



## Oregon State Archives

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### GOVERNOR NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT ADMINISTRATION

January 12, 1987 to January 14, 1991

#### Inaugural Message, 1987

Source: Inaugural Message Governor Neil Goldschmidt, Oregon, 1987

This is an occasion filled with the deepest feelings.

There is the love and pride that I have for the members of my family who are here today – my wife, Margie, my parents, Margie’s father, my brother, my children, all of whom give so much and mean so much to me.

There is the gratitude I feel for the tens of thousands of Oregonians who worked in and contributed to my campaign – the people who launched the Oregon Comeback; and the appreciation I have for the committed Oregonians who did not support me during the campaign, but who have since come forward to close ranks and offer their help.

There is the respect I have for a woman of strength and determination – Norma Paulus. You learn a lot about a person when you face them for a year on the campaign trail – and everything I learned about Norma only increased my regard for her as a person and as a political leader.

There is my appreciation for a man who has spent his career on behalf of his state – Vic Atiyeh. Over a span of 28 years, Vic has demonstrated his integrity, his decency, and his concern for our state. And today, Vic, we salute you for all you have govern us.

There is my regard for the 90 men and women of the Legislature, each of whom has worked hard to listen and respond to the people of this state, each of whom has been chosen to help guide our state’s future course.

And finally, there is the love I feel for Oregon – for all that Oregon and the people of Oregon have given me and my family over all the years, and now for the opportunity to give some of that back through service in this office. There is no place on earth like our Oregon.

This occasion has always marked more than an election of our state’s chief executive.

It is a constitutional reminder of civic duties owed – and of democracy honors bestowed upon all of us.

It is a day for prayerful acknowledgement of the legacies of caring and commitment left us by our predecessors. WE know they were tested by adversity – but more, their vision and values have earned our respect. Their bequest is an Oregon capable of ensuring education for all and providing security for all; caring for the weak, assisting the needy, sustaining the elderly; moving people and products efficiently; and conserving our best neighbor, the land, which nurtured them and now us.

And this bequest also leaves us generous choice and personal freedom – giving us an Oregon ins which towns, communities, and whole regions should with pride about their own unique differences – a diversity of kind and custom that all can celebrate.

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WE have received much as “A gift Outright”:

From the early Oregonians a legacy of courage, determination, and pioneer grit – the testimony of deep grooves won into hard earth by their wagon wheels.

From our great grandparents, who lost all they had built to Oregon’s winter floods – and stayed to rebuild – a heritage of resilience and resourcefulness.

And from the generation of parents and grandparents who stood in their bitter soup lines of the 1930’s – and then went on to build Timberline Lodge, Bonneville Dam, and so much more – the pride of the indomitable Oregon spirit.

So much has been given. The balance we must earn. This is the tradition which connects us to those who came before; this is the bond of conscience we have with those born and yet unborn who will inherit the Oregon we build.

For, if this day represents continuity, still we know how different our world is from that of our forebears.

A new global economy has made obsolete our old national economic assumptions – and threatens to leave us poorer. International trade issues hand over our workers, our businesses, our communities like a cloud of smoke from a forest fire, with the devastating blaze following close behind. In reasons, mergers, acquisition, closures, and relocations centralize more American wealth and power in fewer organizations, fewer hands, and in fewer and fewer cities. More and more communities are left without their own traditional locally-owned enterprises – left without a home-base of economic opportunity – and left with a feeling that all these changes only translate into powerlessness.

Like those Oregonians who came before, we must ask, what do we stand for?

What will we say? What will we do?

I believe we know.

I believe that some things are enduring. And I believe that as in the past, the future can be earned by the hard choices we make today.

And so we will tell our educators that they will have the resources they need to teach – that the learning they have to offer our children is, more than ever, the ladder to opportunity.

WE will tell our artists and musicians whose visions become our mirrors and our memories – that we are all enriched by the inspiration only they offer us.

WE will make a place of honor for the curious exporters among us – the innovators and researchers – because we need their insight to reach our most vital frontier – knowledge.

We will nurture the talents of all among us, wasting none because of change of birth which gives one darker skin; another some hardship, physical or mental; and yet another female gender. We need each to contribute, as each needs to find fulfillment.

We will build an economy that is a magnet for opportunity and an economy that attracts success. We will stake Oregon’s claim to business profitability, and we will assert the manifold advantages of all of Oregon.

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We will tell our skilled workers that they are needed; any we will have the training for them and for those who come behind them to match the demands of the future; and we will not surrender their jobs to foreign workers.

We will proclaim for all to know that we in Oregon still keep our streets and schoolyards secure in fashion that meets our traditional standard of safety and justice.

WE will treat Oregon's living legacy – the land, the air, the ocean, rivers, and streams – like wise stewards; and we will carry that message to the highest councils of the land to keep other from destroying our state's natural heritage.

We will tell our children that their learning is assured and that work is available - here, at home in Oregon.

And we will tell each other that we believe in each other – in God, in ourselves, our families, our neighbors; and that, as partners in the work that lies ahead, we have the capacity to help each other by summoning from each the best that each has to offer.

I live in Oregon.

It infuses my being. It shaped my values, affects my outlook and – above all – leaves me few excuses.

From Oregon each of us has received much.

Now from me, from all of us, Oregon deserves in retuning everything she has given, everything she needs. No constituent's rationale, no lobbyist's plea, no single group's majority of the moment, can subtract from that total commitment.

The only special interest is our common interest in our children's future. We earn a clear conscience by coming together and working to gather, satisfies only when we have done our best for Oregon. No single individual among us can claim this trust – but all are welcome as trustees who faithfully apply for service. All ideas, energies, and commitments are needed.

For now it is our time – our turn to say to each other and to our children – that we are empowered, we are resolute, and we will act.

It is time for a pledge to Oregon. And I make mine today and for so long as I may serve her:

I pledge to Oregon and to the future we can create together – of more opportunity and more wealth for all of Oregon and for each Oregonian.

I pledge my commitment to each Oregonian, to the opportunity that each individual deserves to fulfill his or her own aspirations – for by each individual success, we all succeed.

I pledge myself to the promise of work as fundamental to the independence of each Oregonian.

I pledge myself to work with each Oregonian who joins to create the new possibilities that come only from partnership.

I pledge that the Oregon we leave our children will be enhanced and enriched and in no way diminished by the decisions we make and the work we do.

This is our pledge, our duty.

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It will require my own best effort – and it will require the talents, energies, and creativity of each Oregonian as vital to our shared success.

In this service, each of us will be measured, each tested. I expected it – I welcome it. One the days on which I am seen to fail or on a day on which I am seen to succeed. I hope my values and vision will be the same. For if the value of ideas, of hard work of human enterprise, of public service, of our system of laws, of human kindness, infuses every choice we make, in the end our mistakes will be fewer and may e forgiven; and our successes may be lasting.

By the next time Oregonians assemble for this occasion, we will know how faithfully we have kept our pledge – and so kept faith with Oregon. All will come in time to judge – not our purpose for resolve – but our product. If there is more hope, more work, more choice, more opportunity – Oregon will judge us well.

Until then, let us join hands to do the work that is at hand. Let us share the labor and the joy that is our special portion as Oregonians. And to all of us, good luck, great effort, and God's speed into the Oregon that we can build together.