

2004 Mayor's Inaugural Speech

Congressmen Reynolds, Sen. Maziarz, Members of the Common Council, Honored Guests and Fellow Citizens of Lockport:

Today, a new chapter begins in Lockport's rich history.

Today is the date that we place politics aside and begin a journey together to strengthen our great City... and Today, let's take a moment to reflect on our past, to savor the present and forge a new path for future generations.

We are so fortunate- to live in the United States of America- and our City is a reflection of what our country stands for- freedom, opportunity, and a strong sense of community pride and spirit. As we sit here in this Historic Palace Theatre, my mind takes me to the images of our courageous soldiers all around the world, especially in the desert of Iraq and hills of Afghanistan; and our homeland, where our sons and daughters are bravely risking their lives so we can have ceremonies such as this today. At this time, I would ask that we pause in silence to honor these fine men and women- especially those from our Lockport community - who are protecting us today and also those who served so honorably in prior conflicts.

At this time, I would like to recognize my predecessor, Mayor Thomas C. Sullivan for his dedication, tireless effort and extraordinary service to the City of Lockport. Mayor Sullivan- on behalf of all Lockport residents- we thank you! In one's life, a person can not achieve success without the support and help of a strong family and good friends. Having previously served in city government, I know that my family has already endured many sacrifices and when I decided to seek the Mayor's office- they were the first ones to rally around and enthusiastically support my decision- despite the known time commitments and sacrifices that arise when accepting this tremendous responsibility. Without the support of my family, this day would simply not be possible and I must recognize them for their strength, love and constant encouragement.

My Wife, Kathy, who has stood by me every step of the way and remains very understanding of my desire to serve our Lockport community. My number one lady- now Lockport's First Lady - is very special and I thank you for always being there from the bottom of my heart. Next, my children: Lisa Stafford, her husband Neil and my grandchildren, Ellie & Lilly. Jennifer, her friend Jack and my grandson Jack. Michelle and my son, Michael and his girlfriend, Haley. You are my source of inspiration and the main reason I am working so hard to make Lockport a community where all our children will have the opportunity to remain here and raise their families. My parents, Ed & Rosalie Tucker - what can I say- your steady guidance from the beginning has led to this special moment - Thank you for everything and I am so blessed to be your son and to have you share in this extraordinary day. Also, I would like to acknowledge my sister, Shirley Weiland, her

husband Tony and my nephews, Anthony and Jacob and my Aunt Clara who all worked so hard on my campaigns.

Speaking of the campaign- the avenue by which I am standing here today- I would like to take this opportunity to thank all for you in this room and watching at home who worked so hard on my election bid. I literally could spend all afternoon individually thanking the hundreds of you for your time and support - but then I would far exceed my intended time of 5:00 p.m. to complete this address- just kidding about the time. However, I would like to acknowledge a few close friends who served on my kitchen cabinet. They include, Mike Norris, Ed Sandusky, Al & Pat Cavagnaro, Tom Callahan, Tom DiMillo, Nick & Rita Ruper, Henry Wojtaszek, John Lombardi & Glenn Aronow.

Now that the campaign is behind us, it is time to govern - based on a renewed spirit of cooperation and remembering those who entrusted us with this responsibility. I want everyone to know that the oath I just took, is a solemn commitment to each and every citizen in Lockport that I will be accountable to you and that I will never forget who bestowed upon me the extraordinary honor and privilege to serve you. My door will always be open to you and feel free to contact me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. There is no issue too small or too large that I am afraid to tackle and I am committed to being there any moment you have an idea, concern or question. That's why I am making a pledge today to return to several traditions, to reopen the lines of communication between the Mayor and Lockport residents. I will appear on WLVL's radio morning talk show and LCTV's "Ask the Mayor" once a month, will allow city residents to address the Common Council, within reason, at its meetings, without time and constraints and will re-establish the Citizens Advisory Board to provide critical advisement and counsel to the Mayor and Common Council. My number one mission is constituent service and when the Tucker administration comes to an end one day - I want it to be known for its openness and eagerness to serve.

I understand that it takes more than one person to achieve results for Lockport at City Hall. As a former Common Council President, I fully appreciate the role of the Common Council and hereby extend my hand of complete cooperation to them. This is a partnership and by working together, I am confident that we will be able to achieve great successes to place Lockport back on the right road to recovery. I eagerly await the opportunity to work with you and look forward to facing the difficult decisions and challenges that await us.

A close friend once told me that you are only as good as those who work with you. Lockport is fortunate to have committed department heads and workers who do an outstanding job in ensuring that vital public services are provided for - often times without much recognition. As an individual who strongly believes in the management-union partnership, I plan on utilizing and maximizing the untapped resources of our city's workforce and reaching out to them for their input in how we can improve the efficiency and overall operation of city government. I commend you for the fine work that you do and look forward to a strong working relationship in

the years to come. At this time, I would like to acknowledge the newest member of City government who is excited and prepared to serve, my secretary, Erin Buerger.

Turning Lockport around cannot happen without the cooperation of all levels of government and whoever believes that this renaissance period can happen with city government alone is sadly mistaken. I completely recognize this and I have already met with federal, state and county officials to discuss the major issues of economic & tourism development facing Lockport. Just a few days ago, I had an extensive meeting with Congressmen Tom Reynolds to discuss the needed focus on revitalizing the downtown area and cleaning up our dilapidated housing stock. Tom and I share a common vision on these issues and by working together, we are confident that needed assistance will be forthcoming. The same holds true with state Senator George Maziarz and our County Legislators. Furthermore, I am prepared to work jointly with the Town of Lockport and Supervisor John Austin to address areas of shared services where permitted by state law. There is no reason why all levels of government cannot be on the same page to achieve common goals facing Lockport and I intend to do my part to facilitate one unified vision for the City's betterment.

My dear friends, who do so many of us make New Year resolutions... because we want to better ourselves. Often times our resolution will fail and falter, but many times we will accomplish our goal. I know that as your Mayor, there will be success and there will be some failures. My resolution to you - is that I will never forget why I sought this office and that I will fight hard to have many more wins than losses. Why did I run for Mayor? There are "too many" reasons to recite here today, but

There are too many of our children moving to North Carolina, Texas and Nevada to find jobs. There are too many City of Lockport businesses closing their doors. There are too many taxes, which are preventing citizens from being able to afford their homes. There are too many homes falling in utter disrepair. There are too many missed opportunities due to poor decision making which haunts us to this very day.

As your Mayor, I will fight hard to extinguish the ghosts of our past and place us on a steady path of revitalization and prosperity so our children will have the opportunity to find a good paying job, afford a quality home and raise their family in this community.

Economic Development is the key to conquering this vision and I will aggressively fight to retain and to find new, good paying jobs for the City of Lockport. An extensive marketing strategy is currently being crafted and once completed, I shall commission a Blue Ribbon panel of qualified business experts to accomplish this most important mission of my administration.

Lockport has a special jewel, our beloved Erie Canal Locks. It's the symbol of our past and a resource of our future. Many great strides have been made to enhance our tourism Potential with the cave tours and Lockport Locks boat rides, but much more can be done. I am devoted to ensuring that the original five flights of Locks are

restored and am hopeful that this can be accomplished with the assistance of the federal and state governments during my tenure as Mayor.

I am sure many of you remember how Downtown used to bustle with activity... A movie at the Palace, a milkshake at the Royal and tons of shopping. It was the heart of Lockport. I cannot promise that we will return to days of old, but I can assure you that downtown Lockport will be seeing brighter days ahead. Completing the Richmond Avenue project remains a priority, however, on renegotiated terms to protect the City's interest, the Hamilton House will be completed as scheduled and as the member of the Common Council who sponsored the resolution to reclaim South Block, as your Mayor, I will fight to make the empty block, the building block, to recapture our downtown.

I will also fight to maintain and where necessary, to enhance our quality of life services in the areas of public safety, recreation and parks, while establishing a Tree program and creating a Mayor's youth basketball league.

So, new chapter begins for Lockport. Let's write the pages so our children and their children can look back with pride knowing that the leadership of today... met the challenges which provided them the change to write their own chapter in Lockport's history book years from now.

Lockport, I accept this challenge humbly and I want you to know that I am deeply honored that you gave me the opportunity to hopefully make a difference on your behalf. In conclusions, I congratulate all those who accepted their oaths of office today and to those who participated in this ceremony.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Dr. & Ellen Schratz and the Palace Board of Directors for allowing us to use the Palace Theatre for the Inauguration and congratulate them on saving this historic treasure.

Let our work and the writing of Lockport's new chapter begin. Thank you all for coming and May God Bless You and May God Bless the United States of America.