

PRESS RELEASE

January 26, 2018

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR THE MEMORY OF ESSEX COUNTY NATIVE AND FORMER NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR BRENDAN BYRNE



Pictured are (back row, from left to right), Freeholder Robert Mercado of District 1, Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano of District 4, Freeholder Vice President Wayne L. Richardson of District 2, (front row, from left to right) Freeholder Carlos M. Pomares of District 5, Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold, Ruthi Byrne, and President of the Board Freeholder At-Large Brendan W. Gill.
PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – During a special presentation at the Hall of Records, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the life and leadership of the late Brendan Byrne, former New Jersey Governor.

Governor Byrne was born in Orange and grew up in West Orange in a Roman Catholic family with deep Irish roots. His father, Francis A. Byrne, served for 15 years on the municipal governing body of West Orange and was appointed by successive governors to terms on the State Tax Commission.

Governor Byrne was a West Orange High School Mountaineer and a Princeton University and Harvard Law School graduate. He grew up deeply rooted in Essex County's community, hence the bronze statue proudly rests in the county's Government Complex

commemorating his leadership and service, just steps away from where he gained his start at the Essex County Prosecutor's Office.

Before he became Governor, Brendan Byrne served as former Governor Meyner's Acting Executive Secretary, Deputy Attorney General in charge of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, President of the Board of Public Utilities Commissioners, and Assignment Judge for Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties.

During the presentation, Freeholder President Brendan W. Gill and Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold, along with the members of the Board, presented a Commendation to his wife, Ruthi. The Freeholders recognized Governor Byrne's unique leadership, great sense of humor, and love for New Jersey, especially Essex County.

During his two terms as Governor, he spearheaded the following initiatives: the personal income tax; the Pinelands Preservation Act; the development of the Meadowlands Sports Complex; the development of the casinos in Atlantic City; the construction of major highway segments, such as Interstate 287 and the expansion of the Atlantic City Expressway; the development and modernization of sewage and water supply facilities; and the addition of State capital support for urban redevelopment through the Community Development Bond Act, an act that provided funding for the construction of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJ PAC) in Newark and the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City.

Governor Brendan Byrne served on the Board of Directors of the Prudential Life Insurance Company of America, Jamesway Corporation, Mack-Cali Realty Company, and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, to name a few.

He is predeceased by daughter Susan Byrne. He is also survived by his wife, Ruthi (Greenfield); four sons, Brendan Thomas, Jr., of Princeton, Timothy of Princeton, William of Maplewood, and Michael Zinn of Montclair; three daughters, Nancy Byrne of Red Bank, a former director of the state division of tourism, Mary Anne Byrne of South Plainfield, Barbara Stefan of Cohasset, Massachusetts, and Laura Fromm. He is also survived by 16 grandchildren and a host of friends, relatives, and colleagues that will cherish his memory.

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