



Executive Chamber, City of Providence, Rhode Island

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MAYOR

FOUR YEARS AGO, ON THE OCCASION OF MY FIRST INAUGURATION, I STOOD ON THIS SPOT, WITH APPREHENSION AND SOLEMNITY, BUT WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS, AS A BRISK JANUARY WIND SWEEPED THIS SPACIOUS PLAZA. THAT BREEZE SYMBOLIZED TO ME THE WINDS OF CHANGE, FOR I KNEW CHANGE WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THIS CITY TO REVIVE. AND THOSE WINDS ARE STILL GUSTING!

FOUR YEARS AGO PROVIDENCE WAS A COMMUNITY IN DECLINE-- A CITY IN WHICH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND CIVIC PRIDE HAD BEEN DEADENED BY AN UNRESPONSIVE POLITICAL MACHINE. IT WAS A CITY LACKING PURPOSE OR DIRECTION; ONE WHOSE NEGLECTED NEIGHBORHOODS WERE IN THE PROCESS OF INEXORABLE DECAY; ONE IN WHICH TWO DECADES OF CREEPING BLIGHT AND HAPHAZARD DEMOLITION HAD NARROWED THE TAX BASE TO A FISCALLY PRECARIOUS LEVEL.

AS I GAZED FROM THESE STEPS ON THE CITY WE CALL OURS, I REFLECTED UPON MY VIGOROUS EFFORT TO BECOME YOUR MAYOR AND UPON THE CAMPAIGN PLEDGES I HAD MADE. THE PHRASES OF THE GREAT NEW ENGLAND POET, ROBERT FROST, RAN THROUGH MY MIND.

"THE WOODS, INDEED, WERE DARK AND DEEP, AND I HAD MANY PROMISES TO KEEP!"

AS CANDIDATE CIANCI, I HAD MADE AMBITIOUS PLEDGES-- TO REVITALIZE OUR DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT;  
TO REJUVENATE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS;  
TO REVERSE THE TREND OF URBAN BLIGHT;

TO UPGRADE OUR RECREATIONAL AND PARK FACILITIES;  
TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND OUR PORT;  
TO MAKE OUR CITY SAFER BY REDUCING CRIME;  
TO PRESERVE AND COMMEMORATE OUR CITY'S HERITAGE;  
AND TO PROMOTE THE CULTURAL ENDEAVORS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

MOST OF ALL, I PROMISED A GOVERNMENT THAT WAS OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL OUR CITIZENS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE, THEIR ETHNICITY, THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, OR THEIR POLITICAL PERSUASION.

THESE PROMISES HAVE ALL BEEN KEPT; NOT BECAUSE OF MY ABILITY OR STATESMANSHIP, BUT BECAUSE I RECRUITED YOU, OUR CITIZENS, TO DO THOSE CIVIC TASKS WHICH CRIED OUT FOR ATTENTION.

IF I CAN TAKE ANY CREDIT FOR OUR RECENT PROGRESS, IT WOULD CONSIST PRIMARILY IN HAVING MOBILIZED THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY; IN HAVING INVITED THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS; AND IN HAVING SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED THE PUBLIC SERVICE EFFORTS OF OUR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.

THIS NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN OUR CITIZENS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN THE KEY TO OUR RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT. PROVIDENCE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED FROM A MACHINE-DOMINATED OLIGARCHY TO A PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. THE OLD POLITICAL ORDER HAS PASSED; AND THAT CHANGE, MORE THAN ANY OTHER, HAS EARNED FOR US OUR RECENT NOMINATION AS AN ALL-AMERICAN CITY.

I NEED NOT RECITE THE LITANY OF SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS. A TOUR THROUGH OUR DOWNTOWN, OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, OUR PARK, OUR PORT AND OUR STREETS, IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS. BUT ONE EXAMPLE WILL SUFFICE.

IN JANUARY 1975, THAT MASSIVE LANDMARK TO MY LEFT--THE BILTMORE-- WAS CLOSED AND IN A STATE OF DISREPAIR. ITS DEMOLITION WAS DISCUSSED BY THOSE WHO HAD CONSIDERED THAT COURSE THE BEST SOLUTION TO ALL OUR URBAN ILLS. THIS MONTH, WITH A 14 MILLION DOLLAR TRANSFUSION FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE BILTMORE, LIKE LAZARUS, WILL COME TO LIFE.

DURING THIS SECOND ADMINISTRATION WE WILL WORK TO COMPLETE THE MANY CHALLENGING PROJECTS WHICH WE HAVE BEGUN. TOGETHER WE WILL REAP THE HARVEST FROM THE SEEDS OF PROGRESS THAT WE HAVE SOWN.

OUR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION WILL CONTINUE AND ACCELERATE IN TEMPO. AMONG OUR IMMEDIATE CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES ARE A NEW HOTEL-CONVENTION CENTER, AN AUTO-RESTRICTED ZONE FOR KENNEDY PLAZA, A NEW FEDERAL BUILDING AND STATE COURTHOUSE, THE RENOVATION OF CITY HALL, THE RECYCLING OF YET MORE HISTORIC BUILDINGS, THE CONTINUATION OF OUR PEDESTRIAN MALL PROJECT, A NEW PHASE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNION STATION, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MAJOR OFFICE TOWER.

SOME OF THESE PROJECTS ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE POLICIES OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, WHILE OTHERS ARE THE INDIRECT RESULT OF THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION WHICH WE HAVE BEGUN; BUT ALL SPELL PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY FOR PROVIDENCE.

WHILE DOWNTOWN IS THE HEART OF OUR CITY, THE NEIGHBORHOODS ARE ITS SOUL, FOR IT IS THERE THAT THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IS STRONGEST; AND IT IS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS THAT THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF OUR CITIZENS HAVE BEEN NURTURED AND MAINTAINED. THEY WILL ALSO REMAIN A PRIORITY DURING MY SECOND TERM.

WITH THE HELP OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS OUR HOME IMPROVE-

MENT AND PAINT PROGRAMS WILL CONTINUE, ADDITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS WILL BE OPENED, NEW PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED; MANY MORE TREES WILL BE PLANTED; AND MORE NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGNS WILL BE LAUNCHED. IN ADDITION, WE WILL DESIGNATE SEVERAL NEIGHBORHOODS AS TARGET AREAS SO THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE A SUBSTANTIAL INFUSION OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR RENEWAL AND REGENERATION.

WHILE PRESERVING THE GAINS OF THE PAST FOUR YEARS, MY SECOND ADMINISTRATION WILL EAGERLY EMBRACE NEW PRIORITIES. THE FIRST AND FOREMOST OF THESE ADDED GOALS WILL BE FISCAL AUSTERITY. TO PHRASE IT IN SIMPLE, UNEQUIVOCAL TERMS:

"THE TAX LINE WILL BE HELD!"

THE CAMPAIGN IS OVER, BUT MY COMMITMENT TO A NO-TAX INCREASE BUDGET FOR FISCAL 1979 REMAINS FIRM AND IRREVOCABLE! LIKE MY PROMISES OF '74, MY PROMISES OF 1978 WILL BE KEPT!

THERE IS NO MAGIC TO FISCAL SOLVENCY AND BALANCED BUDGETS-- PRUDENCE, PLANNING AND SACRIFICE ARE SUFFICIENT! TO THIS END I AM PREPARING A FINANCIAL PACKAGE THAT WILL BUILD A DAM TO HOLD BACK THE RISING TIDE OF INFLATION AND THE WAVES OF GOVERNMENTAL EXTRAVAGANCE AND BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY.

THE FOUNDATION OF SUCH A DIKE IS OUR TAX BASE; AND DURING MY FIRST TERM ITS LONG AND STEADY SHRINKAGE WAS REVERSED BECAUSE OF NEW INVESTMENT, STRUCTURAL RENOVATION AND RECYCLING OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS, AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION. AFTER BEING RAVAGED BY TWO DECADES OF DEMOLITION AND DECAY, OUR TAX BASE HAS STABILIZED, AND EVEN GREATER GROWTH IN THE FOUR YEARS AHEAD IS VIRTUALLY ASSURED.

TO AUGMENT THIS ENCOURAGING AND ECONOMICALLY ESSENTIAL TREND, I WILL ATTEMPT TO GENERATE NEW SOURCES OF MUNICIPAL REVENUE. A SURCHARGE ON CIVIC CENTER TICKETS AND THE SALE OF SURPLUS CITY PROPERTY TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS WILL BE TWO INGREDIENTS IN MY FISCAL PLAN. IN ADDITION, I WILL RECRUIT AND HIRE A PROFESSIONAL DIRECTOR OF FINANCE TO MODERNIZE OUR FINANCIAL PROCEDURES, IMPROVE OUR TAX COLLECTION RATE, ELIMINATE DUPLICATION IN PURCHASING, AND UPDATE OUR INVESTMENT PROCEDURES.

FURTHER, I WILL IMPLEMENT THE TACTIC OF PLANNED ATTRITION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE WHEREBY NON-ESSENTIAL CITY POSITIONS WILL REMAIN UNFILLED WHEN VACATED TO KEEP DOWN GOVERNMENTAL COSTS; AND I WILL REORGANIZE SEVERAL CITY DEPARTMENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR MORE ECONOMICAL OPERATION. FOREMOST AMONG SUCH AGENCIES, IS THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT--A SYSTEM TOP-HEAVY WITH ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL. TO IT, I WILL APPLY THE 3R'S OF RETRENCHMENT, RE-ORGANIZATION AND REDIRECTION.

I WILL VIGOROUSLY ENDEAVOR TO BRING OUR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BACK TO REALITY IN ITS EXPENDITURES AND BACK TO BASICS IN ITS EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES. MY NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WILL SHARE THESE BASIC CONCERNS.

FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, I WILL SEEK SEVERAL IMPORTANT FINANCIAL MEASURES. ONE IS THE ITEM VETO--A VITAL WEAPON IN THE ARSENAL OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY. FOR PARTISAN REASONS THE LEGISLATURE STRIPPED THIS POWER FROM ME. I WILL SEEK ITS PROMPT RETURN. HOPEFULLY, I CAN CONVINCE THE ASSEMBLY, AS I HAVE THE ELECTORATE OF THIS CITY, THAT PROVIDENCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN POLITICS.

ANOTHER STATUTE WHICH I WILL PROPOSE TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE IS ONE THAT CAN TURN A MUNICIPAL LIABILITY TO AN ADVANTAGE. THERE IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF TAX-EXEMPT PROPERTIES IN PROVIDENCE, AND THAT FIGURE IS INCREASING DRAMATICALLY. IN 1978, WELL OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN REAL ESTATE VALUATION WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE EXEMPT ROLLS, AND THE TREND SHOWS NO SIGN OF SUBSIDING. AT PRESENT, TWENTY-NINE PERCENT OF OUR REAL ESTATE VALUES ARE TAX EXEMPT PROPERTIES SUCH AS CHURCHES, COLLEGES, HOSPITALS, AND GOVERNMENT-OWNED BUILDINGS.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE BURDEN WHICH THIS CONDITION IMPOSES UPON OUR STATE CAPITAL IS THE INNOVATIVE CONNECTICUT PLAN WHEREBY CORE CITIES RECEIVE A GRANT FROM THEIR STATE LEGISLATURE, IN LIEU OF PROPERTY TAXES, FOR THOSE PRIVATE TAX-EXEMPT INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THEIR BORDERS THAT SERVE A BROAD PUBLIC FUNCTION OF BENEFIT TO THE ENTIRE STATE; SUCH AS HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES. THE NEED FOR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IS IMPERATIVE -- A FACT RECENTLY HIGHLIGHTED BY THE STATE'S INDIFFERENCE TO THE PLIGHT OF OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY, DESPITE ITS ACKNOWLEDGED STATE-WIDE SERVICE.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT CANNOT WASH ITS HANDS OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITY THAT SERVES AS ITS HOST AND AS THE FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND HEALTH SERVICES CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND. SUCH AN ATTITUDE IS PENNY-WISE BUT POUND FOOLISH, FOR AS PROVIDENCE GOES, SO GOES RHODE ISLAND!

ANOTHER IMPORTANT THEME, WHICH WILL HOPEFULLY SERVE AS A HALLMARK OF MY SECOND TERM IN GOVERNMENTAL EFFICIENCY. THE RE-ORGANIZATIONS DICTATED BY MY CONCERN FOR AUSTERITY SHOULD HAVE GREATER EFFICIENCY AS THEIR BY-PRODUCT. IN ADDITION, I INTEND TO PLACE NEW LEADERS IN SEVERAL KEY MUNICIPAL POSTS WHO ARE MORE RESPONSIVE TO MY PROPOSALS AND MY POLICIES, AND I HAVE REDEFINED THE FUNCTIONS OF MY ADMINISTRATIVE AND OFFICE STAFF.

ALSO, I AM ACTING TO CREATE A DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO BETTER COORDINATE OUR EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS; AND A DEPARTMENT OF MARITIME SERVICES TO REMOVE THAT IMPORTANT AREA OF ACTIVITY FROM THE SHADOW OF PUBLIC WORKS. IN VIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF OUR NEW MARINE TERMINAL, A GREATER VOLUME OF BUSINESS, THE INCREASED REVENUES FROM PORT FEES, AND THE EXCITING PROSPECT OF CARGO CONTAINERIZATION TO BOOST REVENUES TO ALL-TIME HIGHS, THE PORT DESERVES MORE PROMINENT STATUS IN THE HIERARCHY OF CITY GOVERNMENT.

FINALLY, I PROPOSE TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF LABOR RELATIONS TO GIVE CONTINUOUS ATTENTION AND SURVEILLANCE TO SUCH IMPORTANT ISSUES AS UNION CONTRACTS, WAGES, HOURS, FRINGE BENEFITS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, AND AN OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO COORDINATE SUCH ACTIVITIES AS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, JOB PROGRAMS, AND TOURIST PROMOTION.

SINCE AN INAUGURAL MESSAGE SETS THE TONE FOR AN ADMINISTRATION, I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOT REAFFIRM TODAY MY CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO OPEN GOVERNMENT, TO CITY-SPONSORED PROJECTS OF CULTURAL AND HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, AND TO THE CAUSE OF HOME RULE. MY INTEREST IN THESE DIMENSIONS OF CITY GOVERNMENT IS AS STRONG

AND ENTHUSIASTIC AS EVER.

ON THE SUBJECT OF INAUGURAL SPEECHES PLEASE PERMIT ME AN ALLUSION TO ONE DELIVERED BY THE GREATEST REPUBLICAN STATESMAN OF THEM ALL. ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN HIS SECOND INAUGURAL SOUNDED THE THEME OF RECONCILIATION BY HIS FAMOUS INTRODUCTORY PHASE:

"WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE;

WITH CHARITY FOR ALL."

THOMAS JEFFERSON SAID IT EVEN EARLIER. IN HIS FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS HE PROCLAIMED THAT "WE ARE ALL DEMOCRATS; WE ARE ALL REPUBLICANS, "WHEN IT COMES TO SERVING THE PUBLIC GOOD.

WITH THESE STATESMEN AS MY INSPIRATION, I EXTEND THE OLIVE BRANCH TO OUR CITY COUNCIL IN HOPE THEY WILL RECIPROCATE. TO VETERANS AND NOVICES ALIKE, I INVITE YOU TO JOIN WITH ME IN A WORKING PARTNERSHIP. LET US NOW RESOLVE TO CONDUCT OUR CITY'S BUSINESS IN A MORE HARMONIOUS MANNER-- ONE WHICH WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE AND BENEFICAL TO THOSE VOTERS WHO HAVE GIVEN US THEIR TRUST.

LET US IGNORE THE SEDUCTIONS OF PARTISANSHIP AS WE PURSUE OUR COMMON CIVIC GOALS.

NOW, AS I CONCLUDE THIS INAUGURAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, MAY I SHARE WITH YOU MY HOPES FOR THIS ADMINISTRATION. MY FONDEST DREAM IS THAT SOME FUTURE HISTORIAN OF THIS CITY WILL VIEW THESE YEARS AS "THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA" FOR PROVIDENCE.

JUST AS THE ITALIANS OF THE 15TH CENTURY USHERED IN A RENAISSANCE THAT REVIVED THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME, LET US IN THESE YEARS RESURRECT THE PROSPERITY AND THE PRE-EMINENCE THAT WAS PROVIDENCE.

LET US RESTORE THE ECONOMIC HEALTH, THE CIVIC PRIDE, THE ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP, AND THE CULTURAL RICHNESS, THAT MADE

NINETEENTH-CENTURY PROVIDENCE A CITY OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE AND RENOWN. WE HAVE COME THROUGH DARK AGES AND OUR TIME OF TROUBLES--A NEW ERA IS AT HAND FOR THIS CITY, IF WE HAVE THE DESIRE AND THE WILL TO MAKE IT SO.

THE RECORD OF THE PAST FOUR YEARS, AND THE PROSPECT OF THE NEXT, WILL PROVE THAT THE FUTURE AND THE PROMISE OF PROVIDENCE REST NOT IN ITS LOCATION, ITS PHYSICAL FACILITIES, OR ITS POLITICIANS, BUT IN ITS PEOPLE.

SO TOGETHER, LET US ENSURE THE PERMANENCY OF THIS NEW ERA BY CONTINUING AND EXPANDING THE WORK WHICH WE HAVE SO SUCCESSFULLY BEGUN. THOUGH WE HAVE CHANGED THE OLD ORDER AND MADE IMPORTANT GAINS, WE HAVE, IN THE POET'S PHRASE, "MANY MILES TO GO BEFORE WE SLEEP." THAT SOBERING REALIZATION WILL BE MY CHALLENGE AND YOURS-- AND IT WILL BE OUR INCENTIVE--IN THE FOUR EXCITING YEARS WHICH LIE AHEAD.