

¡Buenas noches, Santa Fe!

Mi nombre es Javier Martín Gonzales, ¡y durante los últimos cuatro años ha sido el honor de mi vida servir como su alcalde!

And it is my honor, once again, to be here with you one last time as your mayor tonight, for a conversation not just about what we've accomplished and what's to come, but about Santa Fe itself: our community and our values, our history and our future, our identity, and our potential.

It's hard to put into words how special it is to have served this community as Mayor - this place that has shaped my entire life. This place where my family raised crops along the banks of the Acequia Madre on Canyon Road and the Santa Fe River that runs through historic Agua Fria.

This place where the Gonzales family has strived, sometimes struggling and sometimes succeeding, and growing our roots here as deep and wide as any of the pinons we grew up picking every fall.

This is where I watched my mom and dad work night and day to support our family and build their dreams, refusing to give up, building a business - a community radio station based entirely on the idea that bringing people together to share news and information and music and culture matters, it matters deeply, and it is a noble and worthy way to earn your living.

They put community first, and to this day, that spirit has guided me. Nothing says Santa Fe to me more than turning on KSWV radio to hear my dad and countless other northern New Mexico musicians singing the songs we all love.

It has been special because Santa Fe is special. As you know, my own father had the opportunity to serve in this same role. That George got to watch me as mayor for two years meant the world to me. Walking in his footsteps every day, sitting in his seat, though he is gone I can still feel his presence, his pride, the power of his voice guiding me, saying "hoy por ellos mañana para nosotros" - today for them, tomorrow for us all."

But that's the beautiful thing about Santa Fe - with a millennium of history behind us, we can hear the voices of our ancestors no matter where we go.

It is because of them, Celine and George and Anthony, Patricio and Estevan, and of course Cameron and Cadence my beautiful daughters, that I am standing here today, and I owe them everything. They are here tonight, as are many of my family, and I want to thank them for their love and support, for teaching me about who we are as a family, as a city, as a people, and for showing me how to live those values every day.

They are my blood, but they aren't the only family I have here this evening. From the very beginning, going back to the early, early days of my campaign, my time as mayor has been a daily reminder that in Santa Fe, family isn't just about blood, but about a sense of place, a realization of history, a shared set of values and a culture that every Santa Fean comes from and gives back to in their own way.

That makes every one of you a part of this family, and while I hope my legacy as Mayor means many different things, above all I hope it is defined by the belief: somos una familia - we are one family.

With that comes the responsibility to have faith in one another, to look out for each other, a burden that is not always easy to bear but is critical to our success.

There is also the belief, in which I am more certain than ever - that when we come together - juntos, un Santa Fe unido - around our common values, there is nothing we can't accomplish.

It's the story of Santa Fe that defines and shapes those values.

Last year we came together for an incredible Rally Against Racism that brought two thousand Santa Feans together on the Plaza to speak out in the wake of the tragic white supremacist attack in Charlottesville, Virginia.

It was an inspiring night in many ways, most of all because it gave our community the courage to look in the mirror, to launch a conversation that will extend far beyond my term, though I have been proud to take its initial steps.

It's not about removing monuments or tearing down statues, it's about how we can tell our story in a way that honors the true history of this place and all of the people - Native, Hispanic and Anglo, who are critical to its creation.

A conversation about acknowledging the wounds that history has created, rooted deeply in the belief that we can heal, but only if we heal together.

History has left no people without scars. But the current version we tell simply doesn't acknowledge the wounds that history has created: for Native people on whose ancestral lands we stand tonight and for Hispanic people whose language and land was also lost along the way following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

For 400 years, these people, our people, were Santa Fe's first builders, creators, artists and dreamers, and we owe it to them to be honest with our history, aware that all our wounds are real, and united in our commitment to healing.

Those conversations have been and will continue to be difficult, but if all of us make the commitment to look forward, working through the pain of the past 400 years, we can forge a new path.

As a next step, we launched a review of the monuments in Santa Fe, and it's made me think about some of the monuments around town.

There's one in particular, a simple stone on the plaza, that I walk past almost every day. It's small compared to many - three feet high and a couple of feet across - a smooth face chiseled with a map and some simple text that says "This stone marks the end of the Santa Fe Trail."

That simple stone speaks volumes about what makes Santa Fe special. In that stone you can read our community's story, you can see our values, you can see why so many people risked their lives and their livelihood to come and contribute their legacy to our future.

Though it is dedicated to one specific trail, it calls to mind all of the people who travelled that trail, or el Camino Real, or the ancient paths whose names are lost to history, to come to Santa Fe.

They were greeted in conflict or in peace, in commerce or in fellowship, each in their turn, by those who were here before, first Native, then Spanish, then Mexican, then American and beyond.

And each in their turn became another unbreakable thread woven into the fabric that ties us all together today.

Although the conflicts and clashes between these waves of people were devastating at times, those interactions, and the culture that arose from them, forged a set of common Santa Fe values - New Mexico values - that we have relied on for centuries. When we place our faith in these ideas we prosper, when we turn away from them we fall.

Ideas like kindness and compassion, love and respect, openness and diversity, tradition and innovation and creativity.

Last year we won international recognition from National Geographic, beating out some of the most incredible cultural centers all over the world.

It was called the 'Sense of Place' award - and I know it can be hard to really define what that means, but we all know Santa Fe has it, and we all know that it's rooted deeply in the values that bring our community together and make it possible for a place like Santa Fe to thrive.

We have our challenges, no doubt. The edges are rough, just like the rough, un-chiseled stone on the edges of the trail marker.

It's a reminder that we have a distance yet to travel, that the future has not been defined for us, and is still ours to define.

I find great hope in that, because I know we have the foundation of those values to turn to for guidance, to help us look out for one another, do better by one another, to ensure with each passing year more of our neighbors share in the bounty of this city.

That has been the driving force behind every proposal we've put forward, every stand we've made, every speech or statement we've given, and every vote we've taken.

There is real power in that hope, real power in our ability and our willingness to engage the challenges that face Santa Fe using the values that define us.

More than any budget we balanced or program that we created - let that idea - that our values and our identity give us the power to overcome our obstacle - be the thing that carries forward from our time here.

Let that be our legacy, and our time will not have been wasted.

The last four years have been nothing if not a whirlwind - and I will forever be proud of the work we have done and the path we have set our beloved Santa Fe on as we look into the future.

And it all began in the thousands of conversations with everyday Santa Feans we had as we built our people-powered campaign four years ago.

Together we shaped a new vision for this community, a new approach to governing — that asked more of City Hall, which demanded more of our city and of ourselves.

A vision rooted in our values, that says we are our brother's keeper, and we will not stand by or ignore the barriers keeping our neighbors from being full and fellow members of our community.

We have a role to play and a duty to carry in improving the lives of every individual in our community, in unleashing the potential of every Santa Fean, and we've worked hard to do exactly that.

Teddy Roosevelt calls on each one of us to jump into the arena, to "strive valiantly" even if we fail, to know "the great enthusiasms, the great devotions," and to give all we have in the service of a worthy cause.

He believed that was the only way to achieve something great, and that even if we failed, at least we failed "while daring greatly, so that our place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

In ways both large and small, that's exactly what I've worked to do as your mayor. We got our clocks cleaned on the soda tax for Early Childhood Education - no question about it.

But we made that effort because we believe in our children. We jumped into the arena because we were and are still tired of seeing too many kids go hungry at night, slip through the cracks of our school system, and fall further and further behind.

Enough had become enough, and win or lose I will always be proud that we took action when action was needed.

People didn't like our proposal to fund it, and that's okay, we learned our lessons, dusted ourselves off, and jumped right back into the work of governing.

We recognize that we have work yet to do to convince our communities of the value and importance of Early Childhood Education.

I still believe in it - I did then, and I always will.

I'll never forget the words of my grandpa John when I was growing up, who told us over and over again that education would always be the key to my future - to always go to school, to always respect our teachers.

Like nothing else, it has the potential to change lives, to change our state for the better, and I'll go to every county, every community, and every school in the state if I have to, but I won't rest until we deliver on the promise of every young life in every corner of our state.

So we've had our share of losses. But from that very first day on the campaign trail, you have inspired me with your courage, with your work, with your tirelessness in the service of a shared vision. And together we built a City Hall that reflected our shared values at every turn.

A government of conscience - that would refuse to stand aside while our neighbors, friends, family members fell through the cracks.

That's why we launched MIHO, the Mobile Integrated Health Office, sending our EMTs - some of our most trusted public servants - out into the community to provide life-saving preventative care.

A government of inclusion - that would capitalize on Santa Fe's greatest asset - our diversity and openness to the world - to make every kind of person feel welcome and able to contribute to the beauty of Santa Fe. That's why we fought for safe spaces for transgender people in our community.

A government of courage - that could and would stand up against the bullies in the White House who threatened us with everything from de-funding to arrest, and not only stand by our Sanctuary City policies but strengthen them! Oh and in case all my fans who called for me to be thrown in jail (or worse) are wondering - I haven't been walked out of City Hall in cuffs just yet!

A government of partnership - that would work hand-in-hand and side-by-side with the people in this community whose lives and careers were invested in the causes they believe in the most. That's why one of my first acts as Mayor was to bring the nurses' union and the hospital together to avoid a strike and negotiate safe staffing that benefits the entire community.

And a government of results - that would recognize smart and innovative opportunities to do better and wouldn't be afraid to embrace them. That's why we took a chance - investing in smart, young, and homegrown Santa Fe entrepreneurs like the artists and dreamers behind Meow Wolf,

which has gone on to create hundreds of jobs and make careers in the arts a reality for young people in our community.

We proved that government can and does work for real people, bringing the state, city, and private sector together to grow jobs at companies right here in Santa Fe.

In just four years we've negotiated and launched landmark deals to recruit innovative tech companies like Mark Johnson's Descartes Labs.

We've helped homegrown craft brewers and distillers like Santa Fe Brewing, Second Street Brewing, and Santa Fe Spirits grow.

And of course - in Santa Fe which has a higher proportion of women-owned businesses than any place in the country - we've worked to support the health of industry leaders like Kimberly deCastro's Wildflower International.

All together we created more than 2,000 net new jobs and guided the city to a full recovery from the Great Recession, and that's the kind of change we can be proud of.

The State of our City is strong because together we have made it strong, growing our economy, expanding the circle of access to education and opportunity, and building sustainability into the very fabric of Santa Fe.

We've acted because we want to make a difference, to shape the lives of the people in our community for the better, to support each and every Santa Fean as they chase their dreams.

And looking back across the last four years, the highs and the lows, that's exactly what we've done.

Jesse Guillen, from our Legislative Affairs office, and his wife Natalie, had a little baby last year, Rafael. My assistant Erminia has a two year old son, Juan Tapia IV. And out in the community, there were almost 7,000 babies born in Santa Fe County in the last four years.

That's 7,000 little Davids, or Estevans, or Isabellas or Olivias who are the future of our community, and on whose behalf we have dedicated our work for four years.

They are inheriting a city of opportunity. Thanks to the work we've done, a baby born in Santa Fe today is more likely than ever to be able to grow up, go to school, build a career, and raise a family of their own, right here in Santa Fe.

Our progress matters most where it will impact their lives:

So that those children will grow up in schools aligned to support them from birth to career, we brought school leaders, policy makers, funders, non-profits, teachers and parents together in the

Children, Youth and Family Community Cabinet to create for the first time a set of community-wide standards and goals and a strategy to get us there.

Because we created the Homework Diner, which has served more than 6,500 meals in just the last year, they'll grow up one step away from a warm meal for them and their families and a tutor to help with homework and answer questions.

As they work to succeed in school they'll have the support of dozens of programs and non-profits funded by City grants to help them cross the finish line.

Programs like ArtSmart, to connect them to Santa Fe's arts culture, the Boys & Girls Club to ensure a safe place for kids of working parents, Communities in Schools to teach them hard skills that contribute to success, Girls, Inc. to help us raise strong, smart and bold women, and NDI, where so many of our kids have grown up and built lifelong friendships.

Wise Fool, Youth Shelters, Santa Fe Public Schools, Gerard's House - all told, more than 35 of the community programs and organizations we often take for granted have been funded in part or in whole by a grant from our administration.

And we are making children a priority like never before, pushing this type of funding above \$1 million a year for the first time ever.

As they get closer to graduation, our young people will have the opportunity to shape their futures for themselves on the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board or the annual Youth Summits that bring hundreds of young people together to talk about the Santa Fe they want to inherit. And statistically, they're 18% more likely to walk that stage and receive their diplomas than they were in 2010.

(ASK VETS TO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED)

If you decide to serve our country in the military, you deserve to know you are coming home to a community that values your service and will honor it in ways both large and small.

Like when we fulfilled our promise to end veteran homelessness in Santa Fe for good, ensuring that no veteran would go without a roof over their head in our town ever again. Like when we created a first-ever Veterans Commission to advise our course. Like when we made public transportation in our city free for every veteran.

It's a token of what we owe you for your service, but we took these steps with an honest intent to show our appreciation. Thank you, thank you all, and please be seated.

Through our work in Culture Connects we know that the children of tomorrow will grow up in a city dedicated to connecting them to the arts in a meaningful way - that they will be citizens of the world, a promise we made in my first State of the City address that our kids would be "as comfortable with calculus and computer science as they are with O'Keefe and the Opera."

Thanks to partnerships like Santa Fe Advance and Opportunity Santa Fe, which bring people together across sectors to focus on common goals, our young people will find no shortage of opportunity for post-secondary education that builds a skilled workforce ready to boost local companies and local families.

Whether it's a 4-year degree at St. John's or the Higher Education Center; a degree or certificate from Santa Fe Community College in a field like nursing, green building, or sustainable technology; an apprenticeship in the local film union; or a Verde Fund internship in sustainable agriculture, we want every child in our community to have access to post-high school classrooms that teach the skills of the 21st century.

Today that dream is more real and more accessible than ever.

When they finish school they'll have access to an economy that is thriving, on a foundation that is sustainable.

In healthcare, technology, the arts, tourism, film, renewable energy, and construction, we've seen huge leaps forward that put a career and a life in Santa Fe within the grasp of every child born here.

Our economy has been the strongest in the state, and we've worked hard to create pathways into careers in one of a half a dozen growing sectors.

There are jobs here, in a film industry that earned Santa Fe honors as the third-best small city for film-makers in America, and has a \$300 million local annual economic impact, competing with Los Angeles and New York for new film and television production - supported by a world-class local workforce that is proudly unionized and a Film Commission we created my first year in office.

There are jobs here, in a healthcare industry that in the last two years has seen a brand new 340,000 square foot, \$135 million Presbyterian facility on the South side, with more than 500 new jobs as a result, a 60,000 square foot, \$33 million expansion at Christus, our community hospital, and expansion in community health services like Southwest Care and La Familia Family Medical Services.

Jobs in a Tourism industry that supports more than 7,000 families in our community, and has seen four year growth of 30% in lodgers tax revenue, supported by my administration's doubling of our investment in marketing Santa Fe to the world.

Tourism, film, technology...these industries will continue to grow and create jobs as a result of our commitment to a world-class, regional airport right here in Santa Fe.

Jobs in an economy wired for the future - from the day we brought gigabit-speed broadband internet to the Railyard and laid the groundwork for its expansion to every resident in the city in coming years.

Jobs in a city where the living wage - rising to \$11.40 an hour this year - has continued to set the standard for wage policy nationwide, keeping pace with the cost of living and increasing the buying power of the working people and their families who are the foundation of our economy.

And jobs in a city that takes the crisis in housing seriously and where our commitment to do something about it has been consistent and transparent.

We wrote new rules that make building affordable housing easier than ever and generate new revenue for our affordable housing fund.

We appointed new people with new perspective to the Planning Commission.

We laid out a new vision for the Santa Fe University of Art & Design and launched a public process that will reshape our city for generations.

And we got real, tangible results: 1,000 new housing starts in the last four years and over 2,000 units in the approval process as of today.

We are a city committed to resilience, a city that, thanks to our efforts, is more prepared than ever to deal with the real consequences of Climate Change.

We're proud to have put our city on a path of true environmental sustainability.

Proud of our commitments - to utilize 100% renewable energy by 2025, to be completely carbon neutral by 2040, to transition to a fully-electric city vehicle fleet in the next ten years.

On our watch our city's water conservation shattered records, dropping below 100 gallons of water per capita per day (from a high of more than 165!) - by far the best in the West.

We paved the way for a city-wide infrastructure of EV charging stations, launched new solar arrays that boosted our renewable portfolio above 25%, and created nearly 100 new jobs for kids in sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest management, home weatherization, and solar technology through the Verde Fund.

And we're proud of the way we've gotten the job done: through collaboration, citizen leadership, local expertise, and community engagement at every step.

The Climate Action Task Force, the Sustainable Santa Fe Commission, and the Verde Fund strike to the heart of our ability to create jobs in the green economy, adapt to climate change, and ensure that the poorest in our community do not bear the brunt of the crisis.

We're proud of this work because it means that our efforts to build equity in Santa Fe, to create jobs in Santa Fe, to educate the next generation of Santa Feans, will not have been for nothing.

We're building a Santa Fe worthy of our children's future, but we will fail to secure any future at all if we ignore our responsibility to make our city sustainable and resilient along the way.

Our environment is not the only thing we've built sustainability into either, despite what you may be hearing on the campaign trail these days.

Through consistent hard work and tough decisions, we've rebuilt the city's financial strength and health, and worked accountability and transparency into every process.

Too many of the candidates for council and for Mayor - a few of whom have been in positions of power for years and yet have done nothing to prevent or correct the very problems they complain the loudest about, have chosen to run cynical campaigns, trashing the city they seek to lead and blaming others for their own inaction.

I've been in politics long enough to know that some candidates will say anything to get elected, and they're just taking the easiest course, the path of least resistance. But tonight we set the record straight.

Because the truth, though inconvenient for a political campaign that appeals to division and anger, is that through four years of constant struggle and work, we leave a city to our successors and to our children that is in stronger shape than it was even before it was hit by the worst recession since the Great Depression.

We inherited a \$15 million deficit and a mess of a parks bond and cleaned up both, without raising a single tax.

We rewrote our financial policies, our bond policies, our investment policies and our project management policies to correct the problems that allowed those things to happen, we initiated systems and technology upgrades to bring city government into the 21st century, and made it more transparent and accountable than ever before.

We initiated reforms, including an anonymous employee hotline, to stop fraud, waste and abuse, and they worked exactly as intended, catching major issues in multiple departments and leading to decisive action whenever and wherever impropriety was uncovered.

Early on, we realized our city government needed a long, hard look in the mirror, and we weren't afraid to take it, commissioning dozens of internal and independent audits, reviews, investigations and reports in just four years.

Reviews that publicly exposed problems, identified weaknesses, and helped us chart a clearer, cleaner, and more accountable path forward for our city.

To be perfectly honest, we never anticipated that we'd have to spend as much time as we did putting the city's fiscal house in order. It's not what we ran on, and like most of you, it's not something we were even aware of until we took office.

But we never backed away from it when the challenge arose or when the critics were the loudest. We invested real time and resources in getting it right, and we got results. Because of our reforms, as our economy has surged, we've aligned our budgets with our community's priorities, restored our cash reserves, and earned one of the highest bond ratings of any government in the state year after year.

As we righted our financial ship, we found the freedom to invest in our city for the first time in years.

We put \$11.5 million this year into repaving our roads. We paid down millions of dollars in debt ahead of schedule. We raised employee pay - even when the raises weren't as high as I fought for them to be, and we more than doubled our training budget to increase skills and accountability for our workers.

And we invested in technology platforms that will make it easier and more efficient than it has ever been for our citizens to interact with their city government, from business licenses to building permits and more.

We did it because we believe in transparency and public accountability, because it was my responsibility as mayor to correct problems when I found them, regardless of the criticism every new report about the problems we uncovered brought with it.

More importantly, we did it so that the children and the families in our community, to whom we owe our greatest duty, will now be able to live with a city government that has the stability and the capability to create opportunity for them at every turn.

We've also acted, in the last four years, to build a city that will be there to pick them up if, god forbid, our children or our neighbors' children ever fall on hard times. Because we leave a city where the fabric of community has been woven just a little tighter with every passing year.

From us, our children will inherit a city that came together time and again on a Plaza which was once the economic and civic and social center of Santa Fe, and which we have restored to the heart of our community.

We came to dance at Bandstand, heal after tragedy in Orlando, stand up against racism after Charlottesville, courageously tackle difficult questions about ourselves during Fiestas and the city's first-ever Indigenous Peoples' Day, march for the resistance, celebrate the Low-Rider Summer, launch into the New Year, and set records for attendance at festivals and community fundraisers, and of course to burn away our troubles at Zozobra.

For those moments, and for the thousands of others I don't have the time to mention tonight, I am so grateful.

And now, I'm leaving my beloved city in your hands. The next mayor will have their share of challenges to face. Despite our progress, there are still too many children in Santa Fe going

hungry, too many families moving away, too many workers going home to other communities at the end of the day.

It will not do to turn away from our commitment to be our brother's keeper, love our neighbor, and fight for our children's futures. It will not do to abandon our values or back away, whether in fear or simple lack of vision, from the big challenges we face.

I don't know what will happen next - but I know that we are the masters of our own fate, and there is nothing we cannot accomplish together, as one family, heeding the advice of Dr. King when he said, "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

My wishes for our Santa Fe family moving forward are simple and few, and this is what I'll leave you with tonight:

that we continue to place our faith in those common values, forged in our history, and continue to step forward, fearless, in engaging those values to tackle the challenges we face.

that we reject the divisive tribalism that may have started in Washington but has been creeping steadily into our own conversations, elections and debates thanks to politicians who would have us believe that Santa Fe isn't about us - it's about us vs. them.

that we never throw up our hands in the face of poverty, or climate change, or inequity wherever we may find it - never turn inward in desperation or be seduced by the ridiculous idea - as some would have it - that we cannot do more for one another - that we have no more duty to one another - than to pull weeds in city medians.

and finally, that we never lose our imagination, that we never lose our hope in the power, and the responsibility, to make a difference in each other's lives, and that we never lose the courage to try big ideas, even if they fail.

Let these ideas guide us, let those values teach us, and we will never fail in the eyes of our ancestors, we will never fail in our duty to each other or to the children who are our future, and we will never stop adding to the richness and the legacy of this incredible place we have been so blessed to call our home.