

NJ State Senator Troy Singleton, Rowan University, Class of 2005

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New Jersey Senator Troy Singleton (D-District 7), who last year was known as New Jersey Assemblyman Troy Singleton (D-District 7), identifies himself as a progressive who believes in getting the most out of every dollar spent. Getting the most bang for the buck was a principle instilled in him, not only by his family, but also by his college education.

He is one of the few people in New Jersey who with one bachelor's degree could have been awarded three bachelor degree certificates – one from Glassboro State College, one from Rowan College and one from Rowan University. When he started college in 1992, the college was Glassboro State College, which then became Rowan College, which shortly afterwards became Rowan University. Even though he attended

Rowan from 1992 to 1996, he left school six credits shy of what he needed to graduate.

“My mother got sick, and I did not want to be a drain on the family’s resources. I loved Rowan, and I made every minute count. But at the time, I thought earning a salary and making a contribution to the family would be more important than finishing school. In addition, I was lucky enough to get a job in state government and that coincided with my career goals,” he said.

His mother, however, was unhappy with the decision to forgo a degree. Her son promised he would go back to school and get that certificate from Rowan University (and in his case, a degree from two other institutions). In 2005, he fulfilled that promise, and best of all, his mother got to see him graduate. And so did his wife, Megan Singleton, a political science professor at Rowan College at Burlington County, whom he married in 2005.

“I am so pleased that I became an official graduate, because, in fact, Rowan was the force that set me on the path of public service,” said Senator Singleton, who is a former trustee of the Rowan University Board.

Thanks to being awarded a grant as a Rowan Trustee Scholar (which meant free tuition if he maintained a 3.0 grade point average) – plus other grants including Pell, TAG, a small conventional loan, and a variety of jobs, attending college was “financially doable.”

When he started at Rowan/Glassboro, the Willingboro resident thought he wanted to be a stockbroker or financial analyst. He was good at math and interested in finance, and he saw how other individuals did very well in life with jobs at brokerage firms.

Even though he was a business major in college, it was a mentorship program at Rowan and his inspiring history and politics teachers that were the forces that transformed the course of his life. Many would say his Rowan experience also ultimately changed the lives of many New Jersey residents who have benefitted from his seven years as a New Jersey legislator. In 2011, he was

elected to his first term in the New Jersey General Assembly, representing the 7th Legislative District, and in November of 2017, he won the election to the NJ State Senate in the 7th District.

“When I started at Rowan, there was a mentorship program for African-American students. I was so fortunate to have as a mentor James Gaymon, a Glassboro State College graduate who worked for Glassboro/Rowan in External Affairs. He had worked in the New Jersey Assembly Democratic Office. Once I started working in government, I was hooked. That internship was pivotal in my life,” Senator Singleton said.

The professors at Rowan who added to the young Singleton’s fascination with government were Dr. Bruce Caswell, political science professor, and Dr. Gary Hunter, a history professor specializing in African-American history. Dr. Caswell’s class featured guest speakers who were directly involved in the nitty gritty of politics and government. The speakers explained how these government jobs done with commitment and professionalism could make a huge difference in people’s lives. He showed us the positive impact of government instead of the negative impact, Senator Singleton said.

Dr. Hunter instilled the importance of civic engagement no matter what one’s profession was. “I learned that it was irresponsible for citizens to sit back and wait for someone else to bring about positive social justice changes,” he said.

“I came out of school convinced that public service is the greatest job and serving the public is the highest honor. My years of working in the NJ Legislature have only reinforced that belief,” said the 44-year-old Singleton.

After his internship, he began his career as a legislative director for New Jersey Assemblyman Herb Conaway and Jack Connors in the district he would come to represent. He then served as deputy executive director of the New Jersey General Assembly Majority Office and chief of staff under Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts, Jr.

His job as a legislator, however, is one of those fulltime/allegedly part-time jobs that he does in addition to his job as director of operations for the Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters (NRCC), a job he has held since 2015. In this job, he is responsible for the implementation of special projects including: the NRCC Scholarship Fund that provides school scholarships to the children and grandchildren of Union carpenters; Citizens Carpenter Program, which annually recognizes carpenters who contribute to their community; and overall Council operations, such as ensuring NRCC facilities are outfitted with the latest technology.

His business acumen, in fact, has proven to be very important for his union director’s position. “Every class at Rowan had value for me,” Senator Singleton said.

Since he started work in the State Assembly in 2011, Mr. Singleton has introduced and sponsored various New Jersey legislative bills that have led to hundreds of millions of dollars of construction development, workforce development and prevailing wage standards.

Most recently, Mr. Singleton was the prime sponsor of the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act (A-222). The bill, which New Jersey voters approved in November, appropriates \$125 million in general obligation bonds for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance on the State’s library system.

He was the prime sponsor on the Higher Education Bond Act (A-3139), signed into law in 2012, that led to major facilities projects at colleges and universities throughout New Jersey. Senator Singleton is an avid supporter of affordability, accessibility, and excellence in higher education. And, while he fully supports financial assistance and grants for those who truly need it, he also believes that bearing some financial responsibility for one's own tuition allows a student to have "skin in the game" and teaches them about having financial obligations – lessons they will certainly need in life.

"Yes, I am busy," said the father of three children (20-year-old son, 11-year-old daughter, six-year-old son), but "I love what I do in all aspects of my life – personally with my family and professionally in my director of operations job for the Carpenters Council and in my job of working to improve the lives of New Jersey residents."

It is clear to everyone who knows him that Troy Singleton is very adept at getting the most out of every minute of his day and night.