



January 7, 2010

## Remarks made by Councilman Tom Owen after his election as President of Louisville Metro Council

Colleagues:

I am grateful for your confidence in my skills to effectively lead Louisville's Metro Council in 2010.

I have served as an elected official in local government sixteen of the last twenty years, and we are all trusting that those years of testing and public service will abound to the benefit of this Council and city.

Buffeted by revenue shortfalls, unsettled by anticipated changes in the Metro Mayoral leadership and engaged in the tough work of putting flesh on the bones of our merged government, 2010 will be a unique and challenging year.

You may expect from me:

1. Greater patience in hearing your hopes, fears and plans for our city. You have known me through the years as a drop-in/drop-out Councilman, something of a whirling dervish with multiple jobs, projects and lives. I will still be hydra-headed, but I commit to you a slower kind of listening that enriches us both.
2. A zealous effort to help shorten the perceived distance between the Mayor's office and administration in Metro Hall and our committees and Council chamber here in old City Hall. The two buildings are, in fact, less than thirty yards apart.

3. A Council presidency that emphasizes how close to one another all of our citizens in Metro Louisville live. We really are in the same boat in a small Metro lake; and in the next couple of weeks, I will ask to meet each of you at a designated location in your district, taking alternative transportation (bike, bus and foot) to get there. Why? I want to demonstrate the fact that I will be a Metro Council leader for the entire community. On my way, my eyes and ears will be tuned to the lay of your land and the changes going on in your districts. When I get there, I will listen to your dreams and visions for our community. I repeat, I will be a Council President for all 26 members of this Metro Council, and the citizens who live in all districts.

Now the toughest challenge of all:

4. I ask each of you to join me in playing the game all year long called “Heads Up.” We are of different parties, residents of different parts of town, different racially, economically, and in our very personal choices and increasingly committed to a different mayoral candidate – three of whom sit in this chamber. We should disagree and vigorously debate those estimated seventeen issues in 2010 that will genuinely divide us.

Louisville will be a richer place when our disagreements are tempered with a heads up among all camps. Good judgment – the one commodity we have to offer our citizens – is never advanced by “gotcha” politics, pop-up issues, surprise attacks, or personal vendettas. Help me modulate secretiveness and promote the open and free flow of information and opinions on issues that divide us. Our citizens will be the beneficiaries of our commitment.

To the citizens listening over our shoulder, this Council pledges our attention and interest in those concerns that touch your community life.

Finally, your Council President is also the leader of a staff that makes our Council run. We work off their shoulders; and I pledge to help build their job satisfaction, promote their efficiency and work to make this building a safe and wholesome work environment.

Again, thank you for your confidence.

Tom Owen, President  
Louisville Metro Council