



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Communications and Public Relations
Press Release
November 17, 2016

Contact: Angela Daidone
201-684-7477
adaidon1@ramapo.edu

Honorable Judge Linares Offers Words of Encouragement to Ramapo College Students

MAHWAH, N.J. -- The Honorable Jose L. Linares, U.S. District Judge for New Jersey, was a guest speaker at Ramapo College of New Jersey on Wednesday, November 16. His appearance was sponsored by the Office of the President, the Student Government Association and the College's Center for Student Involvement, and coordinated by the Ramapo College Board of Trustees.

Linares, who presides on the bench in the Federal Courthouse in Newark, is the first Hispanic to hold that honor.

"It is indeed a privilege and an honor to be here. It gives me great pleasure to talk to a segment of the population that I don't usually get to meet, namely the students," said Judge Linares. "You represent what America looks like and what America is going to look like in the future."

He recounted his journey from Cuba as a young boy to his prestigious position as a federal judge.

"Growing up in Communist Cuba, I lived through the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis, which were frightening, even to me as a young boy," Judge Linares said, adding that his family left Cuba in 1965 when he was 12. "We couldn't go directly to the United States so we went to Spain, then here to America. My parents were both educators in Cuba and they knew that education was always an important component of our lives."

He told the audience of students, faculty, staff, trustees and guests that from a young age he was intrigued by the legal profession – recalling one particular incident when his family faced eviction from their small apartment in Elizabeth. "We were advised to meet with a legal aid attorney who helped us and I thought, 'Wow, this is something I would like to do someday,'" he said.

Judge Linares earned his B.A. from New Jersey City University (then Jersey City State College) in 1975 and a J.D. from Temple Law School in 1978. He was a supervising attorney of the New York City Department of Investigation from 1978 to 1980 and was in private practice in New Jersey from 1980 to 2000. He was a judge on the Essex County Superior Court, New Jersey from 2000 to 2002.

On August 1, 2002, Judge Linares was nominated by President George W. Bush to a seat on the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on November 14, 2002, and received his commission on December 3, 2002.

“Attaining the position I hold now seemed unsurmountable when I started out, but here I am. We all have obstacles to face but don’t feel that you cannot attain what you go after,” he told the students. “Your career path is dictated by you and the effort you put in. If I had to write a prescription for success, it would be get an education, stay away from drugs and stay focused on what you want to achieve.

And ultimately make a career decision based on doing what you love, not on money.”

Judge Linares fielded questions from students following his talk and concluded with words of encouragement: “I lived the great American story but it can apply to all of you. I wasn’t anything special but I worked hard and so can you to achieve your dream – whatever that might be.”

###

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes viewed as a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,000 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers eight graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.