



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### NEWS RELEASE

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## Gov. Christie Whitman Announces Appointments

Gov. Christie Whitman today announced the appointment of Michael P. Torpey as chief of staff and John Farmer as chief counsel and has asked Eileen McGinnis to remain as chief of policy and planning in the Governor's Office.

She also announced that the two cabinet officers serving in Constitutional offices, Attorney General Peter Verniero and Secretary of State Lonna Hooks, will be renominated.

While the transition team will continue its work over the next several weeks, Gov. Whitman said she is announcing decisions regarding two other cabinet posts today because those cabinet officers are in the middle of critically important on-going activities. Treasurer James DiEleuterio, who is drawing up the proposed Fiscal Year 1999 budget, and Education Commissioner Leo Klagholz, who is implementing the Supreme Court's mandates in the Abbott v. Burke case, have been asked to remain in their posts.

She also accepted the resignation of Communications Director Becky Taylor, who after 13 years in public service, has elected to explore other career options.

"I am extremely pleased to name such qualified, talented and dedicated individuals to the top three positions in the Governor's Office. I expect that Mike, John and Eileen will be a dynamic team supporting and carrying out my second term agenda," said Gov. Whitman. "They assure continuity as we move into my second term, and also bring a depth of experience in effectively running government."

"As the first among equals, Mike Torpey will offer leadership in the Governor's Office and with cabinet officers. His knowledge of the workings of the executive and legislative branches of government will be invaluable in his role as chief of staff," said the Governor.

Torpey, 35, of West Windsor, has served as chief counsel to the Governor, counsel to the chief of staff, and deputy executive director of the Assembly Republican Majority Office.

"John Farmer's strong legal background and his ability to work effectively with the Legislature will be very important in my second term," Gov. Whitman said.

Farmer, 40, of Stockton, currently serves as deputy chief counsel to the Governor. He has also been an assistant U.S. Attorney, a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Alan B. Handler and a private practitioner. He has served as adjunct professor of appellate advocacy at Seton Hall Law School for the past five years.

"We are fortunate to retain Eileen McGinnis as chief of policy. With her vision and understanding of policy issues, she has helped shepherd many important initiatives in my first term. I look forward to her continued leadership," said the Governor.

McGinnis, 42, of Hopewell Township, previously served as director of policy for the Department of Human Services under Gov. Tom Kean. She was responsible for design and evaluation of national research demonstration programs and analysis of social policies and programs at Mathematica Policy Research. She also served as consultant to several national foundations.

In reappointing the two Constitutional officers, Gov. Whitman said, "Peter Verniero has been an outstanding Attorney General, overseeing the most significant drop in crime in two decades as well as undertaking several key initiatives, including his Quality of Life program to combat drugs. Lonna Hooks' One Family Many Faces program is a cornerstone of my administration and epitomizes our philosophy of celebrating the diversity of this state."

Verniero, 38, of Clinton, heads the Department of Law and Public Safety. He previously served as the Governor's chief of staff and chief counsel. He has been a private practitioner and served as a law clerk to state Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Clifford.

Hooks, 39, of Montclair, was a senior lawyer at Schering-Plough when she was nominated to the Secretary of State post. She served as a law clerk under Judge Theodore Newman of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, and as a private practitioner.

Gov. Whitman said of Klagholz, "I am very proud that we are putting children first in our on-going efforts to rebuild the public education system in New Jersey. Today I am asking Leo Klagholz to continue leading the charge to assure that all children receive a high quality education."

Klagholz, 55, of Hopewell Township, began his career as an elementary teacher. He served as a school principal, a college professor and assistant dean as well as filling administrative posts in the Department of Higher Education and the Department of Education.

"Jim DiEleuterio is a dedicated public servant with a wealth of experience in public policy and fiscal matters. I look forward to working with him as we take on head-first the difficult fiscal issues that will be confronting us," said the Governor.

DiEleuterio, 44, of Hamilton, started his career in state service in the Division of Taxation 25 years ago. He has served as Assistant State Treasurer for Tax Policy and Deputy Treasurer under Gov. Whitman.

Of Becky Taylor's service, the Governor said, "Under Becky's leadership, the communications office undertook a broader role than in the past. For the first time, the communications office was responsible for strategic planning and used an integrated, coordinated approach. Becky distinguished herself by her honest and fair dealings with the press. She stepped into a difficult position during the most demanding time of this administration. I'd like to thank her for her constancy and commitment."

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