

Our county suffered a great loss this month with the passing of Freeholder Director Dave Crabiel. He was a dear friend to me, as well as to many of you. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family as they mourn his passing.

We will always remember the frequent references to his idol, Harry Truman and most especially, his signature line, "Middlesex County, the greatest county in the land."

I will never forget the kindness that Dave showed me after I became Mayor of Spotswood in 1976. He took me under his wing and helped me with the intricacies of local government.

As chairman, I was honored to work with him on many local and county campaigns over the years. Dave was never overconfident in any race he ran. That is why he campaigned so hard, spending a great deal of time at local stores and train stations. His sense of satisfaction was on Election Day as he flashed a smile after the results were in. With all his large victories, many of us gave him a nickname, "Landslide Dave." He really got a kick out of that.

As has been said many times over the past few weeks, Dave Crabiel loved Middlesex County. May we always keep his example of public service as a guide in continuing to make this county the greatest in the land.

I want to congratulate Dave's running mates this year, Freeholder Ron Rios and Freeholder-elect Millie Scott on their victory. Though they are veterans to public office, they were



Chairman Joseph Spicuzzo

incredibly enthusiastic during the entire campaign. Ron is doing a great job as Freeholder and I know Millie will hit the ground running when she begins her term in a few short days.

This has been a great year for Democrats. We thankfully end the Bush Era and welcome our new President-elect Barack Obama. Our re-elected Senate and Congressional team of U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg and Congressmen Frank Pallone, Rush Holt and Albio Sires will provide him plenty of support.

Locally, we did very well. I want to congratulate Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler on his re-election, East Brunswick Mayor-elect David Stahl on his election and all our council winners.

I want to wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season. Thank you for your continued support.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEMOCRAT

Paid for by the
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION

231 Bridge Street, Building F
Metuchen, NJ 08840
Phone: (732) 906-3680
Fax: (732) 906-3975

FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
EDISON, NJ
PERMIT NO. 123

MIDDLESEX COUNTY DEMOCRAT

A TRIBUTE TO FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR DAVID B. CRABIEL

When Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel was about to wrap up a speech, whether it was governmental or political, everyone knew what was coming at the very end.

"Middlesex County, the greatest county in the land," he would say in a booming voice.

That line was no idle boast to Crabiel. He meant it with all his heart and during his 27 years on the Freeholder Board, he made sure the county was just that.

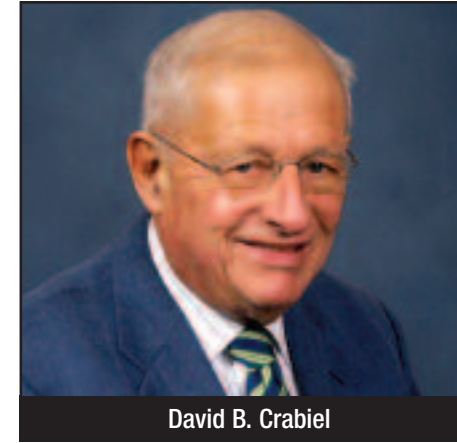
"David Crabiel was the most knowledgeable individual of county government in New Jersey," said Senator Bob Smith. "He is a giant role model of what a public official should be for the protection of taxpayers."

He said working on county business was Crabiel's "vocation, his avocation, his hobby—it was everything he wanted."

Crabiel expressed great pride in highlighting the fact that the county share of property taxes was stable for 16 consecutive years. Also, it had the second lowest per capita cost of county government in the state and maintained a AAA bond rating.

"Dave Crabiel was a consummate politician," said county Democratic chairman Joseph Spicuzzo. "He always thought of the taxpayer first."

On the campaign trail, Crabiel did not take any election for granted. He, along with his running mates, would shake hands and hand out literature at shopping malls and train stations. This year's re-election was especially sweeter as Crabiel



David B. Crabiel

won with the biggest plurality, more than 65,000 votes, of his political career.

Freeholder Ron Rios said he regarded Crabiel as a "mentor, teacher and good friend."

"What a legend, what a legacy, and his family has to be really proud of him," said Rios. "I'm really proud to say that I knew Dave Crabiel and I served with Dave Crabiel."

Freeholder-elect Millie Scott said, "Our campaign stops at the train stations will always be memorable to me."

She explained that when Crabiel spoke with constituents, it was like he was meeting "old friends."

Scott said as a Chief Sheriff's Officer she worked with Crabiel on matters such as manpower within the Sheriff's Department and courthouse security.

"I am saddened that I will not get an opportunity to work with him as a Freeholder," she said.

Freeholder Deputy Director Pete Dalina said Crabiel was a great public servant whose "first and foremost passion was the interest of the citizens of Middlesex County."

"His guidance and leadership as Freeholder Director will be greatly missed," he said.

Officials from the federal to local level reflected on Freeholder Director Crabiel's legacy following his passing.

"For the past three decades, he worked day in and day out to improve the quality of life of his constituents and he had many achievements to show for it." - U.S. Senator Robert Menendez.

"I was fortunate to count him as a good friend. I relied on Dave for his counsel, advice and inspiration as he worked to improve the lives of people in the 'Greatest County in the Land.'" - Congressman Frank Pallone.

"As a borough councilman, a mayor, and as a freeholder, David exemplified the finest qualities of a public servant, working tirelessly for those he was elected to represent during his 27 years of service." - Gov. Jon Corzine.

"He was a dedicated public servant whose love of meeting and greeting his constituents gave him great joy. His encyclopedic knowledge of the county and state he lived in will be long remembered." - Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler

"No public servant I know worked harder or was more dedicated to his community." - New Brunswick Mayor James Cahill.



Crabiel is all smiles after his re-election win in November.



Crabiel and his 2008 running mates, Freeholder Ron Rios and Freeholder-elect Millie Scott share a laugh.



Another year, another big victory. Crabiel addresses the crowd after being re-elected in 2005.

LOCAL DEMOCRATS SUCCESSFUL AT THE POLLS

It was a festive Election Night for many Middlesex County Democratic mayoral and council candidates.

The party was two-for-two when it came to this year's mayoral races.

In Piscataway, Mayor Brian Wahler received a 5,775 vote plurality to easily win re-election for a third term.

East Brunswick Mayor-elect David Stahl bested two challengers for the victory.

The council majority in South Plainfield is back in Democratic hands as Councilwoman-elect Christine Buteas and Councilman-elect Franky Salerno were victorious.



Piscataway's winning team of Councilman Michael Griffith, Councilwoman-elect Gabrielle Cahill, Mayor Brian Wahler and Councilman Ken Armwood.



East Brunswick Mayor-elect David Stahl



South River Councilmen-elect Peter Guindi and Rui Almeida (l-r) shake hands.



South Plainfield Councilwoman-elect Christine Buteas



South Plainfield Councilman-elect Franky Salerno

South River is within one council seat of a Democratic majority as Councilman-elect Peter Guindi and Councilman-elect Rui Almeida ousted the Republican incumbents.

In East Brunswick, Councilwoman Nancy Pinkin and her running mate, Councilwoman-elect Denise Contrino were winners.

Democrats dominated in their victories in Piscataway (Councilman Ken Armwood, Councilman Michael Griffith and Councilwoman-elect Gabrielle Cahill), North Brunswick (Councilmen Robert Corbin and Robert Davis), Carteret (Councilman Randy Krum, Councilwoman Susan Naples and Councilwoman Iris Colon), Jamesburg (Councilman Otto Kostbar and Councilwoman Daria Ludas) and South Brunswick (Councilwoman Carol Barrett, Councilman Joe Camarota and Councilman Charlie Carley).

Three new faces on their respective councils will be Sayreville Councilwoman-elect Lisa Eicher, Milltown Councilman-elect Ronald Dixon and South Amboy Councilman-elect Mark Noble.

Dunellen Councilman Frank Bienek and Metuchen Councilman Pete Cammarano each won re-election.

Councilwoman Elsie Foster-Dublin, Councilman Padraic Millet and Councilman Lou Pichinson (Highland Park), Councilwoman Elizabeth Garlatti, Councilman Jimmie Cook and Councilman Robert Recine (New Brunswick), Mayor Peter Cantu and Committeeman Nuran Nabi (Plainsboro), Councilmen Russell Stillwagon and John O'Connell (South Amboy) and Councilman Charlie Spicuzzo (Spotswood) all ran unopposed.

FULL HOUSE FOR CAMPAIGN RALLY AT PINES

The Pines Manor was filled to capacity in mid-September for the Middlesex County Democratic Organization's Campaign Dinner Rally.

Local high school and college students were among those who attended the festivities. Young people were very involved during the campaign, enthusiastically helping to get out the vote and making countless phone calls.

The dinner's keynote speaker, Newark Mayor Cory Booker, delivered an impassioned speech which fired up the Democratic faithful.

"The status quo has got to go," he said.

As he concluded his speech, Booker began each remark with the words, "Stand up." With the audience rising, he said, "Stand up because New Jersey needs you

now. Stand up for New Jersey pride because Barack Obama was born to serve and lead. Stand up because Barack Obama was born to run."

The campaign rally's success was due to the hard work of a 25-member committee, co-chaired by Surrogate Kevin Hoagland and Carteret Mayor Dan Reiman.



Newark Mayor Cory Booker poses for a photo with local students.



Former county Democratic chairman Nick Venezia spends time with current Chairman Joe Spicuzzo and his son, Charlie.



Freeholder Director David Crabiel emphasizes a point during his remarks.



Democratic supporters stand up and applaud as Newark Mayor Cory Booker concludes his rousing speech.

VOTERS CAST BALLOT, HELP THE HUNGRY

When voters in Woodbridge head to the polls, casting a ballot is not the only thing they do. For most of them, they also have a canned good to give to the less fortunate.

The 'Cast a Can When You Cast Your Vote' food drive began last year. Mayor John McCormac said the food drive was the 'brainchild' of Colonia High School teacher Joyce Brown and became a reality through efforts of senior class students at Colonia.

"It has become synonymous with election day in Woodbridge Township and is one of the most significant efforts we as a community can participate in to assist needy families," he said. "Today, the 'Cast a Can When You Cast Your Vote' food drive involves students from all three township high schools and is responsible for collecting thousands of pounds of food."

Students from Colonia, Woodbridge and J.F. Kennedy High Schools coordinate the

drive with the Board of Elections by placing food drop-off containers at more than 60 polling locations. Following the election, the containers are collected, taken to the Health Center where the food is sorted and distributed to township food pantries.

According to Peter Barcellona, chairman of the "We Feed Woodbridge Township" Food Bank Committee, more than 17,000 pounds of food were collected during the 2007 General Election drive.

A TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION TO THE CAMPAIGN

Until the past decade or so, getting a campaign's message out usually meant going door-to-door, sending literature via mail and phone banking.

Though these methods are still utilized regularly, new technology on the Internet has added a new dimension for campaigns to get their message out.

A website devoted to the Middlesex County Democratic Freeholders was launched in late August. Along with providing information about the Freeholders, it included areas to highlight the county candidates.

"Visitors had the opportunity to sign up as volunteers, write letters to the editor or get a yard sign," said Craig Yetsko, MCDO Communications Specialist. "We also added videos of the two Freeholder commercials and the candidates' speeches for Piscataway Community Television."

Website traffic was busy with 1,790 visitors from October 1 to November 23. The county Democratic website had 1,254 visitors during the same time period.

The campaign also utilized e-mail to reach out to voters. E-mails, which included a biography piece, television commercials, endorsements, absentee ballot reminders and get out the vote were sent to over 150,000 recipients during the final weeks of the election. The open rate for the e-mails was quite good as it averaged over 6 percent.

"We are pleased with the e-mail program and the responses we received," said Yetsko.