

MAYOR A.J. HOLLOWAY

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JULY 6, 1993

Greetings and welcome to all of our distinguished guests and to my family, my colleagues, and my friends, both old and new.

This is a day of new beginnings. A day of celebration for good things to come. A day of renewed commitments. And a day of reflections on the past even as we look forward to the progress of the future.

Several months ago, when I first began to consider running for Mayor, I sat down to some serious soul-searching. I wanted to make sure that my decision to run was not based on self-serving motives or on a desire to lash out at any person or creed, for those reasons would never sustain me in the light of things to come or aid me in doing the best I could at the job at hand. You need only to look around you on this beautiful day, here under this magnificent oak overlooking the sparkling waters of the Mississippi Sound, to know what brought me to my decision. It was Biloxi herself. Biloxi lives in my heart and soul and for her I hold only the deepest regard and respect and love. I do not come to criticize the past, but to take responsibility for the future. It is in that spirit and in the spirit of cooperation that I humbly begin my term as Mayor.

In coming to such a momentous occasion, I have reflected on the persons and experiences of my life which have made it possible for me to be assuming the office of Mayor of the City of Biloxi. The heritage of a loving family, of an educational system that nurtured my growth in knowledge, of teachers and friends who have encouraged, corrected and sustained me throughout the stages of my life, of business associates with whom I have worked, of the beauty of the land itself, of the freedoms we all enjoy as American citizens, of a God who is the giver of all life ...these have my sincerest thanks and my unending gratitude. And it is particularly meaningful to me that many of you who have meant so much to me through the years, are here now to share with me in this moment of glory. As most of you know, I was born and educated in Biloxi. Was Graduated from Biloxi High and from the University of Mississippi. I am proud to have been part of a football team there that knew the value and the rewards of teamwork and within that spirit of cooperation, I was privileged to be a member of the Ole Miss football team which went on to become recognized as National Champions. It was during those years that I learned how invaluable working together as a team can be, not only on the football field, but in every area of life. It can mean the difference between success and failure. I bring that spirit of teamwork and of cooperation to the Biloxi mayor's office, with the faith and knowledge that it can only lead to our ultimate success.

I stand before you today with the desire that, on this occasion, we would together give serious attention to matters which are intimately related to our city's future, to the expectations, to the hopes and to the desires that we, as Biloxians, all share. We are a city of many cultures and many creeds. It is up to us now to build on that long heritage of diversity to shape a strong future based on our common aspirations. For no matter who we are or where we come from, we are now all Biloxians who must share a commitment first and foremost to each other and to our city.

The words "No man is an island" never rang truer than they do today as we strive to understand that mysterious relationship between continuity and change. My fellow Biloxians, we may oftentimes differ as to methods, but in regard to our homes, our families, our lives...we do not differ in purpose.

If you could have the power of any talent that you now possess doubled and tripled for the mere asking, for what would you ask? Think of what that enhancement of your talents would mean in your life...the additional power, the additional profit, the additional pleasure. The best and most talented quarterback the world has ever known would surely fail without the talents of his fellow team members working in his, and also in their own, behalf. And at the end of the game, all are winners. Working together as a team on a football field, we too, can do far more than double or triple our own talents. We will emerge from the field victorious, leaders in the opportunities that lie before us.

Do you remember, as I do, when we were children, watching the shrimp boats out on the horizon and seeing them bringing home the catch? How thrilling and how, Biloxi. We are now at the cross in the road where the decisions made will mean great changes for generations to come. The profits from our new gaming industry has afforded us the opportunity to do so many things that we could only wish for in the past. Capital improvements are now moving forward, our depleted general funds will soon be repaid, and with careful and responsible guidance, the city will soon be standing on solid financial ground. But I have no doubt that the long term success of our new opportunities are dependent on our ability to preserve the wonderful heritage of our past. It is time to put Biloxi first, for the Biloxi of the future must remain as diversified and as unique as the Biloxi we have always known. Only then will Biloxi be first in the minds of potential visitors to our city as well as to our citizens for many years to come.

But we are not alone in this time of change. All cities and all people of the entire gulf coast, are experiencing a time of monumental change and unparalleled uncertainty. The borders between our cities make little difference when the effects of our new industry are looked at as a whole. We are ALL experiencing new growth, increased revenues, increased traffic, a lack of adequate housing and a multitude of other opportunities and problems. All coastal communities must work together as we take advantage of those rich opportunities and strive to minimize those inevitable problems. Biloxians can no longer longer afford an attitude of

isolationism when we are in fact already in the middle of the stream. Today, I extend the hand of fellowship and of cooperation to all our neighbors throughout South Mississippi.

Though the challenges before us are fearsome, so are our strengths. There is so much to be done and we must, as do all generations, define through our decisions, what it means to be a Biloxian and what we believe it will take to make Biloxi great. Theodore Roosevelt, in his speech to the people of Chicago in 1899, spoke these words which are as poignant today as they were then - "If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play great part in the world. We cannot avoid meeting great issues. All that we can determine for ourselves is whether we shall meet them well or ill."

Over the next four years, it is my intent to work with our city council and with my citizens to repay our debts, to rebuild our general fund, to ensure that the quality of life of all our citizens is the best possible, to enhance our public safety program, ...the list goes on and on. But no matter what the programs, the goals and the accomplishments are, I stand before you today with the conviction to perform the duties of my office so that four years from now, it is said of me by my fellow citizens, that "We're glad he came. He has helped to make Biloxi better than it was before..for his heart was in his work and in his desire to serve all of the people of Biloxi."

So let us now begin anew. And let us begin with the commitment to move forward with energy and hope, with faith and discipline, and let us work until our work is done.