

2011 COGEL Award
Paula Franzese
Delivered by COGEL Officer and Deputy Executive Director of the
Philadelphia Board of Ethics, Nedda Massar

I have the pleasure and honor to present the 2011 COGEL Award to Professor Paula Franzese, who is both an advocate for COGEL and our work and also a great friend. In everything Paula does, she looks for the best in people.

This Award is the highest recognition conferred by our organization. The recipient must have made a significant, demonstrable, and positive contribution in one or more of our fields of interest: campaign finance, elections, ethics, freedom of information or lobbying for a significant period of time. Paula Franzese personifies this standard. She has brought local, state, and national attention to the issues of concern to COGEL, especially Ethics and Campaign Finance, and has performed a tremendous role in efforts to promote openness, honesty and integrity in government.

It is not enough to review highlights of Paula's accomplishments, which I will do in a moment. You must also know that she is a master teacher, a mentor, an advocate, and an academic. She brings energy, intellect and commitment to everything she does. I wish I could bottle Paula's positive energy. It's contagious.

Many of you remember Paula because she spoke at our New Orleans Conference in 2006 and received rave reviews. We asked you to speak to us again at our Chicago Conference in 2008. In speaking to us, she made it clear that she understood the challenges we face in the "ethics business," and she made us all feel good about our work to achieve ethical government.

I first met Paula when she was Vice-Chair of the NJ Election Law Enforcement Commission. More quickly than anyone I know, she mastered the details of the campaign finance and lobbying laws and vigorously supported the work of the ELEC staff. Most of you know how important it is to have that support from your commissioners and board members. Whether we were debating the text of a regulation or other difficult drafting task, Paula always stood by us, encouraged us, and found the perfect words for the task at hand.

Most important for the COGEL Award, she was at the forefront of ethics reform in New Jersey, and was picked by Governor Richard Codey to serve as his Special Ethics Counsel. In that role, she undertook a survey of the diverse ethics practices

and policies of the 19 major departments and 36 authorities, boards and commissions of NJ State government. Then she studied ethics laws in other jurisdictions (I believe with help from COGEL members David Freel and John Contino). The result of this work as Special Ethics Counsel is the landmark “Report of Ethics Reform Recommendations for the Executive Branch of New Jersey Government” (issued March 14, 2005). She and her co-author, Justice Daniel O'Hern, promulgated the first ever Uniform Ethics Code for NJ government and advocated for the new independent State Ethics Commission, of which Paula ultimately became Chair.

It is an understatement to say that the recommendations in this Report dramatically changed the ethical landscape of NJ government from negative to positive. I believe the Report is important to us here today for another message it conveys. For those of us in the world of government ethics, it is easy to feel invisible and underappreciated. So, please – when you feel that way - read the Dedication in the 2005 Ethics Report prepared by Paula with Justice O’Hern. It says:

This Report is dedicated to all those who labor in the trenches of public service. Our research, interviews, and analysis of the ethics audit responses left us with the indelible impression of firm resolve on the part of State employees to serve the public honestly and faithfully. More than anything, we must reinforce their resolve by demonstrating that every level of government supports their efforts.

Paula “gets it” and gets us.

We know Professor Paula Franzese as an expert in government ethics, but she is also the Peter W. Rodino Professor of Law at Seton Hall University Law School, in Newark, NJ, and is one of the country's leading experts in property law and has been elected a Fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers, a highly coveted honor. She is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, and the recipient of numerous accolades, including the Sir Thomas More Medal of Honor, the NJ YWCA Woman of Influence Award, the Women Lawyers Association's Trailblazer Award, and the State Bar Foundation's Medal of Honor.

Professor Franzese’s casebook, *Property Law and the Public Interest* (3d ed., Lexis, 2007), is one of the first to explore the public interest dimensions of Property law. She has published extensively on the anatomy of ethics reform of state and local government and attorney professionalism.

Professor Franzese is the creator and editor of the new Westlaw collection of substantive first year review books for law students, entitled "The Short and Happy Guide" series, including A Short and Happy Guide to Property. I don't know about the rest of you here who are lawyers, and I don't remember anything especially short and happy in property law, but Paula, in typical fashion, has found it.

Professor Franzese is nationally renowned for her excellence in law teaching and is the unprecedented nine-time recipient of the Seton Hall Student Bar Association's Professor of the Year Award. She has been named "Exemplary Teacher" by the American Association of Higher Education and was ranked the Top Law Professor in New Jersey by the New Jersey Law Journal.

I know I've told you this story before, but in a way, Paula is part of the reason that my son-in-law, Doug, married my daughter Leah. Doug was visiting us when he was taking his Bar Review course. He was positively rapturous about one thing, his instructor for the Property Law review. According to him, the instructor sang and danced her way through the arcane topic and he therefore remembered everything she said. Before he said anything else, I knew it was you, Paula, and when I told Doug that I knew you – and on a first name basis – he was hooked.

Paula Franzese is at the forefront of our world of government ethics and a cheerleader for the work we do. I could go on and on to list her accomplishments and to sing her praises, but I think it is obvious that she represents everything that we stand for at COGEL and is the perfect recipient of the COGEL Award for 2011.