it all what has struck me most deeply is/are three things: the obvious love and affection you feel for each other, and evidence toward each other; the great humor you share— the

love of laughter, wit, and amusement. But the thing that strikes me most deeply is the tenderness and care and the pride and pleasure each of you takes in the other and for the other. In my experience that is the rarest thing of all — the millions of tiny gifts of time, and effort, and attention — so often putting the others pleasure before your own. Or rather deriving pleasure from giving it. I don't know that I'd go so far as to say that you have the perfect marriage, because that could only exist in a perfect world, but you do have a model marriage. It's extraordinary that two such different and disparate people — different styles, moods, temperaments, versions of the world, sets of interests — still have created such a perfect union. Particularly in the last few years, since Dad's retirement. I know it was a bit rocky at first, but now you seem to have perfected your joint lives in miraculous and wonderous ways. Mom, I know you

are often haunted by past events. But I hope you can more fully enjoy and appreciate the exquisite life the two of you have created now. Your lives have been blessed by your partnership. This 50th Anniversary is a celebration, Yes, but from my perspective you have turned every day into a celebration. And I feel blessed to be able to witness and participate in so much of it. Lois and I often marvel at your miraculous relationship, and try to use it as a guide and map for our own marriage. You have given my life more than I can ever repay, but if I have any power with the Fates, I wish you 50 more years of what you have right now.

Love,
Mark

ROSES
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