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FAREWELL ADDRESS
THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1991

TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT FOR FAREWELL.

SIX YEARS AGO, WITHOUT BENEFIT OF ELECTION OR TRANSITION, I BECAME YOUR MAYOR. I WAS 28 YEARS OLD.

THE CITY WAS IN TURMOIL AND THE PEOPLE DIVIDED. WE DON'T NEED TO GO THROUGH A LITANY OF THE CITY'S TROUBLES -- YOU ALL REMEMBER THEM WELL.

FROM THE VERY FIRST DAY, I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE NEEDED. WE NEEDED TO BRING A CITY BACK. WE NEEDED TO RESTORE OUR SCHOOLS AND FINANCES, TO BRING CONFIDENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM BACK TO PROVIDENCE. WE NEEDED A GOVERNMENT THAT WAS HONEST, EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL -- AND IT NEEDED TO SERVE ALL THE PEOPLE.

IT GIVES ME GREAT PRIDE TO LOOK BACK AND SAY, "THAT'S THE KIND OF PROVIDENCE WE BUILT."

FOR THE LAST SIX YEARS, WE HAVE TRIED TO NURTURE THE SPIRIT OF THE POSSIBLE. TO SEE AN OPPORTUNITY AND GRASP IT. TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE PITFALLS, BUT TO GO FORWARD ANYWAY -- BECAUSE THE PEOPLE DESERVED IT, AND THE FUTURE DEMANDED IT.

TOGETHER, WE BROUGHT THE CITY BACK.

TOGETHER WE HAD THE VISION TO MOVE OUR RIVERS SO THAT OUR DOWNTOWN COULD HAVE A REBIRTH OF EXCITEMENT AND SUCCESS.

TOGETHER WE HAD THE VISION TO BRING MORE POLICE TO DUTY AND ON THE STREETS, TO HELP PROTECT OUR PEOPLE IN THE FACE OF THE RISING THREAT OF CRIME AND DRUGS. AND WE BROUGHT MORE RESCUES TO OUR FIRE DEPARTMENT TO HELP OUR SENIORS.

TOGETHER WE HAD THE VISION TO BRING AMERICAN EXPRESS TO TOWN TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR OUR PEOPLE. WE'RE WORKING TO BRING SHOPPING BACK DOWNTOWN WITH A MALL CALLED PROVIDENCE PLACE.

THE KEY TO DOWNTOWN SUCCESS, HOWEVER, REMAINS IN BRINGING OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS TO OUR CITY'S CENTER, IN DORMITORIES, ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS AND CLASSROOMS.

TOGETHER WE HAD THE VISION TO RESTORE OUR BEAUTIFUL ROGER WILLIAMS PARK, ZOO AND MUSEUM AND TO RENOVATE OUR LOCAL PARKS TO GIVE CHILDREN AND SENIORS ALIKE RECREATION AND BEAUTY IN THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS.

KNOWING THAT NO PROGRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE UNLESS IT WAS ACHIEVED ON STRONG FINANCIAL FOOTING, WE SET OUT TO CUT WASTE AND REDUCE OUR DEFICIT TO ZERO. EACH AND EVERY YEAR, WE BALANCED OUR BUDGET AND HAD A SURPLUS. WE IMPROVED OUR BOND RATING AND BALANCED OUR BUDGET IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDENCE AND AROUND THE NATION.

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WILL BE TO MAINTAIN THE STRONG FISCAL POSITION WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE FACE OF A DOWN-TURNED ECONOMY.

JUST WEEKS AGO, WE SENT OUT A WARNING TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS EVEN MORE TO AVERT THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR STATE AND OUR SISTER CITIES AND TOWNS. THROUGH AN EXTRA VIGOROUS EFFORT, WE HAVE COLLECTED \$4,260,000 IN BACK TAXES. THIS IS ALREADY MORE THAN WAS BUDGETED FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR. WE FEEL THAT THIS GIVES THE NEW ADMINISTRATION A HEAD START IN MEETING THE PROJECTIONS IN OUR AMMENDED BUDGET.

BY DOING THE RESPONSIBLE THING, I BELIEVE WE HAVE LEFT FOR OUR SUCCESSOR A CITY BOTH MEETING THE NEEDS OF ITS CITIZENS AND LIVING WITHIN ITS MEANS. A DIFFICULT TASK, BUT ONE WORTH WORKING TOWARDS.

ALONG THE WAY, WE MADE IMPROVEMENTS IN VIRTUALLY EVERY AREA OF OUR CITY OPERATIONS. WE BROUGHT GOOD PEOPLE TO GOVERNMENT AND GAVE THEM THE TOOLS THEY NEEDED TO MAKE REAL AND LASTING CHANGES.

WE MET THE PUBLIC AT NUMEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS. I WANTED TO STAY CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AND THIS WAS MY WAY OF DOING IT.

IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY TO HEAR COMPLAINTS, BUT I FELT THAT THE PEOPLE HAD A RIGHT TO SEE THEIR GOVERNMENT FACE-TO-FACE AND EXPRESS THEIR NEEDS. AND YES, SOMETIMES IT WAS UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT I DREW STRENGTH FROM EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM.

TO MY SUCCESSOR, BUDDY CIANCI, I HAVE SOME ADVICE:

CONTINUE TO WORK TO IMPROVE OUR SCHOOLS. OUR PLAN TO RENOVATE OUR SCHOOLS IS A SOUND ONE WHICH SHOULD BE CONTINUED. WITHOUT THE CONSTRAINTS OF RESIDENCY, YOU ARE FREE TO FIND THE BEST TEACHERS TO SERVE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. THERE IS NO GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR A GOVERNMENT, AND NO BETTER INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE, THAN OUR CHILDREN.

CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT. WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY, AND YOUR CHALLENGE WILL BE IN FINDING WAYS TO FINANCE A GREATER POLICE PRESENCE.

QUITE FRANKLY, IF I WERE STILL MAYOR, I WOULD CONSIDER INVOLVING AN OUTSIDE REVIEW PANEL TO STUDY THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE IT MORE EFFICIENT AND MORE EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING CRIME AND PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS. THIS REVIEW PANEL MUST WORK WITH YOUR POLICE COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF OF POLICE IN A COOPERATIVE EFFORT WHICH WILL YIELD QUICK RESULTS.

CONTINUE TO FIND WAYS TO PROVIDE SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS. WHEN THE TIME AND THE FINANCES ARE RIGHT TO GO OUT FOR BONDS ONCE AGAIN, SEEK A NEIGHBORHOOD BOND ISSUE TO IMPROVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. IT IS SIMPLY THE ONLY WAY TO GIVE PRIDE TO OUR PEOPLE AND TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY.

CONTINUE TO ATTRACT HONEST AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORS AND EMPLOYEES TO CITY SERVICE.

TODAY, DPW, AND ALL OUR CITY DEPARTMENTS, ARE WORKING WELL. THE PUBLIC HAS RECEIVED FASTER RESPONSE, WITH GOOD LEADERSHIP, AND GOOD EMPLOYEES -- THEY HAVE WORKED WELL IN DIFFICULT TIMES.

I SUGGEST YOU WORK WITH GOVERNOR SUNDLUN. THE STATE MUST REALIZE THAT THEIR BUDGET PROBLEMS ARE OUR BUDGET PROBLEMS AND THAT ANY SOLUTIONS TO THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE STATE MUST TAKE IN THE BIG PICTURE OF 39 CITIES AND TOWNS.

QUITE SIMPLY, THE STATE CANNOT CONTINUE TO TURN ITS BACK ON THE COMMUNITIES OF RHODE ISLAND. WE HAVE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THEN THE STATE GOVERNMENT PASS ALONG THEIR BUDGET PROBLEMS ONTO THE SHOULDERS OF THE CITY. IT HAS BECOME TOO HEAVY A BURDEN AND SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

CONTINUE TO LOOK TO INNOVATIVE WAYS TO GENERATE INCOME.

CONSIDER SELLING THE CIVIC CENTER TO THE CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY. IT MAKES GOOD ORGANIZATIONAL SENSE BECAUSE ONE MANAGEMENT TEAM SHOULD BE OPERATING BOTH.

CONSIDER REGIONALIZING THE WATER SUPPLY BOARD. THIS SERVICE PROVIDES WATER FOR 60 PERCENT OF THE STATE AND SHOULD BE A REGIONAL AUTHORITY WHICH COULD GENERATE MORE REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

CONSIDER JOINING TOGETHER WITH OTHER CITIES AND TOWNS TO ADDRESS THE RISING COST OF HEALTH CARE AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION. THEY HAVE BECOME A MAJOR OUTLAY OF OUR CITY BUDGET DOLLARS AND NEED TO BE CONTROLLED. ANY SAVINGS AFFECTED IN THESE AREAS MEANS REAL SAVINGS IN THE ANNUAL BUDGETS OF ALL CITIES AND TOWNS.

CONSIDER CONSOLIDATION OF SEPARATE CITY DEPARTMENTS AND THE REGIONALIZATION OF SERVICES BETWEEN CITIES. EVEN SIMPLE THINGS CAN SAVE MONEY -- DO WE REALLY NEED 39 DOG POUNDS?

FINALLY, MR. CIANCI, WE ARE VERY DIFFERENT, YOU AND I. YOUR STYLE IS FLASHIER, MINE MORE LOW KEY. BUT, I HOPE OUR GOALS ARE THE SAME: TO GET THE JOB DONE.

AND REST ASSURED, WHEN I LEAVE OFFICE, I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL CRITIC. BUT, IF I NEED TO SPEAK OUT, I WILL. I HAVE WORKED TOO HARD AND WE'VE COME TOO FAR FOR ME NOT TO SAY WHEN I THINK SOMETHING IS WRONG.

AND NOW, YOU ARE MAYOR CIANCI. YOU'VE GOTTEN THE SECOND CHANCE YOU ASKED FOR.

I WANT TO ADD THAT I WANT YOU TO SUCCEED. YOU'RE MY MAYOR TOO. WE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, BUT THEY ENDED ON ELECTION DAY. TODAY, WE PUT THE PAST BEHIND US AND MOVE FORWARD.

WHEN I DECIDED TO LEAVE A RELATIVELY SAFE SEAT AS MAYOR TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR, MANY PEOPLE WONDERED WHY.

WELL, THE REASON WAS SIMPLE -- AFTER 6 YEARS AS MAYOR, I SAW THE PROBLEMS -- DRUGS, HOMELESSNESS, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE.

THESE WERE PEOPLE PROBLEMS A MAYOR COULD ATTACK, BUT ONLY A GOVERNOR COULD SOLVE.

THROUGH THE YEARS, WE, AND EVERY OTHER CITY, TRIED TO MAKE DO AND TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WITHIN OUR CITY BOUNDRIES. I KNEW THAT REAL CHANGE FOR ALL CITIES AND TOWNS COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE AT THE STATE HOUSE. I LEFT, NOT BECAUSE I LOVED PROVIDENCE ANY LESS, BUT BECAUSE I CARED ABOUT IT EVEN MORE.

YOU KNOW, GOVERNMENT ISN'T ONE PERSON. IT'S ALL THE PEOPLE. IT ISN'T ONE PERSON'S DECISION, BUT THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE. MAYORS HOLD THE POSITION TEMPORARILY, BUT THE PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER FOREVER.

JOHN KENNEDY, MY INSPIRATION, CALLED GOVERNMENT "OUR GENERATION'S MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS -- THE PUBLIC BUSINESS." WE IN GOVERNMENT ARE ONLY THE STEWARTS FOR THE PEOPLE -- PROTECTING THE CITY FOR THE FUTURE.

PROVIDENCE, YOU HAVE GIVEN ME ONE WONDERFUL PRIVILEGE AFTER ANOTHER. FIRST AS CITY COUNCILMAN, THEN AS A COUNCIL PRESIDENT -- AND THE GREATEST HONOR OF ALL -- THE HONOR OF SERVING AS YOUR MAYOR. YOU HAVE GIVEN ME YOUR SUPPORT AND WELCOMED ME INTO YOUR HOMES. DURING THESE LAST DIFFICULT MONTHS, I HAVE BEEN SO PLEASED BY YOUR CONTINUED ENCOURAGEMENT.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT HAS TO GO TO MY TRUE PARTNERS IN PROGRESS -- THE CITY COUNCIL.

TO MY STAFF AND DIRECTORS -- THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK, LOYALTY AND DEDICATION TO THE PEOPLE OF PROVIDENCE.

THERE HAVE BEEN CHALLENGES AND REWARDS, HEARTBREAK AND SUCCESS, AND ALWAYS THE GREAT SENSE OF GRATITUDE AT HAVING BEEN GIVEN THIS WONDERFUL GIFT -- THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE. THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING BACK THE CITY I LOVE.

BUT, I HOPE I'M REMEMBERED AS A MAYOR WHO TRIED TO GRASP EVERY CHANCE I HAD -- TO MAKE PEOPLE'S LIVES A LITTLE BETTER AND TO MAKE THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY STRONG.

I HOPE I'M REMEMBERED, NOT ONLY AS THE MAYOR WHO BALANCED THE BUDGET, BUT AS THE MAYOR WHO BROUGHT PRIDE BACK TO PROVIDENCE. NOT ONLY AS THE MAYOR WHO MOVED THE RIVERS, BUT AS THE MAYOR WHO HELPED THE CHILDREN.

I DID MY BEST, AND I DID IT HONESTLY. I GREW AND BECAME A BETTER MAYOR, AND I HOPE A BETTER MAN, AS WELL.

AS THIS CHAPTER OF MY LIFE ENDS, A NEW ONE BEGINS. I'M 35 YEARS OLD, AND AT AN AGE WHEN PEOPLE ARE JUST BEGINNING TO THINK ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE, I'VE ALREADY SERVED MY BELOVED CITY.

TO THE PEOPLE OF PROVIDENCE, NOW I TAKE ON A NEW CHALLENGE TO HELP OUR GOVERNOR WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT A TIME WHEN OUR STATE IS FACING DARK TIMES. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT ORIGINALLY IN MY PLAN, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TURN MY BACK ON PUBLIC SERVICE. AS DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, I CAN HELP CREATE JOBS AND NEW REVENUE BY BRINGING IN BUSINESS, AND YES, HELP THE CITY I LOVE, TOO.

THOUGH I WILL NO LONGER BE MAYOR, I WILL HAVE SOMETHING I'VE NEVER HAD BEFORE -- TIME -- TIME ENOUGH FOR MY FAMILY. THEY ARE THE UNSUNG HEROS.

I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE HELP AND SUPPORT OF MY MOM, DAD, SISTER, BROTHER, AND IN-LAWS.

BUT, ESPECIALLY, MY WIFE, LIANNE. TONIGHT I WANT TO THANK HER FOR BEING THE BEST, THE MOST CARING, AND THE MOST GRACIOUS FIRST LADY THIS CITY HAS EVER HAD.

PUBLIC LIFE IS SO HARD ON A FAMILY THAT IT IS A WONDERFUL GIFT -- FOR WHICH I AM VERY GRATEFUL -- THAT I LEAVE OFFICE WITH A FAMILY STRONGER AND MORE PRECIOUS THAN EVER.

BEING MAYOR IS ALL WE HAVE EVER KNOWN, AS A COUPLE AND AS A FAMILY. LIANNE MARRIED A MAYOR, AND NOW SHE GETS TO HAVE A HUSBAND.

MY CHILDREN, JENNIFER AND CHRISTINA HAD TO SMILE FOR AN AWFUL LOT OF PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND MISS A LOT OF TIME WITH US. ALL MY DAUGHTERS HAVE EVER KNOWN IS HAVING A MAYOR AS A FATHER. NOW THEY GET TO HAVE A DADDY.

AND THERE'S A NEW BABY COMING. WHAT BETTER SIGN OF JOY AND HAPPINESS TO COME FOR OUR FAMILY THAN A NEW BABY.

THIS CHAPTER ENDS, AND ANOTHER BEGINS. IT IS A CHAPTER FILLED WITH THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE. DIFFERENT, PERHAPS, BUT WELCOME NONETHELESS.

NOW IT'S TIME TO GO. IT IS TIME FOR OTHERS TO CONTINUE WHAT WE HAVE BEGUN. I FEEL PRIDE THAT TOGETHER, ALL OF US BROUGHT BACK OUR CITY.

PROVIDENCE, IN MY HEART, I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU.

I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO SAY "GOODBYE" -- AND SO -- FAREWELL, AND GOD BLESS YOU.