

President's Remarks  
**Dr. Jon H. Larson**  
Distinguished Citizen of the Year

Toms River/Ocean County Chamber of Commerce  
48<sup>th</sup> Annual Reception and Dinner Gala  
Thursday, April 28, 2011

Thank you, **Ken**. I am deeply honored and very humbled by the Toms River Chamber of Commerce's decision to include me in this wonderful and deserving group for acknowledgment. My mother used to offer this advice when I was to make a presentation: "Stand up, so you will be seen. Speak up, so you will be heard. And then sit down, so you will be liked!" I'm going to make two promises tonight: The first is that I will be brief!

As I accept the Chamber's accolades, I am compelled to say what is always true of a successful organization like Ocean County College—many talented, dedicated, creative contributors make it happen. My job is by far the easiest—try to create a culture where everyone who wants to contribute is given that opportunity and is able to find an environment of energetic shared decision-making—a challenging, intense, but hugely enjoyable one - more constructive play than "work" in a traditional sense.

We have found that magical combination in which our leadership team and the vast majority of our faculty and staff cannot wait to get to "work," where they are free to be creative and energetic participants in building a truly great, nationally recognized, academic institution.

Now, this room is filled with dignitaries and friends of Ocean County College, all of whom deserve recognition. I thank each and every one of them for their ongoing

commitment to the College—but must acknowledge in particular the co-chairmen of this gala event and long-standing supporters of the college and its Foundation, College Trustees **Steve Leone** and **Harvey York**. They are wonderfully generous and supportive, and I give thanks daily for their unending contributions of time, resources, and wisdom, and, I am genuinely honored to have several other members of our Board of Trustees here tonight—Chair of the Ocean County College Board of Trustees, **Van Thulin (and Kathleen)**; **Jerry Dasti (and Liz)**; **Joanne Pehlivanian**; and College Counsel, **Jack Sahradnik**; along with **Steve Leone (and Judi)** and **Harvey York (and Barbara)**!

Please also acknowledge the Chair of the Ocean County College Foundation, **Joseph Coronato**, as well as the Executive Director of the College Foundation, **Sandy Broughton**, one of our brightest stars, and my colleagues, **Dave Wolfe**, **Dottie LaPosa**, **Fran Polk**, **Richard Strada**, and **Dr. Richard Yankosky** - and, from our partner Kean University, **Dr. Frank Wetta** and **Dr. Robert Cirasa**. Finally, I want to Say a special thank you to my best friend and life partner, who made a special effort to be here tonight, although she has been a bit under the weather, my wonderful wife **Judy Larson**.

Of course, the tremendous success of Ocean County College would not be possible without the extraordinary support of the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders and particularly **John Bartlett**, Freeholder Liaison to the College. I deeply appreciate all they do for us.

Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, wrote, “Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

Judy and I have travelled many roads we never intended to choose, but they have permitted us to end up in exactly the destination we wanted. We are eternally

blessed to have landed here in beautiful Ocean County where I have been given the chance to work hard at work worth doing. Leading a truly exceptional collegiate institution is the best job in the world!

Let me conclude by making my second promise and an invitation—

We invite everyone here tonight to visit our beautiful, rapidly expanding campus to see the energy at work there. And this I promise you: We will continue to build, change, improve, reach out, partner, and innovate, until we become the finest collegiate institution in America, one that makes you proud of Ocean County and of Ocean County College!

Thank you for this marvelous honor!