

State of the State
Governor George Nigh
January 8, 1963

HONORABLE PRESIDENT PRO
TEMPORE OF THE SENATE,
ROY BOECHER
HONORABLE SPEAKER OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
J. D. McCARTY
MEMBERS OF THE 29TH
OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE
MY FELLOW OKLAHOMANS:

Allow me to express my gratitude to you for affording me the courtesy of appearing before the Joint Session to say a few words to you, and through you, to the people of Oklahoma.

Let me begin by saying this is a very distinct honor and privilege for me to appear before the First Joint Session of the 29th Legislature and to participate formally in two great legislative bodies have played such a major role in my life there was these past 12 years.

In 1951, just 12 short, but long, years ago I was privileged to come to these very chambers as a member of the House from Pittsburg County and to serve with pleasure with the knot-hole gang and with many of you seated here today who are among my closest friends.

Four years ago the people of Oklahoma saw fit to give me the opportunity of moving across the hall to the State Senate where I was privileged to serve as its presiding officer in the capacity of Lieutenant Governor and have served with many of you in the Senate and consider you, also, among my respected friends.

I have moved again and returned to you today in a different capacity. I don't think there are any present who would assume these to be the circumstances that I would desire. I have lost a great friend, you have lost a great friend, Oklahoma has lost a great friend in the passing of Senator Kerr. Yet, fate as it is, I with a heavy heart have been elevated to the office of Governor and appear before you today in this Joint Session.

It would be presumptuous of me under the circumstances that exist to bring you the normal "Condition of the State" message at this time from the outgoing Governor. Rather I would prefer the opportunity of just visiting with you personally for a few brief moments today about the future of Oklahoma.

As I have traveled these past years from coast to coast, but even more important into every county of our State, I have been as a circuit rider preaching the Gospel of pride and enthusiasm for Oklahoma. This has also a reverse effect for having met personally with people from your legislative districts, I. have developed an even deeper pride in them and

you and in our State.

My motivation was belief that there was a serious need in the development of Oklahoma for the implementation of the psychological forces of State industry that could only help in their growth and achievement as our rejuvenated interest in Oklahoma.

There has been, admitted by all, I believe, a hesitancy in the people of Oklahoma to speak up and tell the true story – the unchanging story of the 46th State. Many felt that the full realization of the story of Oklahoma would be achieved and there is no question of our loyalty and love, only the question of aggressiveness.

From the rank and file of John Q. Public came our champion, the one man who would tell our story, louder, longer and more lovingly than all others. Under the leadership of Robert S. Kerr, Oklahoma was seeking and finding its place in destiny.

With the full cooperation and assistance of people like Senator Monroney, the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation, the executive, and legislative bodies of our State, and a reinvigorated citizenry, Senator Kerr was guiding Oklahoma toward not only being geographically but also the true "Crossroads of the Nation."

Rather than a "State of the State" address, let's talk of the "Ship of State" with you and I, and our fellow Oklahomans serving as members of the crew, with Senator Kerr having served as the Captain at the helm of our ship. We indeed regret that the Captain is no longer at the wheel.

It has been said by others, "A great oak has fallen."

This makes more important, that united, we begin a hard driving effort to do our best possible and take up the torch. It will be difficult yes, but we have no alternative but to try.

As we look to the future, we must realize that Oklahoma is in a position for economic growth in the near future. We must let nothing deter us from reaching the goals set. Although we may, and am sure we will, disagree as to how to best accomplish our goals, we must move on. Let no man rise to be marked as an obstructionist to impede the progress and steady path forward of Oklahoma. There is enough work, enough credit, enough glory, enough good, for all of us to do – and do it we must. Let us not look back, but only straight ahead.

The great water development dream must be realized. We must see the completion of the navigation system that will bring water transportation and unforetold industry and jobs to Oklahoma. The full development of Oklahoma such as highway roads, the interstate road system, the opportunity for all Oklahomans to have adequate highway facilities must be a reality.

There must be a greater effort toward taking advantage of the opportunities of the tourist industry, in the area of additional parks and recreational facilities.

To be specific we must take up the count down for Oklahoma's continued liftoff to the space age.

From the past, has come our heritage and our motivations. From the present, we must take our wisdom and ability, to meet the future in which we can realize our just reward.

My recommendation to you as Governor, upon which I suggest speedy action, is as follows.

I am desirous as Chief Executive that a fitting and appropriate memorial be established for Senator Kerr in Oklahoma, the state which he dearly loved, and a people who returned in like amount that love.

The real memorial to Senator Kerr will live on forever in his deeds and works.

It is, however, appropriate that official recognition be taken of his service.

May I also express for the people of Oklahoma, the gratitude for your service and encouragement in your deliberations. I commend your integrity, courage and diligence. I urge you to work together and gain much for you and your State.

Let us adopt as our creed, the beliefs expressed by former United States Senator Tomas Gore: "I love Oklahoma. I love every blade of her grass. I love every grain of her sand. I am proud of her past. I am confident of her future."

Senator Ham moved that the President Pro Tempore be authorized and directed to approve for payment expenses claims for members of the Senate who attended meetings prior to the convening of the 29th Legislature of the Committees on Employment and Printing and Committees and Rules which motion was adopted.

About Digitizing the Governors' State of the State Addresses

Section 9, Article 6 of the Constitution of Oklahoma provides as follows:

“At every session of the Legislature, and immediately upon its organization, the Governor shall communicate by message, delivered to joint session of the two houses, upon the condition of the State; and shall recommend such matters to the Legislature as he shall judge expedient.”

From statehood in 1907 to present, the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors have been recorded in pamphlets, booklets, and Senate Journals. One could not foresee the toll that time would take on the earliest of these documents. When these items first arrived at the Oklahoma State Archives, the leather bindings had dried considerably, cracking the spines significantly. Due to the acidity in the paper, many pages have darkened with age. Some of the more brittle pamphlets crumble at the slightest touch.

Thus when we decided to digitize these materials, we faced two challenges: the safety of the original documents and ease of viewing/reading for patrons. Our primary objective was that the unique and historic qualities of the documents should be reflected in the website. However, older fonts would not digitize clearly when scanned and even using a flatbed scanner could cause the bindings to worsen. An image of each page would increase download time considerably and any hand-written remarks or crooked pages could be lost. We decided to retype each document with every period, comma, and misspelled word to maintain the integrity of the document while placing some unique images of the documents online. Patrons can download the addresses quicker and view them clearer as well as save, print, and zoom with the Adobe Acrobat Reader. We have learned much from our efforts and we hope that our patrons are better served in their research on the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors.