

**Nick Fish Inaugural Address
Rosa Parks Elementary School
Portland, Oregon
June 13, 2008**

Thank you Tamala Newsome, Governor Barbara Roberts, and John Kroger.

Over 40 years ago, another Candidate named Fish faced the same challenge that I did this spring – the challenge of running for public office. My father lost his first race – some things apparently run in the family.

As I stand before you today, I dedicate this moment to my parents – a nurse and a member of Congress – with deep gratitude for their love and support.

I would not be here today without the support of my wife and partner, Patricia. Patty is the reason my family moved to Oregon in 1996. She is the first woman on her mother's side of the family to go to high school. Inspired by her hard-working parents, nurtured by caring and dedicated teachers, and supported by financial aid, Patty is now a professor of History at Portland State University. I draw inspiration from her dedication and commitment, for it reminds us that in America, education is *the* great equalizer.

Many of you in this room made this day possible. I wish to acknowledge in particular 3 people. Governor Barbara Roberts, Principal Tamala Newsome, and Former City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury. I am inspired by your commitment to public service, and I pledge to live up to the standards each of you has set in our community.

To Mayor Potter, and to Commissioners Saltzman, Leonard and Adams, I wish to extend my special thanks to each of you for welcoming me to City Hall with warmth and friendship as well as my terrific transition team for making my entrance to city hall seamless.

I also want to thank my host committee for today's event, as well as my campaign team. Their names are listed on the back of your in program.

As you look around this room, there are many elected officials. and community leaders. Let's acknowledge them all by giving them a round of applause for their service to our city and state.

To those who voted for me on May 20, I thank you for your support. And to those who did not, I pledge to work every day to earn your confidence.

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I come to this Council with a new vision for public service.

What is this new vision? And why is it significant?

The cornerstone of this vision for the future is defined by seven core values that guide my public service. They are as follows:

1. Opening City government to everyone;
2. Insuring housing equity;
3. Creating family wage jobs and opportunity;
4. Supporting our kids and schools;
5. Maintaining neighborhood livability;
6. Building a sustainable future for all; and
7. A commitment to social justice

My vision is to create a city that rises above our differences. For too long we have been manipulated by what keeps us apart. The time has come to unite around what brings us together.

This vision will not succeed unless we embrace creative and innovative thinking, strong management and oversight, and collaboration. It requires a commitment to the common good and not to the special interests. And it requires leadership as bold and courageous as that demonstrated by Rosa Parks.

I am drawn to public service because of my desire to change things, to improve peoples' lives, and to help those in need.

I believe these are the same values that motivate my new colleagues on the Council.

I know from this campaign that the public has great expectations for this new Council. Building on shared values, anchored by collegial relations, and inspired by the example of others, there are no limits on what we can achieve together.

We stand at the cusp of a unique moment in history, where the marriage of the new politics of collaboration and partnership promises a new day.

This is our time. The moment is now for us to work together to preserve everything we love about our City, to address the unfinished business of hunger, of poverty, and of the growing inequalities between the rich and poor.

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The path to this new vision begins here:

I will launch a Council summit on poverty. Too many of our citizens work long hours and have little to show for it; live in substandard housing, cannot afford health insurance and are under-served by parks and public transportation. We will not be a truly great city until everyone enjoys the benefits of a livable community. I know from my community service that many of the best ideas in our community come from outside City Hall.

No single city or county commissioner, state legislator, or regional partner, no matter how inspired or brilliant, can solve this problem. Instead, we must work together to seize this opportunity to end, for once and for all, the scourge of poverty.

Regardless of our intentions, no matter how big our agenda, we cannot succeed unless we earn and maintain the trust of the public every day. I will join with my colleagues to ensure transparency and accountability.

We must work every day to promote social justice within our community. This means building the alliances necessary to sustain our unity as a people, respecting differences, renewing our commitment to racial harmony. While we continue to work to remedy the wrongs of the past, I will also lead the charge to celebrate our progress, and to provide opportunities to those who for too long have been shut out from the process.

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I go to this new Council emboldened by your confidence, inspired by your courage, and humbled by the opportunity.

I ask you today to renew our shared commitment to this city we love. The road ahead will challenge us. I have no illusions. But where some see challenges, I see opportunities. Where some are overcome by cynicism and pessimism, I am encouraged.

I am encouraged because of the commitment demonstrated by the people in this room, who work tirelessly and selflessly for the betterment of our community.

I am encouraged because we have a new model for collaboration, for opportunity, and for strengthening the City's social fabric – and that model is right here. In New Columbia and this elementary school, our new Council has a light which can guide us toward a new vision for our City.

Thank you.