

*Speech
Dedication of
Senior Center of
Speech
8/31/88*

REP. E. Z. TAYLOR/ SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

SEPTEMBER, 1988

(OPENING REMARKS IN RESPONSE TO INTRODUCTION)

THE DEDICATION OF ANY STRUCTURE REPRESENTS, TO ME, A NEW BEGINNING....

WE HAVE COME HERE TODAY TO MARK A BEGINNING. WE ARE HERE TO DEDICATE THE NEW WEST CHESTER SENIOR CENTER. I FEEL VERY PRIVILEGED, INDEED, TO BE PART OF THIS OCCASION AND THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING ME.

IN THE SPRING OF 1987 I WAS PLEASED TO GATHER ON THIS SITE WITH CENTER BOARD PRESIDENT STEVE MCGANN, CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN JOHN HALL, COMMISSIONER PAT BALDWIN AND MAYOR TOM CHAMBERS TO BREAK GROUND FOR THE CENTER.

THAT IN ITSELF WAS AN EXCITING DAY! I ENVISIONED THESE WALLS RISING. FLOORS BEING LAID. A ROOF STRETCHING OVERHEAD. AND I AM EVEN MORE THRILLED ON THIS SEPTEMBER DAY IN 1988. BECAUSE TODAY IT IS NO LONGER A VISION, A DREAM. IT IS A REALITY!

I'M FILLED WITH A SENSE OF EXHILARATION. OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. OF GRATITUDE. I THINK OF ALL WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO ATTAIN THIS DREAM--THE PLANNERS, WITH THEIR FAR-SIGHTEDNESS AND SENSITIVITY TO THE NEED FOR THE CENTER. THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR RESOURCES. THEIR GIFTS HAVE HELPED MAKE THIS DAY POSSIBLE. TO THE BUILDERS. ALL WHO HAVE GIVEN OF THEIR TIME, TALENT OR TREASURE TO CREATE THIS MEETING PLACE FOR OUR SENIOR CITIZENS. I TAKE MY HAT OFF TO YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BE A PART OF THIS COMMITMENT, THIS SERVICE TO COMMUNITY. AND I SAY THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

DO YOU KNOW OUR STATE IS NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION IN THE SERVICES IT PROVIDES TO SENIOR CITIZENS? WE SPEND ABOUT \$95 PER CAPITA ON THEM. MANY STATES DO MUCH LESS. FOR INSTANCE, FLORIDA SPENDS ABOUT \$20, WHILE CALIFORNIA BUDGETS A LITTLE OVER \$3. AND TEXAS, WHERE EVERYTHING IS SUPPOSED TO BE BIGGER AND BETTER, ONLY \$2.58.

HERE IN PENNSYLVANIA THE LEGISLATURE IS VERY AWARE OF THE NEEDS OF ITS SENIOR CITIZENS. AND WE RESPOND TO THOSE NEEDS. WE HAVE AN OUTSTANDING PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM--PACE--FOR THOSE OF YOU 65 AND OVER WHO FALL WITHIN CERTAIN INCOME GUIDELINES. AND, THERE'S OUR PROPERTY TAX AND RENT REBATE PROGRAM TO ASSIST SENIOR CITIZENS ON FIXED INCOMES.

WE TRY VERY HARD TO LET AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS. THERE ARE DOZENS OF SERVICES AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE. THEY ARE ALL OUTLINED IN A COMPREHENSIVE BROCHURE PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING. NOT ONLY DOES THE BOOKLET OFFER INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, IT ALSO TELLS YOU ABOUT STATE AGENCIES, AS WELL AS STATE, LOCAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS FOR OLDER PERSONS, AND IT TOUCHES ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, VETERANS BENEFITS, ETC.

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(NOTE: YOU CAN MENTION HERE SOMETHING ABOUT BROCHURES BEING AVAILABLE--EITHER AT THE CENTER OR THROUGH YOUR DISTRICT OFFICE. IF YOU TAKE COPIES ALONG WITH YOU, YOU WILL WANT TO MENTION THAT PEOPLE CAN PICK THEM UP HERE LATER).

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BECAUSE PENNSYLVANIA OFFERS SUCH A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, IT ALSO IS VERY CLEAR TO ME THAT AS LEGISLATORS WE ARE ACUTELY AWARE OUR SENIOR CITIZENS ARE A LARGE AND IMPORTANT PART OF OUR STATE SOCIETY.

I FOR ONE HAVE NO DOUBTS THAT OLDER PENNSYLVANIANS ARE THE BACKBONE OF OUR SOCIETY. THEY'VE GIVEN MUCH TO THIS STATE AND TO THIS NATION--PROBABLY MORE THAN ANY OTHER AGE GROUP. THEIR YEARS OF WORK, OF SERVICE, HAVE HELPED MAKE OUR COMMONWEALTH AND OUR COUNTRY WHAT THEY ARE TODAY. FOR THAT, WE OWE THEM. FOR THAT, WE THANK THEM.

IN MY WORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES I HAVE A CHANCE TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE--TO SPOT TRENDS. ONE THING THAT'S OBVIOUS IS THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE LIVING TO WHAT ONCE WAS DESCRIBED AS A "RIPE OLD AGE."

I'VE ALSO FOUND THAT THE GROWING NUMBER OF VIGOROUS, HEALTHY, INTERESTED OLDER PEOPLE HAS HELPED OVERCOME SOME STEREOTYPES ABOUT AGING. FOR MANY, THE BEST IS YET TO COME. OLDER PEOPLE HAVE WHAT I LIKE TO REFER TO AS "THE ADVANTAGE OF VINTAGE."

IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE OUR SENIOR CITIZENS WILL CONTINUE TO PUT THAT "ADVANTAGE" TO WORK FOR THEM. THAT THEY WILL FIND A FULFILLMENT OF SORTS HERE. AND , THAT AS THEY COME TOGETHER WITH NEW AND OLD FRIENDS OF THEIR OWN GENERATION IN THIS CENTER, THAT THEY MAKE THE RAFTERS RESOUND WITH THEIR LAUGHTER, THEIR SINGING, THEIR FELLOWSHIP.

IT IS MY HOPE, TOO, THEY WILL MAKE THE WEST CHESTER SENIOR CENTER AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR LIVES. THAT THE CENTER WILL TAKE A SIGNIFICANT PLACE IN THEIR DAILY ROUTINE AND THEY WILL DROP IN OFTEN AND STAY LONG. THAT THEY WILL MAKE NEW FRIENDS. GAIN NEW INSIGHTS. LEARN SOMETHING NEW AS THEY RELAX AND SOCIALIZE TOGETHER.

THAT ALL THE "NEW BEGINNINGS" THEY EXPERIENCE HERE IN THIS GATHERING PLACE WILL ENRICH THEIR LIVES. THIS CENTER, ITS STAFF, THE SENIORS WHO COME HERE, COULD HAVE NO NOBLER GOAL.

I WISH YOU SUCCESS AND LONG LIFE, WEST CHESTER SENIOR CENTER.

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING ME TODAY. IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO SHARE IN THIS "NEW BEGINNING" WITH YOU.