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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR STRIKES MINT'S FIRST QUARTERS HONORING STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Gov. Christie Whitman and students from the Pond Road Middle School in Washington Township, Mercer County, today joined U. S. Treasurer Mary Ellen Withrow at the U. S. Mint in Philadelphia for the ceremonial striking of the first New Jersey commemorative quarters. New Jersey is the third state to be honored with a new quarter coin in a series that will eventually honor each of the 50 states.

"I'm proud of New Jersey, the Crossroads of the Revolution, and this coin captures our pride perfectly," the Governor said. "The wonderful image of Washington Crossing the Delaware on the New Jersey coin will remind people all across the nation about the pivotal role New Jersey played in the War for Independence."

"When Washington brought his ragged army across the Delaware River to Trenton on a bitter Christmas night, they began 10 crucial days of battle," she said. "Their victories over a seemingly invincible enemy gave hope to the Continental Army."

"George Washington and his army did have it rough. But they were fighting for a great cause - the cause of freedom. The new coin not only commemorates an important battle but also celebrates the determination of the American people to overcome obstacles and to persevere," Gov. Whitman said.

New Jersey's commemorative quarter features a design on quarter's reverse side of Washington crossing the Delaware to engage Hessians in the Battle of Trenton in 1776. The top of the coin includes the words "New Jersey" and the year "1787," the year New Jersey officially became a state. Beneath the design of Washington crossing the Delaware are the words, "Crossroads of the Revolution." Underneath those words is the year "1999". The Latin words "E Pluribus Unum," meaning out of many, one, are at the bottom of the coin. The design is based on the famous 1851 painting by Emanuel Leutze that hangs in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The design was recommended by the New Jersey Commemorative Coin Design Commission and approved by Gov. Whitman. The 15 members of the commission, which was created through Assembly Joint Resolution 68, were selected for their professional backgrounds in history, art, and numismatics.

Some 750,000 New Jersey commemorative quarters will be produced at the Philadelphia and Denver mints. The quarters will be delivered to the Federal Reserve on May 17, with public circulation beginning a few weeks later.

The quarters are being released every ten weeks in the order that the states ratified the Constitution or were admitted to the union. New Jersey was the third state to ratify the Constitution. Delaware was first to ratify the Constitution and Pennsylvania was second. The quarter series will be completed in 2008, finishing with Hawaii.

