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Two civics education institutions join forces: Rendell Center moves to Annenberg Public Policy Center

PHILADELPHIA (March 4, 2015) – The Rendell Center for Civics & Civic Engagement has moved its headquarters to the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, and the two institutions will collaborate on projects to strengthen civics education in schools, it was announced today.

The Rendell Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization led by Judge Marjorie O. Rendell of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, will be working with the policy center on educating young people and promoting civic engagement. The Rendell Center has focused on civics-curriculum development for children in the lower grades, while the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC), through its Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics, has concentrated on civics in middle and high school.

“I’m looking forward to working with the Annenberg Public Policy Center to have an even greater impact on civics education,” said Judge Rendell, the chair of the Rendell Center. Judge Rendell, who co-founded the center with her husband, former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, announced in January that she will be moving to “senior status” with the 3rd Circuit this summer, giving her a lessened case load and more time to devote to civics education.

APPC Director Kathleen Hall Jamieson said, “This is an alliance of two strong partners with the same mission – improving the quality of civics education in the nation. The civics programming that Judge Rendell and the Rendell Center have created for the younger grades is a perfect complement to the work that APPC’s Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics has developed for high schoolers.”

“We at Penn are honored and delighted to partner with the Rendell Center,” said University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann. “The Center’s goal of buttressing a robust civics education for young people aligns beautifully with the ideals of Penn’s founder Benjamin Franklin, and mirrors the University’s own long-standing commitment to civic engagement. I commend Judge Rendell and Governor Rendell, both stalwart friends and alumni of the University, for this praiseworthy work.”

The Rendell Center originated with Judge Rendell’s initiative as First Lady of Pennsylvania, PennCORD, the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy.

Continuing her civic education activities, Judge Rendell, joined by former Governor Rendell, created the Rendell Center at Arcadia University in 2013 in collaboration with the National Constitution Center. Arcadia and the Constitution Center will continue to work with the Rendell Center in its new home at the University of Pennsylvania.

“Midge and I are excited to continue the important work of educating our youth on their role as citizens,” said Gov. Rendell. “I have long believed that one of the biggest challenges facing the nation is the lack of citizen engagement and participation.”

In July 2015, the Rendell Center will hold a weeklong training institute for teachers at the National Constitution Center, co-sponsored by the Constitution Center, Arcadia University, and the Annenberg Public Policy Center. The Constitutional Scholars Institute will bring together scholars with K-12 educators to explore the Constitution and issues such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion. For more information about the Institute, [click here](#).

[The Rendell Center](#) was created by Edward G. and Marjorie O. Rendell to nurture and promote an informed and responsible citizenry that actively engages in democratic practices. Among its other activities, the Center is developing “We the Civics Kids,” a curriculum for teaching the knowledge, practices, and dispositions of engaged citizenship to K-12 students, which is currently being used in a pilot program. The Center also sponsors the Citizenship Challenge, an essay-writing program about issues related to democracy for 4th and 5th graders. In December, the top 10 teams in the Citizenship Challenge, drawn from the five-county Philadelphia region, were invited to present their work before a panel of judges at the National Constitution Center.

[The Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) was established in 1994 to educate the public and policy makers about the media’s role in advancing public understanding of political and health issues at the local, state and federal levels. Among its projects is [Annenberg Classroom](#), part of APPC’s Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics. The policy center also is a partner in the [Civics Renewal Network](#), a consortium of more than 25 organizations dedicated to elevating the visibility of civics in education and providing a wealth of no-cost, high-quality resources for teachers.

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