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Transcript of 1974 gubernatorial inaugural speech by Governor John A. Burns, delivered on December 2, 1974. Transcribed from the Honolulu Advertiser (12/03/1974) by Perry Arrasmith, 2022, under the auspices of the School of Communication & Information, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

The 1974 Inaugural Address of George R. Ariyoshi December 2, 1974

This is a memorable and auspicious day for many. Let me begin, then, by noting another historic moment in our past.

It was 12 years ago, almost to the day, that the people of Hawaii began a new journey under the leadership of a new governor. That journey will surely be recorded as perhaps the greatest period in our history.

The beginning of a new Administration represents many things. For some, it is a day of fresh joy. For some, it is a day of fresh joy. For others, it is an occasion for nostalgia and a certain wistfulness in ending a long and fruitful relationship. For still others, it is a day of mixed emotions.

For all of us, however, there is a common bond.

Whatever our range of thought on the political spectrum, we are all Americans. And as citizens of this great nation, of a country steeped in democratic principles and traditions, we properly regard this occasion as the culmination of a democratic process of tested and proven worth.

In the special context of Hawaiian history, the ceremony we observe today is held in deep reverence. Thus, the tide of history has brought us together today on these hallowed grounds for the ceremonial exchange of the mantle of executive authority.

In assuming the office of Governor, I am mindful of the great responsibilities entrusted to the Chief Executive of our State.

You have given me a high trust. I shall always cherish this trust and honor it in all that I undertake as your Governor.

I am equally mindful that the example set by my distinguished predecessor is a difficult one to match. In his dedication, his vision, his wisdom, his deep-seated desire to insure equity and to

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open up new opportunities for all our people, Governor Burns has been a shining example to all who have been privileged to work with him during his three illustrious terms of office.

Indeed, were it not for the great changes brought about by his influence, in Hawaii's economic, political and social life, I would not be standing here today in this capacity.

Future historians will, I am sure, note the abundant credit that is due him for all the good that has been accomplished in Hawaii over the past two decades, for the span of his influence is at least that long. It is difficult to adequately express my personal gratitude to him and the sense of gratefulness that we all feel for his extraordinary leadership.

To Mrs. Burns, we also express our great admiration and aloha for her gracious service and warm hospitality as First Lady of Hawaii.

While the past provides us with a yardstick by which to measure our future progress, as well as a base from which to set new goals and objectives for us, I would also bear in mind the credo underscored by my predecessor when he first took office and which he repeatedly stressed – that change is constant and must be accommodated. Growth and change are a natural part of our lives and of any viable government.

I, too, pledge change: change not just for the sake of change, but change to meet new needs and new times. To remain progressive, a society must continue to evolve. It must be dynamic, not static; priorities are always being reordered. And so it is that we will seek new ways, more effective means, of improving what government should do for the sake of our people.

I am pleased that a group of skilled and dedicated men and women have joined with this Administration in developing new directions for Hawaii's future.

With their help, I offer you a fundamental pledge: whatever the task, whatever the challenge, we will at least try. I would rather try and err honestly than be faulted for failing to meet a challenge. I want to find 100 ways of getting a job done, not be given 100 excuses for leaving it undone. To all who would join in our endeavors, I want them to dare, to be bold and unimagined, to be creative and innovative.

Let us remember, too, that the times ahead will demand sacrifices from all of us. There are very real worldwide problems of population, consumption and production that have already been

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manifested in our domestic affairs. Indeed, Hawaii, and all of us, are involved in mankind and in each other. No man is an Island, but we are an Island of men, and together we can forge a society that flourishes in a climate of mutual trust and cooperation.

The signs of the times clearly indicate that our State must become increasingly self-sustaining—in food production, in energy resources and in other basic necessities.

We have long taken pride in having the most efficient large-scale farms in the world in our sugar and pineapple plantations. Our men and women possess the technology and the know-how that made these industries a vital part of our economy. These same skills and dedication can be applied to make our lands more productive in other agricultural enterprises, not only for our own consumption but for other markets as well.

At the same time, we must be selective in promoting balanced economic development that stresses quality and compatibility with our unique insular nature. Moreover, if we are to encourage balanced economic development and controlled growth, we should also consider a blanced distribution of our population.

The needs of our Neighbor Islands, then, must be borne in mind as we consider the problems of our population centers on Oahu.

In seeking growth, we should also continue to explore the potentials opened up by new technology and new discoveries, particularly in the resources that abound in the ocean that surrounds us and is so much a part of our lives.

To achieve our goals for the future, we must merit and receive the enlightened cooperation and active participation of all our people.

This administration will represent all the people. No one must hesitate or fear to come to us for justice, for service, for help. We are pledged to the advancement of art and science, to excellence in education, to the maximum enhancement of our physical and societal environments and to the continued development of a strong and healthy economy which will provide a basis for prosperity and happiness for all people.

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This administration will be an open one, characterized by honesty and integrity. We will tell it as it is. We will speak of our efforts, and of our successes. But we will also speak of our disappointments and setbacks. We ask only for your understanding.

And if this is to be truly a government of the people, then each citizen has an obligation to do his share. I mean this to apply not only to every level of civil servant in the State Government but also to those in private industry and business.

Nothing is gained, no one is served, by those who sit idly by, wringing their hands and bemoaning their lot. Instead, I would encourage a constructive attitude and invite all to come in and present their ideas for a better Hawaii, with the thought of working together with government to attain our mutual goals.

For my part I intend to reach into the community to secure the benefits of the talents and resources of our people. I expect, and I am confident, that I will receive cooperation and participation.

I appeal, then, for a statewide commitment to excellence and for renewed dedication to all that is so great and special about our Hawaii, particularly to that spirit of Aloha which is our common heritage.

If we are in a period of transition, let it be a transition to a renaissance of those qualities and attributes that have characterized all the great societies of the past—a willingness to make personal sacrifices for the greater good, human understanding and a desire to strive for excellence in every undertaking.

As we chart our new directions, let us be grateful but not fearful. As we seek unity in setting our goals, let us also treasure our diversity of methods and opinions.

We have rich human resources in our young people of cosmopolitan outlook. They have tremendous potentials for dramatic and vigorous leadership. Our senior citizens have a store of wisdom and knowledge which must be more adequately applied, for their own satisfaction as well as for the benefit of the less experienced.

Let us then begin afresh, inspired by the past and emboldened by the vision of new horizons. With confidence in our future, secure in the knowledge that our destiny is in our own hands to shape and perfect to match our own hopes and aspirations, let us continue our journey together.

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As we continue on this journey to create a better society for ourselves, let us also be ever mindful of the obligation that we have to succeeding generations—to lay the foundation for a future which will be preferred by our children and our children's children.

Let us then carry on, with full resolve, with every conviction and with the will to succeed.

I ask for your prayers and goodwill, and for the blessing of God as we begin our new Administration.

Mahalo.

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