At Mayor Littmann's Inauguration

By Jefferson Holland, Poet Laureate of Annapolis

Photo credit: Executive Office of the Governor

Part I

It was a Christmas to remember, way back in December of 1783,
The Revolution won, a whole new world begun, and we called that world the Land of the Free.
The big houses blazed in those glorious days with candles and fiddles and laughter,
And we wandered the streets, begging wassail and sweets, with our caroling trailing off after.

Along that procession, we passed Congress in session in the State House in the circle on the hill,
(Though the Congressmen in question were more frequently in session at Mann's Tavern, quaffin' their swill).
They had ratified the Treaty of Paree and now were seeking to reward the man who'd made the dream come true.
He was coming into town to step up – and then step down.
He was the greatest man we ever knew.

With fifes and drums a-beatin', we all went out to greet him as he came toward town along the General's Road.
And George, he looked so proud as we gathered all around, he sighed like he'd set down a heavy load.
On that day, Washington could have had his own kingdom with a wave of his sword and a nod,
We'd have made him our king gladly, instead, he sat there sadly and said goodbye to use unruly mob.

And afterwards, at Mann's, the General shook hands with a tearful group of old comrades in arms.

They had followed him around from New York to York Town, but they couldn't follow now back to the farm.
That evening, the General danced with the ladies,
Washington loved to dance at the ball,
And he danced until dawn, danced with each, one by one,
'Til he'd danced, 'til he'd danced with them all.

And then he departed for Christmas with Martha,
Not knowing what fate would decree.
Thanks to him, we had more to be thankful for,
That Christmas in Annapolis in 1783.

Part II

Imagine the magnitude of that moment:

He'd just defeated the most powerful army in the world,

And yet he ceded all the power he'd controlled,

Cementing for the eons that the nation would be ruled,

By the word of law, and not by petty whims of one who had so many people fooled,

Governed by the rule of "We the People," not by tyrants, oligarchs or tycoons

Let Annapolis show the world how democracy is done –

With justice, not with vengeance --

With the truth, not outright lies --

With good sense and consensus --

With the facts, not alibis --

With idealism, not idolatry --

With compassion, not derision --

With intelligence, not idiocy --

With communion, not division

On this December day, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals set by Washington here, in this place, in this city, in this Annapolis.

God bless our new Mayor and our City Council, God bless Anne Arundel County

God bless the State of Maryland, And God bless America