

GOVERNOR GEORGE ALLEN

**STATE OF THE
COMMONWEALTH ADDRESS**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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Office of the Governor

George Allen
Governor

GOVERNOR GEORGE ALLEN'S

1998 STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH ADDRESS

TO THE

VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA

STATE CAPITOL

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

JANUARY 14, 1998

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Mr. President Pro Tem, distinguished members of the General Assembly, my Cabinet Secretaries, Justices of the Supreme Court, friends and fellow Virginians: Good evening.

Virginia always has been a beacon for freedom-loving people around the world. Democracy -- representative democracy, the right of the people to govern themselves -- is our great gift and our great legacy to mankind.

History will judge the events of this day, but I must tell you this: Here in Virginia -- Virginia, the birthplace of American freedom -- it is never right to silence the voices and the will of the people!

Tonight, we gather to assess the state of our Commonwealth. I am pleased to report that Virginia is invigorated and better than ever. Most importantly, Virginians are rightfully optimistic and confident in Virginia's prospects for a promising future!

After four years of hard-charging effort, we have brought forth a flourishing Virginia Renaissance -- a rebirth of expanding hope, opportunity, jobs and prosperity.

This truly is a great time to be alive in Virginia. And yet, each new day brings new challenges and opportunities. So for an even better future, we must not rest, but keep striving to change, adapt, innovate and improve.

In a few days, you will hear from my good friend, Governor-Elect Jim Gilmore. He has been a trusted, effective ally, with a proven record of experience in helping me put many ideas into action. With the leadership of Governor Gilmore and the help of Lt. Governor-Elect Hager, Attorney General-Elect Earley and this Assembly, I am confident that Virginia will keep moving forward in the right direction!

I also thank Lt. Governor Beyer for his many years of commitment and service to the people of Virginia. He presided over the Senate in an expeditious, orderly manner and with aplomb. We all wish you and your family continued success and happiness.

Ladies and gentlemen, when I first stood here and addressed you as Governor, the people of Virginia were demanding fundamental change. Accordingly, I outlined an ambitious agenda of reforms:

- higher academic standards and accountability in education;
- a halt to skyrocketing tuition at our State colleges and universities;
- the abolition of the lenient and dishonest parole laws, and the overhaul of outdated juvenile justice policies;
- sweeping reform of the failed welfare system, so able-bodied people would be required to work;
- the recruitment of new jobs and more investments with the help of new competitive tax laws and reasonable regulatory policies; and
- a leaner, more efficient and more customer-friendly State government that would consume fewer taxpayer dollars.

Through trials and tribulations, we kept faith with the people who sent us here. We stayed focused resolutely on our principles. And with the ingenuity and creative efforts of so many, we successfully have achieved positive, constructive changes.

Today, all Virginians can take pride in knowing that our schools are improving. Our communities are safer. Jobs and opportunities are increasing. State government is smaller. Our environment is getting cleaner. Virginia families are growing stronger. This all certainly bodes well for our children and future generations of Virginians!

Many of the principled reforms we have created here on these historic Capitol grounds are being emulated in Statehouses all across the nation. In truth, however, our tremendous progress has its origins not in government, but in the aspirations, decency and common sense of the people of Virginia.

It is you; it is "we the people" who are unleashing the unstoppable, can-do spirit that makes Virginia such a vibrant wonderful place to live, learn, work and raise a family!

Ladies and gentlemen, as I survey the sturdy foundation for progress that we have constructed for Virginia's future, I am reminded of a great American hero -- Teddy Roosevelt.

About this time 100 years ago, he pondered what the next century would bring for our nation. Then as now, what matters most is one's spirit, values and motivation.

To paraphrase old "Rough and Ready," it is not worthy of the citizens of this Commonwealth, or any individual, to lead a life of uncontested, lackadaisical timidity -- a life of no ambition to strive for great improvements.

Virginians must strive for victorious effort, while not harming our neighbors. We can help our friends, while possessing the strong qualities to win in the stern strife of actual life.

Yes, it is hard to fail. But it is worse never to take the risk and make the decision to reach for new heights. And in this life, we only succeed with effort and hard work, no matter what the task.

Never did folks in Roosevelt's time imagine satellites orbiting the earth, forever changing the way we communicate. Never could they have envisioned watching vivid pictures as Sojourner explored the surface of Mars. And I am sure that they never dreamed of children, like Tyler and Forrest, using computers and teaching their parents how to surf the 'Net.

The 21st century looms before us as large and magnificent as did the 20th century to those who had lived through the War Between the States, had the requisite perseverance for the taming of the West, and used their ingenuity to invent new methods and products in a rapidly changing world.

If we had stood by idly in the this century, then bolder, stronger people would have passed us and won for themselves, and their heirs, the better, more productive life.

The same applies as we, Virginians, stand at the doorstep of the next century.

Therefore, let us boldly face the life of competition, resolute to do our duty well and honorably; resolute to uphold righteousness by word and by deed; resolute to be both honest and brave, and to serve high ideals.

IMPROVING EDUCATION

During the past four years, we have dared to embark upon a new course for Virginia. It marked a turning point in our long, celebrated history. We promised to lead by advancing common-sense, Jeffersonian conservative principles and ideas that would provide all Virginians with the opportunity to succeed to the best of their ability -- especially in education.

In Virginia not so long ago, instead of teaching the core academic subjects in well-disciplined classrooms, the so-called experts experimented with novel social theories and unproven education methods. They attempted to shift our focus away from academic achievement to giving students artificial self-esteem. And when students failed to learn, they mistakenly proclaimed that the only way to solve the problem was simply to pump in billions of more taxpayer dollars.

Enhancing the academic quality of learning in our schools is the heart of the education ideas and reforms that we have put into place.

With the support of many of you in the General Assembly, and most importantly, by involving parents, responsible educators and business leaders, we have brought historic change to education in Virginia.

We've developed new, clear, understandable and higher Standards of Learning in the core subjects of English, math, science and social studies. It is the highest compliment Virginia can receive that States all across our nation point to, and replicate, Virginia's Standards as they develop their own.

We initiated comprehensive testing in third, fifth and eighth grades, and in high school, to measure student academic performance and progress.

We also adopted more logical and accurate Standards of Accreditation, including School Performance Report Cards, which are a linchpin to secure enduring accountability for students, parents and taxpayers.

Requiring students to demonstrate mastery of the core, academic subjects will help instill a positive work ethic and an earned sense of accomplishment. That is important because Virginians graduating from high school are now in world-wide competition. And the best jobs and the best opportunities will go to those who are best prepared.

Our kids need, and deserve, more than a mediocre education. I am sure you agree: every child in Virginia ought to be learning in champion schools!

With our strong, growing economy, we are able to strategically help young Virginians obtain an outstanding education. I ask you to join in supporting the following vitally important education initiatives:

- Keep early reading skills a top priority in our schools, as we propose, by enhancing our First-Grade Reading Readiness Initiative.
- Ensure that our dedicated school teachers have relevant textbooks and instructional materials, and are well-trained in the academic content areas required by Virginia's nationally acclaimed high academic standards. My budget fully funds these initiatives to prepare and better enable teachers to educate our children.
- Enact our Remedial Education Initiative. Every student must be equipped to succeed, and no child who is trying will be left behind.
- Make sure Virginia schoolchildren have smaller class sizes -- so they can receive greater individualized attention -- by approving our proposals to add over 1,350 new elementary school teachers.
- Support our dedicated teachers who are making good-faith efforts to maintain orderly classrooms where students can learn. I ask you to continue the initiative which I have put in place to provide liability insurance so that every public school teacher and every teacher's aide will not have to buy insurance coverage out of their own paychecks. We can do it, as I have done administratively, without any cost to local school divisions, any cost to local governments, or any cost to teachers.

To enhance the academic quality of learning in our schools, I ask you to approve my comprehensive education package. It provides the largest biennial increase ever for Kindergarten through twelfth-grade education. Most significantly, it links that increased investment with common-sense, academic, accountability reforms.

Members of the General Assembly: we owe it to students, parents and taxpayers to continue ensuring accountability in our schools for higher academic performance!

KEEPING HIGHER EDUCATION AFFORDABLE

Our pursuit of academic excellence also involves students attending Virginia's outstanding community colleges, colleges and universities. Here, our priority has been constant and clear: providing a quality higher education that is affordable and accessible to all qualified Virginians.

Four years ago, skyrocketing tuition increases were threatening to place a college education beyond the financial reach of many students and their hard-working parents.

I appreciate your joining me to keep the dream of a college education an affordable reality.

We've increased significantly Tuition Assistance Grants, essentially vouchers, for students attending Virginia's outstanding independent, private colleges. And I ask you to approve my Tuition Assistance Grant proposal that would mean the largest increase in Virginia history.

With your help, we have created the popular Virginia Prepaid Tuition Program so parents can lock in future tuition costs at today's prices.

We also have halted the devastating tuition increases of the past. I know that parents and students would be grateful if you approved our proposal to continue the freeze on college tuition for two more years.

That would mean absolutely no tuition increase for four years -- or long enough to earn a degree -- at a savings to students and parents of more than \$4,400.

To keep Virginia's institutions of higher learning at the national forefront of educational excellence, I am recommending an increase in funding. And as we have in elementary and secondary education and so many other areas, we propose linking this increased funding with accountability reforms to ensure that taxpayers and students are realizing positive returns on their substantial investments.

Our new Higher Education Performance Initiative compares our State colleges and universities with their national peers to measure performance. Widely accepted criteria are used: graduation rates, retention rates, percentage of funds used for student education, hours of instruction taught by faculty, and space utilization.

Measuring performance will keep Virginia competitive and in the lead in providing a top-quality higher education for students. Most importantly, it will reward colleges for placing their focus where it ought to be -- on teaching students!

ENSURING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Along with wanting better schools for their children, Virginians rightfully expect their State government to protect their most basic right -- freedom from violence.

Rather than be misled by the sanctimonious excuses of the criminal apologists, we listened to law enforcement professionals, law-abiding citizens, victims of crime and those families ripped apart -- their lives forever shattered -- by violence. That is why we acted so swiftly and decisively to stop the "revolving door" of justice in Virginia.

Whether it is abolishing parole, instituting truth-in-sentencing, increasing actual time served by violent criminals, promoting victims' rights or transforming our outdated juvenile justice system, Virginia has become a model for the nation in ensuring that true justice is served!

Our landmark reforms are working:

- All categories of violent crime are down;
- For the three most violent felonies -- murder, robbery and rape -- crime rates have decreased nearly 16 percent;
- Last year, the rate of violent juvenile crime in Virginia decreased by 13 percent, significantly better than the national average;
- Best of all, because of the strong actions we have taken together, there are thousands of Virginians and their loved ones who will never suffer the terror and anguish of being a victim of crime!

I ask you to continue our zero-tolerance approach to violent criminals by increasing the number of Sheriffs' Deputies on roads in rural counties, and expanding the urban Weed and Seed Initiative for an even safer Virginia!

TRANSFORMING WELFARE

The welfare system is another important area in which our foundational principles and ideas for change have helped families, children and taxpayers.

I have a fundamental belief that all people possess an innate desire to lead self-reliant and independent lives. And after listening to the taxpayers of Virginia, we set out to break the debilitating cycle of dependency on government.

Together, we created what is widely recognized as one of the most principled, comprehensive and pro-family welfare reform laws in all of the United States. It is built upon the twin pillars of the work ethic and personal responsibility.

"Compassion" is now measured in Virginia not by the amount of money spent, but by the amount of progress in getting able-bodied people into work and providing a better future for their own families.

With the support of so many legislators, businesses, churches, synagogues, civic groups and concerned citizens, Virginia is proving that welfare reform works.

- The number of recipients on welfare is down by more than 42 percent. Indeed, Virginia welfare rolls are at their lowest in 25 years!
- Best of all, thousands of former welfare recipients are now working and beginning to lead productive lives.
- Mothers and families are getting more child support from deadbeat fathers than ever before. With our concentrated roundup efforts, child support enforcement is up 30 percent the past two years. In fact, it is up 60 percent since 1993!

There are so many inspiring examples of all the good that is happening across Virginia. One account particularly impressed me. It captures the spirit of Virginians.

L.P. Moss works in the Danville Social Service Office and keeps a bell at his desk. Whenever he finds out that another welfare recipient that he has helped has got a job, he rings that bell with joy. Everyone in the Office is cheered by the sound because they know exactly what it means.

L.P. Moss is with us this evening, along with his wife, Nancy, and their daughter, Kim Soo. L.P., we thank you, and your colleagues, for helping to enthusiastically alter the very nature of social work in Virginia. You now have become job placement leaders!

INCREASING JOB CREATION

Ladies and gentlemen, I have devoted most of my time and energy as Governor to recruiting business and jobs to Virginia. I have wanted to sow seeds of commerce, trade and free enterprise so those seeds could grow and keep bearing fruit, well after I leave office, for the benefit of hard-working Virginians and their families.

To enhance Virginia's competitiveness, a winning team was assembled that involved hundreds of Virginians at the State, local and regional levels. A coherent strategy for jobs was developed and implemented. An we enacted positive, pro-growth tax and reasonable regulatory policies that encourage risk-taking and investment, reward initiative and help create more jobs.

All Secretaries in my "Competitiveness Cabinet" and all agencies of State government have worked hard together for jobs for Virginians.

The people in all regions of Virginia are reaping solid dividends from the tremendous progress of this team in bringing more investments and jobs.

- The latest monthly jobless rate is 3.4 percent -- the best in 24 years!
- Virginia's job growth is significantly better than the national average.
- And notwithstanding the loss of 14,000 national defense industry jobs, about 300,000 net new jobs have been created in Virginia during the past four years!

Together, we have helped small businesses to flourish by reforming and cutting unemployment and BPOL taxes.

We successfully secured semiconductor fabrication plants from respected international giants -- such as Motorola, Siemens, IBM and Toshiba. They and other high-tech industries of the future, Oracle, Gateway 2000 Computers and Ericsson to name just a few, have contributed to Virginia's new reputation as the Silicon Dominion.

In all during the past four years, more than 700 businesses have announced record-shattering investments in Virginia -- totalling nearly \$14 billion!

To put that into perspective, the previous one-year record used to be just over \$1 billion.

Since many of these investments have not reached their full, job-creating potential, Virginians and their families can expect to see a dramatic increase of tens of thousands of newly created jobs in the future -- further improving their lives and communities for decades to come.

The most profound significance of this unprecedented magnitude of investments is the impact they are having in transforming Virginia's economy into a competitive, economic powerhouse. Who could have imagined just four years ago that we'd be now looked upon as the "Silicon Dominion," not just by Virginians, but by the whole world.

The world now knows that, yes indeed, Virginia is Open for Business!

All of these statistics and investment figures are wonderful. But perhaps a more meaningful measure is the enthusiastic, hometown pride you hear or the optimism which beams in people's faces when a company invests and creates jobs in a community. A good example is Reynolds Metals' recent announcement of an additional \$26 million investment, doubling their wheel production capacity in Russell County.

In June 1996 at the initial announcement, Superintendent of Russell County Schools, Larry Massie, was all excited about the positive impact of Reynolds' decision on local schools -- saying students were going to learn better and do better because of this great opportunity.

And three weeks ago at the expansion, Randy Williams, Chairman of the County School Board, told how every night he prayed to God for jobs to come to Southwest Virginia so his son would not have to go elsewhere for work. When Reynolds came in 1996, he said his prayers were answered as his son was able to get a good job there. He is still working at the plant -- staying close to his loving family, roots and heritage.

And I know that every Senator and Delegate here understands what a success of this kind means to the people in communities you represent.

Ladies and gentlemen, a new standard for economic development has been set. Competing and winning now are expected by all Virginians. And so, for a future that is even more thriving and prosperous than what we now enjoy, I encourage you to keep improving -- and keep winning -- in the race for jobs and investments!

CUTTING TAXES AND REFORMING GOVERNMENT

The best way to keep expanding our economy, create more jobs and increase revenues to responsibly address priorities like education and law enforcement is to make sure that regulations are reasonable and that the tax burden on Virginians is competitively low.

Throughout my term as Governor, I have been committed to reducing the weight -- and improving the fairness -- of the tax burden on working families.

It is important that we enable Virginians to keep more of their hard-earned money, and help businesses to profit and create more jobs.

Together on a bipartisan basis since my administration began, we have cut taxes by over \$600 million!

In the next budget, Virginia's robust economy is expected to add \$1.8 billion in additional General Fund revenues. Consistent with our principles and Virginians' dedication to responsible fiscal management, not all of this money is being spent.

A full one-third of this additional revenue is going to savings for a rainy day or for tax relief.

Our strong economy has enabled me to propose that a "dividend" be returned to Virginia's shareholders -- the people of Virginia. Specifically, I am recommending the following tax cuts:

- The first installment toward Governor Gilmore's great idea to eliminate the personal property tax on cars, pickup trucks and vans;
- A tax deduction for the purchase of pre-paid college tuition contracts;
- Allowing the long-delayed elimination of the sales tax on non-prescription drugs to take effect; and
- Increasing the usefulness of the recycling tax credit for large investments.

These and other important tax reductions mean that I am proposing nearly \$350 million in total tax relief during the next two years!

Revenue re-forecasts during the Session undoubtedly will indicate that additional revenues will be available. When this occurs, I urge you not to spend it, but rather to cut taxes even more for working Virginians and their families.

We also have worked to reduce the burden of government on people, businesses and future generations by protecting our Commonwealth's fiscal integrity. Together, we have maintained Virginia's coveted triple-AAA bond rating -- the highest possible.

During the last four years, total tax-supported debt authorization declined from the levels recorded earlier this decade and in the 1980s. In fact, Virginia has achieved one of the lowest levels of public debt of any State in the nation.

With the amount of cash available in the 1998-2000 budget, it would be irresponsible to be lured into authorizing any new taxpayer-supported debt!

As promised, on Day One as Governor, I created the Blue Ribbon Strike Force to help find ways to streamline State government -- to make it less burdensome, less costly and more efficient for the people it serves. And ever since, we have worked intelligently and creatively to reduce the size, reach and cost of State government.

In reducing State government, we have strived to minimize the hardship on capable and hard-working State employees by relying on a hiring freeze, normal attrition and voluntary retirement incentives.

Virginia taxpayers can take satisfaction in knowing that we have achieved the reduction of over 10,000 full-time equivalent positions in the Executive Branch of State government.

Innovative, cost-saving ideas also have been pursued, such as moving the headquarters of the Department of Military Affairs to Fort Pickett. It makes sense to position the headquarters for the Virginia National Guard where their primary military installation is located. The move promotes national defense readiness by consolidating operations and military training at the Virginia National Guard's premier training base. The move also is cost effective. Having a permanent home for the Virginia National Guard will save Virginia taxpayers over one-half million dollars per year.

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION

Efficiency, innovation and integrity also have guided us in our successful efforts to improve Virginia's transportation system.

During the five years prior to our administration, over one-quarter of a billion dollars was diverted from transportation revenues. We put an end to this practice. Virginians rightfully expect transportation funds to be honestly used for the purposes for which they pay fees and taxes. That is why we made protecting the integrity of the Transportation Trust Fund a priority.

As a result, highway maintenance funding has increased 58 percent in the past four years, and the actual level of road construction is almost double the 1993 level.

The folks in Southside and Southwest Virginia know that we have kept our word on Route 58, and fully funded it each year. The "Beach Boys" -- and Thelma -- recall the joy when we removed the tolls from the Norfolk-Virginia Beach Expressway. It sure was fun to throw that "Stop Tolls" sign into the back of a pickup truck. Folks in Goochland and Chesterfield Counties are relieved that we are moving forward on Route 288, without tolls. The Route 234 Bypass in Prince William County is near completion. And major highway capacity increases are ongoing throughout Virginia, including I-66 and Routes 19 and 460 just to name a few.

All of these transportation projects, and so many more, were accomplished in the last four years without increasing the tax burden on working families!

In addition, we have enacted the visionary Public-Private Transportation Act. We passed competitive trucking taxes and simplified regulations. We decimated unnecessarily burdensome railroad laws. And we aviation and the Virginia Port Authority on stronger financial footing. In fact, the Port of Hampton Roads is now the fastest-growing port on the East Coast, in both volume and market share.

We also made an important start in correcting federal transportation funding formulas that are inflexible and unfair. For too long, Virginia, Southern States and many other States have been paying far more in federal gas tax dollars than we get back for transportation. Given the solid groundwork that we have helped lay, with the able assistance of U.S. Senator John Warner, we are confident that in the course of this year we will see a major correction in this gross violation, so we can improve our bridges, transit systems and roads.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Turning to the protection of our natural and historic resources, I trust we Virginians share the same ultimate goal and responsibility -- safeguarding, protecting and enhancing our air, water and historic resources for the inspiration, education, use and enjoyment of our families, tourists and future generations.

Virginia's economic prosperity has enabled us to further invest in heritage sites, museums and our environment, especially in one of Virginia's most precious natural resources, the Chesapeake Bay.

Last year, we proposed, and you adopted, the first ever major investment toward a logical, effective strategy to reduce harmful nutrient levels in the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia waterways. Consistent with our principles and specific strategies, we are going even further.

This year, I am recommending unprecedented State funding for a sound, scientific statewide strategy that will enable Virginia to meet its commitment to reduce nutrient loadings into the Chesapeake Bay by 40 percent by the year 2000!

STRENGTHENING VIRGINIA FAMILIES

Another way we have worked to preserve the special character of Virginia is by strengthening families.

Families are the backbone of any free civilization. For generations, families -- around the dinner table, during bedtime stories or at bedside prayers -- have imparted to us and our forebears the values which have made our country and Commonwealth so good: individual initiative, responsibility, honesty, hard work, thrift, compassion for those who are ill or can use a helping hand and, of course, a grateful faith in God.

Last year, we, Virginians, renewed our respect and support for Virginia families. We persevered. We kept faith. And after 18 years of trying, true and honest parental notification is now the law in the Commonwealth of Virginia!

I will always remember the thousands of people who gathered for that bill signing ceremony last March. Folks were not fighting for their own advantage or personal gain. They were not here for any special favor, or seeking money from their government. What was so truly inspiring and refreshing was that they were gathered around this Capitol for an idea. It is that wholesome, invigorating spirit -- the will to never give up and never get discouraged -- which marks the special character of Virginians.

THANKING VIRGINIANS

Ladies and gentlemen, this may be the last time I address you as Governor in this chamber.

A Governor comes to Office with principles and ideas. But no one can carry the weight of decisions that one must make as Governor without much guidance, help, consultation and trust.

First, I thank God for providing me with the wisdom that I otherwise would not have, and the strength to awake each day with the enthusiasm to help improve the lives of Virginians by some good work or deed.

I appreciate the prayers, friendship, encouragement and support of Virginians from all walks of life. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for giving me the tremendous responsibility and honor of serving as Governor of this great Commonwealth of Virginia.

I thank the members of the Senate and House of Delegates, and their staffs, who have worked constructively with me to effectuate the will of the people of Virginia.

I thank every agency head, all state employees, and the thousands of volunteers serving on State boards and commissions who share our principles.

I commend former Attorney General Jim Gilmore, Attorney General Richard Cullen and the entire Attorney General's Office. I knew I could always trust and always count on you.

I especially salute all of the members of my outstanding Cabinet and their staffs. No Governor in the nation has had better Cabinet Secretaries than I have enjoyed. I shall be forever grateful for your tremendous loyalty, experience, skill and leadership.

To the folks in the Governor's Office, I truly appreciate the many late nights and weekends during which you have all worked so long and hard for me and our cause. I am so fortunate to have had people of your dedication and distinction.

The Governor's Office and our Cabinet have been an unmatched, winning team for the people of Virginia.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill: Never have so many... been so positively changed... by so few... for so much... so fast!

And I dearly thank my wonderful wife Susan, whose love, respect and friendship has so enriched my life, and that of our children. She has been a tremendous, graceful First Lady, always working and volunteering to promote tourism, breast cancer awareness and other important causes and ideas. She also has been a dignified, intelligent and beautiful "Ambassador for Virginia" throughout our Commonwealth and all around the world.

Susan, you are an inspiration to me each day. And whether I'm Governor or not, you will always be my First Lady!

PASSING THE TORCH

In closing, I have saved and carried with me a quote by George Bernard Shaw. It inspires and motivates me, and I would like to share it with you this evening. He wrote:

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community. And as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die
for the harder I work, the more I live!

Life is no "brief candle" to me. It is sort of a splendid torch
which I have got hold of for a moment.

And I want to make it burn as brightly as possible
-- before handing it on to future generations!

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope and pray that our Commonwealth will continue to be blessed with people of exemplary character, high ideals and enduring resolve.

And may those bells of opportunity keep ringing -- in this new year and always -- throughout our beloved Virginia! Thank you all so very much.

NOTE: These are Governor Allen's prepared remarks.

