

**REMARKS OF MAYOR RON PIAZZA**  
**March 22, 2016**

Thank you council colleagues for putting your trust in me to serve as mayor this coming year.

First, I would like to recognize my family who are here tonight...my life partner and wife, Nancy, who has been very supportive of my council career and the rest of my family. And thanks to all our friends who have come to share this with Nancy and me.

I have lived in Lakewood most of my life. I have interacted with its council members for over 40 years. We have a history in Lakewood of being a well-run city.

But what I have been able to experience over my last three years on the council is what an extraordinary group of men and women we have serving right now. What has impressed me, and should impress our residents, about these four individuals sitting here with me tonight is the dedication, integrity and skill they bring to our city. They all have varied backgrounds and strengths, different perspectives and points of view. But what they all have in common is insisting that we do what is in the best interests of the city and its residents.

Sadly, not all local governments are like Lakewood today.

I respect, and look up to my council colleagues as examples, and I am honored that they have entrusted me with this job for the next year.

Being mayor means different things in different communities. Here in Lakewood, the city council expects me to represent all of us at community functions and activities, be the voice of the council, chair and facilitate our council deliberations, and be Lakewood's chief cheerleader.

While Lakewood is very well run--sometimes even boring in a good way--we still face our occasional challenges.

This council has a track record of thoughtful and collaborative decision making. I hope to continue that tradition by encouraging even more of that same good dialogue. I know we will not always agree, but I have seen us do our best work when we all weigh in on the difficult issues, always respectful of our individual opinions.

Lakewood is a wonderful and special community. I am proud to have grown up here.

Here is a place where a kid can go to good schools and enjoy first-class recreation, parks and sport programs; a place where a kid, of very modest means, can get his first job making burgers and fries at 16 to help his dad pay the bills; and a place where he can continue his higher education while working his way up the burger ladder, eventually to purchase the very same restaurant he started at, and grow his business for himself and his family.

Lakewood is also a community that fosters good values and citizenship. After all, times may change here in Lakewood, but our positive values do not.

One of those values is people helping each other. I have had many wonderful mentors helping me over the years. Our community is rich with them. Some of mine included my first boss, Dick Robinson, who was very involved in community organizations, and insisted I join the Lakewood Jaycees. There was my friend, Council Member Larry Van Nostrum, who's passing created the vacancy I now sit in, and Howard Chambers, whom I have worked with and learned from for close to 40 years. There's Supervisor Don Knabe, who has joined us here tonight with his wife Julie; McDonald's longtime CEO Ray Kroc, who I, as a young store manager in Lakewood, met on several occasions; and my council colleagues who continue to coach me as I learn the fine points of this job.

My many mentors taught me the value of giving back. And Lakewood made it welcoming and easy to do. From the Jaycees, to Rotary, to the YMCA, to the Chamber, these organizations and programs gave me the opportunity to--in a very small way--repay this community for what it has given me. As I serve on the council--and now this year as mayor--I hope to continue to repay a bit of what I have received from Lakewood.

As I enter this job, I do not arrive with a long agenda to accomplish or any major milestones to achieve, just as a council—together--to continue to make good decisions for our residents, keep our city the special place it is now, and keep our residents pleased.

As I immerse myself into this job, I hope along the way that I can make a small difference for this community. And if so, I will have achieved my personal goal as mayor.

Speaking of making a difference, in the coming months you will be hearing more about how we plan to specially recognize Lakewood folks who do make a difference, day-in and day-out in our community. Stay tuned for that.

Now, I'm not one for long speeches, but before I end, I want to thank Howard Chambers for his service to Lakewood as our city manager for 39½ years. Howard is the longest-serving city manager with any single city in California. We are lucky to have the dean of city managers leading his exceptional team here. Howard, I want to thank you for staying with Lakewood all these years. I know it wasn't always easy. You and your motivated folks make a real difference in the everyday lives of our residents. Thank you.

I also want to thank our city attorney Steve Skolnik for his sage advice and counsel. Steve, my colleagues and I all value your intelligence and knowledge of municipal law. I know I can count on you for good legal guidance and overall advice this year.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my fellow residents of Lakewood. You are the key ingredient that makes this city the wonderful place that it is. We are blessed to still have many residents who have lived here since our founding in 1954. Not many communities can say that. We are also fortunate to have new residents and businesses alike that continue to move to Lakewood, who are looking for a safe, well-run, family friendly community to call home.

I am honored to serve as your mayor for this next year. I pledge to do my best, working with my council colleagues, our city staff, and all our residents and businesses community members to keep Lakewood the great place that it's been--a place where any young person can become his own boss, become involved, and even become mayor some day. A place where dreams can come true.

Thank you. God bless you all. And God bless this great city of Lakewood.