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[Inaugural Address]
[James Burruss Edwards]

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ASE AT NOON, JANUARY 14, 1975:

GOVERNOR WEST, DISTINGUISHED PLATFORM GUESTS, MY FELLOW SOUTH CAROLINIANS:

IT IS WITH COMPLETE HUMILITY THAT I COME BEFORE YOU TODAY AS THE 86th GOVERNOR OF A PROUD SOUTH CAROLINA. I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR SHARING THE JOY AND EXCITEMENT OF THIS DAY WITH ME.

AS I ASSUME THIS HIGH OFFICE, I AM MINDFUL THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME GREAT HONOR. MY FAMILY AND I ARE MOST APPRECIATIVE.

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME YOUR CONFIDENCE -- I ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY. YOU HAVE EXPRESSED TIMELY CONCERN IN YOUR MANDATE -- I PROMISE TO RESPOND.

TODAY MARKS A NEW BEGINNING FOR SOUTH CAROLINA AND ME. THOSE WHO EMBARK ON NEW JOURNEYS AND ADVENTURES MUST SUPPLY GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION TO THEIR HOPES OF REACHING THEIR APPOINTED DESTINATIONS. FOR OUR BEGINNING TODAY, I BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR BEST SOURCE OF DIRECTION. IN II CHRONICLES, GOD PROVIDES US PROMISE:

"IF MY PEOPLE WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY, AND SEARCH FOR ME, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, I WILL HEAR THEM FROM HEAVEN AND FORGIVE THEIR SINS AND HEAL THEIR LAND."

I BELIEVE GOD'S WORD CAN PROVIDE US WITH STRENGTH AND COMFORT WHEN WE OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, AND KEEP OUR FAITH STRONG. MEN CAN BUILD AND LAUNCH SHIPS OF STATE, BUT WITHOUT GOD'S HELP, THE SAILING IS IMPOSSIBLE. LET US ALWAYS SEEK HIS GUIDANCE AND HIS HELP AS WE CHART OUR COURSE INTO THE FUTURE.

WE SOUTH CAROLINIANS, AMERICANS ALL, LIVE IN A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY.

OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY IS AFFLICTED WITH UNCERTAINTY.

OUR LONG-RANGE ENERGY SUPPLIES REMAIN IN QUESTION.

OUR MORALE IS EBBING LOW.

OUR GENERAL PROGRESS AS A PROUD, STRONG NATION SEEMS STUNTED.

OBVIOUSLY, THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS, BUT WE WILL NEVER FIND ANSWERS, SO LONG AS WE CONCENTRATE ON THE PROBLEMS.

THIS IS A TIME TO SOLVE PROBLEMS, NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT THEM ... A TIME FOR TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S RIGHT WITH AMERICA ... A TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE GREATNESS OF THIS GIANT-OF-A-NATION THAT HAS COMPASSIONATELY GIVEN OF MORE RESOURCES TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND HAS WON MORE WARS IN DEFENSE OF MAN'S FREEDOM THAN ANY NATION IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND.

IT IS A TIME TO MATCH ACTIONS TO OUR CONCERNS.

IT IS TIME FOR US TO TEACH, TALK, TELL, AND SELL AMERICA AND SOUTH CAROLINA.

AMERICANS MUST NEVER FEEL SORRY FOR AMERICA -- THAT IS A VIOLATION OF OUR HERITAGE! THE TRUTH IS THAT AMERICA IS AMERICANS, JUST AS SOUTH CAROLINA IS SOUTH CAROLINIANS. OUR COUNTRY IS WHAT WE MAKE IT; WHAT WE INSIST THAT IT BE.

SOUTH CAROLINA TO ME IS 2.8 MILLION GREAT PEOPLE -- BLACK, WHITE, RICH AND POOR, ALL STANDING TALL, AND READY TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO OVERCOME ANY HARDSHIPS THAT LIE AHEAD. CONQUERING HARDSHIPS IS VERY MUCH A PART OF THE LIFE OF OUR STATE AND NATION.

OUR TIMES ARE NOT UNLIKE THOSE FACED BY OUR FOREFATHERS. THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE JUST AS PERSONAL TODAY, AND THE OBLIGATIONS JUST AS GREAT. CAROLINIANS PREVAILED AT THE BIRTH OF OUR NATION -- FORT SULLIVAN, CAMDEN, KINGS MOUNTAIN AND COWPENS. THEY STOOD TALL IN THE AGONY OF DEFEAT AND IN THE TRIUMPH OF VICTORY. THEY SURMOUNTED THE CHALLENGES OF THE PAST, AND WE WILL ACCEPT THOSE OF THE FUTURE. WE ARE A PEOPLE OF SOUND PRINCIPLE.

WE CAN BE CONFIDENT, FOR WHATEVER WE FACE TODAY, WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO PREVAIL. WHAT WE MUST BE SURE OF IS THAT WE HAVE THE WILL TO PREVAIL, AND WE MUST REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT IT IS NOT GOVERNMENT, BUT PEOPLE WHO CREATE THIS WILL.

LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN OUR LAND, EXCEPT THE LEVEL OF OUR SPIRIT. WE AMERICANS MUST GET BACK TO THE BUSINESS OF BEING AMERICANS, AND WHEN WE DO, OUR PROBLEMS WILL THAW IN THE WARM SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM.

THE IMPENDING BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE OF OUR NATION'S BIRTH OFFERS US A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PRODUCE A TIMELY REGENERATION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

HISTORY IS FULL OF THE PART SOUTH CAROLINA PLAYED IN THE CREATION OF AMERICA. OUR STATE CAN AGAIN LEAD THE WAY IN RETURNING TRUE MEANING TO THE "SPIRIT OF '76." YES, LET US ALL COMMIT OURSELVES NOT TO JUST A CELEBRATION, BUT TO A RE-DEDICATION TO THE PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS THAT BROUGHT A YOUNG NATION TO GREATNESS.

WE LIVE IN A STATE THAT GIVES US A FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO ANTICIPATE EXCITEMENT AND GREAT OPPORTUNITY. TODAY, SOUTH

CAROLINA ENJOYS RELATIVE ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES. WE CONTINUE TO BE PRODUCTIVE IN AGRICULTURE; WE HAVE A SOLID BASE IN INDUSTRY; WE ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MANY GOD-GIVEN ASSETS, SUCH AS OUR SEASHORES, AND OUR PORTS AND HARBORS WHICH WE HAVE AS THRESHOLDS TO THE WORLD. BUT, MOST OF ALL, WE HAVE 2.8 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN WHO STILL BELIEVE IN GIVING A DAY'S WORK IN RETURN FOR A DAY'S PAY. WE HAVE TRULY BEEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE AMERICA AT ITS VERY BEST!!

I WANT TO LET IT BE KNOWN LOUD AND CLEAR THAT, DURING THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL HONOR THOSE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF SOUTH CAROLINA, THOSE PRODUCERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES, WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING OUR SOUND ECONOMIC FUTURE.

HARD WORK, DEDICATION, AND RESOLVE TO CREATE NEW WAYS OF FULFILLING OUR GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IS A LESSON OF OUR FOREFATHERS. THIS WILL SERVE US WELL AS WE ENDEAVOR TO REACH OUR POTENTIAL OF GREAT ACHIEVEMENT, WHICH WILL BENEFIT GENERATIONS TO COME. THE GOALS OF MY ADMINISTRATION WILL BE SET HIGH, AND

KEPT IN SHARP FOCUS. TO FRUSTRATIONS AND BURDENS WE SHALL REACT WITH MATURITY AND QUIET DETERMINATION. I BELIEVE THAT WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN CONFIDENTLY CHART A COURSE TOWARD A NEW SUMMIT OF PROSPERITY FOR ALL SOUTH CAROLINIANS, AND WE CAN BEGIN OUR JOURNEY TODAY!

BEGINNING WITH THE STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS, AND IN THE WEEKS AHEAD, I SHALL BE SPECIFIC IN OUTLINING THE PLANS AND PROPOSALS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL BE REFORM-MINDED, FOR THAT IS A PART OF OUR MANDATE. WE WILL NOT EMBARK ON A CARELESS ADVENTURE OF CHANGE. THERE WILL BE NO ARBITRARY UPROOTING OF CUSTOMS, AND INSTITUTIONS, BECAUSE CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF CHANGE DEFEATS ALL GOOD PURPOSE. WE MUST REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT CHANGE HAS BEEN THE ONE CONSTANT OF HISTORY. OUR JOB IS TO DIRECT CHANGE IN A RESPONSIBLE AND OPEN WAY TO HELP OUR PEOPLE. WE SHALL VIEW CHANGE AS THE PRODUCT OF OPPORTUNITY, AND SEEK IT OUT ACCORDINGLY.

ETHICS LEGISLATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND TAX REFORM WILL BE TOPICS HIGH ON THE LIST OF PRIORITIES.

THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL CREATE THE BEGINNING OF A SYSTEM OF HEALTH CARE THAT WILL PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY OF QUALITY CARE TO ALL OUR PEOPLE.

EDUCATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ANY EFFORT TO ELEVATE THE DIGNITY AND PROSPERITY OF OUR PEOPLE. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE SHALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO REFORM OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO ASSURE EXCELLENCE IN STATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT ALL LEVELS.

THIS ADMINISTRATION IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ALARMING INCREASE IN CRIME IN OUR STATE. WE INTEND TO SEND THE CRIMINALS A FIRM MESSAGE -- THAT WHILE WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES, WE ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RIGHTS, FREEDOMS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OF OUR LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS. JUDICIAL REFORM IS A MUST.

I ENLIST THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN RE-ASSESSING THE OLD IDEAS, BELIEFS, AND PATTERNS OF OUR STATE GOVERNMENT. THIS IS IN ORDER.

SOUTH CAROLINA IS FORTUNATE IN THE QUALITY OF ITS LEGISLATORS. THEY ARE MEN AND WOMEN SINCERELY COMMITTED TO SOUTH CAROLINA

AND ITS FUTURE. TO YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE, I PLEDGE MY COMPLETE COOPERATION. I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. I BEGIN NOT WITH ANY PARTISAN GOALS, OR DEBTS TO ANY SPECIAL INTERESTS, BUT RATHER AS THE RECIPIENT OF A PUBLIC TRUST FROM 2.8 MILLION GREAT PEOPLE; PEOPLE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR LEADERSHIP THAT IS NOT CONCERNED WITH POLITICS, BUT DEDICATED TO BUILDING RESPONSIVE AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT. LET US ALL REACH ACROSS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS, AND WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUR STATE, AND EFFECTIVELY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

TO MY FELLOW SOUTH CAROLINIANS, I WOULD REMIND YOU THAT SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNMENT DEPENDS UPON INVOLVEMENT OF ALL ITS CITIZENS. PROPER LEADERSHIP CAN PROVIDE ONLY A COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS, AND IT CAN, BY ITS OWN SUCCESS, RESTORE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT CAN BE DONE BY INDIVIDUALS. IN THE END, THOUGH, INDIVIDUAL SOUTH CAROLINIANS GIVE SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNMENT ITS FORCE AND MEANING.

THIS ADMINISTRATION PLEDGES ITSELF TO COMPLETE OPENNESS. WE WANT OUR PEOPLE TO BE AWARE OF OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, OUR PROBLEMS AND OUR ACHIEVEMENTS. I HAVE AN ABIDING FAITH

THAT IF OUR PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF OUR PROBLEMS, THEY WILL RISE TO THE OCCASION AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT NEEDED SOLUTIONS.

THE ORDER AND SPIRIT OF OUR STATE'S PAST WILL SERVE US WELL AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE. THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT BE SHORT-SIGHTED IN SETTING GOALS. OUR RICH HERITAGE REQUIRES US TO PLAN WITH THE GENERATIONS OF TOMORROW IN MIND. LET US ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THE FUTURE DOES NOT BELONG TO THOSE WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH TODAY. WE IN SOUTH CAROLINA HAVE EVERY REASON TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH POSITIVE FAITH. WE MUST NOT ACQUIESCE TO THE INSIDIOUS VIRUS OF FEAR. LET US PLACE OUR EMPHASIS ON DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY TO BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW. LET US KEEP OUR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS POSITIVE AND OUR SPIRITS HIGH. HISTORY WILL JUDGE US AND, YES, IN TIME WE SHALL JUDGE OURSELVES, ON HOW WE USED OUR TALENTS AND RESOURCES TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.

I INVITE EACH OF YOU TO JOIN ME IN RE-DEDICATING OURSELVES TO THE END THAT SOUTH CAROLINA CAN ALWAYS VIEW THE PAST WITH PRIDE ... THE PRESENT WITH SECURITY ... AND THE FUTURE WITH



CONFIDENCE. LET THIS BE THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE OF OUR ACTIONS AND THE BEST EXPRESSION OF OUR GOALS -- NOT ONLY FOR THIS ADMINISTRATION, BUT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

THE GREATNESS OF OUR LAND IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DREAM AND TO BUILD. AN ANONYMOUS AUTHOR SAID, "I HAVE DREAMED MAN'S DREAMS THAT NEVER CAME TRUE --- I HAVE SEEN THEM VANISH AT DAWN, BUT I HAVE REALIZED ENOUGH OF MY DREAMS, THANK GOD, TO MAKE ME WANT TO DREAM ON."

LET US DREAM, SOUTH CAROLINIANS, AND BUILD TOGETHER FOR A GREAT TOMORROW.

THANK YOU.