

# STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



## Stockton College to Lead Atlantic City's Historic Dante Hall of the Performing Arts

Stockton Affiliated Services, Inc., St. Michael's Church Reach Lease Agreement; Vital Step in Development of Arts District for Atlantic City

### ***For Immediate Release***

Wednesday, June 08, 2011

**Contact:** Tim Kelly  
Office of Public Relations  
Galloway Township, NJ 08240  
[Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu](mailto:Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu)  
(609) 652-4950

**Atlantic City, NJ-** Successfully completing a long-envisioned collaboration, the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's non-profit corporation and St. Michael's Church of Atlantic City reached a lease agreement yesterday, enabling Stockton to operate the historic Dante Hall of the Performing Arts here.

The agreement, signed by Stockton Affiliated Servic

## **Stockton Affiliated Services Announces Lease of Dante Hall/ page 2**

Neighborhood businessman Frank Formica grew up in the upstairs apartment of the family's Formica Brothers Bakery on the 2400 block of Arctic Avenue, which is physically connected to Dante Hall. He is currently a member of the Dante Hall Board of Directors and played a pivotal role in the collaboration. Formica said he was ecstatic for the future prospects of the Hall and an Arts District in the surrounding neighborhood.

Formica contacted Stockton officials several years ago about resurrecting the intimate 250-seat performance venue.

"All of the Stockton officials have been receptive and understanding of what a revitalized Dante Hall could mean to the area, with President Saatkamp being at the forefront. Also, Alex Marino (Director of Stockton's Carnegie Center in Atlantic City) has worked extremely hard to help make this happen," he said.

Father Jeffrey Cesarone, Pastor of St. Michael's, was pleased to hear the lease had been executed.

"This collaboration promises to be of great benefit to both the parish and the community," he said. "We anticipate a very bright future for the development of our neighborhood and an increased invigoration of St. Michael's Parish."

According to President Saatkamp, Dante Hall is a good fit for Stockton's educational mission and strategic plan, which calls for ongoing community partnerships and civic engagement. "Additionally, this fits with Governor Christie's vision of Atlantic City's evolution to a destination resort," he said. "The casinos obviously are crucial to the future success of the City, but so are educational and cultural resources, which Dante Hall will certainly augment."

Formica said some of his earliest memories of the building involve playing basketball there as a child.

"When President Kennedy started a physical fitness initiative in the 1960s, a basketball court was fashioned there. Among the neighborhood kids who played there was Chris Ford, who went on to win three NBA championships as a player and a coach for the Boston Celtics."