

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS**  
**of**  
**LINWOOD HOLTON**  
**GOVERNOR**

**TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**and**  
**THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA**  
**SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 1970**



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**LINWOOD HOLTON**



Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the General Assembly, My Fellow Virginians:

Much has been said and written about today as the date of the inauguration of a Republican as governor of Virginia. And, indeed, there is much of history in this occasion. I am a Republican, and I welcome the advent of a two-party system in our Commonwealth. But the campaign is over.

The time for partisan politics is over. It is time now for leadership, for action, for progress through unity.

The unity of Virginia is demonstrated by the former governors of our state who are participating in this Inauguration. I am honored by their presence and will endeavor to serve our Commonwealth in the future as they have served it so loyally and well in the past.

I turn today to all Virginians, whatever their political persuasion, and say: Let us act together.

I do not ask you to join me in a *Holton* program. I ask all of you to support a *Virginia* program for the 1970's.

I seek the help of all Virginians in this endeavor, no matter where they live, what they may do, what age or race they might be, or what political philosophy they might hold.

At the dawn of the 1970's it is clear that problem-solving, and not philosophical principles, has become the focal point of politics, both in Virginia and in the nation.

No longer can we be divided into opposing camps of political philosophy. No longer is there complete disagreement between "conservatives" and "liberals" about the problems confronting us or the need for their resolution. Old cliches have now blurred and old dogmas have died.

The common belief is that state government must act, that the future of states' rights rests upon the success of state efforts. No more must the slogan of "states' rights" sound a recalcitrant and defensive note for the people of the South. For the era of defiance is behind us.

In its place is the challenge posed by the late 20th century. Moreover, it is evident that the federal government alone has not coped and cannot cope

with this challenge. So much of the national government's attention must be given to our commitments abroad; and even its massive domestic programs have failed to halt the decay of our cities, the exploitation of our rural resources, the rising crime on our streets, and the befoulment of our environment.

John W. Gardner, chairman of the Urban Coalition, recently spoke on the nation's apparent incapacity to launch meaningful solutions to its problems. "We know our lakes are dying," he said, "our rivers growing filthier daily, our atmosphere increasingly polluted. We are aware of the racial tensions that could tear the nation apart. We understand that oppressive poverty in the midst of affluence is intolerable. We see that our cities are sliding toward disaster. . . . But we are seized by a kind of paralysis of the will. It is like a waking nightmare."

The great task of state government is to dispel this nightmare, to overcome this paralysis of the will. We are fortunate in Virginia. Environmental decay has not yet beset us as it has the great cities of the Northeast and Southern California. There is still time here to see that Virginians have both material progress *and* a dignified, enjoyable and lastingly productive place to live.

This administration intends to move forward immediately on all fronts against the deterioration of our environment. We are determined to make the quality of our air and water, the safety of our streets, the core of our cities, the development and preservation of recreational areas top priority public concerns.

We intend further to continue the development of our educational system at every level. We must see that our youth are prepared for the complexities and changes their generation will face; and we must engage them actively in the identification of major concerns and in finding solutions to those problems. We must make our highway system adequate for the demands of a mobile population, and we must find some way to save our urban areas from traffic strangulation. We must develop fully the potential of our great natural harbors and waterways. We must offer every incentive possible to persuade industries to locate in our rural areas so that their young people will not migrate to cities already overpopulated. We must seek a new partnership with the federal government to insure that Virginia will receive the full benefit of federal funds and programs available to it.

Most of all, we must begin long-range planning now for a future in which our population will reach new heights and our public concerns new dimensions.

The durability of our nation and civilization will be in the end determined by how we have responded not only to external problems but, more importantly, to our problems from within. One of the foremost of these is obviously that of racial discrimination.

Here in Virginia we must see that no citizen of the Commonwealth is excluded from full participation in both the blessings and responsibilities of

our society because of his race. We will have a government based on a partnership of all Virginians, a government in which there will be neither partisanship nor prejudice of any kind.

As Virginia has been a model for so much else in America in the past, let us now endeavor to make today's Virginia a model in race relations. Let us, as Lincoln said, insist upon an open society "with malice toward none; charity for all."

To succeed, this quest for an open society must involve all of us, not just the leaders of government. We earnestly ask the active participation of our business and professional leaders, the heads of our schools and universities, our labor chiefs and legislators, our local governments, leaders of minorities, and all individual citizens. Let our goal in Virginia be an aristocracy of ability, regardless of race, color or creed.

It is now almost 200 years since Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, Patrick Henry and James Madison inspired the birth of our nation. All through the early years of our Republic, it was Virginia which guided the nation's destiny. For long after the Civil War, Virginia's people had to overcome the hardships of poverty and defeat. But they succeeded.

Today a new vigor, similar to that of 200 years ago, has caught our people. It is an honor to become governor at such a time. We accept a challenge which Daniel Webster once expressed in these words:

"Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered."

This challenge summons us forth again today, and, with God's help, we shall succeed.