

GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
INAUGURAL ADDRESS – AS PREPARED
ROTUNDA OF THE STATEHOUSE
COLUMBUS, OH
JANUARY 14, 2019

Governor Kasich, Governor Strickland, Governor Taft, Governor Celeste -- It means a great deal to me personally that you are here to share in this historic occasion. Thank you for your deep love of Ohio -- our great state that you all have had the privilege to lead.

And Governor Bevin of Kentucky -- thank you for being here. You and I have work to do. We have a little bridge we need to build!

Lieutenant Governor Husted, Puerto Rico Lieutenant Governor Rivera Marin;

Senator Portman;

Congressman Johnson; Congressman Stivers; Congressman Joyce; Congressman Balderson;

Speaker Householder;

Senate President Obhof;

Chief Justice O'Connor; Justice French, Justice DeWine, Justice Fischer, Justice Donnelly, Justice Stewart;

Secretary of State LaRose;

Attorney General Yost;

Auditor Faber;

Treasurer Sprague;

Mayor Ginther;

Reverend Clergy;

Members of the General Assembly;

My Fellow Citizens of Ohio....

Today -- we are united as Ohioans.

We are united in our passion and commitment to ensuring that all of our children lead meaningful, fulfilling lives.

We are united in our resolve to end the opioid crisis.

We are united in our desire to preserve and protect our magnificent Lake Erie.

And, we are united in our love for and our pride in this wonderful state, with its rich history, abundant natural wonders -- and good and decent people.

I will be the Governor for all the people of our state -- and I will remember each and every day that I am their servant.

Jon and Tina and Fran and I want to thank all of you for sharing this day with us and for giving us this opportunity to serve. So many people worked so hard to help us achieve this moment.

I am so very grateful. I am grateful to our children and grandchildren, whom I learn from each day. And I am grateful to Fran.

We met in first grade and have been married for over 51 years. She is the love of my life. She is the rock of our family. And she is my best friend.

Fran -- more than anyone -- helped us achieve this moment and deserves the most thanks. Without her, I would not be here today.

Fran is an amazing mother and grandmother. Her passion for children, her love of family, and her compassion for those in need will make her an amazing first lady of Ohio!

Today, I also think about those who have had an immeasurable impact on my life, who are no longer with us -- my parents; my grandparents; my aunts and uncles; Fran's father; Fran's brother Mike; our daughter Becky; our granddaughter Kathryn Becky; and our dear friends Bill Schenck, Brenda Lewis, and Alex Arshinkoff.

While not here physically in this glorious and historic rotunda, they remain forever in our hearts. This is their moment, as well.

As we celebrate today, let us pause to honor and remember the men and women in our military and in law enforcement who, at this very moment, are defending and protecting us. And let us especially honor and remember Colerain Township Police Officer Dale Woods and his family. Officer Woods died in the line of duty on January 7th and is being buried today.

Please join me now in a moment of silence.

[MOMENT OF SILENCE]

Thank you.

Fran and I were blessed to grow up in a village where we could walk to the homes of our grandparents. Our strong and close-knit families shaped who we are today.

We both come from families of optimists. My grandfather kept planting trees up until his death in his mid-80s. At that time, I thought -- he's never going live to see those trees get very big -- yet he planted them nonetheless. And now, in just a few weeks, his great-grandson -- our son John -- will once again tap those very maple trees, as he does each year, to produce maple syrup to sell and for our family to enjoy.

My dad, in the final autumn of his life when he was dying from cancer, made sure the daffodil bulbs were planted -- knowing full-well he would probably not live to see them bloom in the spring. But he did that, nonetheless, because he had faith and hope in the future and in the beauty of what was yet to be.

In what is known as the prayer of Oscar Romero, on which Father Hagan, who runs the Becky DeWine school in Haiti, has based Hands Together's mission:

“We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is god's work. [yet] we plant the seeds that one day will grow. . . .[because] we are prophets of a future not our own.”

It is with that eye to the future and with great optimism that I will serve as your Governor -- because I truly believe that the best is yet to come!

Over the next four years, I will be asking the people of Ohio and I will be asking those of you in the General Assembly to do things where the results will not be immediate -- but where they will be profound, and where they will endure.

In the words of Governor James Cox spoken 106 years ago yesterday, “History tells us that while we can profit immeasurably by the experience of the past, every government that has endured, kept its face toward the sunrise and not the sunset.” As we govern together, we must keep our face toward that sunrise!

Our plans to intervene early in the lives of at-risk kids, to address their physical and emotional needs, and to give them better, higher-quality educational opportunities -- all will be undertaken in the faith and hope and confidence that these children will flourish and grow and that their lives will be forever changed by the things that we do.

For much of what we will do, we will not see the results during the life of this administration, nor in some cases in our lifetime, yet we will do these things nonetheless -- grounded in the faith and hope that we can change the future!

In the process, we will be fierce and passionate advocates and defenders of the defenseless!

We will bring people together.

We will seek out many opinions and ideas.

We will work hand-in-hand with local government and community leaders.

And we will listen!

But don't mistake our willingness to listen and our openness to new ideas for a lack of vision or resolve or focus. The bible warns us of an "uncertain trumpet." Our trumpet will give a clear and certain call, as there will be no mistaking where I am leading!

Government exists to protect people so they can live and achieve their dreams, with its fundamental purpose, as our own Ohio Constitution of 1803 states, "to establish justice, promote the welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty." Its essential function is to protect the most vulnerable among us -- those, to paraphrase the late United States Senator Hubert Humphrey, who are in the dawn of life, those in the twilight of life, and those in the shadows of life.

And so, these are the values that will guide our administration each and every day.

Family is everything.

Education is the key to equality and to opportunity.

And everyone -- no matter where they were born or who their parents are -- deserves the chance to succeed, to get a good-paying job, to raise a family comfortably, and to be secure in their future.

As I reflect upon this day -- the work that lies ahead, the challenges, and the opportunities -- I am reminded of the words of a young, aspiring writer in her fictional account of a woman travelling across England. In her words:

"I wrote [while] on the British rail, describing the hills dotted with sheep, knowing I could never capture that weird sensation of recognition which comes from imagining something all your life and upon viewing the site in real life, finding your image was beautifully accurate."

Thank you, Becky.

Thank you for helping your dad find the words that I could not.

You have captured so perfectly how I feel today about what we have visualized for so long about our state's future and the hopefulness that comes as we work to turn our dreams for Ohio into beautifully accurate realities.

May God Bless America -- and may God Bless Ohio!