

## Noteworthy deeds of musical governors archived at Eagleton Institute of Politics

Some political candidates adopt theme songs, a current tune which they blare out of the campaign bus or play just before starting a big rally.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who is seeking re-election today, is an ardent fan of Bruce Springsteen. But there are also very little-known songs performed by, written by, or written about American governors.

A political analyst in New Jersey has been collecting these songs.

Among the most familiar is "You Are My Sunshine," sung in the 1940s by the "granddaddy of country music politicians," two-term Louisiana Gov. Jimmie Davis.

Another is "Heartbreak Hotel," performed on tenor saxophone by Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas in 1992 when he needed a boost in the polls in his bid for the White House.

Clinton, Davis, and 27 other governors are the standouts on a list called "The Music Governors Create and Inspire," compiled by John Weingart for the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers.

"One of the things we try to do is make politics interesting and demystify it for students and the general public. It's partly to humanize politicians," said Weingart, associate director of the institute.

Weingart has more than a passing interest in music. He hosts a weekly folk song show on WPRB-FM in Princeton. Recently he tossed a few gubernatorial ditties into the playlist since Garden State voters are deciding whether to re-elect Chris Christie this year.

"The most fun are the governors who have been musicians, in part. Former Pennsylvania Gov. Milton Shapp — he wrote a song during the Watergate era about Rose Mary Woods that got recorded as a single by a singer named Sue Levinson. It's a pretty horrible song. If it wasn't written by someone who was governor, I don't know that anyone would listen to it at all," joked Weingart.

His collection of specialty recordings will be archived at Eagleton's Center on the American Governor in New Brunswick, including one by New Jersey songwriter David Kleiner that touches on a wonderfully weird moment in politics in 2002 when New Jersey had five governors in just over a week with only one of them actually elected to the job.

The baton passing involved an acting-governor, state Senate co-presidents, the attorney general, and the beginning of Jim McGreevey's term.

This musical chairs of "who's who in the governor's seat" is unlikely to be repeated now that New Jersey has a lieutenant governor.