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Transcript of 1978 gubernatorial inaugural speech by Governor John A. Burns, delivered on December 4, 1978. Transcribed from the Honolulu Star-Bulletin (12/05/1978) by Perry Arrasmith, 2022, under the auspices of the School of Communication & Information, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

The 1978 Inaugural Address of George R. Ariyoshi December 4, 1978

My fellow Hawaiians:

We come together this day, in this historic place, to observe a time-honored tradition in Hawaii: the taking of the oaths of office as governor and lieutenant governor of the state of Hawaii. Since 1900, these grounds on which rest the Iolani Palace have been the site of this occasion; and this day marks the fifth consecutive time that this historic structure has so served. It is proper and fitting that these ceremonies be held here for nowhere else is Hawaii’s past and future so uniquely brought together than in these historic gardens amidst this modern metropolis.

An inauguration truly symbolizes an ending as well as a beginning. It is a time for evaluating that which has gone before—for all the wisdom, which that brings. It is a time for remembering that which we still must do—for the sense of purpose, which that gives. And it is a time for reaffirming our faith in ourselves and in our democratic form of government—for the strength of conviction, which that allows.

Four years ago, many of you joined with me at this same place, and I gave you my pledge then to lead our state forward in the quest for many tomorrows of peace, prosperity, and opportunity. I concluded my remarks on that day with these words:

Let us then dare to dream. Let us carry on, with full resolve, with every conviction and with the will to succeed.”

*Since then,
We have, indeed, dared to dream.
We have, indeed, carried on.
And we, indeed, have succeeded.*

We dared to dream of a future in which we could direct the growth and development of these Islands to bring about that future preferred by our people, and we have set those forces in motion.

We dared to dream of an economy where we would be ever more self-sufficient than ever before in the basic necessities of life—food, materials, and services. And we have made much progress toward that goal.

We dared to dream of an educational system which meets the needs of all our citizens whether they be quick or slow, perfect or imperfect, strong or weak. We are moving closer to attaining that objective.

We dared to dream of a society where crimes against people and property would be substantially reduced. We have accepted that challenge and taken our first tentative steps to bring it about.

We dared to dream of creating jobs in agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, manufacturing, television and movies as new opportunities for our people. And, we are doing this.

We dared to dream of Hawaii as a meeting place for all Pacific and Asian peoples to exchange ideas, to share cultural experiences and to stimulate commerce. And we are beginning to realize that opportunity.

We dared to dream of equalizing health services for all of the people of our state whether they live in Hana, or Kailua, or Waimea, or Koloa, and we are making great progress.

We dared to dream of a society where young and old, rich and poor, share alike in the good life which God surely meant for all his children. And we are working toward that end.

We come together this day, not only to remember the accomplishments and victories and, yes, the defeats of the past, but also to remind ourselves of the challenges and obligations of the future. Today, the eyes of all our people are truly upon us and upon their government, in its every branch, in its every division, with what we hope is an air of confidence, a feeling of expectancy, a sense of trust.

All of us have our own unique characteristics; all of us have our own personal aspirations; all of us have our own natural roots. But with all that diversity, by whatever circumstance brought each of us to these Islands—for however long—we also have a common bond with one another. We

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are all part of a Hawaiian family—an ohana—bound together on these Islands by the oceans which surround us, but even more importantly, bound together by the heritage passed over to us by prior generations, and by our faith and hope for the future.

With that bondage each of us shares a common obligation. And that is: that in our time and in our generation we shall preserve and nurture those things which make Hawaii supreme—her beauty, her gentle climate, her scenic wonders, her compassionate people—so that we may hand down to those who follow us, that which was transmitted to us by those that preceded us.

It is that responsibility—that stewardship which Bishop Scanlan spoke about—which you and I share. Today, the oath of office was administered to me, but I am only a symbol and an instrument. Every citizen of Hawaii stood beside me in spirit today when I repeated those solemn words of conscience and service, for truly it is our people who govern. We are the custodians of this land and this culture, each in one's own way, whether an official in government or business, a worker in the trades or the fields, a homemaker or a student. And we will ultimately be judged by our peers and successors alike on how well we assumed that mantle of stewardship. On that day of judgment we will be called to answer:

Did we despoil the land wantonly, or did we keep it beautiful and productive?

Did we pollute the air around us, or did we keep it clear and clean?

Did we strip the oceans of their treasures, or did we utilize and restore them judiciously?

Did we war with our fellow man, or did we live in peace and honor with our neighbors?

To be a steward is to understand and adopt an ancient and revered concept. It is a role given to mankind to preside over the earth and its many bounties. We are answerable to one another for the kind of service we bring to that task. As governor, I more than any other, must acknowledge and accept that concept of stewardship, but each of you, too, must play your part.

As never before, we in Hawaii are aware of the limited nature of our own and the world's resources, and we have begun programs to provide for their conservation, judicious use, and replenishment. We are a leader in the global search for alternate energy sources, especially those utilizing the physical forces deep within the ground and the oceans. We have prescribed objectives in our State Plan to assure the wise use of our land and water resources. We have

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adopted regulations to provide for the continued protection of our beaches and open space. We are taking action to replenish our forests, and to protect our endangered wildlife. We are world leaders in the cultivation of foods formerly found only in the seas. We are actively managing the recycling of some of our waste and the control of litter.

This is our obligation; this is our challenge; this is our responsibility, and ultimately, this will be our victory.

But it is not for us alone that we have this duty. For peoples around the world who have at one time or another shared this land with us, or who hold that desire forever in their hearts, Hawaii is a wondrous gift offering the opportunity for spiritual and physical renewal. We alone, too, can offer ourselves and our global place to the peoples of the East and of the West to come together in peaceful and productive interchange. It is for all the world, then, that we must recognize and accept our custodial responsibility of these Islands and accept the burden of accountability which that demands.

Our stewardship does not confine itself to the earthly world around us. It goes, too, to our responsibility for preserving and enhancing our democratic tradition.

These past few months, we in Hawaii, have seen an intensity of emotion surrounding the democratic political process which has been unparalleled in our history. Accusations were made and bitterness developed; but in the end the elective process was completed and we are all the richer and wiser for it.

It is just this kind of devotion to cause, difference of opinion, and intensity of spirit which makes our democratic society function. For without exhaustive dialogue and formidable opposition, no government can long endure, and this is as it should be. It is from that crucible that we now come together for this inaugural ceremony, to reaffirm our dedication to the decision of the majority, and pledge ourselves to work together for the common good.

We must put that “election fever” behind us.

Now is the time for healing.

Now is the time for reconciliation.

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Now is the time for the people of goodwill, with a true interest in our beloved Hawaii to join hands, to join hearts and to join commitments to assure that together we shall succeed.

Let us not allow differences in thought or action or approach or style to deter us from our duty. If Hawaii holds but a single light out to the people of the world it is that we are one people, made of many peoples; we are one society, made of many societies; we have a common purpose, made of many purposes.

We do not all look alike, but we need not.

We do not all speak alike, but we need not.

We do not all eat the same food, but we need not.

We do not all go to the same church, but we need not.

What we need to do is to reaffirm our own conviction that each person among us is just as we are—worthy of recognition and respect, and entitled to a life of dignity and hope.

What we need is to restore in the hearts of all our peoples that spirit of brotherhood and aloha which brought us together in the beginning and which will keep us together in the beginning and which will keep us together until the end.

My friends, in this beautiful Hawaii, let us give thanks for our past, and accept responsibility for our future.

Let us pledge to one another a will to preserve that which God has bestowed upon these Islands.

Let us accept into our hearts and our homes our fellow man.

Let us reaffirm our dedication to the principles of our democratic society.

And let us praise the Almighty for His benevolence.

I hope to be worthy of the trust you have placed in me once again, and in those who will serve with me.

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We will govern to the best of our abilities.

It is people we will serve, and I want the dignity of the human person to be supreme.

I want individuals respected, whatever their limitation.

I want justice and fairness and equality to prevail.

I want courtesy to expand.

I want kindness to be an unwritten state law.

I want service to be a joy and a satisfying reward in itself.

I want this aloha spirit to grow and to foster and to expand.

I am confident we will succeed in these efforts, just as we have succeeded in so many other efforts, because that is your will, and mine, and it shall be done.

Aloha, mahalo, and God bless you.

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