

Alumnus of the Month



The Alumnus of the month is the Honorable Gerald McCann, Mayor of Jersey City and a member of the Class of 1968, Hudson's first graduating class. While at Hudson, Gerry was an All-County Track Team selection, set several school records (since eclipsed), and became Hudson's first athlete to accept a college scholarship for athletics. He hasn't stopped running since! He still holds the mile record at St. Peter's College, where he was graduated in 1972, and was elected to the Jersey City Council in 1977, after losing his first attempt at that seat in 1973 to, get this, Tim Hawkes! Mayor McCann was elected to his current position in May, 1981. In 1975, he became a Certified Public Accountant and went into partnership with longtime friends and Hudson classmates Bob Gironda and Matt Donohue. In 1983, Gerry was named to the SPC Athletic Hall of Fame. The Mayor and his wife, Maureen, have two daughters, Tara, 8, and Lauren, 4.

ACCIPITER: What would you say is the value of a Hudson Catholic education?

McCann: A Hudson Catholic education is instrumental in developing character, constructing disciplines and ingraining the competitive spirit into students, all of which will be carried into their future personal and professional lives. The early years of Hudson, at St. Patrick's, were marked by the Brothers' tolerance of little nonsense. I think this set the tone for the years to come, and was the basis of Hudson's academic rivalry with the Prep. The Brothers certainly did a great job.

ACCIPITER: What role do you feel the Alumni Association should fill?

McCann: Obviously, the alumni should fully support the school, and should do so by patronizing social events and offering financial support. Also it would be nice to see a tradition started in which the sons of alumni follow in their father's footsteps to attend Hudson.

ACCIPITER: Were you ever elected to the Student Council? What helped you to establish your interest in public life?

McCann: I never ran for Student Council, but I always had many interests and seemed to be involved in many things. At St. Peter's College, I satisfied the degree requirements in Accounting, Economics, and Urban Studies, and together, they helped lead to my interest in government. I always felt that Jersey City was in a good location, was not too large to be unmanageable, and could be saved with the proper management and direction.

ACCIPITER: Campaigning and administrating would appear to be two totally unrelated activities requiring different skills. Which is more difficult? Which are you best at?

McCann: Administration is the tougher of the two activities, and I think I am a better administrator than campaigner. However, campaigning is more enjoyable because it affords the opportunity to get out and meet so many people. Campaigning is a constant - it is not something which ends with an election. Campaigning occurs before an election and while in office, and as such, includes a certain amount of administrating. Yet, it's decision making and performance in office which count most.

ACCIPITER: Mayor Koch of New York is often revered for his candidness with the press and public, yet when you take that approach, it seems the local press and political rivals become more vocal than usual in their criticism of you. Why is that?

McCann: You may recall that I had the same style as a councilman, before Ed Koch became Mayor. In fact, my attitude has remained the same since my days at Hudson. Basically, a person's character doesn't change throughout life. I would attribute some of those criticisms to my problems with the press - sometimes I knock the press, sometimes I do not talk to them. I suppose some of the difficulties are brought on by my own stubbornness. However, I still believe in saying what you think. Maybe that's why Mayor Koch and I get along so well.

ACCIPITER: A recent Time Magazine article detailed the shortcomings and contributions of the American press. Based on your experience, where would you say the right to a free press ends and the abuse of that freedom begins?

McCann: The press has enormous power, perhaps more than they should have when they want to be the judges of events. Too many times they report opinions instead of facts. What is needed is better judgement in presentation. Also the press tends to glorify those who are against something rather than those who are for something, and needs to avoid tainting the news. More editorial responsibility is necessary to insure that reporters' viewpoints are balanced.

ACCIPITER: What is your proudest accomplishment in office?

McCann: Leading all U.S. cities in obtaining \$54 million in Urban Development Action Grants in 1983, including the largest single grant (\$40 million) ever awarded. I am also proud of our start and prospects for development. Jersey City led the state in new construction last year, and real estate values increased the most in the state as well.

ACCIPITER: What encouragement would you offer Hudson Catholic students and alumni concerning the quality of life in Jersey City in the future?

McCann: Jersey City will be a great place to live, work, and invest. I see it becoming the sixth borough of New York...as a bedroom community for Manhattan, primarily with an influx of young professionals from surrounding communities. The attractiveness of Jersey City to these people will be the moderate costs and great conveniences of living here. This influx will undoubtedly improve the quality of life here. I would like to extend a personal invitation to anyone seeking advice on future housing and employment to come and see me.

ACCIPITER: How long would you like to serve as Jersey City's Chief Executive? What will you do upon stepping down? How would you like to be remembered?

McCann: I would like to serve three terms because I feel Jersey City needs the continuity of leadership and proper direction for another ten years. If I leave office voluntarily, I would prefer it to be for another government position. If I leave involuntarily I will most likely return to a business career. Either way, I'd like to be remembered as a guy who got things done for Jersey City.