

Friends,

Over the past week, I've been blessed to have had numerous experiences that have been nothing short of inspiring. Last week, I had the chance to speak to the Young Professionals of Augusta, a diverse and progressive minded group whose membership continues to grow. Their enthusiasm for our city, and for wanting to be proactive in helping to move Augusta forward, gives me great hope for our future.

Over the weekend, I spent a good deal of time at Arts in the Heart and was moved by this celebration of our city's cultural diversity. The crowds were amazing and the energy of the event was palpable. I also had the opportunity to attend a birthday celebration for Ruth Crawford and her two sisters who are all three over the age of ninety. Ms. Crawford, who started the Shiloh Community Center, has long been one of my heroes and her wonderful family, who came from as far away as Boston, is a testament to the lives these three amazing women have lived.

When I got home Saturday night after helping to judge a singer songwriter competition, I was hit by the thought that I always tell people I wish they could see what I see on a daily basis. With this in mind, and with a tremendous amount of inspiration from my recent experiences, I sat down and put pen to paper on the piece attached. I hope you enjoy it and I hope it helps give a bit of perspective as to just how amazing our city really is.

Thanks,

Deke

AUGUSTA THROUGH MY EYES

The river winds its calming way,
Through the place that we call home.
Some scattered on occasion,
We've chosen no longer to roam.
A city whose creative roots,

Break through the senseless strife.
Dark clouds shall never hold us back,
Fertile ground now blooms with life.
The future calls us onward,
While white light ignites the way.
Where once was only midnight,
Now comes the bright new day.
Despite the past we cannot change,
While we strive on to tomorrow,
We're bound all one to another,
For we share in both blessing and sorrow.
There will never be the moment,
Where a city feels no hurt or no pain,
But steadfast in love for our neighbors,
Augusta's strength will always remain.
The Garden City grows anew,
Seeds planted in each generation,
Many flowers creating a rainbow view,
A sight worthy of wondrous elation.
And so now let us remember,
For our city to rise above,
Our focus must be a united front,
Eternal hope born of brotherly love.