



*August 28, 2015*

*It's a Great Day to be ALIVE!*

To our State elected Officials, Mayor Kenneth Wright, Vice Mayor Elizabeth Psimas, Honorable Members of the Portsmouth City Council, Honorable Members of the Portsmouth School Board to our City Employees, Portsmouth Citizens, and to our future leaders in the city, the students of Portsmouth Public Schools, who are present, Good Afternoon.

I stand before you today humbled by your trust, girded by your support, and elated to be the first woman appointed by the Portsmouth City Council, as City Manager, in this great city's 263-year history. Thank you!

Portsmouth is a historic and robust city, the place where John Wood in 1621 recognized its beauty and strategic location with miles of waterfront property on the Elizabeth

River. Today, I affirm that our City is too great, its history too rich, and its people too strong, for us to wait and see what the future may bring, but rather, we must create the bright and prosperous future that can be redefined through collaboration, unification and rededication through citizen and community engagement...Creating The NEW Portsmouth.

It is only fitting that on this special day, having just taken the Oath of Office that I accompany this oath with a declaration of assurance through my leadership as City Manager.

My FIRST PROMISE is that I will seize this moment – this opportunity – to dedicate myself to work tirelessly to make the best decisions necessary to achieve our city’s vision and move in a forward direction characterized by methodical deliberation and expediency.

Our vision lies upon the shoulders of the elected leadership of our City Council—and our School Board who are the stalwart leaders and visionaries for the citizens of Portsmouth.

With our City Council providing the vision, I will be laser-focused on developing a comprehensive plan of actionable goals, metrics and timelines. I will work tirelessly with city employees, who are the human vessels that will rededicate themselves to work

daily for the citizens of Portsmouth, toward achieving the goals and setting the course toward Creating The NEW Portsmouth.

My SECOND PROMISE is to be a courageous decision-maker with financial acuity, for finance is one of the most important tools for ensuring a bright and prosperous future for Portsmouth. We are the keepers of the citizen's municipal financial resources and through my leadership all city employees will work together, to find cost-effective strategies that propel us toward fiscal strength while delivering services in an efficient manner in Creating The NEW Portsmouth.

My THIRD PROMISE is to be a model public servant, for I clearly know why public service is the career I chose over thirty years ago. It is because I care about the people. I want the very best quality of life for all Portsmouth citizens. And, I want our youth to have the very best educational opportunities that they so rightly deserve.

On September 1<sup>st</sup> through God's grace allowing me to walk into City Hall, this begins the NEW Portsmouth! A Portsmouth, where our citizens will trust municipal government and city employees perform their jobs with daily self-reminders of the mammoth responsibility they have as public servants. With every task undertaken, ethical principles will govern their behavior as they provide high caliber services to our citizens. Each and every city employee will understand that they are responsible and accountable to the citizens of Portsmouth. I will be frank. I will be tough, but I will also be fair, and

while I will foster and endorse a culture of creativity and position employees to do their very best work, I will accept nothing less than EXCELLENCE.

I promise you that this blueprint for a NEW Portsmouth will be inclusive of all through countless meetings with community and faith-based organizations, local businesses, and citizens. So, get ready for my knock on your doors, for I am ready to walk through, sit down, listen and talk to anyone with a vested interest in ensuring that Portsmouth's rich and reboust legacy lives on for generations to come.

Finally, I promise to work every day toward achieving the promise and potential that *is* the NEW Portsmouth. I want you all to know that I will awake every morning thinking about what we need to do to realize the promise of our city; I will go to bed every night wondering if we've have done enough; and I PROMISE to leave the City of Portsmouth—BETTER than I found it.

In closing, In 1986, 29 years ago, this past March 6, I drove 3 ½ hours round trip daily coming to a city named Portsmouth, as a new department director, who was eager and excited. I left home early, and returned in time to have dinner and do homework with my daughter and son. Today, I stand witness and attest that every moment spent during that journey, when I look at my daughter Asha, my son Ade, my grandsons Armon and Noah, and my granddaughters Kenzie and Campbell, I truly know that it was well worth the journey and investment, not only in my children, but also in the lives of the

thousands of children within the Portsmouth community and throughout the world that I've had the opportunity to touch.

To my children, I thank you for your love, and unwavering support.

You are the strong wind beneath my wings, that continues to keep me focused on EXCELLENCE, and makes me determined to be a "difference maker" in everything that I am CALLED to do.

And to you, my Portsmouth Family, I believe that I was called back home to Portsmouth.

To help build a NEW Portsmouth that is Better, Stronger, and Smarter. To lead and realign a City government that operates with energy, efficiency, enthusiasm and excellence. That is how the new Portsmouth, will realize its promise. And that promise is so great. I ask that we come together, work together, roll up our sleeves together, and start right now creating a New Portsmouth...TOGETHER!

May God Bless, the Commonwealth of Virginia, May God Bless, the City of Portsmouth, and May God Bless, each of you assembled here today.