

A tribute to my wife.

Sweetie, sugar, pooky wooky, honey lips, poopy woopy baby doll. Something like that.

I was thinking last night not so much what a great wife you are, not even so much what a great mother. Rather, what a great person you are.

I recall when I first met you, I thought you were just a nice, fun girl. But really I was impressed by you before I met you by your reputation. I had heard you were mature way beyond your years in high school and everyone loved you because you loved everyone equally. The heroes of the school and the fringe students all held equal value in your eyes. I don't know why you came in second for homecoming queen. I don't know who could have beaten you. For being so popular and even pretty I had heard it had no impact on you at all. You didn't even know it. Then we met and I saw it was all true and that you even had such a playful even mischievous side. I don't think I have ever met anyone that has invited so many hurting people to church since high school. How you would take them under your wing. I am so impressed. I recall when I decided to marry you it was nothing super emotional or Twitter-pated. I know girls maybe would like to hear I was so head over heels in love I wanted to lasso the moon for you. Sorry. It was I thought there was no one like you. In a sense, I was head over heels for your character. I wanted to be attached to that. That is not to say you were not also beautiful and a delight to date and be in love with but it was more than that for sure. I am even surprised at myself at such a young age I was wise enough to both see that and value it. We married and your true colors kept coming out. You were so supportive as we packed up for me to back down and finish school. You were fine with living with cockroaches in married student housing. I couldn't believe how industrious you were when you bought and sewed together carpet samples so we could have some type of carpet in our apt. I was amazed. Maybe the most impressive thing was watching you have our children. While the lady next to us was screaming and barfing you, and I can still see your face, just closed your eyes and breathed. No one would know how much pain you were in unless they noticed the beads of sweat on your forehead. I am pretty tough and I have pretty tough friends but I have never seen anything like that. I felt bad when you were pregnant and you were so hot you had to buy the plastic kiddie pool and fill it with water and put it in the courtyard and just go sit in it and you were not even embarrassed. You really did so much that I was able to finish a pretty rough 2 years of engineering knowing you were strong. Again, something I saw in you from the beginning. I guess I should skip ahead. You did not take any medicine to mask the pain of childbirth or the contractions as you thought it might damage our kids in some way. That sums you up well as a mother. You will take as much pain as required for them. You quit your successful and profitable job for years and years just to stay home and be with them. You even took on the very difficult job of daycare in our house when we needed \$. I won't even mention that you allowed me to bring in my grandma, then my mom to live and die with us... Then your own mom. Okay, I have to mention that. She was hard and had dementia but you made life so wonderful for her. I recall watching you just sit at her feet and wash and rub them... I was in awe of you. Mother Teresa gets a lot of recognition but so should you. Your mom was sort of mean to you and didn't really appreciate a fraction of what you did. To the contrary, she actually would unfairly criticize the one who washed her feet and cared for her. You did not change at all in your care for her. There is a special place in heaven for people like you. Geese, I can't begin to talk about your support of me as I worked with a rough group of teenagers for 27 years. You allowed your beautiful house to be trashed, you allowed me to take time from you and give it to the students, you allowed me to take 1/2 of our 401k to start our non-profit, you allowed are kids to be exposed to less than perfect friends and behaviors...

Really, I could go on forever here. Again, I saw this in you when I met you. I knew you would be a wife to stand by me in my crazy love for kids. 37 years is too much to capture here. By the way, I am really looking forward to our anniversary next month where I can speak some of these things to you. I will end in this. A terrible thing happened 2 years ago next month. We found out I had a massive brain tumor and it permanently damaged my frontal lobe and you know how it has changed me for the worse. As much as it has been terrible for me, how I hate it, I know for sure it has been worse on you. But just like with your mom, your love for me has not changed and you have been with me the whole way. In all honesty, I would not fault you all if you divorced me. I know you said- I do, for better or worse but my new worse is such a loss for you. You need to be held and honored regularly and am more running in my left brain frustrated how nothing is right in the world or in my brain. I am so sorry. Maybe I end it here. At least you can see I do still have a lot of the good memories and love for you that you married. It is just this agitation side of me you now have to put up with. I will say it again, you are a great person, way above just a great wife and mother. You are way more concerned about making everyone's life better at the expense of your own. I am so fortunate that I am one of those 'everyone's, I am your husband of 37 years