

Ernesto Butcher

Ernesto Butcher emigrated from Panama to the United States at age 17 and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Hunter College in 1967, the year he became a U.S. citizen. He spent the next two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Korea teaching English to high school and college students. He then moved to Pittsburgh for graduate studies and received his Master of Public and International Affairs degree from GSPIA in 1971.



Shortly after graduation he signed on with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as a management trainee and began to build a career of distinction now spanning almost four decades. At the Port Authority he has held a succession of increasingly important public management positions including: General Manager of the George Washington Bridge; Manager of the Port Authority Bus Terminal; Assistant Director of Operations for Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals; Deputy Director, General Services; Deputy Director of Interstate Transportation; Director of Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals; Deputy Executive Director, Operations; and Chief Operating Officer, his current position.

As COO Butcher is responsible for the operations of the Port Authority's line businesses including aviation (JFK, LaGuardia, Newark, Stewart and Teterboro Airports), port commerce, tunnels, bridges and terminals. He is the Vice President of the Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH). He is also responsible for the Public Safety department which includes a 1,700 member Police force as well as the Office of Emergency Management. In the wake of September 11, 2001, when the Port Authority's headquarters at the World Trade Center was destroyed, he played a lead role in ensuring that the Port Authority's facilities remained secure and fully operational. He also managed the Port Authority's recovery while coordinating with local, state and federal agencies in the rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero.

The Senate and General Assembly of NJ, the State of NJ, and the Office of Manhattan Borough President of the City of NY have all honored Butcher for his exemplary service during this national crisis. Butcher is the recipient of numerous awards including an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Bloomfield College, the Interstate Transportation Department Director's Award of Excellence and the Port Authority Award for Exceptional Service. He was inducted into the Hunter College Alumni Hall of Fame in 2003.