

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Whitman to Nominate Verniero to Supreme Court Farmer as Next Attorney General**

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today announced her intention to nominate Peter Verniero to replace Stewart G. Pollock as Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court and to nominate John J. Farmer, Jr. to become the state's next Attorney General.

"I could not be more proud of these two nominations. Peter Verniero and John Farmer represent, not just the best of the legal community, but the best of New Jersey," she said.

"General Verniero's outstanding service to the people of this state has prepared him well for a position on the Supreme Court. He meets in every way the definition of what I seek in a justice," Gov. Whitman said.

"His sharp and insightful mind, his dedication to the people of New Jersey, his remarkable work ethic and rock-solid integrity are evident to anyone who has worked with him," she added.

Verniero, 39, of Annandale has served as Attorney General since July of 1996. He previously served as both Chief of Staff and Chief Counsel to Governor Whitman during her first term. As Attorney General, he personally argued the defense of Megan's Law before the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He appeared before the NJ Supreme Court in defense of the state's urban education plan which ended nearly 30 years of education litigation in New Jersey.

Prior to his service in state government, Mr. Verniero was a director of Herold and Haines, P.A., a law firm in Warren, NJ. His practice included civil litigation, commercial and election law. He also practiced at Pitney, Hardin, Kipp and Szuch, in Morristown, NJ. Verniero began his legal career 1984 as a law clerk for NJ Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Clifford.

Verniero is a 1981 graduate of Drew University and a 1984 graduate of Duke University law School. He and his wife, Lisa, have two children.

Farmer, 41, of Stockton, joined the Whitman Administration after serving as an assistant US Attorney prosecuting criminal cases including organized crime, narcotics, white collar crime and kidnappings. He received the special achievement award from the US Department of Justice in 1993 for his work in the US Attorney's Trenton office.

"John Farmer's work has been indispensable to the success of this administration," Gov. Whitman said.

"John's outstanding legal mind can cut to the essence of issues that tie other lawyers in knots. His ability to find workable solutions to seemingly impossible challenges is without peer," she said.

"In the five years I've worked with him, I've been enormously impressed, not just by how hard he works, but how effective he is," she said.

Farmer was named as Chief Counsel to the Governor in 1997. He previously served as Deputy Chief Counsel and Assistant Counsel to Governor Whitman. He received both his 1979 bachelor's degree and his 1986 law degree from Georgetown University. He began his legal career in 1986 as a law clerk to NJ Supreme Court Justice Alan B. Handler. From 1988 to 1990 he was an associate with the Morristown firm of Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland and Perretti.