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INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR BRENDAN BYRNE

WAR MEMORIAL BUILDING

Trenton, N.J. -- January 17, 1978

Reverend Clergy, Mr. Chief Justice, my distinguished predecessors, members of the Legislature, my family, friends and fellow citizens:

For constitutional and electoral reasons, very few governors of New Jersey have ever delivered a second Inaugural address. For several years, there was little fear that I would disturb that tradition. Yet, I stand here today . . . thanks to the electorate of our state, and particularly to those whose faith and help make today possible. For that, you have my sincere appreciation, and my pledge to fulfill our commitment to the people of New Jersey.

When I took this same oath four years ago, New Jersey was not held in high regard by our fellow Americans. Indeed, our own sense of ourselves was often clouded by self-doubt and pessimism. Others saw us as we too often saw ourselves: a people without an identity, a fragmented corridor dwarfed by our colossal neighbors, a government besmerched by corruption, a landscape despoiled by pollution, a state crumbling under the hammerblows of social and economic decay. In short, New Jersey was a state without an ego.

Today, fifteen hundred days later, we look out across a different New Jersey: New Jersey well on the way to a historic new sense of pride in itself, its institutions and its accomplishments.

New Jersey is no longer the crime and corruption capital of America. Lawlessness is on the run and the government is not for sale.

New Jersey has emerged from the worst national recession in a generation faster than any state in the Northeast. Our credit is honored, our tax system stabilized and our economy is recovering. New Jersey is making dramatic strides against pollution that once was thought lost. Open spaces and farmlands are preserved. Beaches, mountains and pine barrens are being protected from

New Jersey's cities are beginning to stabilize and heal; dedicated local officials are starting to reverse decades of disease, poverty, illiteracy and crime. A rational and more equitable tax system is in place. Neighborhoods are returning to life and our people now work together, displaying a healthy racial and ethnic pride.

Yes, wherever we look, we see the solid evidence of renewed vigor and growth. And a new pride in a state that we, together, have made great; that we, together, have truly put on the map of America.

Ours has been an Administration not of symbols but of substance.

We have changed the swamps and garbage heaps of the Meadowlands into new communities, parks and industries; into havens for fish and wildlife; into some of the most valuable real estate in the world.

We have cheered three major league sports teams that now call New Jersey home, and applauded New Jersey opera, symphony, ballet and theatre that rival the finest companies.

We have pioneered in public affairs, creating the nation's first Public Advocate, the first public financing of gubernatorial campaigns, the first universal postcard registration, the first mandatory ceilings on government spending -- and the first "Pick-It" Lottery -- all now models being copied by our sister states.

Our accomplishments have been great; but our challenges are even greater.

The next fifteen hundred days must be a time, not of self congratulation, but of renewed determination. For these forthcoming four years give us the opportunity to look beyond the horizon of crisis, and to truly plan for the New Jersey of the next century. . . . a plan bounded not by the next election, but by the next century.

Just as an Inaugural is a beginning, a second Inaugural is a time for a new beginning.

See us, in this Administration, beginning to make decisions that will improve the quality of New Jersey life for decades.

I see us, in this Administration, beginning to transform the entire Hudson River Waterfront, from the George Washington Bridge to Liberty State Park. Where there are now rotting piers and barges, I see parks and progress.

I see the invaluable Meadowlands district continuing to grow and prosper; and I see us finding innovative ways to dispose of 40,000 tons of garbage a day that we have dumped there and elsewhere in our state.

I see our Pine Barrens preserved in their natural beauty forever; our Sports Complex completed on a sound financial basis; casino gambling successfully established in a revitalized Atlantic City.

And I see our state enjoying the twin blessings of offshore drilling and beautiful beaches.

Our foresight now, and our demand for excellence, will yield dividends to our children and grandchildren. Our failure now will punish generations to come.

Yet, with all these exciting new developments to enrich our lives and our hope, one great frontier remains: the inner frontier of our own cities. If our cities are not made as healthy and attractive as the rest of New Jersey, I fear that all the other achievements are threatened. But if we take up and win the challenge of the cities, we will not only restore ourselves, but set an example for a whole nation to follow.

Our ancestors found great strengths in our cities. Paterson became a national center for the silk industry; Newark and Jersey City commercial centers; a major port; Elizabeth the home of sewing machines.

My grandfather found work as a hatter in what was then a bustling industry.

While we can never recapture the cities of our youth, we can build on each unique characteristics of our urban centers today. We can begin, with business and industry, to remake the cities in a new image.

Why can't we actively encourage population growth and investment in the cities and deliberately discourage growth and development of unspoiled lands?

To this end, my second Administration will invest its capital and structure its policies to make urban living more attractive. We can do this by deciding where and where not to build sewage systems, roads, and public works and regional facilities . . . where and where not to direct housing investment, economic development projects, revenue sharing and tax incentives . . . where and where not to invest the time and talents of our state officials.

In return for this investment, all the people of the state -- wherever they live, whatever their income -- will benefit from more jobs, a cleaner environment lower welfare costs and stronger social cohesion. This, I believe, is a social compact to which our diverse constituencies can pledge themselves.

This, then, is our vision and our promise.

The way will be difficult; but we have overcome difficulties these four years past, achieving what many called impossible. There will be failures; but we have experienced failure, too, and started anew. Many will not agree; many will oppose. But I am convinced that if we persevere and succeed, New Jersey will be the better for it. We have the opportunity, as Adlai Stevenson once said, "to solve today's problems not in terms of yesterday's fears but in terms of tomorrow's hopes."

The path before the first New Jerseyans was not an easy one. Through those centuries they endured the ravages of the Revolution more than most of their fellow Americans. They opposed the evils of slavery more than most of their fellow Americans. They assimilated the oppressed of many nations more than most of their fellow Americans.

But through it all, they built the foundation upon which our present blessings rest. During the next four years we shall continue to build upon this foundation -- for our youth, our senior citizens, our disadvantaged and our working people.

We have again won a great victory, but we shall be judged in the long-run not by how we fared in elections, but by what we did as an Administration. I owe you much for your help in the past. I ask for it again. For we all owe New Jersey, no less than we owe ourselves, the best that is in us.

In November, we accounted for our stewardship to the people. Our next reckoning will be with history and with God.

Thank you.