



Dear FDU Community Members,

I am deeply saddened to inform the community of the passing of FDU alumnus and former New Jersey governor and legislator Richard J. Codey. His family announced his passing Sunday morning on social media and noted that services will be announced soon.

Governor Codey was an incredible public servant and forged a historic legacy in the Garden State. Not only was he the longest-serving state legislator in New Jersey's history, but he also served as president and co-president of the senate and was the state's 53rd governor from 2004–06.

With conviction and compassion, his record of contributions to our state has been immense and enormously inspiring. Early in his career, for example, he went undercover to expose problems and lead reforms at state psychiatric hospitals. He was ahead of his time in particular in recognizing and championing support for those suffering from mental health issues, and he sponsored legislation to cut health care costs while protecting the quality of care. Along with his wife, Mary Jo, he launched a statewide postpartum depression awareness campaign, and the couple created The Codey Fund for Mental Health. His efforts to advance medical research and to make New Jersey communities and schools safer also have been widely applauded. He retired from the New Jersey Senate in 2024.

His love for FDU was also immense, and he often credited the University with helping him to advance his career and better serve others. He stayed very close to the University, and, among his many deeply impactful efforts, he created the Governor Richard J. Codey Scholarship, which has raised significant money to support FDU students focused on mental health education.

Just two years ago, FDU presented Governor Codey with the Lifetime Achievement Award at our annual scholarship gala FDU Forward. A PINNACLE honoree, he also received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from FDU in 2005. In addition, he was inducted into the Division III Athletics Hall of Fame as a contributor, and a classroom in Hennessy Hall has been dedicated in his honor.

Outside of his role in public service, he led a very rich life. He taught in the East Orange public school district, directed a funeral home, ran an insurance agency and coached youth basketball. He and Mary Jo have two sons, Kevin and Christopher, as well as several grandchildren. We mourn his loss with his family and send our deepest sympathies to them in this difficult time.

We will always remember his inspirational spirit and service, his heartfelt consideration, his warm smile and sense of humor, and his down-to-earth demeanor. We will cherish his memory and all that he gave to the University and so many others in New Jersey and beyond.

Michael J. Avaltroni, Ph.D.
President