

**Farewell Address from Mayor Reardon  
Rhinebeck Chamber of Commerce  
State of Rhinebeck Dinner  
January 30, 2014**

**Good evening. It is with mixed emotions that I stand before you tonight as the clock winds down on my term as Mayor. I am sad that I will not be able to serve the final year of my term yet I am excited about the new opportunity that awaits me! The opportunity of a lifetime has knocked, the door has opened and I must walk through.**

**8 years ago if you had said to me I would be standing here tonight I would have said, I think you need to see a doctor. I had never considered holding public office and quite frankly didn't care for politics, a fact that still remains 7 years later.**

**When I was asked to run for office I made a decision to do so based on the fact that I saw a community that was politically charged, divided, and not much being accomplished. I didn't like what this community was becoming and decided that I had two choices: either be involved and bring about positive change or sit back and keep my mouth shut. The fact that I stand here tonight makes it obvious what my decision was.**

**The first two years in office were very trying. The fact remained that there was a board that was not committed to working together, making decisions and attaining tangible results. Believe me when I say, I was questioning my sanity to have agreed to do this.**

**However, with me quitting is never an option. Any good leader will tell you YOU ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS THE PEOPLE YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH. It was time to step up and build a team of individuals that were willing to check their politics and ego at the door, commit to working hard, following through and not be afraid to make a decision.**

**Enter Wayne Rifenburgh, Howie Traudt, Terry Gibson, Brant Neuneker, Heinz Sauer and Heath Tortarella. Every one of these gentlemen has served with distinction and I hope the residents of this Village understand how lucky they are.**

**As Mayor I have tried to lead by example. My parents instilled in me at a very young age the value of hard work. I also was taught to be honest. That reminds me of the old joke about why old men don't get hired. An old-timer goes for an interview and the human resources director asks with what is your greatest weakness. The old-timer flatly replies honesty. The human resources director says I don't think honesty is a weakness and the old-timer bluntly responds I don't give a shit what you think! Know that's what you call honesty. I start my new job on Monday!**

**As Mayor I have tried to set a positive tone. Positive leadership brings about positive results. FOCUS ON THE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING. If you spend all your time and energy focusing on the negative and say we can't YOU WILL BECOME YOUR GREATEST OBSTACLE.**

**As Mayor and as Trustees we need to be willing to face the difficult issues no matter what they are. Fairgrounds Zoning, Events Code, sidewalk issues, infrastructure repairs, drainage problems, Police Station construction, NDH expansion all come to mind. Talk is cheap, actions speak louder than words and we were voted into office to deal with these issues. We have tackled them all.**

**Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of General Colin Powell once said that when it comes to leadership and decision making that too often people waste time and energy by trying to find all the answers and come up with the perfect plan. Clearly there is no such thing, so don't waste your time. In reality you only need 75% of the information to make an informed decision. In other words don't over think it. MAKE A DECISION AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT CHALLENGE. That is how I have operated.**

**I have never been afraid to say what needs to be said and political ramifications never guided my decision making. I know I have ruffled some feathers but quite frankly sometimes feathers needed ruffling. Another trait taught to me by my parents is stand for what is right even if you stand alone. People need to hear the truth. So often, people lose sight of the big picture. We are a community and need to come together as one. The residents, the businesses, the Fairgrounds, the Hospital and not for profits, we are all pieces of a complex puzzle that is the Village of Rhinebeck. Remove one and the puzzle is incomplete.**

**Sometimes people need to be reminded of that fact. This village needs to grow and prosper and grow smart. When we work together that will happen, if we divide we will fail.**

**I have made many friends over the years, yet I have not been without critics and that is okay, because you can learn from constructive criticism. None the less that has not changed me one bit. I am still the same person I was 7 years ago. The only difference is my life has been tremendously enriched. I learned a long time ago to not try and live up to someone else's expectations as my expectations of myself far exceed theirs. I have had the great good fortune of working with many people from many walks of life, of different backgrounds and beliefs, and I have demonstrated that government should be about people working together and attaining real results. As the framers wrote GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE.**

**I would be remiss if I did not offer thanks to all those individuals I have been involved with during my tenure. To Gail Haskins, Lisa Biscardi, Pat Coon, Krissy Denu, Karen Macfarlane, Trisha Giacalone, all the Village employees in all the departments, the planning and zoning boards, Justices Sanchez and Kane, Klara Sauer and the members of the Pedestrian Task Force, John Wirth and the members of the Events Code Steering Committee, Gary Kenton and the members of the Solid Waste Task Force, the Tree Commission, my colleagues at Rhinebeck Chamber of Commerce, my Colleagues at Rhinebeck Farmers Market, my colleagues at Rhinnebeck Rotary, Matt Linnick and the crew at Running Away, Jeanne Fleming, Lila Pague, Pat Sexton and the Sinterklaas Crew, Andy Imperati, Dick Weckesser, Lou Ruge, Bucky Coon and Neil Wilson from the Fairgrounds,**

**The Rhinebeck Fire Department and the Rhinebeck Police Department, Village Attorney Rich Olson, Village Engineer Nancy Clark, Joe Kirchoff and Warren Temple Smith. Thank you all for your hard work, dedication and support throughout the years. I will never forget.**

**Thanks to the people of this community that put their trust in me to be their Mayor. It has been an incredible seven years and the most rewarding time of my life. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve.**

**I have never taken myself too seriously yet I have taken the job very seriously. I believe as an elected official one must remember who they are, why they are there and who they represent. Forget that, and rest assured there will be a long line of individuals clamoring for a chance to serve you up a big helping of humble pie. One only needs to read the papers or watch the news daily and see evidence of this.**

**Special thanks to Wayne Rifenburgh, Howie Traudt, Terry Gibson, Brant Neuneker, Heinz Sauer, Heath Tortarella, Henry Campbell and Pete Dunn. You have all been individuals that I could count on without fail. Without all of you none of this would have been possible.**

**Lastly, thanks to my best friend, my son Jay for always believing in me and for being a sounding board when I needed one. He is here tonight with his girlfriend Amanda Whyte. It is my hope that I have played a small part to insure that young people such as them will be able to remain in this community they grew up in, have the ability to earn a living, raise families, and still have the quality of life we are all so fortunate to enjoy.**

**The press has asked me what my legacy is. I read something about different types of leadership one time that went like this: A leader leads people where they need to go. A good leader leads people where they need to go and when they get there they say “we have arrived”. A great leader leads people where they need to go and when they get there they say “we have arrived and this is where we belong”. Clearly where I fit is for you the public to decide. I have aspired to be the latter.**

**These are challenging times. We are faced with the worst economy we have seen in our lifetimes. They are times that demand bold leaders, making bold decisions and taking bold actions. My time is done. To Howie, Brant, Heinz and Heath I say this community now looks to you for this leadership. My hope for you is that you are able to carry on this tradition we have established and that is; work tirelessly as a thoughtful, cohesive and dedicated board that addresses the needs of this community, damn the politics. My money is on you.**

**When I began this journey seven years ago I made a pledge. Again this is something instilled in me by my parents. It is a pledge that I live by. Give everything you do, everything you’ve got, every minute, of every day. To that I can say mission accomplished.**

**Thank you, God Bless you all and God Bless the United States of America.**