

Tom McCall's copy of his speech to the Oregon Legislative Assembly, 1973

By Tom McCall

Governor Tom McCall gave this speech to the Oregon Legislative Assembly on January 8, 1973. Like all personal copies of his speeches, it is marked up with last-minute edits and what appear to be pause marks. McCall was a master speechwriter and speaker, and this document includes good examples of his rhetorical skill and persuasive—and poetic—voice:

“Oregon is an inspiration even to those who do not come here to live. The story of Oregon’s Willamette River—our ecological Easter—has drawn cries of hurrah! from the Nation and many parts of the world. And we have heard, along with the applause for Oregon, the lamentations for states where progress has fallen prey to excess compromise.”

The speech called on the legislature to take responsibility for the ecological and economic health of the state, characterizing political action as acts of love for Oregon: “You and I can’t say that we love Oregon more than anyone else, but we love this State as much as those who say they love it the most.” He then outlined an ambitious legislative agenda that included tax and housing reform, beach and wildlife protections, and fiscal responsibility.

As he wrapped up his address, McCall described the participation in the legislative process in moral terms—a reflection of his belief that government and those who govern can be forces of good in people’s lives:

“In Oregon, our accomplishments of the next moments, days and months will be—as before—the result of the labors of people who gave the best of themselves, of public servants who put the common good ahead of personal or party interest.

“We will not accomplish all that we as individuals believe that we should, for there must be conciliation, mediation and compromise even upon the noblest of thoughts. Yet we will give the utmost of ourselves to fulfill rising expectations.”

Read the entire speech [here](#).

Written by A.E. Platt, 2016

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