

# STATE OF THE BOROUGH 2021

On January 1<sup>st</sup> I began my 24<sup>th</sup> year as an elected official. My 11 years on the Council prepared me for my time as Mayor. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as your Mayor. As I tell people, I am the Mayor of Hawthorne, not the Mayor of the Republicans of Hawthorne, but Mayor of the entire community.

I am proud of the fact, that as Mayor, I have appointed more women and more Democrats to important leadership roles than any other Mayor in Hawthorne's history. Last year I created the Hawthorne Pride Alliance to give a voice to a community that wanted to serve and involve themselves in local government but were afraid or unsure of how to. I have strived to bring our Hawthorne community together and keep it strong.

I have made our Police Department more reflective of our community. Hawthorne today is not the Hawthorne of the 1950's. We are a culturally diverse town, and I celebrate what unites us and not on what divides us. Former New York City Mayor David Dinkins said it best when he said that America is not a melting pot where we become the same, but a mosaic where we are part of the whole but maintain our own uniqueness. I celebrate our uniqueness and the fact that we come

together as a family community. The small things we do like meal trains, clothing drives or just watching out for each other makes us the caring community that we are. We are *Hawthorne Strong*.

We have done a lot in my soon-to-be thirteen years as Mayor. I am not going to take your time listing the accomplishments of my Administration, but they are many.

From Super Storm Sandy to the current COVID-19 pandemic, I am proud how we have reacted as a community. Hawthorne is stronger than anything Mother Nature or a virus can throw at us.

We endured the tragedy at the Farmers Market. Hundreds turned out for a Hawthorne victim that many of us never met, but our grief as a community helped us to survive.

I have served with some incredible elected and appointed officials throughout my time as a public servant. I often think of Garry Sinning, Marge Shortway and Hank Van Ry who died doing what they loved: serving the community they loved.

My core appointed officials Eric Maurer, my administrator, Mike Pasquale, my borough attorney, and Steve Boswell, my Borough Engineer have always made me look good, and solve problems and issues that at times seemed unsurmountable. They will always have my gratitude for a job well done.

From Joe Metzler and John Lane, who took me under their wings to show me how to be an effective Councilman, to Rayna Laiosa and Mike Sciarra and their enthusiasm as newly-elected officials, as well as everyone in between: in particular Frank Matthews, Dominic Mele, Bruce Bennett, John Bertollo, et al. To my friend Joe Wojtecki, a member of the loyal opposition, I appreciate your support these many years. All of us past and present have moved Hawthorne forward to make this the great Borough that it is.

2020 was truly the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. All we did as a Borough and a community was to find ways to survive. We survived and at times thrived through the worst virus since the Spanish Flu of 1919. Through my years on the emergency management team we talked about different virus strains and about inoculation, but none were close to what we have endured this last year.

There is, however, good news. Vaccines are here, and inoculations have already started for health care workers and EMTs. There will be an inoculation for every person living in Hawthorne. The vaccines are slated to be given in tiers: 1A for healthcare workers and EMTs; 1B for those over 75 years of age; 1C for those over 65, and then continuing until all are vaccinated. You will have a choice between the County sites and the City of Paterson's site at the International High School on Grand Ave in Paterson. In fact, you can go to any Passaic County site

either run by the County or individual city within the County. You will have to register online, and the vaccinations are by appointment.

I know that many of you have suffered severe complications by the shutdown of government or business. Some of you have lost jobs, housing or businesses. For that I am truly sorry. I do take solace in the fact that the Borough has weathered the storm; and because of prudent financial practices and the CARES grant, we have experienced no significant financial problems. We have met our obligations because you have met yours. There has been no significant change to our tax collection rate.

That means we have paid our employees, our debt services and endeavored to maintain the same level of service to you, our residents.

I am hopeful that we can resume many of the community programs we put on hold last year. Hopefully we can have a baseball/softball season and a Memorial Day Parade, just a few things I note that will help to return life to a new normal.

As we enter 2021 I wish you health and happiness. May God bless Hawthorne and may God Bless you all.

Respectively submitted,

Richard Goldberg, Mayor