

Lewis M. Eisenberg

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Lewis M. Eisenberg (born 1942) is an American business financier and investor, with entrepreneurial roots known for co-founding and heading a private equity firm, Granite Capital International Group L.P. Lewis Eisenberg has a multi-decade history in American political fundraising circles and is most notable for the various national, state, and bi-state appointments he held throughout his career, specifically as the Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey ^[1] at the time of the September 11, 2001 attack of the World Trade Center.

Contents

- 1 Early life
- 2 Financial career
- 3 Appointments and civic service
- 4 Politics
- 5 Awards and recognitions
- 6 Honorary academic achievements
- 7 Philanthropic and public positions
- 8 Quotes
- 9 References

Early life

Eisenberg was born in Illinois and grew up in Chicago with a family that made their living in the agricultural business. Eisenberg attended Dartmouth College^[2] in Hanover, New Hampshire from 1961 until 1964 earning a Bachelor's Degree. He then enrolled at Cornell University^[3] in New York, New York from 1964 to 1966 and earned an MBA.

Financial career

Eisenberg began his career on Wall Street after completing his education at Cornell University. He began working for Goldman Sachs & Company ^[4] in 1966. From 1966 until 1989 Eisenberg worked in a variety of capacities for Goldman Sachs. Eisenberg became a partner in 1978 and concluded his career as co-head of the Equity Division.^[5]

In 1990 Eisenberg Co-Founded Granite Capital International Group L.P., an investment management firm where as Co-Chairman he oversaw investment management for private clients. He Co-Founded Granum Communications ^[5] where he also served on the board until 2007. He also served on the board of ITC, the nation's largest independent electric transmission business and a former KKR portfolio company.

Currently, Eisenberg serves as a senior advisor for Kohlberg Kravis & Roberts & Co.^[6] and has been with the KKR firm since 2009. Working alongside Co-Founders Henry Kravis and George Roberts, Eisenberg provides enhanced investment expertise particularly in the public infrastructure arena.

Appointments and civic service

Lewis M. Eisenberg's public service history is as follows: he was appointed by New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman to chair the New Jersey Commission on Privatization and Competitive Contracting in 1994.^[5] He was elected Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey on November 9, 1995. Prior to his election as Chairman, Mr. Eisenberg had served since February 1994 as a Commissioner on the same agency's Board, having been nominated by Governor Christine Todd Whitman. Throughout his term as Chairman the most notable achievement was the negotiation of a long term lease with Larry Silverstein for the World Trade Center;^[7] the Towers were at their highest occupancy in history in the late 1990s ^[8] and the desire to privatize the buildings was born from an economic strategy of the Pataki Administration.^[9] Eisenberg's term as Chairman of the Port Authority ended in December, 2001. It was during his time as Chairman that the September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacked the Twin Towers, which took the lives of 84 Port Authority employees including then Executive Director Neil Levin.^[10] Prior to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Eisenberg was scheduled to step down as Chairman of the Port Authority in preparation for a proposed appointment by then Acting New Jersey Governor Donald DiFrancesco to the Chairmanship of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority.^[11] As referenced in New York Times articles, Eisenberg chose to stay on at the Port Authority through the days after the 9/11 attack and to provide "continued leadership" and as stated by officials at the time "to provide a comforting continuity in times of tragedy".^[12] Soon after stepping down from the Port Authority, New York Governor George Pataki appointed Eisenberg as a Director of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Board in January 2002,^[13] where he remained involved with the aftermath of the attacks and contributed to the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan. At that time he was appointed by New York Governor George Pataki to chair the Victims' Families and Transportation Advisory Council until April, 2003.

Politics

In 2000, Eisenberg served as the Chairman of the Victory 2000 campaign in New Jersey. In January 2002, Eisenberg became the Chairman of Finance Committee for the Republican National Committee in Washington, D.C. In 2003, he became Co-Chairman of the NYC 2004 Host Committee for the Republican Convention and Co-Chairman of Bush/Cheney 2004 in New Jersey.^[14] Eisenberg served on the transition teams of Governors Whitman from New Jersey and Governor Pataki from New York and on the Bush-Cheney Presidential transition team. He is a founder and former Chairman of the Republican Leadership Council,^[15] a political action committee based in Washington, D.C. In 2002 through 2004 he served as Chairman for the Finance Committee of the Republican National Committee. In 2004 he served as Co-Chairman of the Convention Host Committee for the 2004 Republican National Convention. In 2008 he served as John McCain for President, National Co-Chairman, McCain Victory, National Finance Chairman, and as National Finance Chairman for McCain/Palin Victory 2008.^[16]

Awards and recognitions

In 1995, he also received the Eagle Award from the New Jersey Alliance for Action. In 2000, Eisenberg was honored as the "Man of the Year" by the National Conference for Community and Justice in New Jersey. In

2000, Monmouth University named him as the New Jersey Businessman of the Year.^[5]

Honorary academic achievements

On May 16, 2001, Eisenberg received an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from Monmouth University^[17] in Monmouth, NJ. On May 5, 2002, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree from the Rabbinical College of America.^[5]

Philanthropic and public positions

Eisenberg served on the Advisory Council of Samuel Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, and was a board member of St. Barnabas Health Care System and past Chairman of its Investment Committee. He also served on the Board of Trustees of Monmouth Medical Center Foundation ^[15]

Quotes

September 12, 2001 - "I just saw my two towers fall. I'm devastated beyond belief. In many respects this is significantly worse than Pearl Harbor, and we don't know who the enemy is." — Lewis Eisenberg, chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the World Trade Center.^[18]

September 13, 2001 - "For an agency that at one time or another touches virtually everybody in the region, the human loss was "incalculable," Eisenberg said. September 13, 2001 - "Everything will be different, but we will move forward." ^[19]

December 18, 2001 - "I had thought the bookends of my time would have been things such as improved efficiency and converting assets to produce more capital for the agency's core transportation mission," Mr. Eisenberg said in an interview. "I don't like to think of it the other way."

December 18, 2001 - "PATH had always been a four-letter word for New Yorkers, and now it is the first major appropriation by the Port Authority after Sept. 11 and it is announced by a New York governor, *Mr. Eisenberg said*. If those combined statements by the two governors don't bespeak a quintessential regionalism, I don't know what does." ^[20]

May 5, 2011 - "I think the site and the series of events are filled with emotion," said Lewis Eisenberg, former chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and a board member of Lower Manhattan Development Corp. "I don't know how to respond to the president's visit, but to the extent that it gives comfort and closure to the families, I am most grateful." ^[21]

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