



October 1, 2015

## 15th ANNUAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AWARDS HONORS INDEPENDENT LEADERS

One hundred and twenty supporters of the The New York City Independence Clubs attended its annual soiree and fundraiser, The Anti-Corruption Awards. Prior honorees have included: NYC Mayor Mike Bloomberg, *Amsterdam News* publisher Elin or Tatum, and California Lt. Governor Abel Maldonado, among others. This year's honorees were **James W. Morrison, Jr.** of Tucson, Arizona and **Tiani Coleman** of Amherst, New Hampshire – two independents leading efforts in their respective states to gain recognition and equal voting rights for unaffiliated voters.

**James W. Morrison, Jr.** was active in Arizona's 2012 initiative for Nonpartisan Top Two primaries, and is playing a leading role in the campaign for a Top Two initiative in 2016, working with the ONE Coalition (Open Nonpartisan Elections), Open Primaries and IndependentVoting.org.

Morrison told the packed house: *"We know that there are millions of Americans who are disgusted, dissatisfied and angry about the partisan polarization that infects our politics. Our task is to identify them, organize them, educate them and motivate them to take positive productive actions that will change this political nightmare."*



James Morrison with ACA host Cathy L. Stewart

**Tiani Coleman** started her political journey as a leading Republican in the state of Utah where she served as Chair of the Salt Lake County Republican Party. She traveled in high-level political

circles but her life experiences led her to decide that the political parties were not simply barriers to democracy -- they were themselves a major part of the problem.



In presenting the award, Dr. Lenora Fulani reflected on her 1992 presidential campaign when she spent time in the Granite State meeting many whose "spirit and love of democracy and of our country inspired me."

Also presented at the event was the Nicholas S. Johnson Independent Spirit Award, an honor that goes to local activists who have exemplified strong community leadership on behalf of independents. **Richard Kirkpatrick** of Harlem and **Juliana Francisco** of Brooklyn were this year's recipients. They are pictured here with family members and Doris Johnson (in yellow), wife of the late Nicholas Johnson, for whom the award is named.



## Presidential Politics: Where are Independents in the Mix?

On [IndependentVoting.org](http://IndependentVoting.org)'s national conference call this week, Jackie Salit addressed the ensuing presidential race and its current implications:

*"I think it's a fascinating and conspicuous situation that these big anti-establishment, pro-establishment battles are taking place at such a fever pitch inside the parties, while at the same time the numbers of independents in the country are growing steadily."*

[Listen to the complete conference call here.](#)



Jackie Salit

## Oregon Secretary of State Appoints Independent Dave Ellis

**Dave Ellis**, a co-founder of Independent Voters of Oregon (IVOO), was appointed to the 15-member Oregon Task Force on Campaign Finance Reform last month to represent the concerns of unaffiliated voters. Oregon is one of six states that allows for unlimited campaign contributions. Public concern about corruption in the elections process and the growing presence of independent voters in the state led lawmakers to assign five of 15 slots on the task force to independents: three for representatives of minor parties and two to unaffiliated voters. Ellis is a small business owner, operating as Principal Archaeologist for Willamette Cultural Resource Associates, Ltd.

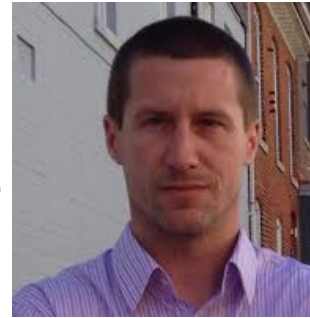


Dave Ellis

## A Profile in Independence:

Greg Dorsey, Baltimore, MD

Greg Dorsey is the founder of a school for self-defense, and a music instructor. He is also an independent political activist and an unaffiliated candidate for US Senate, and is using his campaign to raise the profile of unaffiliated voters. Greg filed a lawsuit challenging a Maryland law which requires more petition signatures to run as an unaffiliated candidate than it does to form a political party. Greg is also promoting the **Open Our Democracy** campaign, targeting students on Maryland campuses.



Greg Dorsey

Said Greg: *"I have never been registered to vote as a Republican, Democrat or Libertarian (or to any other organized political party for that matter). I have always felt that political authority should be given by "We the People", not bought or taken with party money, party "spin" and/or party propaganda (and what about big business, advocacy and special interest influence). I have always felt that organized political parties subjectively create tremendous borders and boundaries that constantly inhibit the "governing" process."*

## In the News

In a letter to the editor published by the **Havasu News**, Independent Voters of Arizona leader Kim Wright, who recently moved from South Dakota to Prescott, Arizona, discusses the **Open Our Democracy** campaign and her hopes that Arizona will switch to nonpartisan elections where all voters are treated equally regardless of party affiliation.

Jersey City resident Sue Davies also penned a letter printed in *The Daily Journal* on the **Open Our Democracy** campaign, titled **"Bill Would Reduce Partisanship."**

An article in the **Philadelphia Citizen** on open primaries posed this question: Independents are the fastest-growing segment of voters in Philly - so why do we keep ignoring them? The article features interviews with **Open Primaries'** John Opdycke and Jennifer Bullock, Director of Independent Pennsylvanians.

*Reason Magazine* talks Top Two primaries with IndependentVoice.org's Jason Olson in **"California Created Single-Party General Elections And Now They're More Competitive Than Ever ."**

John Opdycke makes the case for the California Top Two system in New York in *Crains Magazine* in **"Party Down, Open Primaries to All ."**

Bob Perls of New Mexico Open Primaries was interviewed by **Santa Fe Public Radio** about the movement for nonpartisan elections in New Mexico.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**Sunday, October 18, 7pm ET** Spokesperson Training Call with Director of Communications Sarah Lyons. Advance your skills as a spokesperson for the concerns of independents. Whether it's composing a letter to the editor, speaking to an organization, or appearing on radio or TV, join a conference call and get tips and support from Sarah. **Register here .**

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