

Mayor Lovely A. Warren Second Inauguration Speech

Jan. 1, 2018

Today I begin my second term as Mayor after a hard-fought election.

But I am not satisfied.

And I want you to be dissatisfied with me.

Let us all be dissatisfied, together.

Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort from the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice.

Let us be dissatisfied until those who live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security.

Let us be dissatisfied until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history, and every family will live in a decent, sanitary home.

Let us be dissatisfied until the dark yesterdays of (underperforming) schools will be transformed into bright tomorrows of quality education.

Let us be dissatisfied until integration is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity.

Yes, let us be dissatisfied together.

But don't be dissatisfied because I said so.

These are not *my* words.

These are the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

They were among the final words of his life - the last chapter of his powerful, but sadly, unfinished legacy.

We don't often talk about this, but in the last years of King's life, Dr. King started to articulate that civil rights alone does not guarantee freedom.

He said: "For we know now that it isn't enough to integrate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't have enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

In order for genuine equality to be achieved, we must have economic equality.

He was not advocating for welfare or more social programs.

He was arguing for a guaranteed income for all citizens by creating jobs that advance the social good.

"This is not only the moral thing to do," he said. "It is the intelligent thing to do."

He said poverty has no place in a modern society. There is no reason for it in today's economy.

I could not agree more.

And you know what? Dr. King was not alone in this belief.

Right here, Rochester's very own Joseph C. Wilson, founder of Xerox and namesake of my high school, was a pioneering champion of economic equality.

After the riots of 1964, Mr. Wilson took a deep interest in the underlying factors of the racial unrest in America's cities.

He reached out to the FIGHT Organization and Minister Franklin Florence Sr. to find out how he could help.

Together, they came up with a plan and launched an aggressive policy to hire more African Americans at Xerox and support black-owned businesses.

As early as 1970, Xerox was making sure black employees were involved in the hiring of black employees – even making sure a black employee was always present whenever a white manager interviewed a black candidate.

Those policies would eventually include women and other people of color.

You can draw a direct line from the work of Dr. King and Joseph Wilson to the fact that Xerox would become the *first* Fortune 500 Company to name a black woman as its CEO and president – Ursula Burns.

And you can draw a similar line to City Hall, where Rochester's first African American female Mayor is a graduate of Wilson Magnet High School and the daughter of a former Xerox employee.

And I hope Dr. King and Mr. Wilson would be proud to know that line will not end with me.

It will continue right on through my office to future generations.

We're going to start by confronting the injustice of wage disparities, which are keeping far too many of our citizens from living lives of true economic freedom.

A report completed recently by our Office of Innovation, SEIU 1199 and the Anti-Poverty Initiative is giving us a place to start this important conversation.

The report found that many of our citizens live in poverty even though they have full time jobs – and unfair wages are a key reason why.

On average, women, people of color and citizens with disabilities are earning less money than their counterparts in the same jobs in nearly every industry.

And that's happening regardless of their educational attainment.

That's just wrong - and that has to stop.

As long as I am Mayor of the city of Rochester, I will demand equal pay for equal work.

As Dr. King and Mr. Wilson would almost certainly say – it's not just the moral thing to do, it's the intelligent thing to do.

As the writers of the Proverb told us so long ago: "A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge."

Dr. King and Mr. Wilson accomplished great things in their lives. But their work was not finished.

At the time of his murder, Dr. King was organizing a "Poor People's March on Washington."

Mr. Wilson died of a heart attack while having lunch with Governor Rockefeller, who had appointed him to lead his Steering Committee on Social Problems.

Imagine if they had lived.

They had a right to be proud, but they were not satisfied.

After my first term as Mayor, I am proud of the things we have accomplished for our city.

I am proud of the projects we were able to complete, from the Inner Loop to Midtown to the Charlotte Marina.

I am proud of the investments we have made in quality, affordable housing on Main Street, Hudson Avenue and in JOSANA.

I am proud of the initiatives we have unveiled, from Kiva to VanPool to Bike Share to Beacon Schools.

I am proud that we opened City Hall to employers like del Lago, Uber and Lyft.

But like Dr. King and Mr. Wilson, I am not satisfied. My work – *our* work – is not finished.

As I start my second term as Mayor, I share what Dr. King called “divine dissatisfaction.”

Over the next four years I will work every day to answer the divine call of that dissatisfaction.

With God’s grace and His mercy, we will pick up where Dr. King and Mr. Wilson left off and try to bring true economic equality to Rochester.

Together, we will work to create in Rochester a living example of the powerful, but unfinished, legacy of these great men.

Together, we will do more than invest in our infrastructure.

Together, we will invest in our people so that our city can have social equality ...

Economic equality.

True, genuine equality.

Because I know, standing here today as the granddaughter of sharecroppers.

As the daughter of an immigrant.

As the mother of Taylor, a daughter who has her whole life ahead of her ... I understand.

And we must all understand that we have a unique opportunity to set the stage for the next generation.

And that stage must include and encompass everyone.

Talking about it is not enough. We have to *do* something about it.

I believe if there is any place in America where we can solve these problems, its right here - in Rochester.

And this task is bigger than one person. As Dr. King and Mr. Wilson showed us, we may not make it to see our work realized.

But the mission and the work must continue.

When we talk about the Fight for 15; the fight for equality; the existence of racism and homophobia.

So here we are in 2018, some 50 years later having the same discussion.

We realize the mission is bigger than one person.

Because I know – I *know* - I cannot do this alone.

I need each and every one of you with me.

We must stand together.

If this election has taught me anything, it has taught me that Rochester and its citizens are prepared to move forward.

To reach higher.

To do more.

To be greater.

However, I believe it is our job.

It is our duty.

It is our obligation to set the stage so that one day the opportunities that we all hold near and dear to our hearts can be realized by every citizen no matter their zip code.

No matter their economic background.

No matter their race.

No matter their sexual orientation.

No matter their religion.

No matter where they came from.

**Because what does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter
if he doesn't have enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?**

Thank you and God bless you all.

And God bless the city of Rochester.