

Office of Mayor James E. Harrington
Inaugural Address
January 7, 2008

Good morning Mr. President, Mr. Clerk, Distinguished members of the City Council and School Committee, Fr. Flavin, Reverend Walker, Rabbi Cohen, Mayors Wainwright and Yunits and Citizens of Brockton.

It is an honor and a privilege to stand before you this morning to begin my second term as Mayor of the great City of Brockton. I would like to thank the people of Brockton for the opportunity to continue the work we have begun.

I am extremely fortunate to be able to share this day with my family. My mother is here; Mom. My wife Karen: who has been my partner in every aspect of my life. Our children: Jimmy, Patrick, Shannon and Tracy, who have made us so proud. Our extended family: my daughters-in-law, Ann and Diane, my son-in-law, Donnie and our awesome grandchildren: Hailey, Patrick, James, Megan, Joey, and Christina, I love you all. To my sisters and their spouses: Maryann, Kenny, Terry and Jim. I want to thank you for all your support over the years.

Our State Legislators make an immeasurable contribution to the quality of life for all Brockton residents in their role as advocates for the city. I want to take a moment to acknowledge Senator Robert Creedon, Representative Geraldine Creedon, Representative Christine Canavan and Representative Thomas Kennedy. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to working with you in the days ahead.

Congratulations to all of our City Councilors. The people of Brockton chose to keep your team intact. I believe it was a wise decision, and is a tribute to your professionalism and commitment to this great City. I would also like to congratulate the School Committee members for their commitment to serve the children of Brockton.

I am grateful to the conscientious, committed people in city government and the local business community who have worked so hard these past two years to leave a legacy of a healthier and safer environment for all Brocktonians, you have my deepest appreciation.

For our great city, this is a pivotal time. The decisions we make, and the actions we take, will significantly affect our quality of life, and impact generations to come. Let us recognize the vast significance of these decisions and, with integrity and wisdom, choose well.

With decisiveness, with determination, with dedication, we can make Brockton better. We will honor the rights and dignity of every person, regardless of faith, economic status and ethnic origin.

During my first term as Mayor, I focused on addressing the needs of our citizens and rebuilding their confidence in city government. With the support of city departments, my Administration has been successful in resolving a substantial number of constituent issues. I will continue to ensure that quality customer service is never compromised.

In order to better accommodate our residents we have made our website more user-friendly. Residents can now pay their real estate taxes, utilities and excise tax on-line and we have upgraded the Citizen's Request helpline to better serve you. Other new features include: video segments highlighting Brockton, the publication of the agendas and minutes of all city meetings as well as the city ordinances.

As a community, one of the biggest obstacles we face is the cost of delivering government services. Over the past two years we have found ourselves with an 8 million dollar budget deficit. We successfully balanced both budgets without a reduction in services. Some factors continue to contribute to this shortfall, such as increased health insurance and rising energy costs. We will face this year's fiscal challenges by changing some of the fundamental structures of our local government in order to achieve lower operating costs. It will not be an easy undertaking nor will it be glamorous. I will work closely with the City Council, our department heads and city unions to find solutions that minimize the effect on city services.

Economic development is the key to meeting some of our challenges. During my first term as Mayor, we witnessed a building boom here in Brockton. Many new business enterprises are now affiliated with the City of Champions. As Mayor, I will continue to work with the Brockton 21st Century Corporation, the members of the City Council and the Metro South Chamber of Commerce to recruit new businesses to areas that are suitable. In doing so, helping to expand the commercial and industrial components of our tax base and providing additional revenues to help meet our growing needs.

Despite our financial condition, I believe Brockton's future is bright. We have a plan to keep the City of Champions moving in the right direction. In an effort to protect our environment, the City of Brockton will continue to invest in "Smart Growth" districts in the downtown area. These districts invest time, attention and resources in restoring community and vitality to existing cities. They are auto-accessible, but also accommodate transit and pedestrian activity, and have a greater mix of housing and commercial opportunities as well as retail use. Smart Growth also preserves open space and protects sensitive areas such as wetlands and recognizes connections between development and quality of life.

In addition to revitalizing the downtown, we will partner with the Brockton Housing Authority to transform the Winthrop/Dover Street area. We will continue working together to revitalize neighborhoods, one at a time.

We will finalize the plans for the new Movie Theater Complex to be built at the Westgate Mall. With the support of our legislators we have been awarded funding to construct a new soccer field at Snow Park. The construction of the Manning Pool Water Park and Recreational Complex has begun. These projects will not only be a welcome addition to our city's landscape, but also great places for families to spend quality time together.

We will also continue the restoration of the War Memorial Building. The War Memorial Building was constructed to honor the brave men and women who protect our country in times of war. Public and private resources have enabled us begin the necessary renovations in order to showcase the wonderful attributes of the War Memorial as a museum to our veterans and as our Center for Performing Arts.

Additionally, I will be appointing a group of people to the “Rocky Marciano Committee.” The committee will make a recommendation as to where the World Boxing Council’s statue of the “Champ” should be placed.

Our greatest hope for the future lies within our children. As Mayor and Chairman of the School Committee, I understand how important our schools are to the future of Brockton. We must ensure that our school system has the ability to educate our students to be prepared to compete in the new world economy, so we must provide them with the right tools to succeed. Since taking office, I have spent a great deal of time working with school officials, parents and community groups to improve our schools and provide more programming for our students and I will continue to do just that. Through hard work and careful investment of resources, we are making indisputable progress:

- ❖ Brockton’s MCAS scores have been improving at a rate faster than the state average. At a recent school assembly, 249 of Brockton High’s seniors were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Award for their performance on the MCAS exam, the highest number of any school in the Commonwealth.
- ❖ Brockton High and the Gilmore Academy are among only a very few schools in New England that offer the elite International Baccalaureate Program.
- ❖ The construction of our two new schools is on schedule and they will be open in 2009.
- ❖ Full day kindergarten is no longer just a dream, but a reality here in Brockton. 90% of our kindergarten students are enrolled in a full day program, and it is our goal to get to 100% this year.

I am extremely proud of all our students and teachers and I look forward to celebrating their future successes.

In addition to providing educational opportunities inside the classroom, our commitment to our young people extends far beyond the school grounds. Through initiatives such as the Mayor’s Youth Summit, Mayors Youth Advisory Board, Brockton After Dark and the Summer of Work and Learning Program, we have had the great privilege of watching students learn the importance of teamwork and respect for themselves and others. Our Brockton After Dark program has provided safe places for our youth, where they can enjoy all kinds of fun activities, five nights a week all summer long. I made a commitment to increase the number of summer jobs for our young people and I have done just that. We have increased job opportunities by 300%. I will continue to work with the local business community to expand these opportunities.

I made a commitment to our residents to provide a safer place for our families to live. We have and will continue to hire more police officers. We have been fortunate to have received a

public safety grant to hire 8 officers. I have also partnered with the District Attorney's office and created the Quality of Life team. These teams have had a positive impact on improving the quality of life for Brocktonians. As a result overall crime is down in the city. This year, I have pledged to increase the number of teams and will attempt to open substations in high crime areas.

Challenges arise. Opportunities await. Let us all join together, united in purpose, with integrity and firm commitment, to make the decisions that will keep our neighborhoods safe and make our city an even better place in which to live, work and play. We each have a vital role in our city – as friends, workers, employers, family members, neighbors, members of civic or religious organizations, or public servants. Let us all do our best, each in our own way, to work together to make this an even better community and to build better lives for ourselves and for those who follow us.

Henry Ford said it best: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success!"

Thank you and God Bless the City of Champions!