



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:
Jonathan Jaffe
908-789-0700
jonathan@jaffecom.com

New Jersey Clean Communities Council Awards Paul Bontempo with the First-Ever Barbara McConnell Award

TRENTON – June 14, 2017 – When Barbara McConnell passed away on October 21 last year, it stunned hundreds of people involved in the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) who had worked with her for decades.

Many saw McConnell as the mother of the organization, who nurtured it in its infancy in the 1980s and spearheaded many of the initiatives and educational outreach programs that are critical components of the NJCCC today.

To continue to honor McConnell for her countless contributions to the NJCCC, the organization this year bestowed the first-ever “Barbara McConnell Award” to one of her closest friends and admirers: Paul Bontempo, the longtime NJCCC treasurer.

The award is to be given to an individual who mirrors the commitment and support to the NJCCC that McConnell generously offered over four decades of advocacy and volunteerism.

Bontempo is a principal in MBI/GluckShaw, a government affairs firm in Trenton where he worked with McConnell for many years. He is also heavily involved with NJCCC, a consistent presence who is well respected for his opinions, experience and perspective.

“Barbara McConnell was a very important person in my life and in the lives of many people in New Jersey,” said Bontempo, noting that he met her when he was 19 years old and became a close, life-long friend, even delivering the eulogy at her funeral. “I think about her every day. I truly miss her.”

While humbled to receive the award, Bontempo said, it really belongs to McConnell. She was part of the team that wrote the original Clean Communities Act, using her influence to affect its passage in 1986.

McConnell was the first president of the state Clean Communities Advisory Committee, later to become the NJCCC, and successfully pushed for curbside recycling. She served as vice president of the organization for more than a decade, before retiring in January 2016.

McConnell was also a leader in the food industry, serving as president of the NJ Food Council and executive director of the Food Industry Association of Executives. She was a savvy politician, who served as a member of the New Jersey General Assembly, ran for governor against Jim Florio, and was then the first woman to be appointed commissioner of the state Department of Commerce and Economic Development. Through it all, McConnell always fought for the rights of women and the underserved.

“Barbara was truly special and, through this award, is being remembered, once again, for all she has done for the NJCCC and the people of the State of New Jersey,” Bontempo said.

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