

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Unveils Official Portrait of Former Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno

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TRENTON – Governor Murphy, joined by former Governor Christie and Lieutenant Governor Way, today unveiled the official portrait of former Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, which will be displayed permanently in the New Jersey State House. The ceremony included former Lieutenant Governor Guadagno, as well as her family, friends, and former staffers.

In August 2023, following the passing of Lieutenant Governor Oliver, Governor Murphy [announced the commissioning \(https://t.e2ma.net/click/bgg9bn/nrddit/b6g4gcb\)](https://t.e2ma.net/click/bgg9bn/nrddit/b6g4gcb) of official portraits for former Lieutenant Governors for display in the New Jersey State House. By commissioning portraits for both Lieutenant Governor Oliver and Lieutenant Governor Guadagno, Governor Murphy sought to establish a precedent whereby all former Lieutenant Governors are honored with this special recognition.

"Lieutenant Governor Guadagno served our state with distinction for eight years," **said Governor Murphy**. "Lieutenant Governors hold a vital and often unsung role in New Jersey state government. Throughout her tenure, Lieutenant Governor Guadagno demonstrated unwavering dedication to New Jersey's families and a strong commitment to public service, and it is fitting that we recognize her lasting contributions with a portrait that will stand the test of time. "

"Lieutenant Governor Guadagno made history as New Jersey's first Lieutenant Governor, and dedicated her service to helping communities across the state," **said Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**. "She also served the people of New Jersey as Secretary of State – a role I am honored to hold today – and worked diligently to balance those two roles. Her portrait in the State House will remind future Lieutenant Governors of our unique role in state history and the power of our public service."

"As New Jersey's first Lieutenant Governor, Kim Guadagno served with integrity and energy," **said former Governor Chris Christie**. "She served me very well and led our efforts to reduce government bureaucracy, create jobs, and establish a welcoming environment for businesses both small and large. I am proud to have served with her."

"I am incredibly humbled to have my portrait for display in the State House," **said former Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno**. "It was a privilege serving the residents of our great state for eight years. I thank Governor Murphy for honoring the Office of the Lieutenant Governor by displaying our portraits in the State House."

"We're honored to witness this tribute to Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno's trailblazing legacy and her historic role as New Jersey's first Lieutenant Governor," **said the Oliver Family**. "Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver strongly

believed in recognizing those who break barriers, and she would have celebrated this moment with great pride.”

“Although we live in an era prevalent with digital images, the painted portrait provides an intimate interpretation of the essence of the subject by the artist,” **said Margaret O’Reilly, Executive Director, New Jersey State Museum and Curator of the New Jersey State House Portrait Collection.** “There is often a connection between artist and sitter – when the humanity of the sitter is revealed, that makes painted portraits so meaningful. These portraits provide viewers now, and in the future, with a glimpse of biography and history.”

“It was a true honor to paint Kim,” **said Liza Amir, painter of Lieutenant Governor Guadagno’s official portrait.** “I set out to portray her strength and fire, but also her beauty and femininity, and I hope that’s what I captured.”

The State Museum began working with Lieutenant Governor Guadagno on her commission shortly after Governor Murphy’s August 2023 announcement (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/bqg9bn/nrddit/ryh4gcb>). Portraits commissioned for lieutenant governors will be hung in the Lieutenant Governor’s Suite in the New Jersey State House, rather than in the Governor’s Outer Office or in the State House Rotunda. The State Museum sent portrait samples to Lieutenant Guadagno in February 2024, and she selected Liza Amir, a New Jersey artist from North Caldwell. She began her work on Lieutenant Governor Guadagno’s portrait in the fall of 2024.

History of Gubernatorial Portraits:

Before the mid-twentieth century, New Jersey governors did not customarily have official portraits commissioned by the State when they left office. Instead, portraits were either privately commissioned or donated. Governor Robert Meyner, when he left office in 1962, was the first governor to have an official portrait commissioned by the State. Official commissions have continued with every modern governor except for Governor Richard Hughes, whose portrait was donated. Since 1978, the New Jersey State Museum has overseen the portraits, known collectively as the State House Portrait Collection.

Biography for Lieutenant Governor Guadagno:

Kim Guadagno was sworn in as New Jersey’s first Lieutenant Governor in 2010 and was elected to a second term in 2013. She began her public service career as a federal prosecutor in New York and later became an Assistant United States Attorney and an Assistant Attorney General in New Jersey. Her political career began as a commissioner in Monmouth Beach in 2005, before becoming Monmouth County’s first female sheriff in 2007. During her time as Lieutenant Governor, Guadagno also served as Secretary of State, overseeing New Jersey’s tourism industry, administering programs related to the arts, culture, and history, and working to improve the state’s economic vitality.

Bio for Portrait Artist Liza G. Amir:

Liza G. Amir grew up in New Jersey. Her love of painting began at an early age, and she began her formal training in her teens. She received her BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2004, and continued her studies at the Art Students League of New York, and the International School of Drawing and Painting in Umbria, Italy. During a summer at the Florence Academy of Art, she found the training and working method she knew she’d been looking for all along: a curriculum based on the nineteenth century academic tradition. This led her to the NYK Academy at the Harlem Studio of Art, where, under the direction of Judith Pond Kudlow, she received her Certificate in Classical Drawing in 2011 and her Painting Diploma in 2012.

While studying in Harlem, Liza was introduced commissioned portraiture, where she truly has found her niche. Using her strong academic foundation, she relishes in the challenge of creating paintings that capture both the likeness and soul of her subjects. Notable past commissions include Iowa State University, Loma Linda Hospital, Harvard University, and the World Bank.

Liza resides and works in North Caldwell with her husband, two sons, and daughter.

For an image of Lieutenant Governor Guadagno's official portrait, please [click here \(https://t.e2ma.net/click/bqg9bn/nrddit/7qi4gcb\)](https://t.e2ma.net/click/bqg9bn/nrddit/7qi4gcb).

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