Senator Carmen F. Amato, Jr.: Lilia W. Thompson Legislative Recognition Award



The Commission created this award to give special recognition to those elected to represent the people of Ocean County in our legislature. In Ocean County, we are honored to be represented in the legislature by four Senators and eight members of the Assembly. Each year, we plan to invite one of those representatives to our annual Salute to Ocean County to share the triumphs of the Ocean County Teen Arts and our community award program.

The award is named after Lila W. Thompson (1875-1933), the first women to represent Ocean County in the New Jersey Legislature (1924 & 1925) She was a vocal champion for Ocean County and courageously stood up to those spreading hate. State highway Route 9 between Lakewood and Manalapan is named the Lila W. Thompson Highway.

Senator Carmen F. Amato, Jr. (R-9) was selected as the first Ocean County legislator to receive the Lila W. Thompson Government Recognition Award. Senator Amato was elected to represent Ocean County in the Senate in November of 2024. He serves on following senate committees: Budget and Appropriations, Community and Urban Affairs and Higher Education.

Senator Amato is now in a powerful position to advocate for the arts and heritage community of Ocean County. He is a humble man of integrity and dedication.

A 53 year resident of Bayville in Berkeley Township, Senator Amato has been elected to serve his community as mayor (2012-2023), councilman (2006-2011) and school board member (1993-2011). He also served on the Zoning Board and County Utilities Authority. During his time in municipal government, Senator Amato prioritized updating and modernizing infrastructure, including parks, playgrounds and recreation areas. He was a leader in recovery of his town's waterfront from the damages of Super Storm Sandy. He was also instrumental in preserving thousands of acres as open space. In being responsive and transparent to his constituents, Mayor Amato prioritized improving the quality of life for veterans and senior citizens among others.

Senator Amato is deeply involved in his community as a member of St. Barnabas Roman Catholic Church and as a volunteer for many nonprofits including various recreation groups including Little League, the historical society, Italian American Heritage and INSPIRE t/a the people's pantry.

The Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission understands that the New Jersey legislature provides the funding supplied to Ocean County by the New Jersey Historical Commission, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Tourism Council, and the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism. The NJ Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee (Tax) funds all of these activities that have a direct impact on Ocean County. The majority of these funds are granted to Ocean County non-profits through the Ocean County Board of Commissioners.