



## Newsletter - September 2019



The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy enters Fall 2019 with a full schedule of civic events, research projects and programming. Chief among them is our Hughes Center Honors fundraiser at Seaview on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2019. We are thrilled to honor former New Jersey Governors Jim Florio and Christie Whitman with Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Awards, as well as other New Jersey leaders. I invite you to read about the Honors and all our activities in this newsletter.

I took over as Interim Executive Director of the Hughes Center four months ago. I have worked for the center since 2011, mostly as Senior Research Associate in charge of the Stockton Polling Institute. Prior to joining Stockton University, I was an award-winning political and investigative reporter for The Press of Atlantic City. In that role, I wrote about every major issue and political leader in New Jersey, including Ambassador William Hughes and Dr. Edward Salmon (the center's Steering Committee chair). I believe my journalistic work on public policy, combined with my recent Doctor of Education degree from Stockton, have prepared me to lead the Hughes Center and achieve its mission of civic engagement and public education.

To readers of this newsletter, to Hughes Center supporters and to any member of the public: My door is always open to you, as is my phone (609 626-3626) and my email ([john.froomjian@stockton.edu](mailto:john.froomjian@stockton.edu)). I welcome your ideas, thoughts and feedback as we begin a new academic year of civic engagement.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Froomjian, Interim Executive Director



### [Hughes Center Honors](#)

Thursday, Nov. 14, 2019  
Reception 5:30 P.M.  
Seaview, a Dolce Hotel



### [Hughes Center Steering Committee Updates](#)

Welcome to our new Steering Committee members



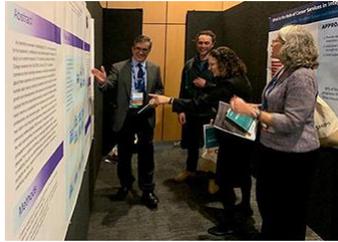
### [District 2 Assembly Debate](#)

Hughes Center to cosponsor the debate



### [2nd State of N.J. Beaches](#)

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### [New Opportunities for Stockton Students](#)

Center helps develop student internships in Atlantic City



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Hughes Center Promotes Civic Engagement

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## [Hughes Center Honors](#)

The Hughes Center Honors will be held on Thursday, Nov. 14 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Seaview Golf Club and Resort in Galloway, NJ. Former New Jersey Governors Jim Florio and Christie Whitman will receive Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Awards for their contributions to New Jersey public life.

"These two outstanding New Jersey leaders embody the values of public service and civility in public affairs," said Dr. Edward H. Salmon, chairman of the Hughes Center Steering Committee. "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. As governor, Florio enacted landmark legislation on clean water enforcement, school finance reform, welfare reform and the nation's toughest assault weapons ban.



Whitman served under President George W. Bush as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from January 2001 until June 2003. She was the first woman governor in New Jersey, serving from 1994 until 2001. During Whitman's tenure at the EPA, the agency passed and implemented landmark legislation to promote the redevelopment and reuse of previously contaminated industrial sites. As governor, she preserved a record amount of New Jersey land as permanent green space.



"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 Stockton University President Harvey Kesselman. "They remain role models for the values of civic involvement and civil discourse, which are hallmarks of Stockton's mission."

The Hughes Center Honors are awarded for professional excellence and a commitment to public service, civility and bipartisanship, qualities which reflect the life and career of Ambassador William J. Hughes, who served as U.S. ambassador to Panama and as a U.S. congressman for 20 years. The awards program is sponsored by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

The other honorees at the Nov. 14 event are Mark Giannantonio, President and CEO of Resorts Casino Hotel; Sharon Schulman, Founding Executive Director of the Hughes Center; and Ike Ejikeme, a recent Stockton University graduate.

Giannantonio, who has more than 35 years of Atlantic City gaming expertise, will be presented with the Excellence in Civic Engagement Award. He was previously a consultant for Specturm Gaming and also served as president and CEO of Tropicana Casino & Resort.



Schulman, who will receive the Distinctive Alumni Leadership Award, retired last year as the Special Advisor to the President and Founding Executive Director of the Hughes Center. She had previously served as president and CEO of Aqua New Jersey and had worked in management for the former Atlantic Electric in Pleasantville.



The recipient of the Distinctive Student Leadership Award will be Ike Ejikeme, a recent Stockton graduate. Ekijeme served as student representative on the Stockton University Board of Trustees, and accepted a position with the Department of Homeland Security in Washington after graduating from Stockton's Dual Degree B.A./M.A Criminal Justice Program.

Ejikeme was an active student at Stockton, serving for two years in the Stockton Student Senate. He was also president of the Alpha Alpha chapter of the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., where he founded the I-Phi Food charity drive.



To learn more about the Hughes Center Honors, visit: [www.stockton.edu/hughes-center/hughes-center-honors-2019.html](http://www.stockton.edu/hughes-center/hughes-center-honors-2019.html)

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## **New Steering Committee Members**

### **Vincent D'Alessandro**

Vincent D'Alessandro is the President of OceanFirst Bank's Southern Region, which currently includes branches and administrative offices located throughout Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem, Burlington and Camden Counties in New Jersey. D'Alessandro's professional career in finance began in 1989.



D'Alessandro has had extensive involvement with various nonprofit organizations and currently sits on the Boards of the Shore Medical Center Foundation, Atlantic

Cape Community College Foundation, the HERO Campaign, South Jersey CEO Group, MBCA of Atlantic City, Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey and Businesses Committed to South Jersey.

### **David R. Mayer**

David R. Mayer currently serves as Director of Government Affairs for New Jersey American Water.

Mayer began his public career in 1989 as an aide to Robert E. Andrews, who was then serving as Freeholder Director. He continued working in Andrews' successful congressional campaign and became Director of the Congressman's district office. From 1995 to 2004, Mayer served as Chief of Staff to Camden County Clerk, James Beach.



Mayer was elected to the State Assembly both in 2003 and 2005, where he served on the Assembly Transportation and Education Committees and sponsored many pieces of legislation including the New Jersey STARS Program.

Mayer was elected Mayor of Gloucester Township in November of 2009, sworn in on January 2, 2010 and was recently re-elected in 2013. Since taking office, Mayer has worked on improving the Township's finances and stabilizing taxes. He introduced six budgets which each held the line on the municipal tax rate and implemented many sustainable and green initiatives.

### **Dr. Mukesh Roy**

Dr. Roy is the Director for Emergency Preparedness and Planning for the Ocean County Health Department, the largest county health department in New Jersey. He also chairs The New Jersey Healthcare and Public Health Sector Working Group and State of New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. He has coordinated major countywide emergency response efforts for infectious disease (H1N1, Ebola, and Measles), hurricanes (Irene, Sandy) and other disasters. Previously he worked as the Senior Director Emergency Preparedness for Yale-New Haven Center for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response. He also assisted the State of Connecticut in planning and purchase of a 100-bed, \$8.2 million mobile and surge hospital facility, one of only four nationally.



Dr. Roy also has experience as a Public Health Epidemiologist for the New York State Department of Health, and acted as a bioterrorism-planning consultant to assist hospitals and healthcare entities.

In addition to his work at County, State, and non-profit entities Dr. Roy also serves at the Rank of Lieutenant Colonel as the Chief of Preventive Medicine, New York State Air National Guard. Previously, Lt. Col Roy served for four years in the United States Air Force. During his active military service, he deployed to Nigeria in direct support of the United States Presidential Mission and to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

### **Kimberly Schalek Downes**

Kimberly Schalek Downes has 26 years of experience working in governmental and regulatory relations. In 2003, she co-founded Salmon Ventures Limited (SVL) and has served as the company's CEO since it was formed, and as President since 2016. In this role, Downes oversees the daily operations of SVL, including finances, client work, projects, special events and political activities. Downes helps foster close working relationships with all SVL's clients in addition to providing them with individual professional consulting services.

Prior to the establishment of SVL, Downes served as Vice President & Executive Coordinator of AUS Pathways from 1997 to 2003. AUS is a worldwide market research and consulting company with corporate headquarters in Moorestown, NJ. In her role, Downes was responsible for the oversight of the firm's administrative duties, including research, writing of client reports and billing activities.



From 1990 to 1991, Downes worked as a Legislative Aide for Assemblyman Edward H. Salmon and Raymond Batten. She represented both Assemblymen at various affairs, assisted with constituent issues and researched legislation affecting the First District.

### **Stephen D. Williams**

Stephen D. Williams was selected as only the third Deputy Executive Director in the history of the Delaware River Bay Authority. In this capacity, he focuses on Authority-related economic development initiatives; plans internal and external communication strategies; handles governance matters; serves as the Board Secretary; and fosters ongoing working relationships with state and local officials. Williams, who also serves as the Director of Airports for the DRBA, began his official duties in January 2018. Williams has more than 40 years of airport and transportation management experience. Prior to joining the DRBA as its Airports Director in 2005, he spent 11 years as the airport manager of Republic Airport in Farmingdale, Long Island, a large New York metro area reliever airport.



From 1986-1990, Williams served as Project Manager and Vice President of Pan Am World Service's private contract management operation of the City of Atlantic City's two airport facilities, Atlantic City International Airport and the former Bader Field. A licensed private general aviation pilot with over 700 hours of flight experience, Williams is also a member of the following organizations: the New Jersey Aviation Association, National Business Aviation Association, Airports Council International, where he serves on the small airports committee, the American Association of Airport Executives, the Air Mates Flying Club at Atlantic City International Airport. He is also a former president of both the New York Aviation Management Association and the Long Island Business Aviation Association.

### **Tahreem Rajput**

Tahreem Rajput is the Stockton student representative on the Hughes Center Steering Committee. Rajput is a senior, majoring in biology with a pre-medical concentration. She has been involved in various student organizations, including serving as the Chair of the Student Senate government affairs committee. She has used her position on the Student Senate to further the interests of South Asian students and has facilitated programs to improve student life on campus. She was the student speaker at the Foundation Scholarship Dinner in 2018 and was the G. Larry James scholarship recipient in the same year.



Rajput is a member of the prestigious Sigma Alpha Pi and Alpha Lambda Delta national honor societies, and also participates in a number of different extracurricular activities, including the Stockton Judo Club. She has been a teaching assistant for the Introduction to Acting class, and was part of the Stockton production "Just One More Hand." She is also fluent in the Urdu and Punjabi languages, and works towards creating awareness of South Asian cultures and customs on campus. Rajput is scheduled to graduate in Spring 2020.

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

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## Hughes Center to Cosponsor District 2 Assembly Debate

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University and The Press of Atlantic City will cosponsor a debate among state Assembly candidates in Legislative District 2 on Oct. 23, in an event that will be free and open to the public.

Candidates who will be participating in the debate include Assembly incumbents Vincent Mazzeo and John Armato, both Democrats, and Republican challengers Philip Guenther, a former Brigantine mayor, and Atlantic County Freeholder John Risley.

Dr. John Froomjian, interim executive director of the Hughes Center, will moderate the debate, and a representative of The Press will serve as a panelist.

Members of the public and Stockton University students and staff are encouraged to propose questions that may be asked of the candidates during the debate.

The 2nd District has historically featured some of the most competitive - and expensive - legislative races in New Jersey, going back decades. The district's voters don't simply vote the party line, Froomjian said.

"In most New Jersey districts, one party controls both the Senate and Assembly seats for years at a time. Legislative representation in the 2nd District has been split between Democrats and Republicans in 10 of the last 15 legislative terms," Froomjian said. "That split reflects the competitive nature of the district."

Froomjian said candidate debates allow voters to evaluate the candidates' positions and leadership qualities, providing valuable information on which voters can make informed choices.

"We're thrilled to once again partner with Stockton University on this vital part of the electoral process as part of our election coverage," said W.F. "Buzz" Keough, executive editor of The Press.

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## DEP Commissioner Calls for N.J. Strategic Climate Plan

New Jersey needs a strategic plan for climate change that will address both mitigation and resiliency across the state, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine McCabe told attendees at the 2019 State of New Jersey Beaches forum at Stockton University Atlantic City on July 1. The event was hosted by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy and the Coastal Research Center.



While the state of New Jersey beaches and ocean water quality are outstanding, issues including plastic pollution, clinging jellyfish, vibrio bacteria and algae blooms are affecting different areas of the state. Additionally, sea walls and dunes have been effective but more will need to be done. McCabe stressed that the state will continue to fight any efforts that allow ocean drilling off the coast of New Jersey, or even testing for wells.

"We know there are issues of vulnerability for people and the economy," McCabe said. "We think about this a lot at the DEP."

The Hughes Center's namesake, former U.S. Congressman William J. Hughes, who helped write and pass the federal ocean dumping ban, said there are still important issues to address.



"Ocean policy has been a love of mine for years, back when a group called SOS, for Save Our Seas, started that was concerned about all the beaches being closed (because of contamination)," Hughes said. "Now there are new crises."

The University could establish a Coastal Resiliency Incubator at the Stockton Atlantic City campus by late 2019 or early 2020, consultant James Rutala said. Stockton already supports state environmental efforts. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection maintains a Coastal Resilience Officer stationed at Stockton Atlantic City, and several personnel from the Division of Fish and Wildlife are housed in Galloway. Most recently, Stockton partnered with the city of Atlantic City on a New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Innovation Challenge grant to research the feasibility of a Coastal Resiliency Institute and Marine Science Center. The grant concluded in August 2019 with a report to the NJEDA, which should be published shortly. The University is working with Atlantic City to finalize a resolution supporting the next steps for the project concept, as well as the viability of a resiliency incubator, should there be sufficient support and stakeholder interest.

Dr. John Froomjian, interim executive director of the Hughes Center, said that as the July 4th holiday approached and the summer beach season got into full swing, it was important to examine the condition of New Jersey's beaches and related issues which play a crucial role in the state's tourism economy.

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## **Hughes Center helps develop student internships in Atlantic City**

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy and Stockton University's Political Science Program are partnering with Atlantic County to create internships for Stockton students within county government.

Internships are available to undergraduate students in various county departments, including Administration, Public Safety, Law, Human Services and Family and Community Development. Dr. Michael Rodriguez, coordinator of Stockton's Political Science Program (POLS), said students will gain real-world experience as they learn how government operates. County officials created detailed descriptions of the duties that interns will perform.

"We want to be sure the students have a productive learning experience," Rodriguez said. "This is a great opportunity that benefits both the students and county government," stated County Executive Dennis Levinson. "We gain insight from the perspective of these young adults while they gain knowledge of the many programs and services we provide."



The internships developed from a May meeting with Atlantic County department heads led by Deputy County Administrator Diana Rutala. The meeting was arranged by Dr. John Froomjian, interim executive director of the Hughes Center, who had offered to help POLS establish the government internship program.

"Helping to place Stockton students in government internships fits perfectly with the Hughes Center's mission of civic engagement," Froomjian said.

Since the county program was announced, two other government agencies in Atlantic City have asked to place Stockton interns in their offices.

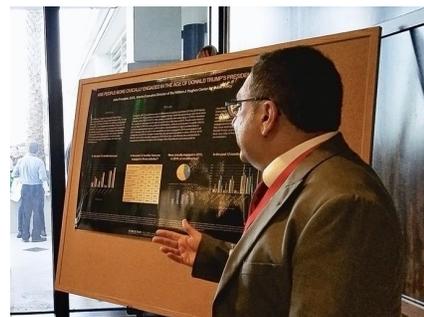
In addition to the internships for Stockton students within county government, the center is creating other internship opportunities for students. Every fall and spring semester, the Hughes Center awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a Stockton student participating in the Washington Internship Program, in which student interns work in a federal agency. The center will take on a student research intern every semester going forward. The first is junior Florence Hulbert, who will research and write a report about the effects of climate change in New Jersey.

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## Hughes Center Promotes Civic Engagement

Dr. John Froomjian attended the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement national conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. during the first week of June. At a conference poster session, he presented findings of a spring Stockton University Poll on civic engagement activities of New Jersey adults. The poll replicated an identical one conducted before Donald Trump was elected (2015). The results showed that while the overall level of civic activities such as attending a rally or writing a congressman or newspaper had not changed in four years, women and Democrats had become more active in 2019.



The Hughes Center has been active for years in the American Democracy Project (ADP) and Political Engagement Project (PEP) at Stockton. These projects encourage civic participation, education and voter registration. Froomjian has agreed to serve as staff co-chair of ADP-PEP for the 2019-20 academic year.

The center will cosponsor panel discussions about immigration, refugees and state violence at Stockton's Atlantic City Academic Center at 5 p.m. on Oct. 18, 2019. The panels will feature Lucia

de Los Angeles Diaz Genao of Mexico, co-founder of "Colectivo Solecito de Veracruz," a grassroots group of mothers searching for their missing loved ones in Mexico's Gulf state of Veracruz. Froomjian will moderate a panel of activists and professional service providers. Additionally, Froomjian will discuss coastal resilience at Stockton Coast Day during University Weekend. The presentation will take place at 12 p.m. on Oct. 13, 2019 on Stockton University Atlantic City.

The Hughes Center also promotes its message of civic engagement by sharing relevant stories of community members and employees. Darya Hrybava, events and communications specialist at the Hughes Center, recently fulfilled her long quest of becoming a naturalized US citizen.

On the Hughes Center Blog, Hrybava shared some of the steps that are involved in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen, including the civics exam, the naturalization ceremony and registering to vote. About the importance of voting, Hrybava writes, "The right to vote is both a privilege and a responsibility of citizens, and I am honored to be able to participate in a democratic process that is unfortunately unavailable to many people around the world." Read Hrybava's full story at [blogs.stockton.edu/policyhues/](https://blogs.stockton.edu/policyhues/).



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