

Jack Markell

Devoted son of Delaware, you were born and raised in Newark, the son of respected University of Delaware accounting professor William Markell and social worker Leni Markell. After graduating from local public schools, you went to Brown University in Rhode Island, where you earned a bachelor's degree in economics and development studies. You then attended the University of Chicago, from which you received an MBA.

You began your career as a banker at First Chicago Corporation. In the early 1990s, you became vice president for corporate development at a nascent wireless technology company, now known as Nextel, a name that you coined. As one of the company's first executives, you helped lead Nextel to nationwide success. You also served in a senior management position at Comcast Corporation.

Your career was proceeding admirably, but there were other ways you wanted to contribute to our world. And for that, you returned to your home state of Delaware and began a career in public service.

Prudent yet pioneering financial leader, you were elected state treasurer of Delaware in 1998 and were reelected to two more terms. Your tenure was marked by innovative programs aimed at cutting spending and encouraging judicious use of public monies.

You developed financial literacy initiatives to educate Delaware citizens about personal financial management. You created the Delaware Money School, which later expanded into the nonprofit Delaware Financial Literacy Institute. More than 15 years later, the DFLI continues to offer free classes in personal finance to Delawareans and to advise entrepreneurs through the Center for Business Growth.

Recognizing the need for financial literacy programs in schools, you created the Delaware Bank at School Program, which partners with the University of Delaware Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship and several Delaware banks to teach students about money.

Esteemed two-term governor of Delaware, in 2008 you were elected the state's 73rd governor. You were reelected in 2012, easily defeating your opponent. As you approached the end of your second term, an impressive 64 percent of respondents to a University of Delaware poll approved of your performance in office. Even those in the opposing party respected your earnest desire to improve the lives of Delawareans and the diligence with which you pursued that mission.

Your accomplishments as governor were many, though your greatest achievements fall into three broad categories: education, fiscal responsibility, and the economy.

You set out to improve early childhood education in Delaware, which is so essential to laying the groundwork for future learning. As just one indicator of your success, the number of low-income students enrolled in highly rated early education programs increased from 5 percent in 2011 to 70 percent in 2016. Additionally, you pursued a goal of having more Delaware students apply to college by giving the SAT for free to all and by increasing the numbers of Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment programs. You also created the Pathways to Prosperity

Program, which begins in K-12 and continues with adult education and occupational training programs to prepare Delawareans for the work world of the 21st century.

You entered office facing an unprecedented state deficit of \$800 million. It was a time of financial difficulty both within the state and across the country, yet you balanced the budget year after year through thoughtful spending cuts, judicious tax increases, and inventive revenue enhancements. Delaware maintains a AAA credit rating, one of just 15 states that can make that boast.

You made it your mission to attract jobs and businesses to Delaware. Despite the loss of some high-profile employers and layoffs at others, you succeeded in creating jobs at a higher rate than neighboring states. Delaware has the highest post-recession growth in the Northeast, with employment growing by 16 percent from 2010 to 2016. Similarly, during the past few years, the state's wage growth has led the nation.

Your peers in other states twice demonstrated their respect for you and your abilities as they selected you to chair the Democratic Governors Association and later the National Governors Association.

President Woodrow Wilson once said, “You are not here merely to make a living. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world.” Without doubt, Governor Markell, you have enriched the lives of Delawareans and made our state a better place.

Therefore, under the authority of the Board of Trustees of the University of Delaware, I have the pleasure and honor of conferring upon you, Jack Markell, the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, and do declare you entitled to all the rights, honors, and privileges to that degree appertaining throughout the world. In testimony thereof, I am pleased to present to you this diploma.

John R. Cochran, Chair

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