



# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

RONALD W. REAGAN  
JANUARY 5, 1967



*Ronald Reagan is best known as the 40th president of the United States. Before ascending to the White House, however, Reagan served two terms as governor of California. On the occasion of his first inauguration in Sacramento, Reagan spoke bluntly about the wonder of our democratic institutions – and, more importantly, everyone’s responsibility to preserve them at all costs.*

“This is a solemn and momentous occasion. And yet, on the broad page of state and national history, what is taking place here is almost commonplace. We are participating in the orderly transfer of administrative authority by the direction of the people. And this is the simple magic of the routine, which makes it a near-miracle to many of the world’s inhabitants: This continuing fact that the people, by democratic process, can delegate power, and yet retain the custody of it.

“Perhaps we have lived too long with this miracle to be properly appreciative. Freedom is a fragile thing. It’s never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by way of inheritance. It must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, because it comes only once to a people. And those in world history who have known freedom and then lost it have never known it again.

“... No generation has fought longer and harder for freedom or paid a higher price than ours. But the fulfillment of our destiny demands more. We can make this way of life we call a state ... a place of unlimited opportunity, a golden dream for all who have the courage to dare.

“If this is a dream, it’s a good dream. It’s worthy of our generation and is worth passing on to the next. This is the eventual fulfillment of our destiny. I have every confidence that we, who have lived through three wars and a cataclysmic Depression, I believe that we’re capable of fulfilling our destiny.

“We can pass this dream on, so worthy of us and worth passing on to the next.”