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*Transcript of 1970 gubernatorial inaugural speech by Governor John A. Burns, delivered on December 7, 1970. Transcribed from a manuscript copy of the remarks by Perry Arrasmith, 2022, under the auspices of the School of Communication & Information, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.*

## **The 1970 Inaugural Address of John A. Burns December 7, 1970**

Mr. President, Mr. Chief Justice, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, Distinguished Guests, Members of the State Legislature, and All My Fellow Citizens:

Aloha. Aloha nui kākou.

I want to express first my deep appreciation to President McClung and his committee members, who arranged this inaugural ceremony. Their attention to detail and devotion to duty has produced arrangements which are second to none. I am also grateful, and I express the gratitude of Lieutenant Governor Ariyoshi and myself to all of you who are here today. We deeply appreciate your personal interest and your community spirit shown and demonstrated by your presence here.

Let me begin on a personal note, by expressing to you—not only those who are here but those that are not with us—the people of Hawaii, my heartfelt gratitude for the high trust and confidence you have again placed in me. There is no way I can adequately convey to you the very deep sense of what can only be described as “aloha” that I feel at this moment. I can think of no higher honor than that accorded me today, to stand before you and to accept, for the third time, the responsibilities of the Governor of Hawaii. The confidence you place in me I take as an expression of our mutual confidence in each other and our resolve to perfect our destiny.

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It is singularly appropriate that we begin anew here, on the grounds of Iolani Palace, where so much of Hawaii’s past is rooted. We are assembled on soil held sacred in Hawaiian history, beneath trees of venerable age, in a setting of grace, of beauty, and of peace. It was here, in 1883 and under this very canopy, that the coronation of King Kalakaua and Queen Kapiolani was formalized. On these grounds the beautiful Princess Kaiulani strolled. In Iolani Palace itself the great Queen Liliuokalani spent nine months under house arrest as a political prisoner. During the British occupation of these Islands in 1843, Dr. Gerrit P. Judd conducted secret, urgent affairs for King Kamehameha the Third in the darkness of the old Royal Tomb, using Queen Kaahumanu’s coffin for a desk. In later years, on the Palace steps, Hawaiians wept as flags were lowered and

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raised, signifying other changes in political allegiance and status. In Iolani Palace, the laws of our Islands slowly evolved in legislative sessions held from 1895 to 1968.

And, on a fateful morning exactly 29 years ago, the explosion that rocked this island and the entire world reached into this very compound. Here, on December 7, 1941, a military officer entered the Palace to announce to a civilian Governor that Hawaii's people must be placed under martial law. Surely, all of us must be deeply moved by the memory of these great events and of the noble men and women of Hawaii's history, whose shadows never leave these hallowed places and whose deeds are not forgotten.

We approach this day, then, as one of special commemoration and dedication for all of us in Hawaii. It is at once the anniversary of our tragic thrust into war and another beginning for this Administration in a new decade.

As we reflect particularly on the disaster of Pearl Harbor, we will do well to remember that it was that event which galvanized Hawaii and the Nation. The resolve we then took led to our ultimate victory and to the subsequent opening of greater opportunities not only for our own people but for the peoples of Asia and the Pacific as well.

And so, I suggest to you that we rededicate ourselves, in that spirit, to a new beginning, to a determination to face new challenges with firm confidence that we can build a better quality of life for all Hawaii's people in the solid achievements of the past.

In my first and second terms, I pledged to work with you to achieve certain fundamental changes and to seek a break from the restrictive patterns of the past. We sought:

- A more equitable system of taxation.
- To develop conditions for full employment in an economy not only of expanding wealth but also of expanding opportunity.
- A system of universal education that would make opportunity for genuine self-development more meaningful to all our youth.
- To preserve and enhance our natural beauty and to make it ever more accessible to our people.
- To preserve and enrich our diverse cultural inheritances.
- To actively pursue those activities which would ensure our rightful place in the Pacific Community of Nations.
- In sum, we sought those changes that have effectively led to openness in all aspects of our social, economic, and political life.

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In all of these things, we have achieved substantial change and made steady—oftentimes unparalleled—progress.

Let us now acknowledge the simple fact that Hawaii is, in truth, the envy of the world. That this is so must be credited to all who have gone before us and who have developed, with patience and with love, this great and sovereign state and to all of you who share an abiding faith in Hawaii's future. That Hawaii must continue to move toward its destiny of greater achievements is the awesome mandate we all share.

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Success inevitably breeds new challenges; the rainbow's end is, as it should be, elusive and forever ahead of us. Our economic successes have focused growing public attention on the need to preserve those very elements in Hawaii that make life here more attractive than anywhere else. More jobs and increasing incomes have brought more automobiles, and greater mobility has brought its attendant traffic problems.

More people have brought greater needs for decent housing, especially those of more modest means. Greater use of parks and beaches has brought need for more of these and other recreational resources.

Saddest of all, the coming of more wealth and greater leisure has brought with it a distressing upsurge of crime everywhere. These are matters of deep concern across the nation, and while we have been fortunately spared the pressures brought to bear elsewhere, unhappily, Hawaii is no exception.

Just as we have addressed ourselves to the resolution of past concerns with every resource at our disposal, so, too, will we give particular attention to these more current matters in the weeks and months ahead.

We can, however, deal more effectively with them if we view them more in the nature of challenges rather than as "problems."

A leveling-off in construction, for instance, can be taken as an opportunity to accelerate our total housing programs to bring homes more readily within reach of those families who most need them. We can also channel our construction energies toward new public works, particularly in building facilities for educational purposes at all levels of our school and university systems.

Public concern, which we share, over the rising incidence of crimes of violence can strengthen government's efforts to improve its total law enforcement activities.

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It is timely, too, that every citizen understand that all laws must be given equal regard. To knowingly violate any law breeds disrespect for all law. If any law is to be openly challenged, then we must examine this law and its relevance to our society, and change the law if it cannot be generally respected.

In our traffic problems and those of urban congestion, we have opportunities for new changes in transportation and in the distribution of our population. More even distribution of people among all our major islands will improve the quality of life for all of us.

There are further challenges to be met also in education. Our schools and our our statewide university must not be content to simply teach what is interesting and useful—though they must always do that and do it well. Nor is it enough that our educational institutions should continue to expand and improve their research for the common good of the State and improve their research for the Nation—though this, too, they must always do and do well.

In the coming years, our schools and colleges must lead, not follow, the revolution in which all of us are caught up. For it is in our educational system, above all, that proper and necessary dissatisfactions with ugliness and hypocrisy, inertia and venality, can be turned into energies we need for creative resurgence in the life of our State and our Nation.

We must learn, all of us, that to defy and destroy solves nothing, personal or social, no matter how great our frustrations become. Education can and must show the way to learn that lesson once more by demonstrating that the disciplines of learning, of constructive action, and of the arts are inseparable at last from the discipline of self.

In all those things we will undertake to better our life in Hawaii, we will be ever conscious of the axiom that any action we take now on any one area of concern will inevitably limit or broaden the range of alternatives open to us in the future—that every problem is related to every other problem; that what we do about one determines, often in large measure, what we will have opportunity to do, or be denied the opportunity to do, with other equally vital concerns.

The environmental movement, in all of its dimensions, The environmental movement,has made us aware of how closed, really, is the circle of life, of how interrelated and interdependent are man and his world. This understanding of the interrelatedness of all things has been fundamental to the development of our open and creative society. We have found an open, orderly society to be the most fertile climate for full human freedom, for human creativity, and for the full flowering of human development.

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Upon these principles we have built our programs of the past eight years. We have been guided in this by the will of the people. We have received the continuing cooperation of gifted legislators whose wise laws are the measure of their greatness. We have been constantly assisted by countless individuals whose good will and good works have been immeasurable. Even those who have differed with us have our sincere gratitude and respect, for it is in the crucible of contradiction and contention that the true metal is tested.

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The vision of Hawaii with which we began eight years ago remains constant, if not brighter. We have ahead of us a world of wonderful opportunities, of rich gifts, of exciting challenges, of new discoveries, all of which generate enthusiasm for life and inspire nobility of mind and heart.

Hawaii of the Seventies and beyond will become a center of learning, culture, and commerce for the whole of the Pacific, and there will be a place in the sun for each of us. We have set an inspiring example of a mature community at peace with itself and with the world around us. Our experience and history, as a sovereign state built out of colonial dependence, with a rich mixture of cultures and ethnic strains, provide us with unique opportunities to talk to our neighbors in a common language if not in a common tongue.

Our ocean was named the Pacific because of its unusually placid surface. The early explorers found it a sharp contrast with the oceans and seas on the other side of the world. Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Pacific peoples in the years ahead is to show the world how that word can be made to mean not only peaceful waters but peace among men as well.

We can have no more noble a goal than this. Gathered on these grounds, the wellspring of our spirit of Aloha, we can have no greater inspiration to continue in its pursuit.

Mahalo.

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