Boyert, Ratledge write book on Delaware politics, government

2:12 p.m., March 18, 2009-----Delaware Politics and Government by William Boyer, Charles Polk Messick Professor Emeritus of Political Science and International Relations, and Edward Ratledge, director of the University of Delaware's Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, is a definitive, concise and informative book about the First State. It is the 25th book in the Politics and Governments of the American States series, published by the University of Nebraska Press.

According to Ron Williams, a columnist in Wilmington's News Journal, the two authors are “foremost experts” on Delaware politics and government. He calls the book a “comprehensive compilation” of everything concerning these topics.

The authors state in their preface that their goal is to “demystify Delaware by explaining how its government and politics compare with the rest of the nation.”

“The book offers a historical overview of Delaware because in order to understand contemporary Delaware, you have to understand its past as, for example, one of the 13 original colonies and as a border state between the north and south,” Boyer said. “Delaware has a political culture shaped by its colonial roots and the evolution of its political economy.”

“Delaware Politics and Government is an A to Z look at what goes on in the state and how we got to where we are in terms of the executive government, the courts, the General Assembly, policies and political parties,” Ratledge, who also serves as an associate professor of urban affairs and public policy, said.

The authors say the book should be of interest to Delawareans, business persons, those engaged in public affairs, students and others who are moving to the area, and that it also can be used as a textbook or reference book on Delaware.

The chapters examine campaign finance, bipartisan and consensus politics, the three branches of government, the relationships of the counties and municipalities in Delaware, political parties, the Coastal Zone Act, the Chancery Court, major businesses and industries, the state’s reputation as the “corporate capital of the world” and other relevant topics. Each chapter ends with a brief summary and conclusion.

Also featured in the book are graphs and tables developed by the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research for different agencies that highlight statistics on such topics as population, farmland and employment.

Delaware Politics and Government is timely and up-to-date, Boyer and Ratledge pointed out, and covers the state through Vice President Joseph Biden’s selection as running mate of President Barack Obama and the primaries last fall.

The authors say their partnership has worked well and they are planning another book on pivotal policy events in modern Delaware, such as desegregation, the Coastal Zone Act, credit card banking and other events and factors that have precipitated far-reaching changes.

Boyer is a graduate of the College of Wooster and received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Wisconsin Madison. He joined the UD faculty in 1969 as chairperson of the Department of Political Science and International Relations. He also is the author of Governing Delaware: Policy Problems in the First State, published by the University of Delaware Press.

He has had three Fulbright awards and has lectured at 41 universities and several government institutes overseas. This spring he will travel to South Korea for the 17th time to deliver an invited lecture on Asia’s influence on public administration in the West.

Ratledge received his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from the University of Delaware and has spent more than 30 years working with state and local governments.

He serves as a member of Delaware Economic Financial Advisory Council and is vice-chairperson of the board of the Delaware Health Information Network. His research also has focused on the prosecutor's role in the criminal justice system, and he is the author, with Joan Jacoby, of Discretion: The Prosecutor's Prerogative to be published this year.
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