

August 23, 2017

Re: Senator Jim Whelan – a Great Public Servant – Passes

Dear Mayor,

We note, with sadness, the sudden passing of State Senator, and former Atlantic City Mayor, Jim Whelan.

A strong and passionate swimmer, Senator Whelan began a lifetime of public service as a member of the Atlantic City Beach Patrol. For over 30 years, he dedicated himself to teaching in Atlantic City public schools. In 1982, he began his municipal service as a Councilman in the City, remaining in that office until his election as Mayor in 1990. In that capacity, Mayor Whelan hosted the League's Annual Conference through 2001. In 2005, he was elected to represent the Second District in the General Assembly. And, since 2007, he has served that District's citizens as their delegate in the State Senate.

His experience in, and understanding of, local government was an asset during his service in the Legislature. He supported the priorities of his former colleagues in local government, particularly in the area of economic development and administrative flexibility. He welcomed the opportunity to work with both municipal and State-level officials, regardless of their partisan affiliation. Most recently, he was cosponsor of S-2855, the "Electronic Publication of Legal Notices Act."

Current Mayor Don Guardian acknowledged the debt that he and the City owe to Senator Whelan. Mayor Guardian, who was elected in 2013, expressed gratitude for Senator Whelan's help and guidance, throughout his tenure. "Jim dedicated his whole life to public service to Atlantic City, whether he was serving as a lifeguard, a coach and teacher, councilman, mayor, or state senator," Mayor Guardian said.

Senator Whelan had decided not to seek reelection this year.

On Wednesday morning, his Legislative Office released a statement saying Senator Whelan had been in and out of the hospital and rehabilitation over the last couple of weeks and had returned home late last week. "Up until the moment he passed, Jim was doing what he loved, talking about his beloved City of Atlantic City," the statement said. "After ordering subs from his favorite White House Sub Shop, he was at his house ready to talk to a Netflix documentary crew about Atlantic City when he passed."

Senator Whelan is survived by his wife of over 40 years, Kathy, and by a son, Richard. On behalf of all who knew him here at the League and throughout municipal New Jersey, we extend to them our heartfelt sympathy and our gratitude for his friendship and faithful advocacy.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director