



City of Biloxi

Inauguration Ceremony 2009

City of Biloxi
Inauguration Ceremony
Biloxi Jr. High School – July 1, 2009

Musical Selections:	Ame'
Mayor, City Council and Distinguished Platform Guests Escorted by Fire and Police Honor Guards	
Master of Ceremonies:	Ronald G. Peresich
Presentation of Colors:	Boy Scout Troop #212
Pledge of Allegiance:	Kendall Gregory
National Anthem:	Ronny Broussard
Invocation:	The Reverend Dr. Harold Roberts
Oath of Office - Councilmembers:	The Honorable & Former Mayor Daniel D. Guice The Honorable Robin Alfred Midcalf The Honorable Jim Persons The Honorable Bruce Strong
Remarks:	George W. Lawrence, Ward 1 William "Bill" Stallworth, Ward 2 Lucy C. Denton, Ward 3 Lt. Gen. Clark Griffith, USAF Retired, Ward 4 Tom Wall, Ward 5 Edward "Ed" Gemmill, Ward 6 David Fayard, Ward 7
Oath of Office – Mayor:	The Honorable Walter J. Gex, III
Inaugural Address:	Mayor A.J. Holloway
Musical Selections:	Michaela Moore and Shay Lawson
Benediction:	The Very Reverend Tony Arguelles
Musical Selections:	Chris Moore

Inaugural Reception immediately following

History of Biloxi Governance

Since the arrival of the French in 1699, Biloxi has been governed under a variety of flags and forms of government. The landing of a French expeditionary force led by Pierre Le Moyne Sieur d'Iberville introduced military governance to the area. The expansion of the French beachhead and the addition of more troops and colonists brought with it the dual governmental system employed in Canada. Under this system, a governor, usually a former high-ranking military official, controlled military and general administrative matters, while an administrator presided over police, finance and justice.

By 1721, Biloxi was one of nine military districts in French Louisiana. Three districts were on the Gulf of Mexico: New Orleans, Biloxi and Mobile. Each was governed by a military commander and a judge and had its own staff of army officers, government officials, company officials, engineers, workmen, soldiers, and settlers. This system continued through a period of dwindling French presence along the Gulf Coast, as the French concentrated their efforts against the English in the north.

In 1763, as a result of the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the Seven Years War, the Gulf Coast officially came under English rule. British West Florida was established with its capital at Pensacola, and some residents of the region swore allegiance to the crown of England. British presence, however, was limited to the occupation of scattered military posts, and local government along the Mississippi Coast became a matter of family affiliation.

Spanish military successes on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution gave Spain dominion over West Florida by the terms of the 1783 Treaties of Paris. Residents were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Spanish Crown. Although garrisons changed throughout the region, the isolated family groups along the Mississippi Gulf Coast saw no local Spanish governmental presence.

In 1810, Americans overthrew the Spanish garrison at Baton Rouge and declared West Florida an independent republic. American rule was soon established when the U.S. annexed the area to the Territory of Orleans. The land between the Pearl River and Biloxi Bay became the Parish of Biloxi, and justices of the peace were established at inhabited points along the coast.

In 1812, the present-day Mississippi Coast became part of the Mississippi Territory, as Mobile County, which was later subdivided into three counties. The Biloxi settlement, served by a justice of the peace and a constable, was included in Hancock County, which extended from the Pearl River to Biloxi Bay. In 1817, Hancock County became a part of the new State of Mississippi. Populations grew, and as charters were granted by the State, settlements became towns and cities. In 1838, Biloxi received its first charter with a government consisting of an elected president and selectmen. In 1841, Harrison County was formed, and, on the eve of the Civil War, the titles of mayor and aldermen replaced the earlier designations for Biloxi's part-time elected officials.

The Mayor-Aldermen form of government served Biloxi during the late 19th and early 20th century, in the rise to prominence as a resort and seafood producer. Change occurred in 1919, however, when Biloxi voters chose their first full-time city officials, a mayor and two commissioners-at-large, elected to four-year terms. This Mayor-Commissioner form of government served Biloxi until 1981.

In 1978, Biloxi citizens voted to enter the city's present form of governance, the Mayor-Council form of government. After three years, in 1981, the Biloxi electorate chose a mayor and seven councilmembers, elected by citizens in wards throughout the city. Biloxi continues to employ this type of government.



Learn more about your city
and its elected officials online at
biloxi.ms.us