
State of the State Address
Gov. Tommy G. Thompson
Assembly Chambers
January 27, 1999

Speaker Jensen, President Risser, Members of the Legislature, Constitutional Officers, Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court, tribal leaders, members of the Cabinet, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I thank you and the people of Wisconsin for giving me the opportunity to address this august body of legislators for the 13th time.

The passion for making Wisconsin better that fills this “house of the people” is as invigorating to me today as it was when I was a freshman lawmaker 32 years ago.

To those who are new to this chamber, never take for granted the awesome responsibility the people have bestowed upon you – and never waiver from the challenge of building Wisconsin stronger than any state in America.

Tonight, I have the distinct honor and privilege of delivering the final State of the State address of the 20th century as we bring a glorious chapter in Wisconsin history to a close; eager to start a new one.

My friends, it is with great pride and even greater hope, that I say to you tonight: the state of state at the century’s turning point is a state of excellence.

We’re tops in America in the percentage of people working and the lowest unemployed in 30 years, the number of families covered by health insurance, the number of families leaving welfare for work, the SAT and ACT scores of our students, the enhancement of our environment, the low level of crime, the strength of our communities, and the quality of life for our people.

We proudly mark the final year of this century as champions -- symbolized, in part, by the crowning achievements of our sports teams in towns large and small.

In Elroy, we take great pride in our hometown heroes: the Royall High School baseball team that won its first state championship.

And the entire state takes pride in celebrating the 1999 Rose Bowl Champion Wisconsin Badgers. I have the honor of presenting to the people of Wisconsin Coach Barry Alvarez, his team and the 1999 Rose Bowl Trophy.

Barry, you know that I’m an avid Badger fan.

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

So when CBS football analyst and former New England Patriots running back Craig James said that the '98 Badger team was the worst team ever to represent the Big Ten in the Rose Bowl – I took it very personally.

Let's take a moment to look at the record.

(Video graphic on screens) Ron Dayne, Wisconsin Running Back, 1999 Rose Bowl: 27 carries....246 yards...4 touchdowns....Final Score – Wisconsin 38, UCLA 31.

Then there's Craig James, New England's star player in Super Bowl XX....5 carries...1 yard...0 touchdowns.Final Score – Chicago Bears 46, New England Patriots 10.

We now know two things, Barry: the Badgers are one of the most exciting teams to ever play in the Rose Bowl.

And Craig James and his New England Patriots are without a doubt the worst team to ever play in the Super Bowl.

Thank you, Barry, and congratulations to the 1998 Badgers on the most successful year in University of Wisconsin football history. Let's give them another round of applause.

These young men are indeed heroes to be held up as an example that anything is possible – no matter what the odds – if you believe in yourself, have the courage to try and the conviction to succeed.

Their endeavors hearken back to another era when Camp Randall was the training ground for the heroes who fought for freedom.

A young man eager to enter life and earn his badge of courage, donned a union uniform and took up arms against what he knew to be an injustice.

At just 16 years of age he quickly found himself in a position of command – a lieutenant.

With a confederate army deeply entrenched on a hilltop, he called on his men to charge into one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

His flag bearer was an early casualty. And when a second member of his unit attempted to raise the Wisconsin colors, that soldier, too, fell in the name of freedom.

Under heavy cannon fire, the lieutenant and future Medal of Honor recipient, young Arthur MacArthur of Milwaukee, reached down and valiantly raised our colors himself.

Outnumbered, bloodied and wounded, he turned to his troops and cried: *“On, Wisconsin!”*

On Wisconsin! Indeed.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, we stand at the threshold of one of history's great moments. At no time in human history does the dawn of a new century hold such promise and possibility.

No people are more poised to take advantage of the endless opportunities that lie ahead than the people of our great state.

We worked diligently together to prepare our state for this day when we would go forth into a new millennium. Over the last decade, we shucked the status quo, tore down the old and outdated, built the bold and embraced the daring.

Now, our challenge is to go forward -- take the work of the past decade, ply it in a new era, and stake our claim to the undiscovered treasures on the frontiers of possibility.

Tonight, we begin our journey with ambitious initiatives in education, health care, child care, W-2 and transportation -- focusing largely on our children, the first pioneers of a new millennium.

Then, in three weeks, I will present to you the remainder of the first biennial budget of the next century. It will feature a visionary package for protecting our environment -- including a new Stewardship program -- exciting new programs for agriculture and rural Wisconsin, an anti-crime strategy, and a major investment in the University of Wisconsin. We will deliver all this and more, while providing a major tax cut and tax reform.

Our navigational tool for this new frontier will be technology. Let me take a moment, if I may, to talk about the importance of technology -- how our courage and foresight to be pioneers in this arena is making all the difference.

From the schoolyard to the farm field, technology is moving us forward. For example:

- Our homes and offices are now our classrooms. We can take courses from the University of Wisconsin or the Wisconsin Technical College System over our computers during lunch or at night, enabling us to better our lives or further our careers at our convenience.
- Farmers now use satellite technology to apply pesticides or determine how best to plant their crops -- a far cry from when high technology for farmers was a horse and plow. For our sesquicentennial this past summer, the Hughes family used guidance from a satellite to carve in their cornfields a giant maze in the shape of our great state. I want to thank Randy and Andrea Hughes and their family for helping us celebrate our birthday in a unique way.
- And technology is itself a rapid-fire business with endless potential in creating new, high-paying jobs for our people -- from the manufacturing of computer systems in the Chippewa Valley to the development of biotechnologies here in Dane County.

When I unveil the University of Wisconsin budget next month, it will include a substantial investment in furthering biotechnology research and setting up an incubator for transferring that

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

technology to the private sector – creating more high-tech jobs for our people and providing greater enhancements for our lives.

Think about it – technology even allows us to go back in time and correct our own human errors. (Video of Jerry Rice fumbling against Green Bay Packers) Yep, fumble.

Throughout my speech tonight, you will see more examples of how these advances are changing our lives. Technology will indeed light our way into the third millennium.

So here we go. On Wisconsin – to the 21st century.

Education

Our first stop is the classroom.

No group is more eager and bright-eyed about the future than our children – and they should be. This generation of children will be better educated and prepared for what lies ahead more so than any other before it.

Wisconsin is pioneering new ways of educating our children for a global era.

- Our charter school and school choice programs are bringing parents and educators together, using innovation to prepare our children for the future.
- World-class academic standards and a high-stakes graduation test are setting a high bar of achievement for our students and making sure they cross it.
- Lower class sizes are making sure our at-risk, low-income students get the close attention they need to succeed.
- And our historic investments in public education are making it possible for communities to build new schools and equip them with the technology of tomorrow.

In my budget next month, I will recommend that we require all students to pass a graduation test, increase accountability by requiring DPI to post on its website a report card on each and every school, and invest nearly \$50 million to lower class sizes.

And my budget will once again fully deliver on our commitment to fund two-thirds of local schools -- this also includes two-thirds of construction projects passed by referendum.

Helping our communities build necessary schools is just about the smartest investment the state can make. I will not back away from this partnership.

Now, one might ask: How are these reforms and investments paying off? Let me show you two examples – one in rural Wisconsin and one in urban Wisconsin.

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

This summer, when we brought state government on the road, we visited Mosinee -- a rural community of about 4,000 people that educates all its students in grades 4 through 12 in one large school building.

Yet, with the help of technology, Mosinee is giving its students the same quality education as school districts with far greater resources.

In fact, Mosinee's state-of-the-art distance learning facility is transforming its school into a community center. Students learn everything from robotics to foreign language there during the day. Local businesses use the facility to train employees at night. And doctors from the nearby Marshfield Clinic take advanced courses when convenient. The community even shares the school's new swimming pool, and seniors walk the hallways during the day to stay fit and trim. Everyone uses this building.

This is what the Schoolhouse of Tomorrow will look like in Wisconsin – and a rural community with limited resources is pioneering the way.

Let's visit some of my friends from Mosinee, who are learning French from a teacher in West Salem.

- Bon Soir Mosinee. (Three-way video exchange between governor, Mosinee students and French teacher Janice Nash in La Crosse.)

What's happening in Mosinee showcases just one of the spectacular benefits we are reaping from the groundbreaking TEACH Wisconsin initiative. In less than two years, we've gone from 25% of our school districts being wired to 75%. And we won't be satisfied until we reach 100 percent, so this budget will include another \$175 million for TEACH.

Imagine just for a moment, the immense possibilities if all Wisconsin students could use this technology to learn French or German or Japanese. Not too far in the future, I can see a class of students in Mosinee helping a class of students in Paris learn English, while they in turn help Mosinee's children learn French. Now that's a meaningful cultural exchange.

To that end, I am proposing a \$350,000 grant program to help every school district make foreign languages available to their elementary school students via the TEACH network. We must expose our children to foreign languages at the earliest years if we really want to prepare them for this global age.

Let's make the world an open book to our children.

Our education reforms and investments are making a profound change in urban education as well.

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

When we started the nation's first charter school program that included a university, technical college and city government, who would have thought it would spawn America's very first K-12 specialty school in science? Or that this Academy of Science would be in the heart of Milwaukee?

And surely many never thought our landmark school choice program would see the light of day. But finally, low-income parents in Milwaukee can freely send their children to the best school possible – no matter what its affiliation.

The aggressive competition generated by these innovations is starting to produce the change in Milwaukee Public Schools we hoped it would.

Last year, I stood here and challenged Milwaukee Public Schools to stand and deliver, or step aside.

Well, MPS certainly stood up. And they're finally taking steps to deliver for the children of Milwaukee. I thank MPS and congratulate them.

As the result of our challenge, MPS is now talking about how to improve dropout rates, attendance rates, graduation rates and reading scores. They are working more with parents and the community on ways to change for the better – rather than simply digging in their heels and defending the status quo.

In fact, MPS is even offering a guarantee that students will be able to read at the appropriate level for their grade, or they'll pay for a tutor. Now that's real progress.

There is still much, much work to do in Milwaukee. I will remain an ever-vigilant and willing partner – ready to step up with new initiatives to help these schools or use the bully pulpit to encourage change.

In fact, my budget will propose giving local school boards – in Milwaukee and across the state – the power to close failing schools. This just makes common sense.

Working together, Milwaukee won't lose another generation of children to poor schools.

Milwaukee and Mosinee – two communities that symbolize the hope and future of education in Wisconsin. And two communities that underscore our need to continue pursuing cutting-edge ways to make our schools even better.

Our schools are indeed great, but their potential is so much greater.

Therefore, we bring to you tonight another ambitious agenda to strengthen education in Wisconsin.

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

We start with our very youngest, making sure our children are ready to learn when they get to school.

Recent brain research confirms that the early childhood years – from birth to age 4 -- are crucial to child development.

Proper stimulation and nutrition in the earliest years of life make a profound and lasting impact on the growth of our children.

Therefore, we must help our most at-risk children get the help they need from birth, so they enter school with the capacity to succeed.

Our new Early Childhood Excellence Initiative calls for building at least five new high-tech, early learning centers for at-risk children 0-4 – at least two will be located in Milwaukee.

These centers would expose our youngest children to foreign languages, music, reading, computers and other technology – stimulating development and learning.

Consider the centers Incubators of the Imagination, nurturing better badger babies.

Let's also use \$20 million to expand our half-day Head Start program to full-day and extend it to children age 0-4.

The earlier we reach our most at-risk children, the better all of society will be in the long-run. We'll have better students and workers and fewer dropouts and prisoners.

Not only do we have to make sure our children are ready for the classroom, we must make sure our teachers are as well.

Therefore, working with Superintendent of Public Instruction John Benson, I am proposing a new graduated licensing system for teachers.

The initial teaching license would require all aspiring public school teachers in Wisconsin to take a national competency exam in the subject they will teach. If a prospective teacher doesn't pass the test, the University of Wisconsin school they attend must provide remedial assistance. They must also demonstrate competency in Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards and educational technology.

Teachers with an initial license can earn a professional license after three successful years in the classroom, fulfilling a professional development plan, and undergoing a peer review. My budget will include \$2 million to double the peer review and mentoring program for teachers and \$1.5 million for the Wisconsin Academy Staff Development initiative.

At the top of the licensing ladder is the Master License for teachers who earn National Board of Teaching Standards certification. To help teachers in this endeavor, the state should continue to

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

pay \$2,000 towards the cost of the test and a \$2,500 bonus for every year a teacher is nationally certified.

This new licensing system will set a high bar for new teachers and reward those who further strengthen their skills. By doing so, we make sure the best and brightest are teaching our children.

Next, we must make sure those students sitting in our classrooms are engaged, making school relevant to their goals in life.

One way we do that is through a more seamless system of schools that prepare students for the career of their choice – such as the 2+2+2 program in Waukesha County.

Here's how it works: A junior at Sussex Hamilton High School enrolls in a two-year youth apprenticeship program in printing – attending school in the morning and working at Quad Graphics in the afternoon.

After graduation, the student spends two years at Waukesha County Technical College earning an associate degree in printing, also working at Quad Graphics to gain hands-on experience and earn money.

Then, the student moves smoothly on to the UW-Stout for two years, earning a bachelor's degree in communications arts while still plying their trade at the company. And all credits are transferable from one degree to the next – it's literally seamless.

In fact, Stout plans to open a facility in Waukesha County expressly for this program.

In the end, two years in high school plus two years in technical college plus two years in a university equals a lifetime of success in a high-demand printing career – all without leaving their hometown or their job at Quad Graphics.

To help this program along, my budget will include \$500,000 for Waukesha Tech to purchase and install new equipment for this printing program. And it will provide more than \$750,000 for UW-Stout, including \$50,000 for collaboration efforts on 2+2+2.

This is what our education system should look like in the 21st century. Let's tear down those walls that separate our schools and universities. Give students the education they need for the jobs of tomorrow.

We started talking about education tonight with our newborns, so let's end with our adults. Join me in helping low-income adults learn to read through a new \$4 million literacy initiative targeted at low-income families.

In America's Education State, everyone should be able to read. Let's make it happen.

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

From babies to boomers, we are once again making education the No. 1 priority in Wisconsin. There's no smarter way to prepare our people for the frontiers of possibility.

So On Wisconsin -- with world-class schools for the pioneers of a new century.

W-2/Child Care

We must lift our people not only with education, but with meaningful work.

Wisconsin – the Great Reformer – changed the face of America with its W-2 program.

Today, just 9,200 individuals remain on cash W-2 – tomorrow, 9,200 more success stories.

We take great encouragement from our recent study showing that nearly 85 percent of former W-2 recipients are working or have worked since leaving the program. To those who aren't working – come back and we'll help you find a job.

Ladies and gentlemen, W-2 Works. Take it from Michelle Crawford, one of Wisconsin's bold pioneers on the path from welfare to work. Thanks to W-2, Michelle is off welfare after 10 years and working as a machine operator at Engineered Plastics in Menomonee Falls.

She's proudly providing for her family like never before. Michelle would like to tell you about W-2 in her own words.

Michelle Crawford:

Thank you. My name is Michelle Crawford and I'm living proof that W-2 makes a positive difference in people's lives.

Today, I am working as a machine operator, providing for my family, buying them things I could never afford before.

But it wasn't always that way. I thought I would always be on welfare. I was always down on myself, thinking I would never accomplish anything.

When my welfare caseworker asked if I knew about W2, I didn't want to join because I had children at home to take care of. I was scared and nervous, but I knew I had to try this.

At first, they had me doing housekeeping and cleaning and I thought to myself – *“I do this at home – what am I doing here!”*

But I started volunteering to do more when others didn't show up for work. And I wondered what was back in the factory.

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

I always wanted to be a machinist – my dad was one. So when my boss, Dave, asked if I'd like to try it – I took a chance.

And it was hard. I learned about the machines using a CD rom and I had to do homework.

I took the first test and passed – then I took the second test and passed. Dave then called me for an interview – and he even offered to drive me there. I thought to myself – *“Please don't let me mess this up...this is a real job.”*

I was so proud when I got the job. Now I tell my kids that this is what happens when you do your homework.

My kids see a difference in me. They see their mother making it. W2 gave me a chance and I feel good about myself – so thank you to everyone involved.

I especially want to thank my employers who are here tonight for believing in me. And I ask others to take a chance on W-2 workers. We won't let you down.

Thank you Governor.

Governor Thompson:

And her children are with us tonight too – I hope you are proud of your mom!

To the men and women participating in W-2, the message from your fellow workers is simple: You can do it. And we will help you.

Tonight, we seek to build upon our W-2 successes.

My budget will propose allocating another \$30 million to assist those entering the workforce to stay there and climb the economic ladder. All W-2 agencies would work with participants for 6 full months after an individual gets a job.

And let's help W-2 workers better meet the challenges of finding quality care for their children while they work. I propose that we:

- Expand eligibility for child care subsidies from 165 percent to 185 percent above the poverty line – a commitment of \$2 million.
- Drop the assets limit for child care eligibility purposes.
- Provide child care assistance for families with disabled children between the ages of 13 to 18 – a \$4 million commitment.

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

- Reduce the maximum co-payment for child care from 16 percent to 12 percent of a person's gross income -- a \$7.5 million investment.
- And create get-well havens for sick children while their parents work. A \$2 million investment will help W-2 agencies develop alternatives for sick children, such as child care pools or separate sick rooms at job centers and day cares.

Caring for a sick child should not put a mother's job at risk, and a working mother should not have to worry whether her sick child is getting quality care.

In addition, we should help steer at-risk children away from a life of trouble through new partnerships with our communities to provide safer neighborhoods and homes. Let's:

- Provide \$150,000 for one-time grants to 25 communities for their own initiatives to bring fathers back into the family through our fatherhood initiative.
- Help needy children find stable homes with \$170,000 for a statewide media campaign to recruit more foster families.
- Enlist the help of faith-based organizations, such as Faith Works in Milwaukee, to help us combat the devastation of broken families by fighting the ills of drug abuse.
- Help drug-addicted and alcoholic parents become clean and sober through a new million-dollar rehabilitation program.
- And provide \$20 million in community youth grants for after-school programs for at-risk children. Neighborhood groups can tap into this money to provide programs that keep children away from crime, provide extra help with school, or prepare them for the workforce. The Safe and Sound program and the Good Samaritan Project in Milwaukee serve as models for this initiative.

With your help, we can make sure On Wisconsin means on to a higher quality of life for low-income children and families.

Health Care

For Wisconsin to be strong in the 21st century, we must be healthy -- our children, our adults and our seniors.

This budget provides the means to go forward with two landmark programs for our families -- FamilyCare and BadgerCare.

FamilyCare would swing into action in 13 pilot counties -- giving seniors one place to turn for an individualized package of long-term care services to meet their unique needs.

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

These 13 counties represent 25 percent of our elderly and disabled population, allowing us to cover a substantial portion of our seniors as we get the program off to a strong start. We plan to expand Family Care as aggressively as possible in coming years until it is statewide.

And we plan to have BadgerCare in place by July 1. With waivers from Washington finally in hand, we can proceed with helping low-income working families buy affordable, quality health insurance through Medicaid.

Badger Care is a grand testament to the good that comes when Republicans and Democrats put people ahead of politics. Because we worked together – in this chamber and in Washington -- 46,000 uninsured children and adults will now have health care.

And we can cover another 35,000 uninsured workers by coming together on a new Small Employer Health Care pool.

I propose investing \$200,000 in one-time seed money to bring small businesses together -- pooling their resources and sharing the risk in order to provide health coverage for their workers. And the private sector will run the health care pool, not big government.

For those in HMOs, we can expand upon the landmark consumer protections passed last year in our Patients Bill of Rights by providing a managed care specialist in the Office of Commissioner of Insurance. This person will review the most complex consumer complaints and work on solutions.

Preventing health problems must remain a priority as well.

Last year, my wife Sue Ann unveiled an ambitious Women's Health Initiative and we thank you for supporting that endeavor. Tonight we seek to add a \$2 million program to help pregnant women deal with alcohol and drug problems – a very important investment.

We also seek to draw attention to a disease infecting more and more men – prostate cancer. My budget will provide \$50,000 – and ask for a \$50,000 private sector match – to develop a prostate cancer awareness and prevention campaign. And a new advisory committee will develop guidelines for treatment of prostate cancer in Wisconsin.

Let's also launch a renewed assault on diabetes with \$732,000 to match a federal grant aimed at improving the quality of life for more than 315,000 Wisconsinites who suffer from this disease, particularly in our minority communities.

As a state, we can take pride in being a national leader in organ procurement and transplants through our renowned Wisconsin Donor Network and the University of Wisconsin Hospital.

We can make our network of life even stronger, however, by adding to the Department of Health and Family Services an organ donor procurement coordinator, who would also enlist more people as donors.

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

Ladies and gentlemen -- we need more organ donors. So I ask every person in this chamber and across the state to pull out their driver's license, sign on the line, and pledge to be part of a generous and thoughtful group of life-saving heroes.

Each year at the Medal of Life Ceremony I am inspired by the people who gave the gift of life. Caring families like Darlene and Duane Woldt of Madison. When their son Derek died, four of his organs and his eyes were donated so four others could lead healthier lives.

We are a very giving state. Working together, we can give the greatest gift of all to our citizens – a healthy life.

So On Wisconsin – with the healthiest children, families and seniors in the country.

Rail Initiative

A state ready to charge into the next century, must do so with an efficient and modern transportation system.

Therefore, I am proposing several new initiatives on passenger rail.

As the new chairman of Amtrak, I intend to help lead this oft-troubled organization out of the tunnel of darkness and into the light of success – for the benefit of Wisconsin and the nation.

Tomorrow in Chicago, I will join Amtrak and federal agencies in formally announcing the railway's \$25 million investment in a new Midwest Rail Initiative aimed at bringing new high-speed rail technology to this region.

The Midwest Rail Initiative would carry people between nine states, on 3,000 miles of track, at 110 miles an hour. It will travel to nearly 70 different metropolitan areas and 11 urban centers – including a line that will connect Milwaukee and Madison to Chicago and Minneapolis.

Imagine the joy in Illinois when they find out they can escape to Wisconsin at 1/7th the speed of sound. And if we want to travel to Soldiers' Field to watch the Packers beat up on the hapless Bears – we won't have to pay their tolls.

And the best part is that the Midwest Rail Initiative would be funded largely by federal dollars, with minimal investments by the states.

Tomorrow's announcement will include a commitment of more than \$2 million by Amtrak to start preliminary engineering on a high-speed route between Milwaukee and Madison, as well as a \$200,000 grant by the Federal Railroad Administration to study equipment needs for the Midwest Rail Initiative.

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

And we are directing \$500,000 in federal money to improve railroad crossings on the Hiawatha Line between Milwaukee and Chicago.

In addition, I am asking Transportation Secretary Chuck Thompson to find another \$1 million to match Amtrak money so we can examine possible locations in Madison for a station on the east side, connecting to the airport and continuing to Minneapolis.

But you do not have to wait until tomorrow for the opportunity to discuss this project in more detail. George Warrington, the new president of Amtrak, is here with us tonight. And you can meet him in the Governor's Conference Room after the speech.

In fact, George and I will be recruiting one Democrat and one Republican lawmaker – and yes even one reporter – to accompany us on the inaugural run of Amtrak's new high-speed trainsets this fall in the Northeast Corridor. We will see firsthand its amazing potential for reducing congestion on our highways, shipping freight, and providing people a more efficient way to travel.

As you can see: These are not your father's trains.

So all aboard. On Wisconsin – to the transportation system of the future.

Conclusion

Pioneers are everywhere around us.

They are the young and old, men and women. They are the faces of all races and religions that call Wisconsin home. And their deeds, whether grandiose or commonplace, are all significant.

As we close tonight, let us honor some of the bold pioneers who are leading Wisconsin into the next millennium. Please hold your applause until the end.

- Bruce Borden – Who encouraged us to develop Pathways to Independence, a breakthrough program allowing the disabled to work without losing their health benefits. Now, Bruce is working with Fannie Mae on a new program to provide low-income housing for the disabled.
- Brother Bob Smith and Howard Fuller – Two men who refused to accept the notion that poor children in Milwaukee's worst neighborhoods were incapable of learning and succeeding in life. They pushed for bold changes in our schools, from charters to choice, so all children would get a world-class education.
- James Thomson – Whose groundbreaking developments in stem cell research at the University of Wisconsin is helping to combat Parkinson's disease and childhood diabetes, and one day grow human organs for transplants.

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

- Jerry Frautschi – Who is using his success to give back to his community with a \$50 million donation to create a cultural arts district in Madison – a gift that will inspire children and enhance our quality of life for generations to come.
- Pleasant Rowland-Frautschi – The Top Woman Entrepreneur in the Country is blazing new trails for women in corporate America.
- Keith Holzberger – Who with business partner Deb Radder, are giving former welfare mothers a chance to reap the rewards of work, showing other companies that investing in these workers is smart business.
- And Jerry Hamilton of Racine – Who is creating stronger Wisconsin families by turning fathers into dads. Jerry's fatherhood initiative – Children UpFront – is reconnecting families, strengthening family relations and promoting self-sufficiency.

Wisconsin's pioneers are just everyday people doing spectacular things so we can all live better lives.

They are the W-2 mothers in Milwaukee who are working and raising their children; the entrepreneurs in the Chippewa Valley developing new technology for a higher quality of life; the students in Sussex learning skills for the jobs of tomorrow; and the farmers in Janesville applying space age technology to feed the world.

They are building the America of the 21st century – molding it in the shape of Wisconsin.

At the dawn of another glorious century, the gates to the Frontiers of Possibility stand wide open.

Tonight, let us once again proudly raise our colors as our forefathers did and charge forward together with the impassioned cry of: On Wisconsin!

Thank you and God bless.