

- Thank you to everyone who has come, to the volunteers and staff who pulled this event together, to the Century Center who accommodated our late change of venue, to our honored guests, and in particular to the men and women of Miller's Vets.
- We are joined today by Judge Robert Miller Sr., ninety-one years young, a leader who has put this city on the map when it comes to doing right by homeless veterans, organizing them into the color guard we saw today.
- I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am stepping into big shoes. I take office after not only the longest-serving mayor in South Bend history, but also one of the most decent and dedicated public servants ever to lead our community. I am humbled to know I will stand on the shoulders of your achievements, Mayor Luecke, and I thank you and Peg for your commitment to this city.
- I also want to congratulate City Clerk John Moored and all the new and returning members of our Common Council. Together we have been entrusted with leadership in a critical moment for this community, and I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to work together.
- While there are too many important leaders and friends here to name, I want to single out one colleague in public service whose birthday is today. Karen White, of the South Bend Common Council.

- Karen, you share this birthday with someone else I met today. Earlier this morning, I had the privilege of welcoming South Bend's newest resident, the first baby born in the year 2012, little Caleb Robert Horner, at Memorial Hospital, the same place where my life began.
- Caleb is South Bend's newest resident, though he has no idea yet that he is in a place called South Bend. But holding him in my arms, I couldn't help but wonder what South Bend will look like when he is my age, or when he is Judge Miller's age. What will South Bend be known for in 2042? What will it be like to live here in the year 2102?
- It is impossible to know, of course. In 1900, the site where we now stand was built as a hydroelectric power plant, the most modern and sophisticated of its time. The river water rumbling behind me turned gears that sent electric power to the Oliver Hotel, where the Chase Tower now stands.
- Then, times changed. Soon we were drawing power from coal, and gas; and then from nuclear reactors; then we even figured out how to get electricity from corn. Now, incredibly, some of the latest innovations in electric power have to do with hydroelectric generation, and we are beginning to turn once again to our river as we install new hydro capacity right over there on the East Race.

- This is how history unfolds—dishing out an unpredictable mix of continuity and change. The role of leadership is to hold fast to those things we want to sustain and preserve, yet recognize what must change and point the way forward.
- Our strengths will not change. Our tradition of hard work. Our great institutions of learning and healing. Our sweeping, bending river. Our location at the crossroads of America. Our commitment to family and friends. Our belief in neighborhoods. Our common-sense culture that values results over image, service over self, work over wealth, products over plans.
- But industries will change. Neighborhoods will change. Buildings will change. Relationships will change. Goals and expectations will change. And government changes, which is what we mark today.
- As of today, our city has a new group of leaders to carry us forward. The elected leaders here today, and the leaders I have appointed to manage our departments, form a new government, with a renewed sense of purpose.
- In setting the vision for local government, it helps to recall why city government exists in the first place: to enable people to go about their lives and focus on what really matters. Leading a healthy, happy life is enough of a challenge without having to worry about basic services.

- We deliver safe streets, clean water, and trash pickup so you don't have to. We look after the basics, and also channel the collective energy of the community to make sure this is the kind of place where anyone would choose to live, work, play, raise a family, or start a business. It's a simple mission, but never an easy one.
- To meet this fundamental purpose, our government must have the highest standards of integrity. That is why the first action I am taking as mayor is to issue an ethics code that lays out my expectations for city employees. Right after we're done here, I will sign an executive order that establishes ground rules for conduct in government to hold our administration accountable, beginning with myself.
- The coming weeks will bring other actions to demonstrate the priorities I was elected to deliver. New partnerships with our schools, beginning when I appear at the next school board meeting to state my commitment to working together. New engagement in public safety and neighborhood recovery, as I create a task force to address the problem of vacant and abandoned housing our city. New tools for customer service, culminating in the delivery of a 311 line by the end of the year. And a new economic direction.
- When it comes to economic development, there is no magic wand, no easy fix, but leadership can make a difference. Because this is so important, I am leading a top-to-bottom review of our community and economic development department to ensure we have the best possible approach and structure.

- Until that review is completed this summer, and a new permanent executive director is named, I will personally step in to take responsibility for major economic development decisions. Make no mistake; **if there is any question about who is responsible for leading economic development in the administration during this period, the answer is simple. I am.**
- But today is not only about managing our city's government. It is about the direction of our community as a whole. This community is at one of those moments that will define our future, as we establish what it means to move beyond the legacy of our greatest twentieth-century institutions. I am convinced that our city will know and surpass the prosperity of our brightest days. We're coming back.
- But this can't happen in one day, or one year. And it won't happen just because of the election of one person, or eleven people. None of this will happen easily, and none of it will happen unless you are there too. Everyone in this city has to take ownership of our future. The spirit of involvement and volunteerism that surrounded last year's campaigns—mine and my competitors—must be only the beginning. Everyone in this room—everyone in this city—must be part of the solution.
- So now that I've let you know what to expect from me, let me share three things the city will need from all of you.

- First of all, involvement. Each of you must feel personally responsible for improving the city and the community. If you are a city employee, and you see a way something can be done better, fix it, or tell someone who can. No matter who you are, if you can see an opportunity to improve, don't wait to be asked... share it, and act on it. Pay attention to what's happening in our schools, our neighborhoods, our businesses, and our city government, and take ownership of our direction. And remember that to anyone you meet who isn't from here, you are an ambassador for this community.
- Secondly, resources. Not everyone commands large sums of money or vast networks of volunteers, but every one of us has time and energy to give to this city. Now is the time to use it. Some of you used it to help get me elected. Now use it to mentor a child. Use it to help fix up a house in a troubled neighborhood. Use it to advocate for meaningful change. Use your resources, be they financial or physical, mental or moral. This community is what you put into it.
- Third, and most important of all, this city needs unity. I cannot emphasize this enough. We need unity or we will fail. Our city is coming back, but it can only happen with all of us working together. I'm not asking for the impossible, for everyone to agree on everything all the time. I'm asking for everyone to remember how to prevent disagreements from holding our entire community back.
- We know what we're up against. The recession does not care who likes whom, who disagrees with whom, who has gotten crosswise

with whom. We cannot afford the attitude that a gain on the West Side is a loss for the East, or progress for this minority is a setback for that one. We cannot afford to be dominated by outdated hostilities. If our business community and our labor community concentrate on defeating each other instead of on restoring our economy, everyone will lose. If we pay so much attention to what divides us that we lose focus on our mutual interests, then the only thing we'll have in common will be the blame we share for missing this opportunity.

- The whole community must pull together right now. We need our neighborhoods and our universities working closely together. The mayor and the council working closely together. The city and the school corporation working closely together. No one should think it is easy, but it is the only way to get anything done. **To overcome our challenges, we need unity of purpose—and right now, unity is within our grasp.**
- From my conversations during and since the election campaign, I can feel something incredible happening in this community. I can feel the whole community agreeing on something, even if what we agree on is simply the importance of our city's being, the fact that our community is one and will rise or fall as one. That's enough to build on for a fresh start.
- The course of the election; the mood in the streets; the simple fact that all of you are here in this room with me, and with each other... it affirms that we have something in common. We have this place in

common. Therefore we have a future in common. And for the first time in a long time, **we all feel what it is like to live in a city that has nothing to fear from the future.**

- That's the kind of city I want Caleb to grow up in. A city that solved old problems and laid aside old divisions to focus on what we can all gain by embracing the future.
- At its best, a city is more than a place. It is part of us, and it frames our most important relationships. The way we relate to our city informs the way we relate to each other, and ourselves. To believe in our city is to believe in ourselves. To expect more from our city is to expect more from ourselves. **Just like being in the company of someone you love, being in a great city brings out your best self.**
- I love South Bend, and I know we are coming back. It's going to take hard work from all of us. Together. Beginning today.