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Contact: Ashlyn Grisetti  
( 856) 234-0001, ext. 1289

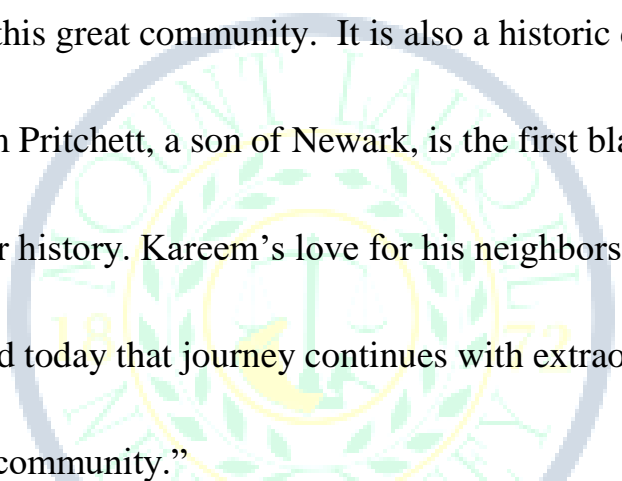
## **HISTORIC SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF MOUNT LAUREL’S TOWNSHIP FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN MAYOR**

*Mount Laurel, NJ* --- U.S. Senator Cory Booker this afternoon administered the oath of office to Mount Laurel Mayor Kareem Pritchett in a historic first as Kareem became the first African American to lead the township in the 150-year history of the municipality.

“It is a great honor and privilege to serve as Mayor, and I humbly embrace the immense responsibility ahead. Having served four years on the township council, I ‘m ready for this opportunity to be a powerful voice for all residents, especially the many that never thought a day like this would be possible in Mount Laurel. During the next year, I will work to ensure our growing township pushes forward smart policies to help our local economy, ensure our residents feel safe and fight for critical infrastructure improvements we need to improve our roads, water quality

and improve our quality of life. And, most importantly, we will continue to build upon a responsive, open and transparent government that will work hard for all residents.”

U.S. Senator Cory Booker spoke to the historic occasion “Today, in Mount Laurel, we begin the new year with immense optimism and hope, as Kareem Pritchett becomes Mayor of this great community. It is also a historic day that touches close to my heart. Kareem Pritchett, a son of Newark, is the first black mayor in the township’s 150-year history. Kareem’s love for his neighbors led him to the path of public service and today that journey continues with extraordinary promise and opportunity for his community.”



In 2021, Mount Laurel Township began a new era with the most diverse council in history and new leadership with Stephen Steglik becoming the youngest Mayor in history. The new council hit the ground running during tumultuous times of braving through the pandemic and delivered on their promise of a more transparent and open government, which would improve communication, modernize the municipality, and restore fiscal responsibility to town hall. Despite the fiscal

challenges faced by local governments throughout New Jersey, the new council both improved services to residents, while not raising taxes on residents.

Deputy Mayor Stephen Steglik commented on the success of 2021, “The challenges we faced were unprecedented during the past year and I could not be prouder of my colleagues, as we worked together to ensure that Mount Laurel would see the progress we promised on reorganization day nearly a year ago. It was not always easy as we faced complex issues that we knew needed to be addressed to improve our township and when faced with even more difficult issues last summer we brought the community together to usher in a new day of progress in Mount Laurel.”

Mayor Pritchett added, “Last year, we focused on smart policies to help small businesses as they struggled through the impacts of the pandemic, we responded to challenges last summer that could have divided our community and rose to the moment together, improved transparency and fulfilled our commitment to keep Mount Laurel as the best place to work, live and play.”

New Jersey State Assembly Deputy Majority Leader Carol Murphy (D- Mount Laurel) administered the oath of office to Deputy Mayor Stephen Steglik, and commented on the historic day in Mount Laurel, “As a long-time resident in Mount Laurel, I celebrate the importance of this moment as this council has just voted to make history by elevating Kareem Pritchett to serve as Mayor. I’ve had the honor to know Kareem for many years prior to his election to township council, and he has always been a dedicated public servant through his service as a member of law enforcement and his training of other officers to protect our public safety. We are in great hands moving forward, and I couldn’t be more proud of Stephen Steglik, who led our community with boundless energy during the past year.”

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