

Inaugural Speech  
January 1, 2016

Mayor Quill, Judge Leone, Judge McKeon, Councilor Cuddy, Councilor McCormick, Councilor Carabajal, former members of council, City Manager Doug Selby and city staff, Father Tedesche, Father Lioi, Stephen Gamba, Don Alger, my friends and family, good afternoon and Happy New Year. Thank you all for being here, for your support and your encouragement.

This journey began seven months ago today, and many of you in this room are, in one way or another, responsible for me standing here today, behind this podium. Our combined efforts proved that hard work and determination pay off, and please know that I would not have been successful without you.

Oaths of office have a long standing tradition in our country. An oath is defined as a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness, regarding one's future actions. As I took the oath of office a few minutes ago, I was reminded of an oath I took 22 years ago as I prepared to leave for basic training. That was an earlier chapter in my life, but with that oath as well as this oath, I understand and appreciate the responsibility that comes with each of them. I am honored that the voters placed their trust in me.

I was inspired by the words of former Mayor Charles D. Osborne that are printed in today's program. When he spoke at the first city council meeting held within this chamber in April of 1930, he maintained high hopes for the new building when he stated: "I believe it actually brings Auburn many steps nearer to that millennium of municipal government when civic affairs can be considered and conducted free from prejudice, selfishness and partisanship, for the benefit of the city as a whole."

These words are not prophetic, but really, if you consider them carefully, are nothing more than common sense. The New Year is symbolic of a new beginning, so it is fitting that we inaugurate a new government today, and embark on what I hope to be a new era of public service in the history of the City of Auburn. I speak of a new era not out of disrespect or criticism of those who have served before us, but instead as a challenge to those of us who will be occupying the seats behind this railing in the years to come.

Let this new era see us conduct the peoples' business in the manner in which Mayor Osborne reflected upon: free from prejudice, selfishness and partisanship. Let this body set the example in a time that is often marred by outrageous and bombastic politics. Through this example it is my sincere hope that we can be an inclusive body of government that encourages all of our citizens to participate in the democratic process, both at the ballot and in this very chamber on a weekly basis. Maybe we can even inspire the younger generation to seek public

service. With the combination of responsible government and an engaged citizenship, we are a city with a bright future and we are full of potential.

Auburn is a great place to live and raise a family. We are a city rich in history and Auburnians are decent and hardworking people. We are a close knit community with great schools, parks and neighborhoods. Our workforce is professional and dedicated to the mission of serving our citizens. We have a vibrant cultural and arts community that includes museums, theaters and a local music scene that is second to none. Our Downtown is in the midst of a renaissance that is becoming a destination for dining, entertainment, shopping and living. We are also fortunate to have a college that has been a fixture in our community for over 60 years.

Despite all of these positive attributes I understand as well as you do that there are challenges at hand. Whether it is the need for continued economic development and job creation, the protection of Owasco Lake, tackling poverty, or eradicating the current heroin epidemic I believe there is no obstacle that together, through combined efforts, we cannot overcome.

Robert F. Kennedy once said that "the purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better." Let us all contribute to making our City better.

Before I close there is someone I would like to recognize, someone who could not be here today, James Nicholas Giannettino, Sr. Many of you knew him by his nickname Cheech, I knew him as Dad. He passed away unexpectedly on December 11th and in the three weeks since his untimely death I have spent much time in reflection, thinking about my dad and the time that I had with him.

My conclusion is this: my dad was a great man. He was by no means perfect, but in a way that is what made him great. He never tried to be perfect; he simply tried to live his life in such a way that when he went to bed every night he knew that he did the best he could.

He raised us to be honest, respectful, and hard working. His family always came first. In many ways he embodied the Auburn community that I know and love.

I have received many messages of sympathy and support over the last few weeks. There is one in particular that I would like to share with you. It came from Jim Dacey, someone who after the last several months I am honored to call a friend. Jim worked with my dad at Austeel for a number of years. His message to me was simple, he said: "Jimmy, your dad was a gentle giant. He always had a smile that said all is well."

I know that my dad is in this room today smiling, letting me know that all is well. If that isn't enough I know that Nana is praying for me so we have it covered either way.

Thank you everyone for being here today; thank you for spending your day with us. Please don't let this be the last time you visit this chamber, after all, this is your house.

May God continue to watch over me and may He continue to bless our city. Thank you.