

Office of the Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Whitman to Travel to Israel and Receive the Friend of Zion Award

Gov. Christie Whitman will arrive Tuesday in Israel, where she will be honored with the prestigious Friend of Zion award by the Jerusalem Fund of Aish HaTorah.

The Friend of Zion award is reserved for leaders who have played key roles in promoting strong ties between Israel and the United States or Great Britain.

Gov. Whitman will be one of four recipients to receive the Friend of Zion Award. The other recipients are Lady Margaret Thatcher, Sen. Joseph Biden, and Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will present the award to Gov. Whitman at a dinner at the Israeli Knesset (parliament) on Thursday, Aug. 27 in Jerusalem.

The Governor, who along with Lady Thatcher will be a featured speaker at the awards ceremony, is being honored with the award for her leadership in promoting ties between Israel and New Jersey.

Gov. Whitman has received national acclaim throughout her administration for her record on Israel and Jewish community issues. She created the first New Jersey trade office in Israel and in 1996 led New Jersey's largest foreign trade mission to Israel. She also made New Jersey the first state in the nation to mandate Holocaust education in all public schools and has doubled funding to the New Jersey Israel Commission.

While in Israel, Gov. Whitman will participate in a memorial service at Yad Vashem, the official Israeli memorial to victims of the Holocaust. The Governor will lay a wreath at the service in honor of the millions of people killed in the genocide.

Also during her visit, the Governor will travel to Jordan with the Jerusalem Fund of Aish HaTorah delegation to meet with Crown Prince Hussein.

Aish HaTorah, meaning "the fire of Torah," is a Jewish educational outreach organization founded 24 years ago in Jerusalem by American-born Rabbi Noah Weinberg. The Jerusalem Fund raises money internationally in support of the Aish HaTorah College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and its worldwide Jewish educational outreach projects and events.