

Mayor Walter Maddox Gives Inaugural Address, “Amazing City”

Nov. 4, 2013

To our Council President Harrison Taylor, Council members, Chairman Lee Garrison, Dr. Paul McKendrick, Board members, Mayor DuPont, department heads and most certainly, the people of Tuscaloosa, I am honored to stand before you as mayor.

It was with great pleasure that I learned of the Council’s decision to re-nominate Harrison Taylor for president pro-tem. I believe this is a wise decision. Council President Taylor is a dear friend and a gifted leader who has been a true partner over the years. I hope you will join me in recognizing our Council President, Harrison Taylor.

In 2005, upon being sworn in as Tuscaloosa’s 36th mayor, I pledged that our administration would lead with “boldness, creativity and courage,” and build a bridge to a brighter future. From our very first hour of our very first day, our work began to usher in the winds of change with a determination not to be those “timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.” From the enhancement of our riverfront to the expansion of pre-k, from downtown revitalization to 311, our City has been transformed on so many levels and in so many ways.

In the months and years ahead, we will continue to lead with the same passion, determination and enthusiasm. We will continue to believe that innovation and customer service are at the heart of everything that we do.

At our core, we will always hold true that we serve people and not bureaucracies.

Our commitment is on display this morning as evidenced by this state of the art facility.

Eight years ago, we pledged that reversing decades of neglect in West Tuscaloosa would be a deeply held core belief. From providing tens of millions of dollars to upgrade our infrastructure, to cleaning up blighted property, to investing millions into McKenzie Courts, the West Police Precinct and Rosedale, we have fulfilled our commitment, but we are not done.

This time-honored ceremony, being celebrated here in West Tuscaloosa only serves as further motivation that we must continue to ensure that our entire City succeeds.

Today, we are exercising a republic’s greatest strength which is executing the will of the people with the peaceful transfer of power.

However, for the most part, it will likely go unnoticed.

Although we understand how critical local government is to our community, the vast majority of our fellow citizens are busy living their lives and trusting their representatives will effectively execute their duties.

Time is of the essence.

Once the pomp and circumstance of this inauguration fades, the elected officials gathered will have less than 1,460 days to make a positive difference. From education to the economy, our journey will require us to address sensitive policy issues, make difficult choices and most importantly, to lead.

With the clock ticking, and with so many opportunities before us, we must not waste time by relying on our reputation because the challenges of the future will not be solved by seeking the policies of the past. Our citizens are looking for real leadership; therefore, it is authentic, daring and compassionate leadership that we have a moral duty to provide in great abundance.

It will not always be easy.

I am an imperfect person who is assuming the duties of a position that often requires perfection. From experience, I know that I will not be able to resolve every problem, address every need or anticipate every event.

However, it is this that I can pledge with certainty: I accept the high expectations of this office because I believe in Tuscaloosa, and after seeing our City meet the worst of Mother Nature with the best of humanity, it reaffirmed that our hometown is a very special place.

Our lives are forever changed by what we have experienced on April 27th. In how we viewed each other, in how we helped each other, and in how we lived with each other, we will always remember being the images of God in a sea of destruction. From Rosedale to Alberta, we learned to set aside our differences and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our fellow citizens without regards for race, religion, socio-economic status or politics.

You inspired us to truly serve something greater than ourselves.

You demonstrated there was nothing we cannot accomplish.

You were a profile in courage whose resiliency and generosity requires all of us swearing an oath today to meet the high standards you have established.

For me, seeing your strength and experiencing your hope, even in our darkest hours, renewed the promise I made to myself and to you that I will work even harder as your mayor.

We are an amazing City, with amazing people who have the capacity to continue to do the amazing.

The future is ours to shape – We must now get to work.

May God bless each of you and May God continue to bless the City of Tuscaloosa