

Newsletter - April 2020



The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy continues its success in civic engagement and informing the public on policy issues. Over the past nine months, the center has conducted election and issue polls, supported student research, held two major events and begun building ties to New Jersey's legal community through continuing legal education.

Our successful Hughes Center Honors program on Nov. 14 honored former Governors Jim Florio and Christie Whitman, Mark Giannantonio, Sharon Schulman and Ike Ejikeme. It attracted nearly 500 political and business leaders and contributed to our endowment, which supports important programs. Jim Florio was so impressed, he returned to Stockton University Feb. 20 to speak to students. The center also hosted former White House Counsel Don McGahn, an Atlantic County native, for a fascinating conversation with Bill Hughes Jr. and a reception on Jan. 23. Despite all that, this is not a time to celebrate. On Oct. 30, we lost our mentor, friend and center namesake, Ambassador William J. Hughes. The Hughes Center pledges to always remember the ambassador and to be guided by his example of civility and civic engagement. We are also in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic that has changed our existence. So much of the Hughes Center's work involves public events, and those must be put off for now. But the center remains committed to our mission and is working to use technology to advance our programs.

And we have a major advantage in that a revitalized Hughes Center Steering Committee is actively engaged and involved in promoting the center and Stockton. The entire board supported the Hughes Center Honors, and our Feb. 24 Steering Committee meeting was the best-attended ever. We are working with individual members to explore new programs and we are grateful to all committee members for their advocacy. I invite everyone to contact me with their ideas and feedback at john.froomjian@stockton.edu or by cell phone at (609) 828-9392.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Froomjian, Executive Director



[2019 Hughes Center Honors](#)
Read about the event, honorees, and presenters



[Hughes Center Steering Committee Updates](#)
Welcome to our new Steering Committee members



[A Conversation with Don McGahn](#)
Former White House Counsel speaks at Hughes Center Event



[Gov. Florio visits Stockton](#)
Florio Urges Students to Stay Engaged and Informed



[CLE Panel Discussion](#)
Center initiates continuing legal education



[Civic Engagement](#)
The Hughes Center promotes civility and supports student engagement

[2019 Hughes Center Honors](#)



The legacy of Ambassador William J. Hughes was the central theme of the 2019 Hughes Center Honors, which was held on Nov. 14, 2019 at Seaview resort in Galloway, NJ. Speakers and honorees lauded the late Ambassador Hughes as a model of civility and civic engagement that is needed more than ever in politics today.

"He was the epitome of a public servant and a role model," Stockton President Harvey Kesselman said in the program's opening remarks.

Former New Jersey Governors Christie Whitman and Jim Florio each received a Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award for their contributions to New Jersey public life.

The crowd of almost 500 viewed a preview of a documentary on Hughes, who died Oct. 30. His daughter, Tama Hughes, thanked guests for supporting the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, which sponsors the awards and advocates for civility in government.

The center meant a lot to her father and was a touchstone of his career, Ms. Hughes said. "He achieved great things for New Jersey through listening and compromise," she said. "That is what the founding fathers had in mind. We could use more of his kind today, and that is why the continuance of this center is important."

The Hughes Center Honors is a biannual event at which awards for professional excellence and a commitment to public service, civility and bipartisanship are presented to recognized leaders in public policy. The qualities meriting an award reflect the life and career of Ambassador Hughes, who served as U.S. ambassador to Panama and as a U.S. congressman for 20 years.

"These two outstanding New Jersey leaders embody the values of public service and civility in public affairs," said Edward H. Salmon, chairman of the Hughes Center Steering Committee, referring to Whitman and Florio. "Those values are the hallmarks of Ambassador Hughes' career, and they guide the work of the Hughes Center for Public Policy."

Florio began his public service career in 1969 by serving three terms in the New Jersey General Assembly before his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974. He represented the 1st Congressional District until 1990, when he was sworn in as New Jersey's 49th governor. As governor, Florio enacted landmark legislation on clean water enforcement, school finance reform, welfare reform and the nation's toughest assault weapons ban.

In Congress, Florio sponsored the Superfund law to clean up hazardous waste sites, and was also influential on transportation policy as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Transportation and Tourism. Florio was awarded the 1993 "Profile in Courage Award" by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.

Whitman was the 50th Governor of New Jersey, serving as its first woman governor from 1994 until 2001. As governor, she preserved a record amount of New Jersey land as permanent green space. She served under President George W. Bush as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from 2001 until 2003.

"We need civil discourse now more than ever," Whitman said. "We have to remind people that you can be partisan but not be enemies. We can work together to find solutions. Yes, we need to win elections, but then we need to govern and serve the people. We can be there again. That is our better nature and a way to honor Ambassador Hughes."

"It's an honor for Stockton to host these two leaders, who have played crucial roles in shaping New Jersey public policy throughout their careers," said President Kesselman. "They remain role models for the values of civic involvement and civil discourse, which are hallmarks of Stockton's mission."

The Excellence in Civic Engagement Award was received by Mark Giannantonio, President and CEO of Resorts Casino Hotel. A Stockton alumnus, Giannantonio serves on the board of the New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA).

Sharon Schulman, Stockton '80, received the Distinctive Alumni Leadership Award. Recently retired, she was the Special Advisor to the President and the Founding Executive Director of the Hughes Center, where she held panel discussions, speaker events and candidate debates at Stockton University.

The Distinctive Student Leadership Award was presented to Ike Ejikeme, Stockton '18, who moved to Washington D.C. for a position with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, after graduating from Stockton with a Dual Degree in the Criminal Justice Program with a track in Homeland Security.

To learn more about the Hughes Center Honors, visit:

www.stockton.edu/hughes-center/hughes-center-honors-2019.html

[Back to Top](#)

New Steering Committee Members

William J. Hughes, Jr.

William J. Hughes, Jr. is a litigator with years of experience in a variety of areas, including federal white collar investigations and criminal defense, antitrust, and commercial and shareholder disputes. Hughes served as Assistant U.S. Attorney, where his duties included investigations of counterfeiting, bank robbery and theft, firearms violations, police bribery, and other crimes. Before joining the U.S. Department of Justice, Hughes served as a Judicial Clerk with the Honorable John F. Gerry, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey.



Hughes holds law degrees from Georgetown and Rutgers, a Master's degree in Political Science from Eagleton Institute of Politics and Public Policy, and a Bachelor's degree in Government from Franklin and Marshall College. Hughes is also the Vice President of Boy Scouts of America, Jersey Shore Council, and is a board member of Atlantic County Crimestoppers Foundation.

Arlene Halpern

Arlene Halpern is a community activist who has served in various capacities over her long career. In Pennsylvania, she was a board member of both the Philadelphia Parkinson Council and The University of Pennsylvania's Institute on Aging. For 35 years she was a committee person for Lower Merion Township, as well as Vice President of Lower Merion Democratic Club. Now residing in Margate, NJ, the self-described lifelong learner is a member of the Margate Democratic Club.



Halpern's professional education includes an Education degree from The University of Pennsylvania, and a paralegal certificate from the Paralegal Institute. She was a U.S. Congressional Staffer to Congresswoman Marjorie Margolies Mezvinsky and a paralegal staffer at Swenson and Cohen. Over the years, Halpern has served on various church and synagogue boards, as well as a "host mother" for foreign students studying at The Curtis Institute in Philadelphia.

Eric Scheffler

Eric Scheffler became Sheriff of Atlantic County in 2018 after retiring as a Lieutenant with the Atlantic City Police Department. While with the ACPD, he served as Shift Commander in the Patrol Division and Commander of the Training Unit. Scheffler is a certified instructor in 22 different law enforcement training curriculums, and he created 11 law enforcement instructor courses. He has mentored at-risk youth as well as intellectually and developmentally disabled students, and has helped tackle heroin and opioid addiction issues in schools.



Scheffler is passionate about helping First Responders with PTSD and the importance of developing resiliency to deal with the cumulative trauma these professionals endure, as well as lessening the stigma associated with coming forward to ask for help.

Sheriff Scheffler is an Atlantic County native. He was raised in Margate and currently resides in Northfield, NJ with his wife Maria and their family.

Dr. Michelle McDonald

Dr. Michelle McDonald is the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Stockton University, where she oversees the work of Stockton's seven schools, supervises the Offices of Research and Sponsored Programs, Office of Continuing Studies, Center for Community

Engagement, and serves as the University's Accreditation Liaison Officer to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.



Dr. McDonald is an Associate Professor of History in the School of Arts and Humanities, and she has received research grants from the Fulbright Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the U.S. Department of Education. She has served in numerous other capacities at Stockton, including as History Program Coordinator (2012-14), Vice President of the Faculty Senate (2013-15), Co-Chair of the Faculty Senate Task Force on University Status (2012-14), Co-Chair of the Pan-College Task Force on University Status (2014), Faculty Administrative Fellow in the Office of the Provost (2013), and Assistant Provost (2015-17).

Dr. McDonald holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Michigan, an M.A. in Museum and American Studies from George Washington University, an M.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, and a B.A. in History from UCLA.

Dr. Michael S. Rodriguez

Dr. Michael Rodriguez is the program coordinator and Associate Professor in the department of Political Science at Stockton University. He has taught a wide variety of courses, including Senior Seminar, Race and Politics, and Politics of Immigration. Dr. Rodriguez is also the Coordinator of Stockton's Washington Internship Program, which sends select Stockton Students to Washington, D.C. for a semester where they intern in various government departments and agencies, as well as in private firms.



Dr. Rodriguez holds degrees in Political Science from Princeton, University of Texas at Austin, and Temple University. He has also taught at West Chester University, Widener University, Camden County Community College and Temple University, and he held administrative positions at Haverford College (Associate Dean) and Princeton (director of the university's multicultural center) prior to earning his Ph.D.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the center's Steering Committee.

[Back to Top](#)

A Conversation with Don McGahn



On January 23, former White House counsel Don McGahn talked about his career with his friend William J. Hughes, Jr. during the event "A Conversation with Don McGahn," sponsored by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. McGahn grew up in Brigantine, NJ in a family that was active in Atlantic City and state politics. He built a career on election law, and said when he first met Donald Trump, who was then just a potential presidential candidate, the two "hit it off."

McGahn said he believed that none of the regular Republican candidates could beat Hillary Clinton, and that the candidate had to be someone different.

"Americans were feeling left out, and Trump's instincts were picking up on that," he said. "I thought he could win, though at the time in Washington everyone thought I was nuts."

When Hughes asked McGahn if the president's propensity for Twitter was a good way to issue policy, he said that it could be since records are maintained and the president's Twitter feed is being captured for the national archives. On the issue of balance of power, McGahn said it is an argument that has been ongoing for generations of presidents. "Executive power has no list of duties, no manual," McGahn said. "There has been constant battle with Congress and it is a tug of war. It is a system of necessary tension, a feature, not a bug, and part of the democratic experiment."

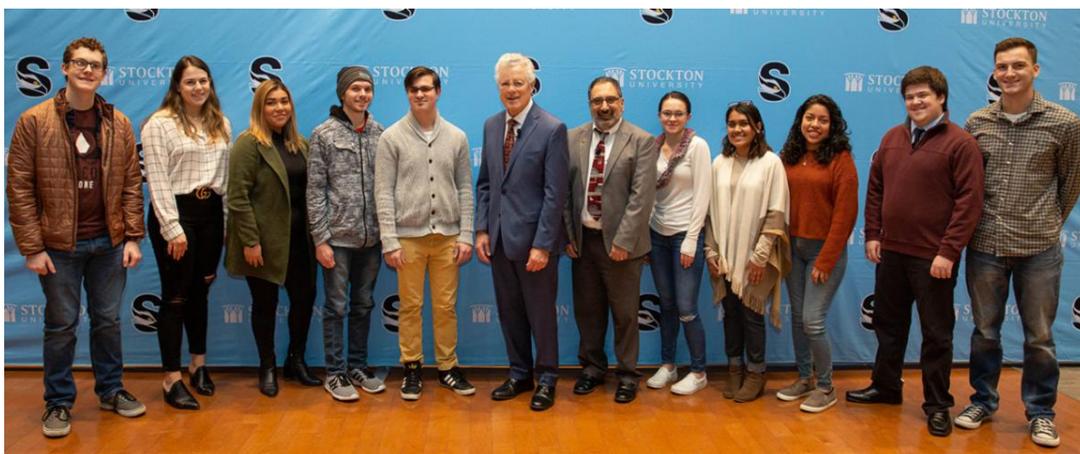
Hughes asked if Washington could again become a place of compromise and negotiation as it was under Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill. McGahn replied that it can, but it will take time and a common premise. He noted that some legislation has been passed in a bipartisan manner, but today it is harder for anyone to cross party lines. He theorized that since most members of Congress no longer move to D.C. with their families, there is less socialization outside of work where they get to know each other as people. "People don't see each other in social settings," he said. "Maybe if people socialized more they would find they have more in common."

Asked for his advice for students, McGahn said they should take risks now, while they are young, and do the hard work to master something. "You have to pay your dues," he said.

Stockton President Harvey Kesselman said Stockton and the Hughes Center serve as forums for diverse voices. Previous speakers have included two Supreme Court Associate Justices, Sandra Day O'Connor and Neil Gorsuch.

[Back to Top](#)

Florio Urges Students to Get Engaged and Informed



Former Gov. Jim Florio told Stockton University political science students that if they want to change government, they have to personally become "engaged and informed."

"A participatory democracy requires it," Florio said during a talk sponsored by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy in the Campus Center Event Room on Feb. 20.

Florio, author of the book "Standing on Principle," talked about issues that continue to concern him, including climate change, gun violence, pharmaceutical and health care prices, the state of the New Jersey public pension system and budget, and the state's infrastructure.

He said he is worried that politicians continue to try to solve modern problems with old solutions that are outdated and can no longer work.

Florio cited his success in passing legislation restricting military assault weapons, though he noted that it took a lot of work to battle the National Rifle Association.

Florio is working to develop offshore wind farms and said Europe has been ahead of the U.S. in tapping wind power. He cited the new industries and jobs it could bring to the state.

"It is important for young people planning their professions to find one that is relevant to the future," Florio said.

Florio served in Congress from 1975-1990 and as governor from 1990-94 and was awarded a Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hughes Center Honors in 2019. He recalled getting involved in politics while a young man in law school. He said he disputes those who say government is not the answer to problems, but is the problem.

"Government is not good or bad," he said. "It is a tool to be used. I get so annoyed when people say that they are too 'good' to get involved in politics. If the good people drop out who is left?"

He said issues like gun control and a woman's right to choose have broad public support, but get less political support because of the power and money of special interests.

Students asked questions ranging from the issues facing New Jersey, to federalism, how to solve New Jersey's pension fund shortage, and what more could be done to help South Jersey.

Florio said he was the last governor to fully fund the state pension system. He said the deficit is now so large that no one really wants to take on the reality of the tough decisions that need to be made.

Florio urged the students to maintain their independence, listen to all views, and become informed on the issues.

"What a university like this does is give you options," he said. "But you have to evaluate your options and think logically to make decisions. Don't get so invested in an idea that you can't walk away from it if it starts to make you uncomfortable."

Asked about how to deal with "fake news," Florio reiterated that people have to do the work of being informed.



"You have to make decisions, then get participation to implement those decisions," he said. "It's a lot of retail work, which is often the work people don't want to do. People may support something, but they also need to be organized."

Asked if there is room today for a bipartisan candidate, Florio said the political pendulum has currently swung far to the right, and the tendency would be for it to now swing back toward the middle.

"People are saying that something is wrong," he said. "People have jobs, but are still not earning enough to meet their basic needs."

Hughes Center Executive Director John Froomjian said that even during partisan battles with the state Legislature, Florio was able to keep the debates civil and professional. He asked how government could return to being more civil.

Florio said as society has become less civil, so has government.

"Government reflects society," he said. "It starts with all of us. We have to do it one by one and hold ourselves responsible. We have to be capable of some shame."

Watch video of the event [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Center initiates continuing legal education

The Hughes Center is reaching out to build ties to New Jersey's legal community by sponsoring continuing legal education (CLE) sessions for lawyers and judges.

On January 29, the center cosponsored a panel discussion for CLE credits with the Atlantic County Bar Association about women's role in the judiciary. The well-attended panel was held at Stockton's main campus in the Campus Center Theatre with a welcome from Center Executive Director John Froomjian. Stockton Continuing Studies also played a role.



Prior to January's session, the Hughes Center cosponsored two CLE sessions on the Stockton campus during summer 2019 with Atlantic County Superior Court.

Dr. Froomjian said establishing relationships with lawyers and judges is appropriate given the close relationship between the law and public policy and because of the late Ambassador William J. Hughes' career as a lawyer, prosecutor and legislator. Hosting CLE sessions can also build on goodwill created by the Hughes Center's past hosting of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and the recent event with former White House Counsel Don McGahn as on-campus speakers about the law.



The Hughes Center is a cosponsor of Stockton's annual Constitution Day speaker event and reception.

[Back to Top](#)

The Hughes Center promotes civility and supports student engagement

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University was recently named a Revive Civility partner of the National Institute for Civil Discourse, an organization dedicated to returning civility to political dialogue. As part of the Initiative to Revive Civility, the Hughes Center will hold

small-group and community discussions about civility in our political conversations during the 2020 election year. Members of the public will be invited to participate in dialogue about how to reduce the hostility and polarization found in political talk today. Sessions will also be offered to Stockton University students, said John Froomjian, executive director of the Hughes Center. "It's important for students to know there was a time when people could disagree over politics and not call each other names," he said. "We welcome their ideas on how we can return to more civil conversation." Former New Jersey Governor Christie Whitman is an honorary national co-chair of the NICD, whose advisory board is chaired by former President Bill Clinton and includes former U.S. Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and other bipartisan political leaders.

The Hughes Center is also taking an active role in supporting student development. The Center established a web page to showcase Stockton University student research sponsored by the center. The first paper to be published, "The Effects of Climate Change in New Jersey," was researched and written by Florence Hulbert, an undergraduate studying mathematics and political science who also serves as president of the College Democrats of Stockton University and sits on Stockton's Student Senate. The research provides an overview of the potential for climate change to affect the Garden State.

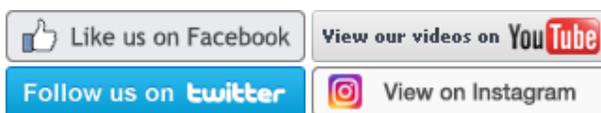


Another way the Hughes Center is involved in student outreach is through the Washington Internship Program, which is an intensive para-professional and academic experience in which Stockton students live, work, and study in the Washington, DC region. The Hughes Center provides a \$1,000 scholarship to a Stockton Washington intern each semester. The fall 2019 scholarship recipient was Ryan Webster, a senior political science student at Stockton University. Webster interned with the International Development Group, an international public affairs consultancy based in Arlington, VA. The spring scholarship recipient is Armando Linares, a dual major in political science and Spanish, who is interning at the American Bar Association.



"The Hughes Center is proud to support serious students like Ryan and Armando who are living Stockton's ideal of civic engagement, and the Hughes Center recognizes that providing these opportunities to Stockton students is an investment in our future leaders," Froomjian said.

[Back to Top](#)



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