

Wednesday, January 12, 2011

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2011 Inaugural Speech

Hope, Freedom and Opportunity
Delivered by Governor Sam Brownback
2011 Inauguration Speech

My fellow Kansans... 150 years ago the Hope of Kansas was Born. Today we come together to celebrate the success and of our venture. We mark the peaceful transfer of power.

Please join me in expressing our gratitude to our outgoing Governor, Mark Parkinson, and his administration.

And I would like personally to recognize and thank my wonderful wife Mary, Our children: Abby, Andy, Liz, Mark and Jenna my parents: Bob and Nancy Brownback.

The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal---endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable r and that governments are instituted among men to secure these rights, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

It is therefore appropriate that the central happening of today's ceremony is the taking of an oath---an oath required by and pledging fealty to our Constitution, for ours is a government of laws not men.

Through our laws we enshrine our aspirations and respond to the challenges of our time. Kansas was born of aspiration---t word of our state motto is the Latin root for "aspiration." Aspiration for life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. All of those aspirations are worthy and each to some degree remains unfulfilled.

Our challenges should be well known to us---nearly 100,000 of our people actively seek gainful employment and cannot fin Our public finances strain under the weight of commitments beyond our present means. Our families and social fabric fray the crassness of modernity.

Yet we have known worse and overcome more.

We were born on Hope...in sacrifice and bloodshed. A Hope built on the Truth that all men and women were created to be

Freedom is central to the Kansas experience, as is Opportunity. Free land settled the state. If you had enough courage and sacrifice to come claim 160 acres of challenge, then it was yours. Some succeeded, some failed, and a state was born!

Hope...Freedom...Opportunity!

These are cornerstones in the Kansas Foundation along with Faith that tomorrow I will be a better person from the trials I face today. On these core Kansas virtues, I know our state will rise.

Kansas has always been an enigma to the casual observer, a state where the unusual arises and the exceptional is commonplace.

A place where Coronado would come in 1547 looking for cities of gold. He found fertile land and Native Americans for whom Father Juan Padillo would return the next year to serve and give his life.

A place where the Civil War started.

A place where men would build machines that let them fly and grow wheat that they might have bread.

A place where a whole new sport, basketball, would be nourished and bloom.

To live in Kansas is to have a type of sober optimism that is both realistic and hopeful; well-grounded yet soaring.

It's a land whose unpredictability and sometimes harshness only yields its fruit with self-sacrifice, trial, patience and care. This type of place produces character in her people.

The character of abolitionists seeking to end the original sin of America. The character of the Exodusters, freed black slave coming to the promised land of Kansas. The character of civil rights activists seeking, not separate, but equal...equal dignity for all God's children.

Character is the fruit produced out of the Kansas environment. And it is that Character infused with Hope, given Freedom, Opportunity and built on Faith that will see us forward as our generation builds its section of the House of Kansas.

Our Administration will focus on the basics. I want Kansas to be known as a state of Hope. Whoever has the most hope has the biggest dreams. Whoever has the most Hope has the most influence, for mankind moves forward on Hope.

Kansas is a land of Freedom. Free, moral men and women will accomplish much more than government planners with regulations.

Kansas is Opportunity. As Freedom expands, so does Opportunity. Our people should be the freest on the planet.

And Faith. Faith allows us to see the future as good. Believing in the future of Kansas, speaking it, making it happen. As you believe, so you will be.

Kansans have always answered the call, perhaps most valiantly during the trials of the Dust Bowl, Depression and World War II. Studies of the achievements of that time have yielded the phrase, "The Greatest Generation."

We are their heirs, and what a bequest they have left us---a world that is more free, more prosperous, more just---and example of courage, wisdom and self-sacrifice.

We have drawn daily from their achievements in the world and now we must summon their achievements of character.

The threats we face today are primarily internal---not foreign tyranny or conquest, but excesses of cynicism, selfishness and despair.

Our threats are less obvious but should we fail, our decline is no less sure.

As we affirm once more our Constitutional government, so too let us affirm the best of our state's character---humility, foresight, thrift, courage, self-sacrifice, charity and optimism.

Let us as Kansans lead the nation in a return to virtue, a "reformation of manners" and a rejuvenation of optimism.

I believe it was said best by Governor Arthur Capper, "We have had a great start; we have great resources and almost unlimited possibilities, but what the Greater Kansas will be, depends primarily upon the sort of men and women who constitute the state."

Let us, in Capper's words, "do our part, be it large or small, in making the world a little cleaner, a little more decent, a little more God-like."

Today, like all days, is a gift from God. Let us treat it appropriately.

Yesterday is gone, tomorrow never does come. Today is our masterpiece.

We have been placed here for a reason and a short season. Let us make the most of it.

Thank you, God Bless you and may God continue to bless the state of Kansas.