

"He's not only been a tremendous role model for my sisters and for me, he's also been one of my best friends," said Hughes Jr., of Northfield.

Growing up during his dad's tenure in Congress exposed the younger Bill Hughes to some "amazing times" and influenced his own life goals. Hughes Jr., a lawyer, ran for Congress in 2014 in an attempt to unseat longtime U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo.

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He also criticized the lack of bipartisanship at the Capitol.

"There was an understanding of the need for compromise. Compromise in some sectors today is not an acceptable word. You can't really legislate unless you have the give-and-take between people who realize there's another point of view out there," Hughes said.

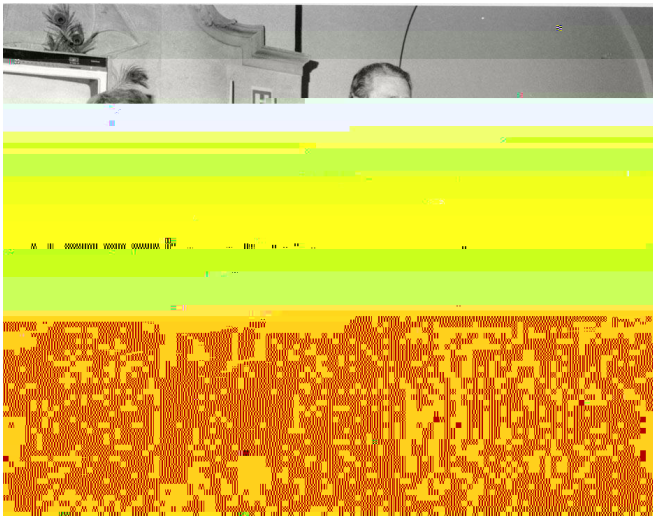
Hughes said he was "honored and flattered" to be honored by the policy center named for him at Stockton University.

"In fact, I tried to talk them out of it. I was overruled on this one. I thought there were others that I felt would have been very appropriate," Hughes said.

The awards are not annual. Two years ago, the William J Hughes Center for Public Policy honored former Gov. Tom Kean.

LOOK BACK PHOTO GALLERY: Congressman Bill Hughes

Longtime congressman Bill Hughes will be honored by Stockton University with its Lifetime Achievement Award.



William Hughes, center, at a celebration event in 1984 at the Flanders Hotel in Ocean City.

Press archive

This year, in addition to Hughes, those recognized include Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, state Sen. Diane Allen, the late state Sen. Jim Whelan, alumna and Montclair University professor Brigid Callahan Harrison and alumna Maryam Sarhan. The event is being held at the Stockton Seaview Hotel and Golf Club.

Hughes Center Executive Director Sharon Schulman said it was the perfect time to honor Hughes, who remains active in the community, sitting on local and regional boards of trustees.

"We all felt there is nobody that embodies civility and good government better than Ambassador Bill Hughes. So we plotted behind his back," Schulman said. "We just wanted to do it while he's hale and hardy and active."

"I enjoy the community work," Hughes said.

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ABOUT THE HONOREES

Civility in Government & Politics Award

Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, U.S. House of Representatives, D-12th

Before her election to Congress in 2014, Watson Coleman served eight consecutive terms in the state Assembly. She has fought to help women, economically and socially disadvantaged populations, and other vulnerable groups. She was the first African-American woman to serve as Assembly majority leader and as Democratic State Committee chair. The former Stockton University trustee is also the first African-American woman to represent New Jersey in Congress.

Excellence in Civic Engagement Awards

State Sen. Diane Allen

Allen was elected as a Republican to the state Assembly in November 1995, representing the 7th District in Burlington County. She was elected to the state Senate two years later. Allen serves on Senate committees handling issues of health, senior citizens, veterans and education. Prior to government, Allen was known as a TV news anchor, reporter and producer in Philadelphia and New Jersey. Allen also ran VidComm Inc., her own media production company. In 30-plus years in the media, Allen has won dozens of regional and national awards.

State Sen. Jim Whelan (posthumous award)

As Atlantic City mayor from 1990-2001, Whelan stabilized a scandal-plagued city government while overseeing economic growth related to casino gaming. He was elected as a Democrat from the 2nd District in Atlantic County to the state Assembly in 2005. Whelan was elected to the State Senate in 2007 and was re-elected twice. He championed issues related to gaming, tourism and the economy. He attended Temple University, where the former lifeguard became a nationally ranked swimmer. He taught in Atlantic City schools for more than 20 years.

Distinctive Alumni Leadership Award

Claire Lowe

I began covering South Jersey in 2008 after graduating from Rowan University with a degree in journalism. I joined The Press in 2015. In 2013, I was awarded a NJPA