

JOHN GROSVENOR ROWLAND

"For each generation of Connecticut, there are dreams and challenges. But lasting dreams don't come from a governor or even from a government. Real dreams spring from the hearts of individuals."

— John Rowland

In 1994, at the age of 37, John Grosvenor Rowland was sworn in as the youngest person ever elected Governor in the state of Connecticut.

Born in Waterbury on May 24, 1957, Rowland was politically active at a very early age. In 1967 he helped his father, Sherwood L. Rowland Jr., campaign for city comptroller by running results on election day.

Rowland's grandfather, Sherwood L. Rowland Sr., was the comptroller in Waterbury who blew the whistle on municipal fraud in the late 1930's, toppling the administration of Mayor T. Frank Hayes.

Rowland graduated from Holy Cross High School in Waterbury where he was a standout for the wrestling team. He enrolled at Villanova University where he continued to delve into the world of politics. He joined the ranks of Young College Republicans and as a freshman he was Gerald Ford's campaign manager at Villanova.

Barely out of college, Rowland ran for state representative in the 73rd District against an entrenched eight-term Democrat and won. After only one term he was named House Minority Whip. He was re-elected in 1982.

In 1984 Rowland was elected as the U. S. Representative in the Fifth District, becoming one of the youngest Congressman in history. He was re-elected in 1986 and, in 1988, he won again with a record-setting plurality of 105,000 votes. He said his proudest moment in Washington D.C. occurred when he demanded a roll call vote that led to Congress reciting The Pledge of Allegiance every morning.

In 1990 Rowland narrowly lost his bid for Governor in a tight three-way race. Four years later Rowland successfully captured the state's highest elected post.

Rowland has received the Jacob Javits Excellence in Public Service Award, the Malcolm Baldrige Community Award, the Prescott Bush Award for outstanding leadership of the Connecticut Republican Party and he was the first Governor to receive the Excellence in State Government Award.

While touring the state, the first Republican Governor of Connecticut in twenty years has repeatedly boasted about his love affair with his hometown. He has said, "I'm from Waterbury, Connecticut, the center of the Universe."

