



HIGH ROAD *for*  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
*Advocacy Project*

HIGH ROAD *for*  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
*Education Project*



---

438 EAST 200 SOUTH | SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84111 | (801) 364-3560 | WWW.HIGHROADFORHUMANRIGHTS.ORG

## **“Why I Have Decided Not to Run for Reelection”**

### **Address by Mayor Rocky Anderson**

July 28, 2006

Salt Lake City Main Library

When I first ran for mayor, I considered myself simply a resident, a citizen, a community-activist, with passionate concerns about what was happening in our city, our state, our nation, and our world. That’s how I still view myself.

I worked in my law practice to help bring about positive changes for people with mental illness, for people whose rights were abused while they were incarcerated, for homeless people, for people who lost their savings in underinsured financial institutions, and for victims of malfeasance by those whose professional standards demanded that they exercise greater care toward those they are supposed to help.

Outside of my law practice, I worked, proudly . . . for the vindication of constitutional rights and liberties; . . . for the provision of better family planning education and services; . . . for political reform, including a ban on gifts by lobbyists to legislators; . . . [and] for the provision of greater educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged young people.

During the course of my community service, I witnessed elected and other public officials enriching themselves as they exploited their offices. I saw important public policy decisions being made by elected officials who seemed to have no interest in reading and learning about the matters on which they exercised enormous impact.

On a national, state, and local level, I watched as few, if any, did anything at all to stop horrendous genocides, to stop the poisoning of people by toxins in our air, or to bridge the huge gulf between the haves and have-nots in our world and in our nation.

Locally, I saw a disregard of the rights and freedoms of people who were members of minority political parties, people who were not members of the predominant religion, and people from the ethnic and racial minority community.

\* \* \* \*

Most fundamentally tragic, I witnessed a dangerous culture of obedience, where change, differences, and dissent are disparaged as being divisive – a culture where hypocrisy so often prevails, as purported religious and family values are recited as if by rote, while in daily lives – in the real world – inhumanity has prevailed, including complacency – and hence complicity and culpability – in connection with the killing of innocents, the degradation of our planet, the stupendous disparity of wealth, the undermining of life-enhancing education, and a mind-numbing condescension toward and discrimination against those who do not share certain religious beliefs, who do not have the correct sexual orientation, and who do not enjoy, through the accident of birth, the perks of status, inheritance, or citizenship.

I wanted to do more – to have a greater impact – so I ran for mayor.

\* \* \* \*

Even in the face of popular or political opposition, I have always sought to keep in mind the importance of providing straightforward, honest, principled leadership – the sort of leadership we often sorely miss from elected officials – officials who are too often led by polls or political expediency, rather than by an informed determination of what is the best long-term course.

I've valued my time as mayor, I've come to love the people with whom I work every day, and I've found great satisfaction in what we have accomplished – and in what Salt Lake City has become. Although it saddens me in many ways, I have decided I will not seek a third term as Salt Lake City Mayor.

I have made this decision because I want to spend my remaining days working on grass-roots advocacy and organizing in the areas of human rights and global warming. As our nation – and indeed our world – have proclaimed “Never Again” ever since the Holocaust, we have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear, again and again, toward many millions of people – many millions of our brothers and sisters around the world – as they have been murdered, raped, tortured, and run off from their homes. We have witnessed much of the same with respect to the most

urgent problem facing our world – global warming – with elected officials dithering while they rely on fiction rather than science to justify their unconscionable inaction.

A clear thread that runs throughout the history of genocides, sexual slavery, climate change, and other human rights tragedies is the fact that our elected officials are generally not leaders. Rather, they respond to what the polls say or what we the people demand – so long as we demand it effectively and in large enough numbers. Our elected officials need to know we care – and that if they don't act to stop human rights abuses and the exacerbation of global warming, they will pay a significant political price. Hence, it rests upon us to lead – to organize – and to make a positive difference by pushing our elected officials to do the right thing.

Two weeks into the Rwandan genocide in 1994, President Clinton's National Security Advisor told a human rights worker, "Make more noise!" He said the phones weren't ringing and that, without a manifestation of Americans caring about the genocide, intervention to stop it would not occur. Although Romeo Dallaire, UN military commander in Rwanda at the time, said it would only take 5,000 troops to stop the genocide, no one in the US made noise, phone calls weren't made, the US and UN failed to intervene – and 800,000 people were butchered in 100 days. The same was true when two million people were killed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; when the genocide, including use of concentration and rape camps, occurred for 2 ½ years in Bosnia; when Saddam Hussein actually had chemical weapons and was using them against the Kurds – during which time the US rewarded him with an additional \$1 billion in agricultural credits -- ; and, now, for four years, in the Darfur region of Sudan, where untold tragedy has occurred with abysmal inaction by the US and the UN.

So, I plan to "make more noise" – and hope to help others give vent to their humanity and their outrage by "making more noise." Through grass roots advocacy and organizing, I believe and hope we can make this a better, safer, healthier, more sustainable, and far kinder world.

Thank you for allowing me the honor and privilege to serve as your mayor – and let me invite you all to "make more noise" with me in the coming years.