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George Stephanopoulos 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday & Retirement  
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MIT Wong Auditorium

Friends, colleagues, former students and current associates of George Stephanopoulos, good evening. As you all know, we are here today to celebrate two events simultaneously: the achievement of that biblical milestone age of 70 years by our colleague, teacher and mentor; and his retirement after an illustrious career that spans decades in time, and several continents in space.

To many of us in the process systems engineering community, George has been that tree in front of our metaphorical village, standing tall and strong among other trees, and doing so without being overbearing or intimidating;

its branches and leaves have swayed gently with the benevolent breezes, and it has provided shade without occluding the sun; birds of all types would flock to it, finding whatever they sought: respite, support, or inspiration. These he gave gladly, asking for nothing in return. This great tree filled its space on the landscape for so long, so well, so excellently, and so unassumingly that it was easy to take its understated greatness for granted and walk by it without even noticing it was there. But now it is about to be removed, transplanted into the land of retirement, where the

sun shines every day, the winds are clement, the sky always blue, and most noticeably, ***there are no more faculty meetings to attend!***

George: Your retirement will surely leave a gaping hole that will not soon be filled. And yet, you leave behind an immense legacy through the many students you mentored. Here is another parable: There once was a time when George Stephanopoulos brought his single lit candle to the land; and one by one, he lit the candles of others, but he did more than just light these candles; he inspired his mentees to go on to light other candles, so that they, too, in turn produced next generation mentees who also lit still more candles. Today, this room is filled with metaphorical candles lit either directly by you, George, or else lit by those other candles that you had lit first. Such is the legacy of an inspirational teacher and mentor; no one knows how far your influence will travel...

Personally, I thank you for your kindness to me when I was just a graduate student, and later when I went to work for DuPont and then moved back to academia. Thank you for what you have done for the process systems engineering community the world over. To close out my short remarks, I found a poem that I would like to share with everyone. It was written by a little known American poet named Eugene Field (1850-1895). Here goes:

Come, brothers, share the fellowship  
We celebrate to-night;  
There's grace of song on every lip  
And every heart is light!  
But first, before our mentor chimes  
The hour of jubilee,  
Let's drink a health to good old times,  
And good times yet to be!  
Clink, clink, clink!  
Merrily let us drink!  
There's store of wealth  
And more of health  
In every glass, we think.  
Clink, clink, clink!  
To fellowship we drink!  
And from the bowl  
No genial soul  
In such an hour can shrink.  
  
And you, oh, friends from west and east

And other foreign parts,  
Come share the rapture of our feast,  
The love of loyal hearts;  
And in the wassail that suspends  
All matters burdensome,  
We'll drink a health to good old friends  
And good friends yet to come.

Clink, clink, clink!

To fellowship we drink!

And from the bowl

No genial soul

In such an hour will shrink.

Clink, clink, clink!

Merrily let us drink!

There's fellowship

In every sip

Of friendship's brew, we think.

Συγχαρητήρια (Syncheritiria) Paliofile; Chronia Polla!