

Mayor Patrick Cannon
Working Together Works
Oath of Office Speech
December 2, 2013

Good evening.

This Chamber is full of such rich history.

We gather here tonight, surrounded by the many community leaders of today, not just to swear in a new Mayor, but to start the next chapter of the history of our great City.

I think of Mayors who have come before me, each with different challenges and opportunities, but all with the same goal in mind....moving Charlotte toward its destiny.

- Stan Brookshire was Mayor when I was born. His challenges were many ranging from desegregation to a modern freeway system.
- Eddie Knox, Mayor during my middle school years and my Mom's favorite. So much progress in his two terms that I can't name them all... First Baptist Church in Uptown was reborn as Spirit Square Center for the Arts...Tryon Street turned into a transit mall...and Charlotte's 3rd airport terminal opened to name a few.
- Harvey Gantt, the first African American Mayor of Charlotte and one who believed in establishing strong relationships.
- Richard Vinroot, a Mayor who was a great consensus builder within the Council.
- Pat McCrory, a public safety and transit advocate as well as our longest serving Mayor, who is now Governor of our State.
- Anthony Foxx, with a transit focused agenda, brought the Democratic National Convention to the Queen City and is now the Secretary of Transportation.
- And, of course, my friend and colleague of many years, Patsy Kinsey, in her five months as Mayor, continued to carry the torch on important issues to our City.

These are Mayors who all knew something every leader should....working together works.

In the words of Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Mayors and Councils—past and present—have focused on opportunities in which government could serve as a catalyst, facilitator, partner and participant for success. We must be prepared to lead and to follow.

We work hand-in-hand with citizens, business leaders, charities, community organizers and faith leaders for the betterment of Charlotte. And, we work hand in hand with the City's professional staff – the over 6,000 men and women who provide essential services to our City.

Our success hinges not on the efforts of few, but the sweat of many. Why? Because working together works.

As I look toward the future, as your newly-elected Mayor, my fundamental goal remains the same as those who preceded me...moving Charlotte forward with the same collaborative spirit that has always existed in this “can do” and “will do” city.

However, to achieve a win for everyone, throughout our city and region, it takes a collective “can do” and “will do” attitude.

Our priorities over the next two years are not my personal wants but rather the community's needs and the city's aspirations.

Working together – they include....

- Economic Development and Global Competitiveness;
- Transportation
- Housing
- Jobs and Opportunities for All and,
- Community Safety through Prevention

We can and will make progress in each of these areas. Let's briefly examine how.

Charlotte's history is steeped in commerce starting with its humble beginnings at the intersection of two local trading paths in the heart of Center City at Trade and Tryon. As the world has become increasingly connected, Charlotte has emerged as a global intersection allowing industries located here to create, import, manufacture and deliver anywhere and anytime. We must capitalize on these opportunities and increase our global competitive edge. Here are five areas where we can do so...

Currently the 6th busiest, **Charlotte Douglas International** provides a gateway to the U.S. and the world through our reputation as one of the lowest cost, highest service airports, and soon to be the second largest hub to the world's largest airline, the new American Airlines. More gates to attract other carriers for more jobs and competition will provide a real opportunity for Charlotte and the region through this economic engine.

The **Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility** opens early next year, linking rail and truck service to east coast seaports. With leadership that is intentional, the intermodal will have a \$7.6 billion impact over the next 20 years. We will maximize this facility by improving the infrastructure around it and promoting development that diversifies us even more businesswise as we work to make Charlotte a global hub for the distribution of goods as the expansion of the Panama Canal occurs.

If we suggest to our youth that they need to be able to compete on the international stage, then Charlotte should have leaders operating with a global mindset, working with domestic and international political and business leadership. The success of this intermodal effort, with creating this global hub in mind, will create both blue and white collar job opportunities, expand our tax base for continued investment in the city across the board and generate positive attention for not only Charlotte, but the region and the State of North Carolina.

Our **regional transit system** reached new milestones this year. Transit is the backbone of our future as the region grows by 70% to more than 2.5 million people over the next 20 years. We must continue smart redevelopment all along the Lynx Blue Line from the University in the North to our southern border. We must work together to find funding solutions for other transit lines and for the complete transportation system for cars, walkers and bikers. And, we must let nothing prevent us from reaching our goals. A thriving global City is one that can move people and goods.

We must be **entrepreneurial and inclusive**. Of course Charlotte's large employers are economic drivers, but so are the small businesses and entrepreneurs willing to take risks and follow their dreams. As Mayor, I will work hard to foster a rich entrepreneurial environment where startups can flourish. I'll do that by supporting resources such as Packard Place, serving as a connector for public and private resources and making it known that Charlotte welcomes and embraces entrepreneurs.

The City of Charlotte has a long history of creating and implementing strategies to support local businesses, including two programs we must make more accessible and more impactful. They are:

The Charlotte Business INclusion program, adopted earlier this year. It enhances competition in City contracting and procurement opportunities for Minority, Women and Small Business Enterprises and

The Business Façade Grant Program, which must be reinvigorated. It provides matching funds to property owners to improve the "curb appeal" of their businesses and the overall image of their communities, which helps spur other development.

Finally, as part of our competitiveness, **we must make Charlotte the easiest place to do business**, to start or relocate a business, to build commercial and residential structures, and to renovate our existing buildings. I have asked the Chair of the County Commission and she has agreed to join me in examining the zoning and permitting processes shared by the City and County to ensure that our respective work is seamless to businesses, consistent, efficient...in short, to ensure that there is no better place to develop and do business than in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Economic Development and Global Competitiveness provide the foundation needed to generate resources for us to pursue all of our other goals and achieve our destiny.

We aspire to be a top global city and we can only achieve this by working together: the city, county, state, different Chambers of Commerce, businesses large and small, Central Piedmont Community College, area universities, the faith-based community along with the citizens of Charlotte all in one common lock step. We must ensure that we include all voices of Charlotte.

Our future depends on our youth. They will fill our seats tomorrow so TODAY we must commit to provide them the skills and experiences they will need to be successful.

The Mayor's Youth Employment Program supported 3200 youth last year and we need to expand further. I've said it before and I'll say it again, we need a better balance of both white collar AND blue collar jobs so everyone has a potential opportunity. We need real work experiences and apprenticeships from a broader range of businesses to fill all of the jobs that a diverse economy demands.

An economically productive city will also be a safer city and a safer city will be a more competitive city in the global economy. Thus, in addition to jobs, we also must promote community safety through prevention.

We are all proud of our historically low crime rates, but together we can do more.

As I have always said, a neighborhood watch program means nothing if no one is watching. Watching is not someone else's job. It's the job of each of us in concert with our public safety officers. It's also our responsibility to support our youth and people at risk of violence.

A key to who I am and how I got here today came from having mentors as a youngster through Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America. Thanks Jake and Phil for the mentors you were. I am committed to expanding the Mayor's Mentoring Alliance to give other young people the opportunity I had then and today. I will also strongly support the cadet and explorer programs with our police and fire departments to build relationships between youth and public safety officials and open career doors for them.

Together we will prepare the next generation of leaders by providing them with valuable life experiences and supporting them with caring community relationships.

Additionally, we must remember those who need to re-enter society's economic mainstream. Whether it's the ex-offender looking for a second chance or a military veteran returning from the battlefield, we must help their transitions back into society, providing them affordable housing, training, counseling and most importantly: jobs.

We must also increase efforts to prevent domestic violence through partners like Safe Alliance and the Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage which just merged with an organization that I support called eNOugh.

We need to do more to prevent the victimization and despair that comes from families and individuals having no place to call home. More than 2,000 people are homeless on any given night in Charlotte-Mecklenburg due to the lack of supportive and affordable housing. We can do better as a society and we will through our partnerships that provide supportive housing developments.

Global competitiveness, jobs, transit, housing and community safety for all...from our most successful to our most vulnerable can be realized. We can do this!

As Mayor, I commit to collaboration, leading by example, because working together works. For too long Charlotte has been known as the "Great State of Mecklenburg." We should reject this notion and

instead, demonstrate that we are a Great City of Opportunity, part of the great State of North Carolina and that Charlotte is prepared to partner, not only with our county of Mecklenburg and the towns and cities within and around it, but also with our General Assembly and the entire state.

Within the City, I will be a full partner to the business community, the faith community, the philanthropic community, and the residents of our neighborhoods.

I often like to share a passage my mother posted in our home when I was in middle school that has kept me grounded ever since. It read: "You who think you know it all, are very annoying to those of us that already do." While the author is unknown, the message is clear: Nobody likes a know it all.

As Mayor, I will look to, listen to and partner with subject matter experts to make Charlotte an even better place for all of us to live, work, recreate, and raise a family.

All of our interests and successes are linked. Together, let's write this next Chapter so that future Charlotteans will look back on our progress with amazement and admiration.

All those seated or standing in this Chamber tonight in favor of working together, let it be known by saying Aye. All opposed?

The aye's have it.

Thanks for your support and being here on this important night.

God bless the wonderful City of Charlotte and our region.

God bless the great State of North Carolina, and God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.