

Source: Marquette University Libraries; Tommy G. Thompson Collection;  
Series 2: Gubernatorial Speeches

-----  
**WISCONSIN STATEHOOD DAY ADDRESS**  
**Gov. TOMMY G. THOMPSON**  
**WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL**  
**MAY 29, 1998**  
-----

IT ALL BEGAN 150 YEARS AGO. THE MAKING OF A GREAT AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY THAT TODAY INSPIRES A PEOPLE AND DRIVES A NATION.

BORN THIS DAY IN 1848 WAS A GLORIOUS LAND NESTLED BETWEEN THE NATION'S TWO GREATEST LAKES AND ITS MIGHTIEST RIVER. A LAND SETTLED BY STRONG AND BOLD PEOPLE, RESOLUTE IN THEIR VISION FOR THE FUTURE AND DETERMINED TO MAKE THEIR EVERY ENDEAVOR A SUCCESS.

BORN THIS DAY WAS A PLACE CALLED WISCONSIN, THE 30<sup>TH</sup> STATE IN AMERICA. LITTLE DID THE NATION KNOW THE GREATNESS ABOUT TO BE UNLEASHED.

ON THE EVE OF OUR STATEHOOD, J. MCMULLEN, A SETTLER FROM SHEBOYGAN, PENNED THIS DESTINY FOR WISCONSIN. "WITH HER GREEN OCEAN-LIKE PRAIRIES, THE UNEQUALLED FERTILITY OF HER SOILS, AND FACILITIES FOR COMMERCE, SHE WILL BECOME NOT ONLY THE 'GARDEN OF THE WEST,' BUT ALSO THE RICHEST, FAIREST LAND IN OUR BROAD COUNTRY FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC."

UNCOMMON WORDS FROM A COMMON MAN. THEY ARE A SETTLER'S THOUGHTS, HIS DREAMS AND HIS VISION OF THE WISCONSIN THAT WAS YET TO BE.

TODAY, WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE THE FRUITION OF THE DREAMS OF THE SETTLERS OF THIS GREAT STATE.

WE CELEBRATE AND HONOR 150 YEARS OF HARD WORK, GROUNDBREAKING ACCOMPLISHMENTS, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES, FAMILY STRENGTH, AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF PROUD HISTORY.**

OF FRENCH TRAPPERS PILING PELTS IN SWIFT CANOES. OF PROUD INDIAN CHIEFTANS NAMED OSHKOSH, BLACKHAWK, AND OSCEOLA. OF EXPLORERS NICOLET AND MARQUETTE. AND OF SETTLERS SOLOMON JUNEAU, JAMES DOTY, AND FATHER MAZUCHELLI.

FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD THEY CAME TO FISH AND FARM, TO MINE AND MILL, TO GRIND AND CRAFT. THEY CAME TO CREATE A STATE WHERE THEY COULD BREATHE FRESH AIR, LIVE FREE AND PURSUE THEIR EVERY DREAM. AND THEY STILL COME TODAY BECAUSE OF THE UNRIVALED OPPORTUNITY THAT AWAITS THEM IN OUR STATE OF WISCONSIN.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY.**

THE EAGLE MASCOT OLD ABE SOARS THROUGH HISTORY WITH THE FURY AND MIGHT OF WISCONSIN'S IRON BRIGADE THAT PRESERVED THE UNION. WE INHERIT THE BRAVERY OF THE 32<sup>ND</sup> "RED ARROW" DIVISION – ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED DIVISIONS IN MILITARY HISTORY -- AND THE DEDICATION TO SERVICE OF A LATER GENERATION IN VIETNAM.

WE HONOR THE MODEST OLD STRUCTURES THAT SERVED AS WAY-STATIONS TO FREEDOM ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD. WE TAKE PRIDE IN BEING THE FIRST STATE TO STRIKE DOWN THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW, INSTITUTE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS AND SECURE A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO VOTE.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF INNOVATION AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE.**

FROM THE SHINING BROW OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT Poured new ways of harmonizing nature and habitat. The practical inventiveness of Christopher Latham Sholes produced the typewriter. The grace and wit of Lunt and Fontanne illuminated the Broadway stage. The beautiful art of Georgia O'Keeffe still startles the imagination.

WISCONSIN ingenuity gave America the first kindergarten, automobile, and outboard motor, as well as the hamburger and malted milk.

WE EVEN GAVE AMERICA ITS GREATEST FOOTBALL TEAM AND ITS FIRST SUPER BOWL CHAMPION.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND, THE WATER, THE SKY.**

WE ARE THE STEWARDS WHO KEEP IT PURE. THE SAND COUNTRY, THE GLADES AND GLENS, THE GENTLE GLACIER REMAINS OF THE KETTLE MORaine, THE STARK DRAMA OF THE DRIFTLESS AREA, THE CRISPNESS OF WILDLIFE-FILLED FORESTS CARESSING SPARKLING STREAMS.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT.**

WE ARE THE VANGUARD OF POLICY INNOVATION AS AMERICA'S ORIGINAL LABORATORY OF DEMOCRACY. OUR PROGRESSIVE TRADITION INSPIRED REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMS THAT

ENDED WELFARE AND LIFTED THE POOR OUT OF POVERTY THROUGH WORK AND OPPORTUNITY.

WE PROTECTED THE WORKERS OF AMERICA WITH THE FIRST UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND WORKERS COMPENSATION. AND WE DEVELOPED INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE FOR OUR FAMILIES AND A HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN.

**WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS AS THE JOB CENTER OF A NATION.**

WE CELEBRATE OUR SESQUICENTENNIAL THIS WEEK WITH THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN OUR STATE'S HISTORY. MORE PEOPLE ARE WORKING THAN EVER BEFORE, AND A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE ARE WORKING IN WISCONSIN THAN ANY STATE IN AMERICA.

WISCONSIN IS A STATE WHERE OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES – REGARDLESS OF THEIR BACKGROUND OR WHERE THEY LIVE. THE WISCONSIN DREAM LIVES FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.

**BUT MOST OF ALL, WISCONSIN IS 150 YEARS OF PEOPLE.**

A MELTING POT OF NATIONALITIES THAT COME TOGETHER TO STITCH A STRONG FABRIC OF FAMILY, FAITH AND TRADITION.

A PEOPLE THAT MAKE UP THE MOST DYNAMIC STATE IN AMERICA, UNIQUE IN ITS SIGHTS, ITS SOUNDS, ITS SUBTLETIES.

**WISCONSIN IS:**

- THE SPRAY OF SPARKS AS ANOTHER ENGINE BLOCK IS WELL CAST
- THE SMELL OF YEAST FOR BREWING
- THE REASSURING HUM OF THE MILKING MACHINE AT DUSK
- THE SLAP OF CARDS IN A FRIENDLY GAME OF EUCHRE
- POLKA MADNESS IN THE FIFTH QUARTER, WIN OR LOSE.
- THE RINGING OF CHURCH BELLS IN SADNESS AND JOY.
- THE WARM, NURTURING EMBRACE OF A PARENT AND CHILD.
- THE BEDTIME PRAYERS AND BEDTIME STORIES, INSPIRING OUR CHILDREN TO DREAM BIG DREAMS AND ACHIEVE BIG ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

ALL MAKE A STATE CALLED WISCONSIN. A PLACE WHERE HARLEYS ROAR AND EAGLES SOAR.

WHAT A SPECTACULAR 150 YEARS! AND WHAT A SPECTACULAR FUTURE LIES AHEAD.

TODAY, WE TAKE PRIDE IN KNOWING THE WISCONSIN OF 1998 EXCEEDS THE GRANDEST DREAMS AND BOLDEST VISION OF OUR FOUNDERS IN 1848.

JUST AS J. MCMULLEN PREDICTED: WISCONSIN IS, INDEED, THE RICHEST, FAIREST LAND IN OUR BROAD COUNTRY.

TODAY WE TAKE THE FIRST STEP FORWARD TO EVEN GREATER SUCCESS IN THE NEXT 150 YEARS OF OUR PROUD STATE. FOR WE ARE A PEOPLE WITH AN ABIDING BELIEF IN AN EVEN BETTER FUTURE.

AS WE EMBARK ON A NEW MILLENNIUM WHERE THE PEOPLE AND MARKETS OF EVERY NATION IN THIS WORLD ARE BUT A KEYSTROKE AWAY, WE DO SO WITH THE SAME BOLD VISION AND DETERMINATION AS OUR ANCESTORS.

LET US MAKE WISCONSIN A PLACE THAT INSPIRES THE ENTIRE WORLD WITH ITS INNOVATION AND INGENUITY. LET US MAKE WISCONSIN A PLACE THAT DRIVES THE ENTIRE WORLD FORWARD.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS WISCONSIN.

*[BAND PLAYS AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD DOES FLY-OVER.]*

THE FIRST 150 YEARS OF WISCONSIN STATEHOOD NOW PASS INTO HISTORY AND THE NEXT 150 YEARS OF THIS GREAT STATE WILL BEGIN RIGHT NOW. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WISCONSIN!

*[RING BELL]*