

## Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

### NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Steffanie Bell  
609-777-2600

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#### **Governor Delivers Morning Keynote at Annenberg Celebration; Discusses Effective Communication by Public Figures**

Gov. Christie Whitman today spoke to students, faculty and public figures at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, where she emphasized the need for public officials to effectively communicate their ideas and policies to the people they represent. The Governor addressed attendees at the school's 40th anniversary celebration and the grand opening of the school's new Public Policy Center.

While speaking to assembled guests, Gov. Whitman highlighted the importance of communication not only on the campaign trail but also in the presentation of policies by public servants. Citing the one million-acre preservation program she championed last year the Governor noted that communication can make all the difference when garnering support for policy.

Founded in 1959 by Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg, the Annenberg School offers an advanced program studying communication and its relationship to the humanities and social sciences. The Annenberg Public Policy Center was established by the Ambassador in 1994 and will be housed in the new facility.

Today's day-long celebration marks the 40th anniversary of the communications school and celebrates the official opening of the new center as well as the Institute for Public Service and the Presidential Campaign Archive. The institute will be part of the Public Policy Center and will strive to bring influential figures and policy makers to the center to work with students for a semester.

The Presidential Campaign Archive will feature general election speeches and transcripts from TV ads and debates featured during presidential campaigns beginning in 1952.

Attached is a copy of the Governor's remarks.

**Remarks of Governor Christine Todd Whitman  
at the  
Annenberg School for Communication  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia**

**September 29, 1999**

Thank you, Dean Jamieson, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I am honored to be back with you to help mark this very significant day in the life of the Annenberg School.

You have a very full agenda over the next twelve hours -- celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the school's founding, dedicating the new home of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, and opening both the Institute for Public Service and the Presidential Campaign Archive.

For most other institutions, that would make not just a full day's agenda, but a full year's. But in the spirit of your founder and benefactor, you make even the impossible look easy.

It really is a great personal pleasure for me to be with Ambassador and Mrs. Annenberg again. I last had the opportunity to visit with the Annenbergs in 1995, when the Nixon Library presented him with its first Architect of Peace award.

Mr. Ambassador, it was an honor to be able to share that occasion with you, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to share another great day in your remarkable life.

It's no secret to anyone here that Walter Annenberg stands as one of the giants of American life in the second half of what has been called the American Century. The story of his life - which is still being written - is a remarkable and uniquely American story.

His enormous success in publishing has left an imprint that continues to shape the nature of that business. His service to our country as Ambassador to the Court of St. James remains the standard against which all his successors are judged. And the energy and vision he has devoted to his philanthropic efforts - particularly in education - have made our country a measurably better place in which to live, work, and raise a family.

Churchill once said that he knew history would treat him kindly because he intended to write it. Mr. Ambassador, in your own way, you too have been writing, as well as making, history.

Through your stewardship of Triangle, you wrote what is often called the first draft of history. And through the founding and support of this school, you have been enabling students to become experts in communicating their ideas, visions, hopes and aspirations.

So, whenever any Annenberg student or alum puts to use the knowledge and skills they gained here, they are adding to the history you have been writing and making since the days of your own youth.

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Annenberg School at Penn. The dedication of this building, which will take place a little later this morning, ensures that the School has the state-of-the-art facilities it needs to remain the outstanding leader in its field into the next century. And the importance of that cannot be overestimated.

But bricks and mortar alone are never enough to make an institution great. Achieving greatness requires both a vision and the wisdom to know how to make that vision real.

That's what Walter Annenberg has brought to this school. And now, with the opening of the Institute for Public Service, you have reached another important milestone on the path to realizing his dream of establishing the world's leading school of communications and politics.

Today, perhaps more than ever before, we need a place where effective communication is recognized and studied as an important part of a healthy political culture. The methods by which people get their information about what's happening in the world around them are changing so dramatically and rapidly. Politicians and other public policy makers must be ready to embrace and master that change if they are to succeed.

As I see it, that is the great service this school will provide to America's next generations of political leaders. By combining in one place the study of communication and public policy with the real world experiences of prominent public servants, you will become the source of practical knowledge about effective political communication.

Of course, there are some who suggest that in this increasingly cynical age, nothing a politician does will be able to surmount that cynicism and inspire people to bold, new directions. The conventional wisdom seems to be that political communication will forever be dismissed as all sizzle, no steak.

I firmly believe, however, that public officials must not allow that cynical view to stand. Because we live in a political system that depends on the consent of the governed for its success, we must engage the public in effective political communication. Failure to do so risks the failure of our system.

Some of you may think I'm overstating the case. And I acknowledge that a mayor or a governor or even a president can manage to keep the day-to-day operations of government running smoothly without being an effective communicator.

But politics without effective communication will never rise to the level of leadership. No elected official will ever be able to lead - to break beyond the mere maintenance of the status quo - if she or he can't convince people that the direction she wants to take makes sense.

In this week's New Yorker, Joe Klein, the "anonymous" author of *Primary Colors*, has an article entitled "Where's the Music?: Why No One's Listening to What the Candidates Have to Say." He disagrees with the common complaint that none of the presidential candidates are talking substance, pointing to several examples of thoughtful, substantive policy proposals laid out by candidates on both sides of the political divide.

Klein maintains that the problem isn't that candidates aren't saying anything worth hearing, they're just not saying it in a way that's worth listening to. As he put it, "[J]ust about every major candidate has proposed at least one significant, politically risky initiative. Unfortunately, never have so many been so admirable to so little effect."

Of course, he's not the first person to make this argument. Politicians have recognized for years that it is increasingly difficult to get voters' attention. But the

primary method which has arisen to combat that - the 30-second attack ad - suggests there's plenty of room for finding a better answer.

Last year, on this campus, I had the pleasure of speaking to the students in Comm. 175, Argumentation and Public Advocacy, about my own experience as a candidate with this particular style of campaigning. I don't intend to repeat that lecture for you now, but I do want to share some of the challenges public servants face in communicating their ideas to voters.

In 1996, New Jersey's U.S. Senate campaign was roundly criticized as one of the nastiest in the nation. So when I ran for re-election as governor the following year, I was determined to clean things up. I offered my opponent a challenge to join with me in running an issues-oriented campaign, and he accepted.

By and large, we did exactly that. Our ads were submitted to Dr. Jamieson right here at Annenberg for her review and public comment. I knew that if either candidate broke the agreement, Dr. Jamieson would call that candidate to account. And as those of you who know her understand, that's something you want to avoid.

A poll taken three weeks after the election showed that 70 percent of New Jersey voters felt the 1997 gubernatorial campaign had been more positive than the 1996 Senate campaign. So we had succeeded in our goal to clean things up.

But, paradoxically, we also appear to have succeeded in driving voter interest down - turnout in 1997 was down 10 points from the 1993 gubernatorial election. So for politicians, the question that naturally arises from this experience is, do voters tune out an issues-oriented campaign and thus fail to turn out at the polls?

As I said to the students last year, candidates are going to need to see evidence that waging an effective campaign doesn't preclude running a positive campaign.

But campaigns are just one aspect of political communication - although the necessary, first aspect. Governing is, of course, much different from campaigning. When you're in a campaign, you talk about what you want to do. When you're in office, you actually have to figure how to do what you want to do.

And as anyone who's been in public office will tell you, a major component of the how to make things happen involves persuading people why it should happen. You have to get your message across.

Doing that - getting the message across - only matters if you have a message. A brilliant communications strategy won't be able to sell a hollow policy proposal. And it's also true that a brilliant policy proposal might go nowhere without an effective way of communicating it. But when the two come together, public servants can really make a difference.

That was my experience during our fight last year in New Jersey to establish a permanent source of funding to preserve and protect one million acres of open space and farmland in the next ten years. Meeting that goal was going to cost a lot of money - more than a billion dollars. We couldn't count on funding it out of general revenues every year, so instead I proposed a constitutional amendment to dedicate a portion of the sales tax revenue to pay for it.

Those who know me know I much prefer to talk about cutting taxes. So far, my administration has cut taxes 34 times, saving the hard working men and women of New Jersey nearly \$9 billion. But in order to meet my goal of a million acres over ten years, we had to create a stable source of funding that could not be easily diverted to other spending.

I was convinced dedicating tax revenue was the only way to go, but that wasn't enough. I also had to convince the people of New Jersey, who would be voting on the amendment on Election Day.

The voters had shown support in the past for short-term support of open space acquisition, but they'd never been asked to vote for so much over such a long period of time. So we developed a comprehensive plan to bring our message to every New Jersey voter before Election Day, when the amendment would be on the ballot.

In a time when more and more people get their news from television, New Jersey may be the toughest state in which to communicate. We are the only state in the country that doesn't have its own media market. When it comes to television coverage, New Jersey fits the description another great Philadelphia publisher, Ben Franklin, once made of our state - a barrel tapped at both ends. The northern part of the state relies on New York TV for its news, while the central and southern part relies on Philadelphia TV. And we don't have a statewide paper either; instead, we have five major regional papers.

So to get TV coverage, and to keep the daily newspapers interested, we had to come up with all sorts of interesting ways to let people know how important it was to the future of New Jersey to support my open space proposal.

We created a grass roots coalition to get the word out at the local level. A number of my Cabinet officers spent hours on the road talking to civic groups about our plan. We sent out half-a- million pieces of mail. And in each of the four weeks leading up to Election Day, I used my weekly radio message to talk up our plan.

Of course, I spent a fair amount of time traveling around the state to highlight all the good things our proposal would do. I visited state parks to highlight recreational open space. I toured historic sites to bring attention to the fact that our program included historic site preservation. I went to farms to show how important it is to keep the garden in the Garden State.

But, it wasn't enough to go to these places and stand behind a mic and talk about our program. We needed to capture the media's attention and the public's imagination.

So, at one farm visit I arrived on horseback surrounded by a group of young boys and girls riding ponies. At a state park I hiked up to the highest point in New Jersey with a class of school children. I reviewed a contingent of Revolutionary War soldiers in Fort Lee, sailed on a schooner on the Camden waterfront, and shot rapids in the Water Gap. I even took a press photographer along on a blimp ride to illustrate the importance of preserving remaining open space in developing areas.

Now I know some people might dismiss this approach as gimmicky, and I won't necessarily argue with that. But the days when families gathered around their radios to listen to fireside chats are over.

And by the time we were done, we had not just attracted plenty of local newspaper and cable TV coverage, we even managed to get the New York and Philly TV stations to pay attention. We got our message out.

On Election Day, the voters overwhelmingly passed the constitutional amendment, by a nearly two-to-one margin. And people noticed how hard we worked to get our message across - one newspaper commented shortly after the vote that I worked harder to pass this ballot measure than I did for my own re-election.

By developing a good policy and coupling it with a good communications strategy, we were able to enact an historic measure to preserve open space, despite the fact that it meant dedicating tax revenue.

And that's really what public service is all about. Taking on the tough challenges, getting things done that will help improve the lives of the people you have the honor to serve.

As the Institute for Public Service starts to attract the kind of prominent public servants I know it will, I'm sure you'll hear time and again the crucial importance of good communications to the enactment of good public policy. It's like the old song says, "you can't have one without the other."

So I want to congratulate Ambassador and Mrs. Annenberg, Dean Jamieson, and everyone here for what you've been able to accomplish over the past four decades, and for what the future holds. With the addition of the Institute for Public Service and the Presidential Campaign Archive, I know that the next 40 years will be even brighter than the first.

When I spoke at the Nixon Library dinner honoring Ambassador Annenberg in 1995, I closed my remarks with a quote from Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." The quote reminds us that great men, in their journeys through life, leave footprints on the sand of time.

Mr. Ambassador, this school is just one of the many giant footprints you have left all across this land. From the quiet galleries of New York's Metropolitan Museum to the sun-drenched campus of the Annenberg School at USC, from Independence Plaza here in the birthplace of Liberty to the countless classrooms in which children are benefiting from the Annenberg Challenge, you are making a daily difference in the lives of countless numbers of your fellow citizens.

I read that you once said, "My country has been very good to me. I must be good to my country." Mr. Ambassador, by any measure, you have been very good to your country. For that, you have our enormous respect, admiration, and appreciation.

Thank you and congratulations.

