



Winter Park Chamber of Commerce
annual State of the City Luncheon
2014 January 17 ■ The Alford Inn

Winter Park State of the City Address

Presented by: the Honorable Kenneth W. Bradley

Friday, January 17, 2014

*The Alford Inn
721 W. New England Ave.
Winter Park, Florida 32789*

I. VIDEO PRESENTATION:

"Winter Park works best when Winter Park works together"

II. INTRODUCTION:

Winter Park works best, when Winter Park works together.

People don't work together the way they used to. Trouble often ensues when people don't work together. In extreme cases—feuds or wars erupt. Unfortunately, there are glaring examples of people at odds.

But today, in our City, we see outstanding examples of individuals, groups, and organizations working together—for common good. And they are being successful—because they are working together. Our State of the City address features those in our City who are working together and achieving improbable goals.

The state of our City is excellent. Our finances are strong. Our retail establishments are thriving. New homes are being built. Preservation is alive. Important issues are being addressed civilly. The outlook for our City is bright. And if we continue to work together, our success will be assured.

III. ALFOND INN:

We have the honor of physically being at one of the greatest examples of working together in 2013 – the Alford Inn.

The Gift of \$ 12.5 million for education:

In 2010, Rollins College received a \$12.5 million philanthropic gift from the Harold Alford Foundation. Members of the Alford family have graduated and been benefactors of the College for many decades.

Working with the City, this beautiful Inn was designed specifically with Winter Park in mind. Built on the site of the historic Langford Hotel--this Inn features 112 rooms, Hamilton's Kitchen, this great conference space and a world class art collection.

The Gift endows education:

The real purpose however, was not just to build an Inn, but to endow a fund for Rollins College's premier scholarship—the Alford Scholars--which provides full scholarships and financial aid to deserving students. With one of the most creative philanthropic gifts in the country, the net financial income for the Inn will be directed to the Scholars program until the endowment reaches \$50 million!

Scott Novak, a Rollins student majoring in International Relations and Philosophy with a minor in Spanish, is one of the recipients of the Alford Scholarship. In addition to his extensive college education, the scholarship has given him the ability to intern at international organizations focused on environment, political and social issues.

This past summer, Scott traveled to Ghana through a partnership with *"Think Impact"*, an organization where students help rural places develop new, entrepreneurially businesses. Scott helped villagers create a washboard business to wash clothes, a rental service and an education stipend to incentivize teachers to help educate youth. This would not be possible without the Alford Scholars program.

The Hotel spurs tourism and economic development:

The Inn itself has already exceeded tourism and economic development projections too. For example, recently "Citizen's Property Insurance" hosted their state wide board meeting here.

The Hotel is home to a multi-million dollar art collection:

And the Alford Inn at Rollins College is not your typical hotel. We sit surrounded by a multi-million dollar art collection.

The Alford Inn is truly one of the nation's best examples of creative, "outside the box" thinking. Using philanthropy as an investment for higher education while spurring economic development is indeed a "win (philanthropy), win (education), win (economic development and tourism), win (art)" for our community.

Please join me in thanking the Alford Family for their gift and Rollins College for this development! Here representing the Inn are:

- Deanne Gabel, General Manager
- Jane McClean, Director of Social Catering.
- Scott Novak--one of the great Alford Scholars.

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IV. FEED THE NEED:

In November 2013, the "Feed the Need" campaign took place to fight hunger in Winter Park and central Florida. Inspired by the tremendous need in our area, Rollins College students and a powerful group of partners came together to raise funds and canned food for the Second Harvest Food Bank—the first time ever a community wide effort had been undertaken for the Food Bank.

The founding partners were:

- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Winter Park Chamber of Commerce
- City of Winter Park
- Rollins College
- Sodexo
- Think Creative, Inc.

Lead sponsors were:

- Florida Distributing Co.
- Mayflower Retirement Community
- Winter Park Memorial Hospital

Kicking off on Halloween, the group set an improbable goal to raise \$50,000. The campaign quickly hit a nerve, as people realized there are hungry children and adults in need right here in our community. The Second Harvest Food Bank matches each dollar raised 9:1, dramatically increasing the benefit for each dollar raised.

Tuesday, December 3, was one of my proudest moments as Mayor--the campaign raised \$96,145!!! Coupled with the 9:1 match of Second Harvest Food Bank, all told, our Winter Park community raised the net effect of \$865,305!!!!

Please join me in thanking key leaders of the campaign who are here with us today:

- Gregg Higerson, Second Harvest Food Bank Vice-President
- Sasha Hausman, Second Harvest Food Bank
- Maria Diestro, Second Harvest Food Bank
- Cindy LaFronz, Rollins
- Micki Meyer, Rollins
- Jana Ricci, Mayflower Retirement Community
- Patrick Chapin, Winter Park Chamber of Commerce

When I was first elected Mayor in March 2009, I never was worried we could solve our own problems. My hope and prayer was that we could put the tremendous resources, knowledge, innovation and power evident in Winter Park to solve others' problems. What else could we do when working together?

- Greatly improve our economic environment for those disadvantaged?
- Generate better health?
- End hunger and homelessness?

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V. THE CAPEN HOUSE MOVE: HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

All true Winter Park citizens value our history. We also value our homes.

When threatened with potential demolition, one of the City's oldest homes was saved by a highly unique partnership between three of our not-for-profit organizations. As you have witnessed, the Capen House was "floated" to its new home on the grounds of the Polasek Museum.

There were numerous leaders, donors and builders personally involved in this great accomplishment. Please join me in thanking Debbie Komanski, Executive Director of the Polasek Museum and President Emeritus of Rollins College, Thad Seymour, one of the campaign's co-chairs. Also with Debbie is her husband, Judge Walter Komanski, who just retired after a distinguished, 30+ year career as an Orange County jurist. Thank you all for your service.

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VI. ANNIVERSARIES, SPECIAL EVENTS AND RECOGNITIONS:

2013 Church Anniversaries:

Earlier today we heard a powerful invocation from three of our great pastors, Reverend John Williams, Ward Chapel A M & E; Dr. Walter Jackson, First Baptist Church Winter Park; and Pastor Samuel Dade, Patmos Seventh-day Adventist Chapel. Last year each of these churches celebrated significant anniversaries of God's blessing: 125, 100 and 60 years. Together their churches commemorated 285 years of service to this community. Thank you pastors and congregations for working together, for helping in times of need and for your grace and prayers.

2014 Anniversaries:

This year many of our treasured organizations will celebrate anniversaries:

- Winter Park Health Foundation is celebrating its 20th Anniversary
- Winter Park Farmers' Market is celebrating its 35th Anniversary
- Winter Park Country Club will celebrate its Centennial anniversary in September 2014
- The Women's Club of Winter Park is celebrating their Centennial throughout 2014 as well
- As we celebrate 2014 anniversaries, I am proud to announce that the city's very special 125th Anniversary that was commemorated in 2012, next week, will be awarded the Florida League of Cities' most prestigious award – the 2013 Municipal Achievement Award for that historic milestone. Congratulations!

Thank you for working together to improve health and quality of life throughout Winter Park.

Holiday Lights:

How many of you traveled down Park Avenue this past holiday season? Weren't the new lights fantastic? Last November, more than 20 city employees came together to create the gorgeous holiday light display unlike any other in Florida. All along Park Avenue, more than 350 multi-sized and multi-colored globes danced about our heads.

It truly created a "positive" traffic jam. Thank you city staff for your creativity and work.

Winter Park Utility:

In 2013, our Winter Park Electric Utility embarked on two significant ventures. In December, staff completed interconnectivity directly to OUC.

This new connection represents a new way to work together with a neighboring utility. It will create over \$ 500,000 of annual savings while diversifying our power supply. This signifies a new relationship with OUC that will bring mutual advantages to both OUC and the city for many years to come.

We also have decided to add a solar farm to our Howell Branch yard. And, with our new power supply contracts adopted in 2013, we will be adding energy from waste via Covanta Energy. And our utility rates are less today than they were in 2004.

All of our City staff present deserve a big “thank you”!

Hometown Hero welcome parade:

Just last week, the City of Winter Park welcomed home, Lt. Chuck Nadd, a Trinity Prep. graduate, from Afghanistan. Budweiser teamed with the Department of Defense and the Veterans of Foreign Wars to film a documentary about a soldier’s homecoming. The documentary will remind all of us on the importance of honoring those who have served that we might be free.

Hundreds joined us as we gave a ticker tape parade down New England Avenue for this returning Black Hawk helicopter pilot.

Our staff worked with the various parade participants and a television production crew from Los Angeles to create and produce a great parade in less than 15 days. Great things can happen quickly when people work together!

This parade truly was a SUPER way to welcome home soldiers who have served that we might be free. Also, this parade may become a SUPER way to recognize America’s hometown, our hometown—Winter Park--for 30 seconds on a global stage in February!

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VII. SUNRAIL ARRIVES!

If you’re quiet for a moment, you can “hear the train a comin!” This year, Winter Park and central Florida will open one of our region’s most significant investments for our future—SunRail. On March 3, we will celebrate the grand opening for our new Amtrak | SunRail train station. Then in May, our whole region will welcome the arrival of SunRail. For Winter Park, this takes us back in our history, when our City was founded around a train track. As the train did 126 years ago, SunRail will forever positively impact our City.

SunRail would not be possible without the significant, inter-governmental partnership with our Federal, State, County and local governments. This shows what good can happen when governments work together.

One local resident--who also truly is a national leader--deserves our accolades for his creativity, leadership and tenacity in making SunRail possible. This local resident | national leader proves governments can work together. Please join me in thanking our own Congressman John Mica.

VIII. BASEBALL AND VOLUNTEERS:

Winter Park works best when Winter Park works together. Working together is truly a team sport.

Babe Ruth baseball league in Winter Park:

Nothing exemplifies working together for good like our Winter Park Babe Ruth baseball league. This spring, more than 600 children ranging in ages from 4 to 16 years old will participate with hundreds of adult volunteers to play baseball. But in reality our coaches and parents will be teaching our youth how to win and lose, how to exercise and how to work together.

The past three years has seen record setting participation and record setting crowds, with over 1,000 parents, aunts and uncles, brothers, sisters, grand-parents, friends and neighbors cheering on these great kids as they play—and learn life's most valuable lessons.

Each week, 35-40 games are played in Ward Park. Our teams have won Disney tournaments, district championships, state championships and been to the Cooperstown Dream Park National competition. Our team finished second the past years out of 206 teams from across the country. The League's 16-year-old Softball all-star team has made the "World Series". The teams also participate in "Buddy Ball", a league for disabled youth.

The greatest satisfaction comes watching opening day, when all the players come out in their brand new, crisp uniforms. Four year old T-Ball players run in all directions on the field until: "swoosh-h-h", their first hit! But most importantly, for more than 50 years, volunteers have taught our children how best to work together as teams.

And our City staff helped too! Marvin Walton, our Parks and Recreation Department's Turf Maintenance manager oversees 8 fields the Winter Park Youth Baseball play on plus 12 acres of multi-purpose fields, 2 adult softball fields, and park common areas—66 acres in all. Home teams and visitors alike often comment on the playing conditions, saying they are the best fields in the area or as nice as NCAA facilities.

Please join me in thanking:

- the President of Winter Park Youth Baseball George McGowan and his son, Justin
- the treasurer of Youth Baseball, Paul Missigman and his sons, Mason and Ryan
- board member Chris Taylor
- Marvin Walton, from our Parks and Recreation Department.

Bringing Minor League Baseball to Winter Park in 2015:

This week, your City Commission unanimously took an important step to study for the next 45 days whether or not to expand our park space and build a new stadium for minor league baseball. We have a generational opportunity to bring a professional baseball team to relocate here—to Winter Park. This team would put us in special company, as we would become one of only 180 cities in the United States with professional baseball. The economic impact is calculated to be \$ 6 million per year.

If this happens, it will be because of our Economic Development Board, our Community Redevelopment Advisory Board, our Parks Board, our City staff and City Commission work together with team owners.

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IX. CLOSING REMARKS:

This month, a new headstone will be placed on the grave of Mary Lee DePugh in Pineywood Cemetery. Ms. DePugh was a wonderful resident of Winter Park. Her vision and love for others inspired her and the Kraft family—working together—to establish the beautiful Gardens at DePugh Nursing Center. Employees of the center raised the money to erect this new headstone. It will read:

"Compassionate caregiver. Passionate activist. Inspired community leader.
She made Winter Park better."

On my father's headstone in Winter Park's Palm Cemetery is this simple inscription from the Old Testament, the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 41:6, KJV):

*"They helped everyone his neighbor; and every one said to his brother and sister;
be of good courage."*

The messages on these two headstones sum it up for me. We should help each other—our neighbors—to make Winter Park better. We should be sources of encouragement and support.

Winter Park works best when Winter Park works together. May God bless you and may God continue to bless the great City of Winter Park, Florida.