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### **Essex County College Holds Investiture Ceremony For President Gale E. Gibson**

Essex County College formally swore in Dr. Gale E. Gibson as the College's seventh president. The special Investiture ceremony was held Friday, October 17 at the main Newark campus. Twenty-seven other colleges and universities sent their presidents and representatives to witness the ceremony.

"I view this Investiture as an opportunity to accept the responsibility in community with all those who care about Essex County, and to welcome a new era and celebrate a new message about Essex County College," Dr. Gibson said. She recalled when she came to Essex in 2011 as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer. "I began to ask questions. I am very data driven and I wanted to explore our learning outcomes, as well as what sustained us for 46 years."

Dr. Gibson was named Interim President in March 2013 and formally named President October 2013. An Investiture ceremony traditionally takes place after a new president is given time to build a vision for the institution's future.

"Last year we needed a leader that would bring Essex to the next level," said Calvin Souder, chair of the College Board of Trustees. "We didn't have to look far; Dr. Gale E. Gibson has proven to be the dynamic leader we needed to ensure the College's place in New Jersey and the country," he added.

Essex County College President Emeritus A. Zachary Yamba, who served as head of the school from 1980 to 2010, said Dr. Gibson is the ideal fit for the College which started holding classes in 1968. "She is energetic, persuasive and filled with outstanding ideas."

During the Investiture ceremony, Dr. Gibson received from Chair Souder the three symbols of the presidency: the presidential robe, mace and chain of office (or medallion), as the rest of the College Trustees gathered around her.

The robe is fashioned in green and gold, the school colors of Essex. The 42-inch long cherry wood mace contains two 4-inch gold plated brass medals engraved with the College seal. The gold plated chain of office also bears the College seal along with the names of the previous six presidents and the words

“Excellence, Accountability,” Transformation,” and Lifelong Learning,” cornerstones of Dr. Gibson’s concepts of education.

Also in attendance was a large delegation from Medgar Evers College of New York, where Dr. Gibson had worked for 16 years prior to coming to Essex, as were Dr. Lawrence Nespoli, President of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges; U.S. Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr., and Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

Born in Barbados, Dr. Gibson came to the United States when she was eight years old. “I thank my grandmother and my parents, who like so many other immigrants, came here seeking new opportunities to fulfill their dreams of a brighter future for themselves and their children.” Her parents and sister also attended the ceremony.

She then outlined a series of Essex County College success stories, including increased online courses, business collaborations, work with local high school students, study abroad opportunities and millions of dollars in grants which will allow expanded academic programs, major capital improvements to the Newark, West Essex (West Caldwell) and Police Academy (Cedar Grove) campuses, and student successes. That the eight Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Transfer Scholarship students Essex has had in the last three years, the most in the nation, with scholarships worth \$90,000 for each student.

“Our impact on the community speaks to our position as a beacon of light in Essex County,” she said.

Following the Investiture, the Presidential Inaugural Scholarship Gala was held.

*Essex County College is a fully accredited public community college with a total enrollment of more than 16,000 students pursuing Associate degrees and Certificates in more than 40 areas of study on campuses in Newark, West Caldwell (West Essex) and Cedar Grove (Police Academy). Essex sends more transfer students to Rutgers, New Jersey Institute of Technology and Montclair State University than any other college. Since 2012, Essex has been the leading two-year institution in the nation in producing Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Transfer Scholars who receive up to a \$90,000 award from this prestigious organization. Ranked the most affordable two-year college in New Jersey by the U.S. Department of Education, Essex is New Jersey’s only two-year College designated a Predominantly Black and a Hispanic Serving Institution. Recently, Essex County College was selected as a 2014 Military Friendly School by Victory Media. For more information, go to [www.essex.edu](http://www.essex.edu).*

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