

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2010

**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS RE-ELECT
BLONNIE R. WATSON PRESIDENT & RALPH R. CAPUTO VICE-PRESIDENT FOR 2010**

Unanimous Re-Elections take place during the Board's January 6th Reorganization Meeting

(Newark, NJ) – Freeholder Blonnie R. Watson of Newark and Freeholder Ralph R. Caputo of Belleville were re-elected President and Vice President, respectively, of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for 2010 during the Board's Annual Reorganization Meeting held on Wednesday, January 6, 2010, at the Hall of Records.

Freeholder President Watson was nominated by Freeholders Linda Lordi Cavanaugh of West Orange, Carol Y. Clark of East Orange and Ralph R. Caputo, while Freeholder Vice President Caputo was nominated by Freeholders Patricia Sebold of Livingston and D. Bilal Beasley of Irvington. Watson and Caputo, both re-elected unanimously, were sworn-in by Assignment Judge Patricia Costello of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex Vicinage.

Upon taking the oath of office, Freeholder President Watson thanked her colleagues for their votes and expressions of support, saying, "I am deeply touched, Freeholders, to once again have your confidence in this role of leadership as we begin a new decade and what is sure to be a challenging year." She spoke about being able to draw upon the many lessons learned in running an effective and service-oriented government during 2009 when striving to meet the expectations of residents and overcome the difficulties that 2010 will present. "With honest and constructive leadership, and by living each day the motto of 'Putting Essex County First', we will be able to weather this storm and guide our County to safe harbor."



Freeholder Watson (left) is sworn-in by Assignment Judge Costello (right) as her husband, Lewis, holds the Bible. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

Freeholder President Watson has been an At-Large member of the Essex County Board of Freeholders since 1996, having been elected to five consecutive 3-year terms. Prior to serving as President in 2007, 2008 and 2009, she served as Vice President of the Board from 1998-2002. She serves as President of the High Park Gardens Cooperative Corporation in Newark and as a member of the Board of the National Association of Housing Cooperatives. Freeholder President Watson is also a housing consultant and a retired U. S. Postal Service executive.

In his remarks, Freeholder Vice President also thanked his colleagues, saying, "I want to thank you for re-electing me as your Vice President for another year. I appreciate your vote of confidence, and I know the excellent working relationships we share will be invaluable to us as we tackle difficult issues, together, in the months to come." He recounted the many accomplishments of recent years, stating, "These accomplishments have restored pride in Essex County and made it especially rewarding to serve in government." He warned, however, that "...as we begin our new term, we must face the reality of hard times ahead. This is our challenge, and we must seize this new opportunity to serve the residents of our county with the same determination."



Freeholder Vice President Caputo (left) is sworn-in by Assignment Judge Costello (left) as Freeholder Linda Lordi Cavanaugh (center) holds the Bible. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

Freeholder Vice President Caputo was first elected to the Freeholder Board in 2002 to represent Freeholder District V (Belleville, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Montclair and Nutley). He was re-elected in 2005 and 2008, and is beginning his fourth consecutive year as Vice President of the Board. Caputo enjoyed a long and distinguished career in education that began as an elementary school teacher in Newark, and then progressed to numerous high-profile administrative positions, including: Urban Education Special Consultant in the New Jersey Department of Education, advisor to the Commissioner of Education on state legislation, Northern Region Area Chief for the Title 1 Office, Assistant and then Acting Essex County Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of the Essex County Vocational Schools and Associate Superintendent of Schools for the City of Orange. Freeholder Vice President served two terms in the New Jersey General Assembly in the late 1960's, and was returned to the Assembly by the voters of the 28th Legislative District in November of 2007 and again in November 2009 to represent the municipalities of Belleville, Bloomfield, Irvington and portions of Newark.

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