



First, I want to thank my friends the Baquet's, Boysie, and Arnold Baker. I also want to thank my lovely wife Dathel and my 3 wonderful children who mean the world to me.

I have invited you here today to announce my candidacy for the Mayor of the City of New Orleans. I am speaking to each and every citizen in each and every neighborhood in New Orleans and I am asking for the opportunity to serve you. I know I can solve the problems, and pursue the vision of a great future for the city of New Orleans. When elected, I will allow nothing to prevent me from dedicating my best efforts and energy in the service of our City.

I am under no illusion that this will be an easy process, but I am prepared for the challenge.

I know what's on your mind and I want to hear more from everyone, but it's no secret that New Orleans has a serious crime problem. The good news is, this is solvable problem.

We are not a city of criminals. New Orleans is a city of good, decent, hardworking, law-abiding citizens who have been plagued by a very small number of career criminals. We need to give the DA the tools and resources to prosecute them effectively, and take them off the streets. I am going to make sure that the Police Department has the training, support and leadership they need. And I am going to hold that leadership accountable for legitimate results. As the next mayor, my number one priority will be to put together a first rate team to restore safety and security to every neighborhood in New Orleans.

When I am Mayor, I will recruit and build an all-embracing, bi-partisan team of experienced professionals, analysts, and academics whose only goal is to serve the people of New Orleans. We will focus on using the best resources in every field and together, with you, the people of New Orleans, we will solve the problems facing our City.

Too often these days, when we discuss the problems of New Orleans, they are interpreted as racial issues. For example, to characterize or interpret the issue of corruption as an issue of race is unproductive and just plain wrong. And make no mistake, I will have zero tolerance for corruption. This unacceptable problem is far too important an issue for this City to combine it with the issue of race. I know I've been told that it is too politically risky to talk about race. But I'm going to take that risk. New Orleans has a tragic history of racial misunderstanding. That cannot be our future. We can't heal it by ignoring it. It's out there, and like any other problem, we have to deal with it. We all think we know about the other person. But, if we are going to get anywhere, and we must, then we need to listen and realize that today we all stand on common ground.

I was born on Marengo Street into an immigrant family where my father didn't speak English and my mother didn't speak Greek. If there is one thing I care about, it's how to solve communication problems. I want to listen to everybody. I invite everyone, from every neighborhood in New Orleans, to contribute their thoughts and ideas. We're going to set our goals for this great City, and we are going to have solid, practical plans that are fair to everybody. And then, I am going to put those plans into action and get it done. We are going to make New Orleans work.

Yes, I'm a businessman and a results oriented guy. But, let me tell you how I am going to measure results. I'm looking to improve the quality of life for every citizen in every neighborhood in New Orleans. Yes, that means jobs, in a strong, revitalized, future-oriented economy. It means an effective, trustworthy City Government that can deliver services and make this City work again. But it means so much more than that. It means safe streets, free of potholes and more playgrounds where children can safely play outside. It means every child in New Orleans deserves a great education that will prepare them for a healthy, productive future. It means accessible healthcare in every neighborhood. It means that Charity Hospital must be rebuilt as a 21st century, state of the art teaching hospital. And I will make it my priority to bring a top quality hospital, and community health care to New Orleans East.

We are going to be determined and creative, and we are going to do everything possible to revitalize this city's economy, with an eye for both getting it done soon, and laying the foundations for a prosperous future. Once again, we are going to use every tool in the mayor's toolbox, and bring together new ideas and new partnerships, to develop neighborhood commercial districts. I am talking about neighborhood grocery stores, pharmacies, shops and healthy restaurants, I am talking about helping small businesses and keeping money in the community. Putting local contractors to work will be a top priority of my administration. Our dollars need to stay at home and feed our families. I am talking about working with the airlines for more non-stop flights to bring the world back to New Orleans.

Which brings me to the urgent and essential goal of eliminating blight. And not just for the tourists, but for every neighborhood in this city. This is about public morale, quality of life, and it's a matter of property values and economic survival. New Orleans was, and will be again, one of the most beautiful and unique cities in the world. We have to take better care of this treasure of a city and take it forward into its rebirth. And I will take great care of this beautiful city.

These are my reasons are for running for Mayor. And these, are my reasons for running for Mayor. They are my children. And they are your children.

It would be my great honor to serve all the citizens of New Orleans and I humbly submit myself to you as a dedicated public servant.