

Distinguished guests....

Senator Tarr, Representative Kelcourse, Mayor Gove, Honorable Former Mayors, City Councilors, School Committee Members, Superintendent Gallagher, Sheriff Coppinger, residents, friends, and family, thank you all for being here today.

To my beautiful wife Jessie and my three amazing children Sadie, Ruby and Oliver, thank you for taking this journey with me.

To the voters of Newburyport, I stand here today for you. During the campaign, I said time and time again that to be elected mayor was a dream of mine since I was a young Clipper. As we move forward as one people who individually and collectively love our city, I am humbled by the servant leadership I witness everyday- here at City Hall, in our schools, community groups, and neighborhoods. After months of hearing your stories and listening to your voices, my responsibility now as mayor is really an opportunity. An opportunity to bring your stories to the table, and hear all of the voices that deserve to be heard.

It is not the first time Newburyport has been in the business of consensus-building. Our storied history began as a beacon to ships needing a port to find their way, and became a place to dwell, to prosper, and to thrive. From the very beginning, Newburyporters from all walks of life had to learn to live and work together. With the passage of time, the city grew, in size and number, but the story is the same. Newburyporters have and always will be a community of doers. Citizens who see a problem and work to solve it, people who commit to service and teach our children the spirit of volunteerism, creating generations of service for years to come. It is this kind of consensus-building that has led to the fulfillment of many city projects, past, present, and into our future. A future where young people are inspired to support their local community. A future where an active citizenry come together to share new ideas, united in a vision for a more inclusive city, a more innovative city, a city with an invigorated step toward a better tomorrow.

In the promise to move toward a better tomorrow, I think often about the Newburyporters past and present who have had the greatest influence on my own life. I was fortunate enough to be raised in a family whose love for Newburyport never faltered and gave so much of their time and talent to make the city a better place, a safer port, a community of eager doers and helping neighbors in the business of lifting each other up.

I also feel fortunate to have been around strong leaders at a very young age, whose example quietly pushed me towards service to my community. The first Newburyporter I knew beyond my front door was my grandfather Warren Oliver Page, a proud 1940 graduate of Newburyport High School. Gramps

was part of what Tom Brokaw called the “Greatest Generation,” who went on to serve in the Coast Guard during World War II. Like many his age, he jumped at the chance to serve his country, defend our nation, stand firm and fight injustices far from our native shores. Answering the call of service did not come without sacrifice. Gramps left his beautiful young bride and high school sweetheart, Margaret Anne Daley at home caring for the first of their six children. My grandmother went on to a career in nursing at Anna Jaques hospital where she became head of purchasing. My grandfather’s career started in the fire department where he rose through the ranks quickly to become the city’s first permanent fire chief. He was an earnest and strong presence in the fire house and the cornerstone of our family. The roots of my Irish heritage began with songs and stories told in my Gramps’ gravelly voice, all with the same contagious themes of friendship, loyalty, and love. He was a true to life example of the “family comes first’ mantra. Gramps expected that of his firefighters, and he led by that example. When my grandmother was stricken with polio, it became his life’s work looking after his “Maggie” and the Chief looked out for his firefighters with the same kind of servant leadership. He knew that at the heart of any department in the city is the people, and you take care of people.

My father, Neil Reardon, is also an incredible leader who I observed closely from a very young age and learned many valuable lessons on how to take care of people, none more important than the value of hard work. When I was born, my father was not yet the legendary teacher and coach he would one day become. He was a 25 year old education student at Salem State by day and a janitor at Anna Jaques Hospital cleaning operating rooms by night. He carried this strong work ethic throughout his career. When I was a kid, a typical day in the life of my dad was rising at 3am and delivering The Boston Globe throughout many city neighborhoods. He’d finish in time for school to begin, where he would teach a classroom full of faithful 4th graders and then end the work day coaching one of his many formidable teams. My siblings and I all wanted to spend as much time as we could with Dad, and would tag along with him whenever we could. We grew up in gymnasiums, courts, and playing fields, watching how he led people, and wanting to be just like dad. When leading people and teams of people, one of the most important lessons learned from Dad is how to put the right people in the right roles to optimize success. Aces in places is what Dad used to say, and my father was a true master at getting the most out of his players. Teams are human organizations and each player was different from the next, but played pivotal roles in executing the game plan. Each had to be coached and encouraged differently. We have so many wonderful people here in Newburyport working for our great city and I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you. For any goal to be met, any purpose fulfilled, any job well done, it begins and ends with people.

Knowing the people that most influenced me growing up, there was no question of my admiration for the mayors that came before me. Byron Matthews, Dick Sullivan, and Peter Matthews were larger than life to me in my earliest days on Congress Street and many an afternoon at my grandparents’ house at 1 North Atkinson. Ed Molin was the epitome of consistent educational leadership and putting our city’s students first. Lisa Mead was a skilled delegate who inspired so many citizens, Chris Sullivan stepped up to serve as mayor and his City Council campaign was the first one I worked on as a young high school student. Mary Carrier brought an infectious energy to City Hall. John Moak taught me how to run a grassroots campaign that focused on people and Mary Ann Clancy also answered her hometown’s call to serve.

There comes a time in our country, city, and community, where the baton passes to the next generation. I want to thank Donna Holaday for her 12 years of selfless and distinguished service to Newburyport as our mayor. It is in that spirit of service that we stand before you today, and by we, I mean myself, and the other elected officials here today, asking you to get involved. I encourage you to step off the sidelines. Join a city commission or board, volunteer at our schools or senior center. There is so much expertise and excellence in our exceptional city. Just imagine what this community of doers can do together.

When I think of the city where I grew up, I see a Newburyport steeped in tradition and promise, family and new beginnings. It is with this common thread that we start anew, loyal to what makes Newburyport that beacon- a thriving arts community, a bustling historic downtown, a hub of industry and innovation, a hometown that puts the education and safety of our children first, an epicenter that supports local businesses, and a place where all people feel accepted, valued, and welcomed.

And so we move, Onward! Forward!, inspired by our history, strengthened by those who serve our community today, and confident in the bright future ahead of us. May God continue to bless our country, our troops who defend our freedom, and our great city of Newburyport, and the people who call it home.

Thank you so very much.