



## Remarks

J. Michael Houston

Mayor

April 29, 2011

Good evening ladies & gentlemen

Tonight is a dream come true for me.

I remember being interviewed by Les Vann of Channel 20 in 1987 in my home and saying to him that my name would never appear on a ballot again.

Since that time a lot has changed.

When I served as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce in 2009, I had no thought of running for office.

During my term as Chamber Chair, two things happened to change that.

First I got a much closer look at the way city government was functioning, or not functioning depending on the way you look at things.

Secondly my term gave me a taste of what I could do as mayor.

I knew I needed to step up and make a difference.

I had the skills, knowledge, and abilities to take the city in a new direction.

I stand here tonight with a combination of humility and pride as Mayor of Springfield.

As little as two years ago I would have never thought I would have the honor and privilege to serve as mayor again.

But I began to have a dream of serving as mayor.

Tonight, I ask you to dream for a few moments.

What would you like Springfield to be four years from now?

With no limitations, how would like to see our community changed for the better if you had a magic wand that you could waive.

There were probably many more thoughts about how we can improve our community than people in this auditorium tonight.

We all know there are no magic wands.

But if we can dream it, and if we are willing to come together as a community to solve our problems, we can make it happen.

People often asked me during the campaign if I could solve the challenges facing our community.

The answer to that question is that I will do my part.

I believe the twelve other people to be sworn into office tonight will do their part and that we will work as a team to deal with the challenges facing us.

We want those dreams to make our community a better place to live, work, and raise a family to come true.

We can accomplish all that if the community is willing to come together as one for all and all for all.

If you think of the spelling of the word “community” it contains the word “unity”.

You can’t spell “community” without the word “unity”.

I have often said that we need to put the word “unity” back into “community”.

We are one community and we need to act as one community if we are to have the bright future with growth and prosperity that I envision.

The next four years will be a challenging time for all of us.

I ran for mayor because I believe it is time for us to deal with the serious challenges that face our community which go far beyond our budget problems.

During the campaign I said that I was willing to commit the next four years of my life to dealing with those challenges.

I think I speak for all thirteen people who are being sworn into office tonight.

We are committed to bring good government to our city and dealing with any challenge facing our community.

Each of us has our own dreams and aspirations for the city of Springfield, and we can achieve them if we are willing to work together to better our community.

By working together, there is no limit to what we can do.

As we dream about our future, it is important that we recognize where we are today, and thank those that have helped us to get there.

I would ask you to recognize Mayor Langfelder and Mayor Hasara for their long-term commitment and service to our city.

I would ask all former elected Springfield city officers to stand and be recognized.

My personal thanks are extended to Mayor Edwards for his service as mayor during the last four months.

He took on a job that was daunting to say the least.

The tragic circumstances under which he took office were monumental.

When we add the financial conditions of the city to the equation, he assumed his position under the worst circumstances that I can imagine.

Please recognize and thank Mayor Edwards for the job he has done.

Sincere gratitude is extended to Alderman Steve Dove for his service as the Mayor's Executive Assistant and for stepping into the Office of Budget & Management when its Director resigned.

My appreciation is extended to Alderman Thom Shanahan and Tony Smarjesse for stepping in to fill the temporary vacancies in Ward 1 and 9.

A special thank you to Alderman Mark Mahoney and Debbie Cimarossa for the leadership and service they provided over the last eight years.

Springfield owes each of you a debt of gratitude for your commitment to our community.

I look forward to working with Alderman Mahoney when he assumes his new position as Director of Public Works in my administration.

His appointment gives you a preview that change is coming to city government.

While he is not here tonight, I would ask that you show your appreciation for Alderman Frank Kunz for his twelve years of service.

And last but not least, I want to thank the people of Springfield.

Thank you for the trust and confidence you have placed in me.

I stand here humbled by a sincere sense of gratefulness.

I am up to the task that you have given me.

You've inspired me to go even beyond my own limitations.

Enjoy the next four years as you watch the progress we make in improving our city's quality of life.

God Bless our great city.

Thank you and God Bless.