

GOVERNOR ARNE CARLSON  
INAUGURAL SPEECH  
JANUARY 7, 1991

Thank you very, very much.

Little did I think that on September 12th that I would ever be here today.

I'm somewhat fearful that my speech may be longer than my campaign.

This is absolutely remarkable and I thank you all for your participation. And to my friends with whom I have served and with whom I will serve as constitutional officer, we have been truly blessed by a public that has given us the opportunity for public service. We have been enriched by the past, by the governors, by the congressmen, by our court people, by all who have contributed so much to where we are today.

In 1849, when Minnesota was made a territory of the United States, Governor Alexander Ramsey surveyed all the resources that this state has, both natural and people. And he gave us several warnings, one of which was never spend more money than you take in. How appropriate for today.

In 1907, John Johnson, the first governor to serve in this Capitol, took office as a Democrat confronted with a Republican Legislature and he spoke about the dangers of a high profile of partisanship. How appropriate.

Today we face a major financial crisis at a time when we are at the edge of a possible war in the Middle East. We can see these problems as overwhelming. We can describe them in pessimism or we can recognize what the people of Minnesota recognize and that is we now have a new opportunity.

Governor Andersen spoke about the religious services last night and this morning. Frankly they were some of the most powerful services that I have ever attended. One because they recognize the tremendous religious diversity in Minnesota but two was the incredible wisdom that was imparted. Those leaders asked of this administration, they asked of all of us, that we create a unifying vision of Minnesota, that we build a new creative partnership involving government, religion, labor, business and community and that we all begin to recognize that we can no longer look to government to do all, but we, as individuals and as members of institutions, must also become a part of the solution. They gave us a concept of what one leader called a stewardship leadership that they wanted our administration to follow recognizing that we were stewards not only of the natural resources of this state but also of the people. And one rabbi suggested that we now have an

opportunity to create a new beginning.

All of us in our lives have been touched by the opportunity for a new beginning. I doubt that anyone of us who can't recall that point in our life when somebody or some event occurred that gave what we know as a break.

I remember so well coming from a family who immigrated from Sweden and a mother who quickly recognized that the American dream could never be realized without a tremendous amount of education. She saw education as the leveling of a democratic process. Education is the opportunity to participate and to succeed.

And by a variety of circumstances I was given a scholarship to the Choate School in Connecticut. And I remember the first day of my arrival they gave me a placement exam. The first part was on grammar. Coming out of the schools of New York City, I can guarantee there was nothing that even remotely resembled education. I had never heard of the word grammar and after two hours I submitted a blank paper. In the afternoon the examination dealt with algebra, another foreign word and another blank paper. I went back to my cottage and I packed my bags and waited for somebody to come in and say that the scholarship had been revoked. No one came. I went to dinner. No one mentioned it.

They gave me the opportunity to gain a tremendous education that allowed me to ultimately be here today. I want us to give those same opportunities to all our children. I want us to have the wisdom to recognize the opportunities that we have today, an opportunity to create a new government partnership that focuses on stewardship and service, one that understands that people must help, as John Kennedy admonished us, ask not what government can do for you but what you can do for government.

And from that stemmed a tremendous wave of idealism which we need today to overcome the decade of the past where we were more committed to short-term gain and short-term greed than we were to the long-term benefits of society. I want a new pragmatism, a pragmatism where those of us in government no longer focus solely on the process but rather than on the substance of politics, on the consumer, on the outcome, on the people. I want a new beginning that appeals to the warmth of the human heart and it recognizes the full capacity of all people and the potential of all people to participate. I want us to reach and to touch.

As we gather here today, we have more than a financial crisis. That we can overcome. But we also have a crisis in terms of our relationship with people. How sad it is that in 1991 we have more black men in prisons than we have in college. How sad it is that thousands of our children today are hungry, homeless and ill-clothed. We need, all of us -- Democrat, Republican, Independent -- to recognize that we have limited resources. But our people have an unlimited ability to want to help and to want to

participate and to want to touch and to want to feel and want to help us in the solutions if only we will give them a chance. I pledge to you today that this administration is committed to all people, particularly those who disenfranchised, those who feel that they have nothing to gain so that we can develop a partnership that truly, truly brings them in. The greatest heritage, the greatest legacy that we can leave to our children is not to continue the transfer of debts but to give them instead an overwhelming sense of opportunity.

I hope that we have the wisdom at all times to focus on the long-term good, to maximize opportunity to education and to job growth. If we keep our eyes on those goals, believe me, we will live and we will leave a rich heritage. No greater command can be given of our administration than to leave this state substantially stronger than we found as all of my predecessors have done. I will continue in that tradition.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.