

I'D LIKE TO THANK GOVERNOR CORZINE FOR THAT WONDERFUL INTRODUCTION.  
AND THANK THE BOARD OF THE NJ HALL OF FAME FOR THIS INDUCTION.  
I'D ALSO LIKE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO LT. BRIAN BRENNEN FOR HIS BRAVERY  
AND FOR EXEMPLIFYING EVERYTHING THAT IS GOOD ABOUT NEW JERSEY.

NEW JERSEY IS THE PLACE WHERE I WAS BORN, THE PLACE WHERE MY FATHER, MY WIFE,  
AND OUR CHILDREN WERE BORN. IT'S WHERE I FIRST WALKED, TALKED, AND LEARNED  
TO PLAY A GUITAR, AND SOMEDAY, IT WILL BE THE PLACE THEY'LL LAY MY BONES TO  
REST.

LOOKING BACK I THINK JERSEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED SHADOWLAND. BECAUSE WHEN  
YOU'RE FROM JERSEY YOU EITHER HAVE TO STEP OUT OF... OR CAST A BIG SHADOW. WITH  
NEW YORK ON ONE SIDE AND PHILADELPHIA ON THE OTHER WE HAVE HAD TO SCRAP FOR  
JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.

BUT, WHEN HISTORY LOOKS BACK ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE LIKES OF  
THOMAS EDISON, OR FRANK SINATRA; FROM GENERAL SCHWARZKOFF TO ALBERT EINSTEIN;  
FROM ABBOTT AND COSTELLO TO JERRY LEWIS, NICKOLSON TO DEVITO; FROM YOGI BERRA  
TO BRUCE AND SOUTHSIDE. COME ON, I'LL STACK JERSEY UP TO ANY PLACE THERE IS.  
SURE WE HAVE HAD TO TAKE SOME CRITICISM AND AT TIMES BEEN THE PUNCHLINE OF  
SOME JOKES. IN FACT, I HAVE FRIENDS WHO THINK THEY HAVE TO BRING THEIR  
PASSPORT AND CHANGE MONEY TO TAKE A TRIP THROUGH THE TUNNEL!  
THAT'S FINE BY ME, THAT'S ONE LESS BENNIE DOWN THE SHORE TO DEAL WITH.  
THE TRUTH IS, JERSEY IS A PLACE THAT OTHER PEOPLE WANT TO BE FROM. I WAS  
REMINDING OF THAT THIS MORNING.

I JUST NOW FLEW IN FROM NEW ORLEANS. I WAS BROWSING ALONG MAGAZINE STREET AND  
HAD WALKED INTO A SHOP WHERE THERE WAS THIS ELDERLY LADY BEHIND THE COUNTER  
WITH THE MOST PERFECT BLOND BEE HIVE HAIRDOO, SHE LOOKED UP, AND AFTER  
REALIZING WHO I WAS CALLED OUT, "HEY JERSEY" SO I ANSWERED "WHAT EXIT?"..SHE  
WAS FROM HERE TOO.

I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYONE CALLING OUT "HEY CONNECTICUT," "WHOA VERMONT," "ROCK  
ON NEW HAMPSHIRE..."

IT'S JUST NOT THE SAME. NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT  
YOU DO, IF YOU'RE ONE OF US YOU CARRY THAT WITH YOU LIKE A BADGE OF HONOR.

LIKE I SAID I WAS BORN HERE, I NAMED OUR FOURTH NEW JERSEY AND IN 2005 EVEN  
CO-WROTE THE SONG THAT WAS EVENTUALLY USED IN JERSEY'S TOURISM CAMPAIGN, "WHO  
SAID YOU CAN'T GO HOME."

IN THAT SONG THERE IS A LYRIC, "THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE THEY CALL ME ONE OF  
THEIR OWN."

AND TONIGHT I JUST WANTED TO DROP BY TO THANK YOU FOR THAT.