

For immediate release

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**WOMEN ACROSS U.S. GETTING READY TO RUN™;  
PHYLLIS KORNIKER BEQUEST BOOSTS EFFORTS  
TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S POLITICAL POWER**

Women in 13 states will learn how to get elected with the help of Ready to Run™ programs created by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Essential to the latest efforts: a \$500,000 bequest from Phyllis Kornicker, a retired businesswoman and civic leader whose gift was intended to “encourage women to become actively involved in the political life of America.”

“Never content with the status quo, Phyllis believed in women’s potential to build a better future and strengthen our democracy,” recalled CAWP director Debbie Walsh. “We are honored that she entrusted us with her dream of spurring more women to seek political leadership.”

The New Jersey Ready to Run™ model is being replicated across the country via a national training network, with each state observing the New Jersey program and then developing a version that fits local political culture and features home-grown officeholders and campaign experts. New programs are either underway or coming soon in Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Dakota and Pennsylvania, with Pennsylvania and New Mexico each creating two separate programs serving different parts of the state. The Michigan, Mississippi and New Mexico programs are supported by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Ready to Run™ programs are already firmly rooted in Alabama, Hawaii, Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Vermont.

In addition to Ready to Run™, Kornicker’s vision and generosity will support a variety of CAWP education and outreach programs aimed at channeling more women into politics and public leadership. Also benefitting is The 2012 Project, CAWP’s national nonpartisan campaign designed to urge accomplished women to take advantage of the once-a-decade opportunities created by redistricting in the 2012 elections.

Phyllis (Passman) Kornicker was born in Johnstown, PA and raised in New York City, where she graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School. Married for almost 50 years to Maxwell Kornicker, she worked in the New York jewelry trade, first in sales and then in accounting. Later she joined Ceramco, Inc., a dental porcelain company in Long Island City, where she became accounts payable and credit manager. The couple relocated to East Windsor, NJ, in the early 1970's when Ceramco was purchased by Johnson & Johnson Dental Products Company, and Phyllis became the credit and receivables manager for both companies. She retired from J&J after 23 years of service. After her husband passed away in 1994, Phyllis moved to The Ponds in Monroe. She is survived by a cousin, Mary Ellen Brodsky Goldberg.

Kornicker's political interest began when she volunteered for the presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy and continued unabated throughout the rest of her life. She was also involved for many years in women's organizations, serving twice as Worthy Matron in the Order of the Eastern Star on Long Island. While living in Monroe, she served as president of the Princeton Chapter of Business & Professional Women of New Jersey and regional president for the New Jersey - Brandeis National Committee, earning a National President's Commendation from the University's president. She was also a founding member and president of The Ponds Chapter of The Brandeis National Committee. She chaired special events for the Monroe Township League of Women Voters and was active in East Windsor Hadassah, receiving the organization's Member of the Year, Woman of Valor Award, and the National Leadership Award. She was also a member of the Monroe Township Democratic Party. In all of her activities, she placed priority on mentoring women.

"Phyllis's spirit will inspire us as we extend our programs across the country," said Ruth B. Mandel, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics. "We miss her vibrant presence at public programs. Phyllis could always be counted on to speak her mind and ask thought-provoking questions."

"It was a treat to have Phyllis engaged in our programs for several years," recalled Kathy Kleeman, Eagleton's senior communications officer, who introduced Kornicker to the Center's work while delivering a speech at The Ponds. "She rarely missed the opportunity to connect with students at the NEW Leadership™ keynote event or mingle with candidates at Ready to Run™."

Kornicker's friend, Christine Cook, remembers her fondly as someone who "lit up a room with her sharp wit, enthusiasm for learning, and zest for life." Friends recall her as the embodiment of the active senior, whether enjoying a trip to the theater, organizing a book club, or engaging in a heated political discussion at a CAWP event.

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about American women's political participation. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life.

To learn more about CAWP and Phyllis Kornicker, visit [www.cawp.rutgers.edu](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu).

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