

**"A CITY UNAFRAID TO DREAM AGAIN"**

**INAUGURAL REMARKS BY ERIC GARCETTI  
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 13  
CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2005  
BARNSDALL ART PARK**

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ARE HERE. THANK YOU TO MY STAFF FOR THEIR HARD WORK PUTTING TODAY TOGETHER. AFTER JANICE HAHN HAD A DISNEY CRUISE SHIP AS HER BACKDROP, THEY GOT A LITTLE NERVOUS, BUT I THINK THAT THEY HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB TODAY. THANK YOU, TOO, TO ALL WHO ARE A PART OF TODAY'S PROGRAM.**

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**PERCHED HERE ON ANOTHER PERFECT JUNE DAY IN LOS ANGELES, WE JOIN TOGETHER ON THIS GENTLE RISE OF OLIVE HILL, RIPE WITH PROMISE AND RICH WITH POSSIBILITY.**

**THIS PLACE BEARS THE NAME OF ALINE BARNSDALL, ONE OF MANY DREAMERS THAT HAVE COME TO HOLLYWOOD. IN 1919, ALINE, AN OIL HEIRESS, SINGLE MOTHER, POLITICAL ACTIVIST, THEATRICAL PRODUCER AND PATRON OF THE ARTS, BOUGHT THESE 36 ACRES IN THE HEART OF HOLLYWOOD AND BROUGHT THE GREATEST ARCHITECT OF HER TIME, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, TO BUILD A CENTER FOR THE ARTS WHERE CREATIVITY WOULD BE FOSTERED AND CELEBRATED.**

**ALINE'S DREAM FACED MANY HICCUPS, FROM LLOYD WRIGHT'S NOTORIOUS TEMPER TO LATER NEGLECT FROM THE CITY GOVERNMENT WHEN SHE WANTED TO DONATE THIS PLACE TO THE PEOPLE OF LOS ANGELES, BUT HER DREAM EVENTUALLY SPROUTED IN THIS MOST FERTILE GROUND.**

**AS SO MANY BEFORE US HAVE DONE FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT IN THE HEART OF ONE OF GREATEST CITIES THIS WORLD HAS EVER SEEN, WE, TOO, SEEK TO SURVEY THE LAND AROUND US—THIRTEEN SQUARE MILES OF A DISTRICT, A QUARTER MILLION SOULS, AND A CITY AND REGION BEYOND.**

**WE ALSO GAZE THROUGH TIME: LOOKING BEHIND US AT FOUR YEARS GONE AND AHEAD TO GRASP A GLIMPSE OF THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO COME.**

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**FOUR YEARS AGO, I MADE A COMPACT WITH THE RESIDENTS OF THE THIRTEENTH DISTRICT. IT WAS SIMPLE: I WOULD KEEP MY EYES ON THE GROUND, BUT NEVER BE AFRAID TO LIFT THEM UP TO THE SKY. I SAID WE WOULD FOCUS ON THE CRACKS ON THE SIDEWALKS BUT WE WOULD BE UNAFRAID TO DREAM AGAIN.**

**SOME SAY CHANGE HAPPENS ALL AT ONCE. OTHERS SAY THAT IT COMES SLOWLY AND OVER TIME. IN FOUR YEARS I HAVE SEEN BOTH. I HAVE SEEN LIVES CHANGE IN A MOMENT IN THE SMILE OF A CHILD WITH THE TURNING ON OF A SPLASHPAD IN A NEW PARK, AND I HAVE SEEN THE TRUE GRIT NEIGHBORHOODS DIGGING IN FOR A MULTI-YEAR PROJECT TO IMPROVE THEIR MAIN STREET.**

**BUT PERHAPS IT IS NOT THE PACE OF CHANGE THAT AS IS CRITICAL AS THE SCALE OF CHANGE. CHANGE DOES NOT HAPPEN IN AN ENTIRE CITY IN ONE FELL SWOOP. IT COMES ONE BLOCK AT A TIME. WITH ONE IDEA, ONE HOUSE MEETING, ONE INTERACTION BETWEEN NEIGHBORS, ONE VISIT FROM A CITY DEPARTMENT. AND THAT'S WHERE WE HAVE FOCUSED—ONE CONSTITUENT CALL, ONE CASE AT A TIME, ONE LEADERSHIP TRAINING, ONE GRAFFITI PAINT OUT AT A TIME UNTIL THE MANY MANY SMALL ACTS OF CHANGE COLLECTIVELY COMPRISE AN UNSTOPPABLE TIDE OF TRANSFORMATION.**

**OUR PROMISE FOUR YEARS AGO WAS SIMPLE BUT AUDACIOUS, FOR WE LIVE IN A SKEPTICAL, EVEN CYNICAL TIME. A TIME THAT TELLS US THAT OUR TOUGHEST PROBLEMS ARE INSURMOUNTABLE, THAT OUR BEST YEARS ARE BEHIND US, THAT GOVERNMENT IS A NEGATIVE FORCE.**

**BUT I BELIEVE BEHIND EVERY CYNIC LIES A POWERFUL IDEALIST. AND I KNOW THAT TODAY I ADDRESS A ROOM FULL OF IDEALISM.**

**WE ALSO LIVE IN AN AGE DEFINED BY VELOCITY, AN AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE IN ANXIETY OF HOW FULL OUR EMAIL BOXES HAVE BECOME, IN WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONTAIN, LET ALONE KEEP UP WITH FORCES OF CHANGE AROUND US THAT SEEM BEYOND OUR CONTROL.**

**ON EARTH DAY IN THE ARCTIC A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I HEARD AN INUIT LEADER SAY THAT IN HER LIFETIME HER PEOPLE HAVE GONE FROM THE ICE AGE TO THE SPACE AGE.**

**IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP OF OUR REPRESSED IDEALISM AND THE RUSH OF LIFE THAT WE HAVE SOUGHT TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES STRONG AND TO MAKE OUR DREAMS REAL.**

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**AND HERE TODAY, OUR DREAMS AND OUR COMMUNITIES ARE STRONGER THAN THEY WERE JUST FOUR YEARS AGO.**

**WE PAVED ENOUGH STREETS AND SIDEWALKS TO STRETCH FROM DOWNTOWN TO THE OCEAN, TAKEN ENOUGH BULKY ITEMS OFF THE STREETS TO FILL THE KODAK THEATRE, PAINTED OUT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SQUARE FEET OF GRAFFITI AND LAUNCHED UNTAG—NOW A CITYWIDE ANTI-GRAFFITI PROGRAM. WE GOT IN THE BUDGET FUNDING FOR FURNITURE-BUSTING TRUCKS TO PROACTIVELY CLEAN UP OUR CITY STREETS. AND WE DID THIS ALL WHILE LIVING WITHIN OUR AND BALANCING OUR BUDGET EACH YEAR.**

**WE HAVE MADE OUR STREETS SAFER—ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES, LAUNCHING NEW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCHES, SECURING MILLIONS OF NEW DOLLARS IN YOUTH ANTI-GANG PROGRAMS, ADDING HUNDREDS OF POLICE OFFICERS TO THE STREETS AND THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES—CRIME DOWN IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE DISTRICT BY 20%, GANG CRIME DOWN MORE THAN 59% HERE IN HOLLYWOOD IN A SINGLE YEAR ALONE.**

**WE HAVE HELPED BRING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO EVERY PART OF THE DISTRICT. WE HELPED NEW COMPANIES LOCATE HERE, FROM NIELSEN ENTERTAINMENT IN HOLLYWOOD TO SI TV IN GLASSELL PARK. I JOINED WITH WENDY GREUEL AND MY COLLEAGUES ON THE CITY COUNCIL TO ELIMINATE THE BUSINESS TAX FOR SMALL BUSINESSES, WE STARTED TWO NEW CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND BUILT STREET BUMPOUTS AND STAMPED CROSSWALKS AND AS A RESULT OUR MAIN STREETS ARE THRIVING AGAIN. WE MADE SURE THAT LOCAL BUSINESSES HIRED LOCALLY, AND WE LAUNCHED THE CAREER LADDERS PROGRAM TO MAKE SURE ANGELENOS HAVE THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO GET HIGH-PAYING JOBS IN GROWING INDUSTRIES. IN FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE ATTRACTED THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS, MORE THAN \$2 BILLION IN NEW**

**INVESTMENT, AND HELPED MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND UNITS OF HOUSING BREAK GROUND.**

**WE TOOK SOME OF THE PARK-POOREST AND MOST-POLLUTED NEIGHBORHOODS AND BEGAN CLEANING THEM UP, BRINGING TREES AND COMMUNITY GARDENS AND FARMERS MARKETS TO OUR STREETS. AND OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS, WE DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF PARKS IN THE DISTRICT FROM 15 TO 30, AN UNPRECEDENTED PACE. I JOINED WITH ED REYES AND MY COLLEAGUES TO BEGIN REVITALIZING THE LOS ANGELES RIVER AND WITH JAN PERRY, WE PASSED PROPOSITION O, THE NATION'S FIRST LOCAL CLEAN WATER BOND IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR LOCAL WATER HEALTHY ONCE AGAIN.**

**FOUR YEARS AGO, I PROMISED TO MAKE SCHOOLS THE CENTER OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND WE BUILT INNOVATIVE JOINT USE FACILITIES LIKE THE COMMUNITY CENTER AT MT. WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE SOCCER FIELD AT WASHINGTON IRVING MIDDLE SCHOOL. WE BUILT THE LARGEST COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FAIR IN THE COUNTRY, HELPED NINE BADLY-NEEDED SCHOOLS BREAK GROUND, AND ENSURED THAT THERE IS AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM IN EVERY SCHOOL IN THE DISTRICT.**

**BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE TRIED TO NURTURE A VISION WHERE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SIT BACK AND WAIT, IT SEEKS OUT AND WELCOMES. THROUGH OUR NEIGHBORHOOD WALKS, COMMUNITY COFFEES, OFFICE HOURS, GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE, NC SUMMIT, AND OUR CHAMBER BREAKFASTS, WE HAVEN'T WAITED FOR YOU TO CALL US.**

**WE HAVE TRIED TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE BY MAKING GOVERNMENT OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE: PUTTING COUNCIL REPORTS ON-LINE, SENDING OUT OUR MONTHLY E\*NEWS, EVEN, TO MY STAFF'S DISMAY, BLOGGING.**

**LOOKING BACK ON WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER, IA M HUMBLD. NONE OF THIS I HAVE DONE ALONE. I WANT TO THANK THE FOUR CORNERSTONES OF THIS TRANSFORMATION. MY COLLEAGUES IN CITY GOVERNMENT, MY CO-WORKERS IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 13, MY FAMILY, AND YOU, THE COMMUNITY.**

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**SO WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS?**

**BEFORE WE FAST-FORWARD, LET ME REWIND FOR A SECOND TIME.**

**BEFORE THE DREAMS OF ALINE BARNSDALL LANDED ON A HILLTOP IN HOLLYWOOD, SOME TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY SIX YEARS AGO, THIS LAND WAS FIRST CALLED LOS ANGELES.**

**IN 1769, AS HE LED AN EXPEDITION OF MEN TO THE INTERSECTION OF TWO RIVERS NORTH OF WHAT WE NOW CALL DOWNTOWN, FATHER JUAN CRESPI WROTE IN HIS DIARY AFTER VIEWING THE BEAUTY OF THIS LAND: "THE RIVER, VERY GREEN, LUSH AND IN TIME TO COME THERE MAY BE A VERY LARGE AND RICH MISSION OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS OF THE PORCIUNCULA."**

**WHILE MISSIONS WERE BUILT IN SAN GABRIEL AND SAN FERNANDO AND THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA, THE MISSION OF LOS ANGELES THAT CRESPI IMAGINED WAS NEVER BUILT. BUT IN ITS PLACE, A DIFFERENT SORT OF MISSION BEGAN—A CIVIC UNDERTAKING, TAKEN UP BY A RAG-TAG COLLECTION OF TWELVE FAMILIES WHO CAME FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD, AFRICA, ASIA, AMERICA, AND EUROPE, WHO TWELVE YEARS AFTER CRESPI'S JOURNEY FOUNDED THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES.**

**THOSE ORIGINAL SETTLERS MADE A COVENANT WITH THE LAND AND WITH EACH OTHER. THEY FACED FLOOD AND DROUGHT, EARTHQUAKE AND FIRES TO BUILD THE CITY WE NOW CALL HOME. IT IS THEIR COVENANT THAT BRINGS US HERE TODAY.**

**SO TODAY, LOOKING AHEAD, LET US JOIN TOGETHER TO RENEW THIS COVENANT, TO EXPAND OUR EXPECTATIONS AND TO REDOUBLE OUR RESOLVE TO BUILD THE CITY OF OUR DREAMS.**

**IN THIS SPIRIT,**

**LET US MAKE A COVENANT WITH THE LAND**

**LET US MAKE A COVENANT WITH THE CITY**

**LET US MAKE A COVENANT WITH EACH OTHER**

**FIRST, A COVENANT WITH THE LAND. A COVENANT WITH THE LAND IS ABOUT FREEDOM—WE CAN AND WILL FIND A WAY TO LIVE WELL**

HERE. WE WILL SEE THIS CITY AS A LIVING, BREATHING, ENTITY. WE WILL CLEAN ITS WATER, IMPROVE ITS AIR, WE WILL PRESERVE ITS OPEN SPACE, AND WE WILL GROW A NETWORK OF URBAN PARKS. AND THAT WE WILL PROTECT THE ABILITY OF ALL TO ENJOY THIS CITY WITHOUT BARRIERS. THAT WE WILL FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND ACCESS FOR ALL, AND THAT WE WILL PROTECT THE LIVING ORGANISM OF OUR URBAN ECOLOGY, FOR THESE TWO THINGS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FREEDOM.

THE STYLE OF HOLLYHOCK HOUSE AND BARNSDALL WAS DESCRIBED BY FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AS CALIFORNIA ROMANZA—MEANING THE FREEDOM TO MAKE ONE’S OWN FORM, AN INVOCATION WHICH CAPTURES THE SPIRIT AND FREEDOM OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

SECOND, A COVENANT WITH THE CITY—THAT WE CAN BUILD A JUST CITY FILLED WITH OPPORTUNITY

PEOPLE THESE DAYS SPEAK OF GIVING A HAND-UP, NOT A HANDOUT, BUT I REJECT BOTH OF THEM, FOR OUR CREATOR EMBUED US AS EQUALS. THERE ARE NOT SOME OF US WHO HAVE TO GIVE HANDS-UP TO OTHERS SO MUCH AS WE NEED TO BUILD A CITY WHERE WE SHOULD ALL EQUALLY RECEIVE THE REWARD OF OUR HARD WORK, BY EARNING A LIVING WAGE, ENJOYING QUALITY HEALTH CARE, A SECURE COMMUNITY, AND ACCESS TO A GOOD EDUCATION.

SO I PLEDGE TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH YOU, TO EXPAND OUR DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE ABILITY OF ALL TO AFFORD GOOD HOUSING. I PLEDGE TO HELP EDUCATE AND TRAIN OUR WORKFORCE AND TO INCUBATE NEW JOBS AND BUSINESS.

LASTLY, A COVENANT WITH EACH OTHER—THIS IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT MISSION. THERE IS A SPACE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE MARKET, A SPACE WE HAVE CAPTURED IN THIS ROOM TODAY, A SPACE THAT SAYS THAT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO ONE ANOTHER. TO THE HOMELESS FAMILY LIVING A FEW BLOCKS AWAY IN A STORAGE UNIT. TO THE YOUNG PERSON LOOKING TO GET AWAY FROM THE PRESSURES OF JOINING A GANG. TO A FORMER INDENTURED SERVANT SEEKING TO START A NEW BUSINESS HERE IN THAI TOWN. WE MUST ACTIVATE THIS PLACE, THAT SPACE, AND LIVE OUT THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT WE HAVE TO ONE ANOTHER. TO SHARE POWER, TO PLAN TOGETHER, TO GIVE BACK TO ONE’S COMMUNITY.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE WRITERS, RENAN, ONCE WROTE THAT THE NATION IS A DAILY PLEBESCITE. WE CANNOT MAKE THIS A ONCE EVERY FOUR YEARS OCCASION. WE CANNOT EVEN CLAIM VICTORY FOR VOTING A COUPLE TIMES A YEAR. WE MUST LIVE OUT THIS COVENANT DAILY, IN SMALL WAYS AND IN LARGE ONES, WITH A CONSTANT BEAT AND A STEADY STEP.

THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN OUR MISSION

THANK YOU FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME AN IMMENSE RESPONSIBILITY AND I HAVE NEVER TAKEN THAT FOR GRANTED. YOU HAVE ALLOWED ME TO REPRESENT YOU TO PRESIDENTS AND RESIDENTS ALIKE. I TRAVELLED WITH MAYOR HAHN AND MY COLLEAGUES LIKE ALEX PADILLA TO MEET IN MEXICO WITH PRESIDENT VICENTE FOX AND IN SOUTH KOREA WITH PRESIDENT KIM DAE JUNG TO TRY AND BRING TOURISTS BACK TO THE U.S. AFTER 9/11. BUT JUST AS IMPORTANT, YOU HAVE ALLOWED ME TO ENGAGE WITH YOU, THE 13<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT AND TO BRING NEW VOICES INTO GOVERNMENT.

MY COLLEAGUES KNOW THAT THE SECOND BEST FEELING IN THIS JOB IS WHEN YOU KNOCK ON SOMEONE'S DOOR AND YOU SEE THEIR EXPRESSION WHEN THEY REALIZE THAT THEIR COUNCILMEMBER HAS COME TO THEIR HOME TO ASK THEM WHAT HE CAN DO FOR THEM. THE BEST FEELING IS SOLVING THE PROBLEMS THAT THEY SHARE WITH YOU.

THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE.

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LET ME INVOKE HISTORY ONE FINAL TIME.

I WAS BORN AN ANGELENO, ENTERING THE WORLD AT THE GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL, LATER RAISED IN SHERMAN OAKS AND ENCINO, BORN TO A MOTHER WHO GREW UP IN LOS FELIZ AND WEST LOS ANGELES, A FATHER FROM SOUTH LOS ANGELES AND

**GRANDPARENTS WHO LIVED IN EAST AND NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES AND THE CENTRAL SAN FERNANDO VALLEY.**

**I LOVE THE HISTORY OF THIS CITY. A HISTORY THAT IS ALTERNATELY DISJOINTED, BEAUTIFUL, LIBERATING, REPRESSIVE, COMPLICATED, INNOVATIVE, AND CONTRADICTIONARY. BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, FORGOTTEN. AND WITHOUT OUR MEMORY, WE BECOME THE CLICHÉ OF A VAPID AND EPHEMERAL TINSEL TOWN.**

**SO LET US REMEMBER OUR HISTORY. LET US REMEMBER THAT WE LIVE AND WORK IN A CITY THAT IS JUST HALF A DECADE YOUNGER THAN THIS NATION ITSELF, THAT WAS BORN 45 DAYS BEFORE CORNWALLIS SURRENDERED TO AMERICAN TROOPS. WE FORGET THAT WE LIVE IN A REGION THAT WAS THOUSANDS OF YEARS INDIAN, 41 YEARS SPANISH, 24 YEARS MEXICAN, AND NOW 159 PROUD YEARS AMERICAN.**

**LET US REMEMBER THAT OUR FIRST MAYOR WAS INDIAN. THAT IN A CASE OF HISTORICAL DYSLEXIA, OUR FIRST BLACK MAYOR WAS ELECTED NOT IN 1973, BUT IN 1793. CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT HAPPENING IN A NEW YORK CITY OR A LONDON?**

**WE ARE A CITY BORN OF HARD WORK AND DREAMS. A CITY THAT TOOK A DUSTY PUEBLO AND TURNED IT INTO THE MOST FAMOUS TOWN IN THE WORLD.**

**THIS IS A TOWN OF DREAMERS, AND A TOWN OF DOERS A MAGNET FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION, AND A SOURCE OF HOME-GROWN TALENT.**

**THE DREAMERS: JUAN CRESPI, ALINE BARNSDALL (86 YEARS AGO), THE NURSE NEWLY-GRADUATED FROM THE HEALTHCARE CAREER LADDER, THE IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR WHOSE POWER IS BEING TURNED ON BY DWP THIS MORNING, AND YOU IN THIS ROOM.**

**DESPITE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE, I ASK YOU IS THERE ANY PLACE WE WOULD RATHER BE, ANY TIME IN WHICH WE WOULD RATHER LIVE IN THIS CITY? WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE ARE COMPELLED BY THE POWER OF THE POSSIBLE, BY A BELIEF IN RISKING TO TOUCH THE UNREACHABLE, BY OUR OWN INSATIABLE CURIOSITY TO BETTER OUR LIVES, THE LIVES OF OUR FAMILY, COMMUNITY, CITY, AND INDEED THE WORLD.**

**IN A CITY HOME TO THE MOVING PICTURE AND WHERE WE HELPED PUT A MAN ON THE MOON, THE ONLY THING THAT STANDS IN OUR WAY IS OURSELVES. ANY FAILURES WE HAVE HAD HAVE NOT BEEN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR SOCIAL. THEY ARE FAILURES OF IMAGINATION. SO LET US IMAGINE AND DREAM ONCE AGAIN.**

**THE MISSION THAT FATHER JUAN CRESPI DESCRIBED NEVER CAME TO BE. IT WAS TO BE OUR FATE THAT WE WERE ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOURNEY, A CIVIC ONE, EMBUED WITH THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE HOPES OF GENERATIONS, THE SWEAT AND TOIL OF MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES**

**BUT NOW WE MUST SEEK THAT MISSION—**

**YOU HAVE ENTRUSTED ME WITH AND THAT I HAVE TRIED TO CARRY WITH ME THROUGH EACH DAY, EACH NIGHT, AT CITY HALL, AT THE FIELD OFFICE, AT THE MARKET AND AT THE DRY CLEANER. PLEDGE TO MAKE EVERY DAY AS FOCUSED, AS ENTHUSIASTIC, AS COMMITTED AS THE LAST.**

**I NEVER FORGET THAT SERVE AT YOUR PLEASURE. I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN PLEASED.**