

Commissioner Nan Whaley Remarks
Swearing In Ceremony
January 4, 2010

Whenever an event like new years, birthdays, and swearing-ins come along, they always lend themselves to look back and recap before looking forward. For me, the last four years have been incredibly challenging and rewarding.

I have learned a lot. And I did not learn alone. Along the road these past four years, I have had great friends and family that have lent their support and honesty to me. A very special thanks to my husband Sam, who is always the first to tell me when my temper is out of check or when my expectations are unreasonable.

I have learned a lot about government. I cannot thank the staff of the City of Dayton enough for their time, patience, honesty and effort. Truly, the City of Dayton's staff is not heralded enough. Their consistent evenhandedness and sound fiscal prudence have earned Dayton a great reputation nationally; but like many of our treasures, it is not recognized locally. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our city.

I have learned a lot from my colleagues on the Commission. Thank you for your patience and support of me. I am so proud to be a part of a local government that always respected each other personally and professionally even when we had different priorities or didn't agree.

I have learned a lot from the citizens of Dayton. Our citizens have always been direct, telling me what's happening in their neighborhood, their perceptions of our city and what needs fixing. The pride and love we all have for our homes, our neighbors and our city always strikes me.

And I am glad I have learned a lot, because these are challenging times for Dayton. The Great Lakes region is suffering from immense job losses creating a loss of wealth in our communities and a significant rise in poverty. Job loss, foreclosures, poverty and vacant housing are just the top of the list of crises facing Dayton. Further, problems that were once viewed as a center city problem now have become region wide issues. Dayton's rise and gilded age, like the rest of the Midwest, had mostly to do with the automotive manufacturing era. The critically acclaimed documentary "Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant", the story of the area's assembly plant drawing it last breath, draws a sigh from most Daytonians as we recognize the end of an industry's era whose wealth fed, clothed and educated many of us and our family members.

I often think of what Rahm Emanuel, President Obama's Chief of Staff, has said about these times: "Never let a serious crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before."

We Daytonians have an opportunity. We have an opportunity to embrace the enormous challenges before us. We have an opportunity to redefine our neighborhoods and what they will look like the next 40 years. We have an opportunity to finally seize our wonderful system of rivers and create education and recreation uses for us and future generations to embrace. We have an opportunity to become a leader in the Midwest by making our thoroughfares and streets more bike and pedestrian friendly. We have an opportunity to work together and create serious, meaningful regional partnerships with our neighboring communities. We have an opportunity to

leverage our greatest asset of all—our aquifer—by continuing to protect it and enticing new businesses to come to our city and region because of our wonderful water.

These opportunities aren't necessarily new. In fact many have been discussed for decades. But this time in Dayton's history is new. The time for us to do something great for Dayton is upon us.