

Inaugural Address of Governor Arch A Moore Jr

January 13, 1969

Judge Haymond, distinguished former governors, my fellow West Virginians:

The journey to this occasion for the purpose of taking this solemn oath began a long time ago. Factually, my public service began sixteen years ago at this very place. Here today are a number of family, friends and associates who began that journey with me. For this, their faith and their presence, I am deeply grateful.

The privilege of taking the oath as the 28th Governor of the State of West Virginia from a long-time cherished friend. The Honorable Judge Frank C. Haymond, adds greatly to the impressiveness of this solemn obligation and commitment.

There are absent today some who proudly added their counsel, their love and guidance over the years, who but for the Grace of God would be sharing this day with all of us. They are, in memory, though very much a part of this, my personal commitment to all of you and to the citizens of the State of West Virginia.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the presence of those of our state congressional delegation with whom I have been privileged to serve over the past 12 years in the national Congress. Their being here means much to me and promises a continuation of the warm friendships and mutual respect that have existed for a long time past.

Therefore, this is indeed a rare occasion; yet no one knows better than I that without the confidence, trust and support of friends of different political beliefs than my own throughout West Virginia, I would not have the responsibilities that are turned over to me today.

The oath prescribed by law and to which I have submitted signifies, in my judgment, the commencement of a new beginning for all West Virginians.

The people of West Virginia have now committed to one of their fellow citizens a supreme trust, and I here and now, dedicate myself to their service. I firmly believe that he who takes this oath only assumes in public ceremony the solemn obligation which every West Virginian must share with him.

The Constitution which prescribes the oath of office is your constitution. The government which you have chosen one to administer is your government. The laws which your elected representatives enact and I must enforce are your laws. So it should be emphasized that every citizen owes to his State a vigilant watch over the fidelity of its public servants. When this is done, the will of the people is impressed upon the function of government.

I appear before you with great humility, fully aware of the great challenge that has been handed to me. Yet, I look forward to serving the people of our State as their chief executive, and I look forward with great anticipation to working with all of you to forge this new beginning of which I speak.

I assume this office today with a full recognition and realization of the awesome responsibility facing all of us. For with the high honor of being elected Governor of West Virginia, there is also required a full understanding that the people look to the one in that office for the ultimate and final executive decisions of their state government. There may be many practical, subtle and terribly binding limitations upon the actual power and authority of the Governor to act in the best interests of the people of our State but, in ultimate and final analysis and fact, the people of this State have elected their Governor to assume and carry out that kind of responsibility.

And, it is to the Governor that the people look to assure the quality of government and service which West Virginians have a full right to expect. I accept that responsibility and all its consequences and am determined to carry it out with all my best efforts and energies.

Furthermore, when the people have bestowed their confidence upon a chief executive, they have a right to expect the type of leadership and action which will make the man and the office effective instruments of their government. This leadership - this action, I shall provide.

The task ahead is no small one by any measurement. But we take up that task with a number of assumptions and profound beliefs. First and foremost among them is that the people of West Virginia want, and by their heritage and work are entitled to, good government. Now, the good government whereof I speak is not that "good government" of past worn-out slogans and promises. Good government for our people must be measured by the services of officers and offices devoted to the best interests of the people and this State. It also must be measured by officers and offices who spend their first-rate energies and efforts in solving the problems of West Virginians and West Virginia.

To that end, we have sought and have enlisted the services of able, highly qualified and devoted people to serve top appointive offices in your government. The response of these people to our conditions of service has been one of great gratification.

We shall commence at once to examine and redesign all areas of government operation to provide the most efficient, least costly and most people-centered service organization possible within the limitations of the law and the practicalities of the moment. We have put the best minds and experience to that task and we shall not be satisfied easily or soon.

Another assumption and belief we hold as we begin this task is that all those who assume elective or appointive office in all branches of our state government are fully mined and dedicated to serve the best interests of West Virginia and her people. There have been, and still are, and probably will continue to be, substantial differences between us as to politics, methods and primary needs. These will have to be worked out if any of us are to perform our duties properly. However, all that may be, we must now compose our differences and, relying on our primary dedication to the people of West Virginia, set about to work and work hard to solve our problems, both old and new and neglected. Our people have seen fit to place us in office and they have begun to give us adequate tools of government; it is our responsibility to respond together to answer the charge from the people. We shall offer immediately our programs for debate and action - only a full and complete response is adequate to fulfill the charge our people have given us.

The problems for governmental action are many and varied. But of this I am convinced that government's first response to any of them must be concerned with the State's greatest asset and resource - its people. Before any of our problems can be commenced of solution, the abilities of our people must be cared for, nurtured and developed. Industry, commerce, and indeed, progress of any kind in any area depends upon the people involved.

Our first and primary attention will be directed toward doing those things with government that can be improved with great personal effort.

We must make integrity in state government a tradition in West Virginia, and the time to begin to build such respect is now. Like an individual, a state can have no asset more valuable than a reputation for honesty. West Virginians deserve honorable government, and I will demand it.

Through public trust, we must provide a fresh stimulus for improved government. Society is built upon trust, and without trust, there can be little more than discouragement. Without trust, hope is small and we must understand distrust and progress are incompatible'

Therefore, we will seek to examine our educational system to assure that educational opportunities of high quality and the right type are available to all our people. We must develop not only the academic skills which lead to college and professional training, but also, and with much more emphasis, we must develop programs providing technical training sufficient to provide a great pool of skilled labor who have flexibility in the application of their skills. No longer can our people be tied to a one-or-two-industry economy with all its limitations upon the ability to work, to earn and to progress.

Every goal important to our people now depends for its attainment in some degree upon education. Schools and other means of education have become not only the instruments of our purpose but the most powerful instruments we possess for attaining our objectives.

If our people are to progress, communication and transportation among all parts of our State are essential. The people of this State have overwhelmingly indicated their willingness to pay for needed improvements in highways by their approval of several road bond issues. We shall immediately set about providing the highest, most efficient and most honest use of those funds for the implementation of a massive road building program.

We must take dramatic action and give special emphasis to combating the deplorable state of affairs in mental health. Among all the areas of pressing need, mental health urgently demands our interest and attention. It is a question in which every citizen of the State is deeply concerned, and with respect to which we should not treat in a partisan sense but collectively as fellow citizens to whom the interests of these unfortunate people deserve significant attention.

While these are our primary objectives for the first moves in our program, we shall not be idle or neglectful in other areas. All the services of government are now under new management. It is our intent and determination to make that management efficient, productive and successful.

I believe that each of us is aware of where we are as a state, and how very much needs to be done. I also believe that each of us is aware that only through unparalleled cooperation can we reach our objective.

I have stated on several occasions that the next four years will be constructive years for West Virginia, which has prompted our state newspapers to suggest that this administration might take as its motto, "A New and Better Tomorrow," or "West Virginia First," or even "A New Beginning." These are all "admirable" phrases, and I hope they prove accurate phrases as time passes. My chief concern, however, will be more with the results of our action than with the name of our action.

I truly believe the people of West Virginia expect more of this administration than they have of any administration in recent history.

The success of your Governor will be the object of the closest scrutiny by the people. The significance of this occasion will count for little unless used to accomplish the aims and objectives of the people. Yet, there are enormous difficulties facing this administration. Only the hopelessly naive are unaware of the problems which confront us. Only the hopelessly provincial among us are unaware of the adverse publicity our State of West Virginia has received in the past.

Too frequently we make the headlines in a negative way. That this should be true is one of the great ironies of our time. That we, who are so abundantly endowed with natural wealth and individual talent, should be cast in the role of a poor relative among those less well endowed is a paradox of the first order.

An astute observer of prevailing conditions finds so much more that is encouraging and optimistic than is discouraging. The unfavorable comparison with life and progress in neighboring states - which West Virginians habitually draw - is rejected by most outsiders. There are shortcomings, yes. And the growing recognition of these shortcomings is useful if it is not grossly exaggerated and overdramatized.

What is notably lacking is aggressive leadership and a spirit of progress. I pledge to you on this solemn occasion the energetic leadership West Virginia sorely needs, and I ask your pledge to support that leadership with your own creative efforts and unselfish performance wherever you toil. Entirely too many West Virginians have the erroneous assumption that the great influences in their lives are beyond their control. They see forces shaping their lives in a manner not to their liking nor of their choosing, yet they feel helpless in bringing about the changes they so earnestly desire.

These disillusioned citizens turn to their elected officials to change the course of events which carry them in a direction they do not wish to go.

They look to a new administration to correct the mistakes of the past, to alleviate the social and economic disadvantages, to provide new strength and hope, and to move West Virginia and its people from the doldrums of dead center into the mainstream of progress. Too frequently we have been improvident in our haste to treat the symptoms rather than the sources of our

inadequacies. We have been too easily satisfied with the outward manifestations of success and the spectre of solutions.

Far too often our policies and programs were hastily designed and too often served the interest of the powerful and the political rather than the interests of all the people of West Virginia. Now, we are forced into sober second thoughts. West Virginians are beginning to comprehend more definitely what remedies should be applied to the problems which assail us, and what actions must be taken to reverse the trends which have marked our lack of progress.

Our help to meet these times may reside in unsuspected areas such as young, talented people of West Virginia, possessing good ideas and boundless energy, who are searching for some meaningful programs to put their energy behind and do something for their State. Thousands of these young people have just gone through their first political campaign, and they look for dramatic results from the victory they helped to forge. These young people want to be meaningfully involved in making a new beginning for their State, and I welcome the opportunity to engage them actively in the programs of this administration. If we do not take advantage of their interest and enthusiasm - if we do not find ways for them to contribute in state improvement - then we will have lost one of our most valuable resources.

I have said that the next four years will be those of great responsibility and massive effort. I have said they will be constructive years. I have said that we have gathered good people and the best minds. However, in every sense of the word, our job will require the best from all of us. No matter what our political allegiance; no matter what our occupation or station in life; no matter what our ages or lot in life, the business of the government of the State of West Virginia is the business and responsibility of all of us as citizens.

We have been elected and appointed to office to serve the rest of the citizens and to direct the affairs of government. But, the measure of our success as government is the extent to which the people of this State demand quality service, demand honest service, and demand intelligent and active work on the problems of West Virginia and West Virginians. We assume office today, but the next four years belong to and are the responsibility equally of all the people of our State.

So you see, my fellow citizens, the task of making West Virginia a better State is no mere exercise in politics, but devolves on each of us. The crucial questions are: "Do we truly understand what must be done?" "Are we willing to join together in the necessary course of action?" While it is only natural that each will have his own method for reaching the desired goals, the work which is set before us will be successful only through the most sincere and harmonious effort. Just as surely as we shall not succeed in attaining our goals through a pooling of blind ignorance, just so, we shall not succeed as rivals and partisans.

Today, the executive branch of our State government has been transferred to new keeping. But this is still the government of ALL the people of West Virginia. At this hour the irritations and the animosities of political strife should be replaced by a conscientious concern for the general welfare. I acknowledge and confirm my obligation to the people of the State of West Virginia who went to the polls last November with a sense of great expectation for the officials they were to elect.

True, the West Virginia electorate has chosen a Republican Governor to serve with a Legislature in which the Democrats hold a substantial majority. In this circumstance, "scare" words of possible governmental stalemates have already been bandied about to some degree. But I put no stock in such loose talk, and I urge the citizenry as a whole to ignore it. Instead of "exploring" possible sources of difficulty, give us your helping hands and work *with* us as a team.

So often I have said, "These are times of challenge and change."

Hopefully, we shall meet the challenge, necessarily our people must be willing to face the need for change.

More importantly, we ask this of these years ahead. That:
God, give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.

In coming here today, I made few public promises during this journey, and I can assure you, I made none in private conversation.

If others persist that Appalachia shall be our national symbol, let us convert it into the realization that "Good things are happening in West Virginia."

We must remember, "One can bequeath only what he himself has built" and in this undertaking -
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"No man is free who is not master of himself."

Therefore, let hope, courage, faith and industry be our daily companions in these years ahead.

With God's guidance, I shall lead;
With God's help, we shall have a new beginning;
With God's will, we shall succeed.