

Swearing-In Remarks
Mayor Bob Buckhorn
Tampa, Florida
April 1, 2011

I want to thank each of you for being here this morning.

There are so many of you that have been a part of my life and without whom I would not be here today. Those of you who never stopped believing in me but more importantly, believing in Tampa.

To my family who has joined me today. The clergy of many faiths who have joined us today and who remind me that HE has said to us - You are my servant. I have chosen you and have not cast you away....Fear not for I am with you.

To Sergeant Joel Tavera.

To the newly elected City Council members, Charlie, Mary, Yolie, Harry, Mike, Frank and Lisa - .you have worked hard to get to this point and you should be proud. It is a great day for you and your families and I want you to know how much I look forward to working with you. Tomorrow we begin this journey together and I am confident that you share my hopes and aspirations for this great city and are ready to make the tough choices that the times require.

To our regional partners, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Hillsborough County, Lakeland, Temple Terrace, and Pinellas County who have crossed over bridges and artificial boundaries on a map to celebrate this day. I offer my hand of friendship and my commitment of partnership. You honor me by being here and remind me of our common destiny - ever linked by our history and joined by what unites us.

And let me extend a special recognition to the many other elected officials who are here today, including former mayors Sandy Freedman, Bill Poe and Bob Martinez. And especially to the outgoing Mayor of Tampa, my friend of over 25 years, Pam Iorio. I want to thank Mayor Iorio for her years of dedication to our city. The foundation we stand on this afternoon reflects her work and her commitment. In challenging times, she has been a steady hand on the wheel.

Enduring tough times and tough decisions with a grace and dignity that has been the hallmark of her career in service to our community. She leaves as she arrived - poised, confident and secure knowing that she gave this City her very best. Thank you Mayor Iorio. Her staff, always professional, have ensured a seamless transition for the city and allowed us to see government at its best.

A continual relay, a baton handed from one to another, with the best interests of our city and families always first. Today is not about the first day of a new mayor or the last day of another. It's about the next day for our city. It's about what we do next. It's about how we keep working, keep striving, keep dreaming - together. It's about thinking bigger, wanting for our neighbors what we want for ourselves. Today is about each of us investing in our city and in each other.

It is about what unites us and not what divides us. If you have ever wondered what makes this city special, look around this room, black, white, Hispanic; young and not so young; affluent and those aspiring to be; gay and straight; blue collar, white

collar, and green collar; male and female; Christian, Muslim and Jewish; a city united by a belief in something bigger than just themselves. That must be our common mission.

Our economy is still soft, the housing market weak, take-home pay not keeping pace, city tax revenues off - and we have a \$20 million dollar budget deficit looming. Those are our challenges. Those are our circumstances, but circumstances are not destiny. Destiny is to be made not dictated. Our city, what she becomes, what we make of her, that's up to us. Greatness is always earned. It takes vision and confidence. It requires sweat and unity. It must be nurtured. A mayor must be part architect, part negotiator, part cheerleader, coach, listener, conductor, part roll-up-your-sleeve-and-get-it-done-worker - but always, a full-time believer. The mayor must be the one who sees all we can be and believes that vision can be our future. Few cities in America can claim our promise. We have USF, Moffitt, MacDill, the Port, an international airport, HCC and M2Gen. We are surrounded by the beauty of Florida. Blessed with talented and entrepreneurial young people. Poised as leader in the Southeast. Capable of becoming a gateway to Latin America. And supported by the greatest group of public employees in any city - men and women who get up every day and put on a Kevlar vest or bunker gear, who keep the water flowing and the parks busy.

We have the potential to take our dreams and these unparalleled assets and construct great things.

We must let the history of our great city inspire us: Just as immigrants came here from Cuba, Spain, Africa and Italy with nothing, and as they built their lives, they built our city. Just as Henry Plant looked southward to sandy swamps and saw a gateway to the world. We too must be inspired by our city's abundant potential to imagine and build an even brighter future. The city we live in ten years from now, twenty years from now.

Whether or not our children stay here, whether others who have left return.

Whether our downtown becomes an urban model for others.

Whether Tampa again becomes synonymous with progress

That future will be decided by us, right now. We can stand still; we can tread water; or we can fly, the wind in our face, a clear view of the horizon before us. That choice is ours. The time is now.

Our destiny is of our making.

If you believe as I do, in the capacity of this city to be great - I understand.

If you are willing to reach deep inside of you to give back to the community you love - I understand.

If you have been knocked down, but never quit, never gave up, never stopped trying - I understand.

Now more than ever I need you to believe. This is our time. This is where history and hope meet. You have given this city its roots. Now is the to give this city it's wings.

Thank you.

###