

## Hughes Center Honors to Recognize Six Outstanding New Jersey Leaders

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**Galloway, N.J.** – The Hughes Center Honors will recognize six outstanding New Jerseyans at the Stockton Seaview Hotel & Golf Club on Nov. 9.

Among those honored will be the late Jim Whelan, who served as a City Councilman and Mayor of Atlantic City and later a state Senator until his death in August.

“We mourn the loss of Sen Whelan, but welcome the opportunity to honor his memory and share his legacy as we recognize the accomplishments of all our honorees,” said Sharon Schulman, executive director of the Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

Other honorees include U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, D-12th, and state Senator Diane Allen, R-Burlington, who will retire at the end of her term in January. The Hughes Center will also recognize Montclair State University Professor of Political Science and Law Brigid Callahan Harrison, a Stockton alumnus, and recent Stockton graduate Maryam Sarhan.

Ambassador William J. Hughes will receive the Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented to him by former vice president Joe Biden. Hughes and Biden became friends when they occasionally rode the Amtrak train together to Washington D.C. when Hughes was a U.S. Congressman and Biden was in the Senate representing Delaware.

The Hughes Center Honors are awarded for professional excellence and a commitment to public service, civility and bipartisanship which 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.

Hughes, 84, a former prosecutor in Cape May County, represented South Jersey's 2nd Congressional District in the House of Representatives from 1975 to 1995. His legislative accomplishments include passage of a ban on ocean dumping and major anti-crime laws. Hughes co-authored the act that preserved the New Jersey pinelands from development and separately secured Wild and Scenic River status for the Manumuskin and Menantico rivers. He worked to prevent the FAA Technical Center, which is now named after Hughes, from relocating to Oklahoma. The center stayed in Atlantic County, and developed into the nation's premier aviation testing facility.

Upon retiring from Congress, then-President Bill Clinton appointed Hughes ambassador to Panama. Hughes served as ambassador for three years, during which he oversaw the process leading to the 1999 transfer of the Panama Canal back to Panamanian control.

### **Civility in Government & Politics Award**

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, U.S. House of Representatives, D-12th

Prior to her election to Congress in 2014, Watson Coleman served eight consecutive terms in the N.J. General Assembly. She has fought to help women, economically and socially disadvantaged populations, and other vulnerable groups. She was the first African-American woman to serve as Assembly Majority Leader and as Democratic State Committee chair. The former Stockton University trustee is the first African-American woman to represent New Jersey in Congress.

### **Excellence in Civic Engagement Awards**

The Honorable Diane Allen, New Jersey Senate

Allen was elected as a Republican to the state Assembly in November 1995, representing the Seventh District in Burlington County. She was elected to the state Senate two years later. Allen serves on Senate committees handling issues of health, senior citizens, veterans and education. Prior to government, Allen was known as a TV news anchor, reporter and producer in Philadelphia and New Jersey. Allen also ran VidComm, Inc., her own media production company. In 30-plus years in the media, Allen has won dozens of regional and national awards.

Honorable Jim Whelan, New Jersey Senate (posthumous award)

As mayor from 1990-2001, Whelan stabilized a scandal-plagued city government while overseeing economic growth related to casino gaming. He was elected as a Democrat from the 2nd District in Atlantic County to the state Assembly in 2005. Whelan was elected to the State Senate in 2007 and was re-elected twice. He championed issues related to gaming, tourism and the economy. Whelan attended Temple University,

where the former lifeguard became a nationally-ranked swimmer. He taught in Atlantic City schools for more than 20 years.

### **Distinctive Alumni Leadership Award**

Brigid Callahan Harrison '88, professor, Political Science and Law, Montclair State University

Harrison has taught at Montclair State University since 1994. She is a frequent political commentator for ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX News, NJTV, CBS News radio, and for various NPR radio programs. She has authored several books and various peer-reviewed journal articles. Harrison received her B.A. from Stockton University in 1988, her M.A. from Rutgers University, and her Ph.D. from Temple University

### **Distinctive Student Leadership Award**

Maryam Sarhan '17, 2016-17 Student Senate President

Sarhan is a recent graduate of Stockton University, where she earned a B.A in Political Science with a Pre-law concentration. At Stockton, she served as Student Senate President and Student Trustee, and worked to advocate and empower her peers. She was also a student representative on the Hughes Center Steering Committee. Sarhan is currently based in Washington D.C. as a Congressional Fellow on Capitol Hill.

### **Ticket information**

The event, which is open to the public, will start at 5:30 at the Stockton Seaview Hotel & Golf Club.

Sponsorships are available at various levels. Net proceeds will benefit the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy Endowed Fund. To purchase tickets or for more information about the Honors, visit the Hughes Center website at:

[www.stockton.edu/hughescenter](http://www.stockton.edu/hughescenter).

**The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy** at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is named for Ambassador William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at [www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College](https://www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College) and can be followed on Twitter: @hughescenter.

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