



INSIDER NJ'S 2020 INSIDER OUT 100: **LGBT POWER LIST**

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P.O. Box 66
Verona, NJ 07044
insidernj@gmail.com
www.InsiderNJ.com

★★★★★★



Max Pizarro
Editor-in-Chief
Max@InsiderNJ.com



Pete Oneglia
General Manager
Pete@InsiderNJ.com

Michael Graham
CEO

John F.X. Graham
Publisher

Ryan Graham
Associate Publisher

INSIDER NJ

Message from the Author

2020 LGBTQ POWER

Welcome to InsiderNJ's 2020 OUT 100 Power List, our 3rd annual tribute to politically influential LGBTQs in New Jersey politics.

This year's list let's us venerate some amazing, brilliant LGBTQ people, veterans of the AIDS crisis, harnessing and channeling wisdom and expertise to battle COVID-19.

Politicians are listed separately this time. Since we like to keep things fresh, the 2020 OUT 100 Power List includes over 20 newbies. So if you don't see your name this year, I'll say thank you for making room for new faces and tomorrow's faves.

Many of the names below were called to action by America's indifference to the AIDS pandemic. Every queer who died of AIDS meant one less mentor to teach and empower the next.

The enormity of that loss haunts me, especially since I "came out" at the height of the AIDS pandemic when many would-be mentors were either dead or too traumatized to contemplate nurturing the next generation. That's why we'll emphasize mentorship on this year's power list.

Let's always celebrate how far we've come since the days when AIDS ran roughshod over our community. But how far have we really come? Especially in NJ, a state without a single out LGBTQ state lawmaker? There are 9 LGBTQ members of Congress. NY is poised to add another 2 to the tally in November. Other states are electing LGBTQ people to Congress and we still can't sent a single Queer person to Trenton!

That's not progress.

Thanks to last generation's sacrifice, no one dies of AIDS in America anymore. Gays and Lesbians can marry who we want and also serve our country in the Armed Forces. And thanks to a recent Supreme Court ruling, it's finally illegal to fire someone for who they love.

If workplace protections completed the "boxed set" of goals LGBTQ activists set early last decade, can this decade be devoted to getting more Queer people elected to office?



Sincerely,
Jay Lassiter

ACLU-NJ CONGRATULATES THE 2020 OUT100 POWER LIST HONOREES

We honor all LGBTQ+ New Jerseyans on the front lines of liberty in the Garden State who fight to advance equality for all LGBTQ+ individuals and people living with HIV.

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1 JEANNINE LARUE

Materfamilias

Jeannine LaRue reigns atop InsiderNJ's 2020 OUT 100 Power List, a tribute to influential LGBTQs in New Jersey politics. The only thing more glittering than Ms. LaRue's resume is her legacy!



Going on 5 decades in New Jersey politics, Jeannine LaRue has seen it all. And she's done it all too: chief of staff, super-lobbyist, advocate, professor. She even did a stint on the last redistricting commission where she literally helped redraw NJ's political boundaries. Currently, Ms. LaRue is the Senior VP at Kaufman Zita, a blue-chip lobbying firm. Her high-profile portfolio includes reforming NJ's cannabis laws.

Her longevity in Trenton is without peer. She's brilliant and also tenacious. But it's as a mentor to others – LGBTQ and otherwise – where Ms. LaRue shines the brightest. Endowed with a boundlessly gracious and generous spirit, Jeannine LaRue is just really good at helping others and nurturing the next generation.

And can we talk about her versatility please?

When COVID-19 struck and our lives went virtual, Jeannine LaRue proved that versatility launching LaRueList Café, the standout live stream of the pandemic season. Her guest list already includes senators, assembly members, and cabinet members past and present. But don't be fooled by all those fancy titles because Ms. LaRue's common touch ensures her interviews with the less-heralded are equally compelling.

Ms. LaRue's service on the Workgroup on Harassment, Sexual Assault and Misogyny in New Jersey Politics is possibly her most important mission yet. A survivor whose resilience emboldens others, this herculean task is a role for which she's uniquely well-suited. And if successful, upending sexual harassment culture in NJ politics will be another capstone on Jeannine LaRue's already remarkably legacy.

SENATOR DECLAN O'SCANLON



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL
THOSE MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ
COMMUNITY WHO MADE THE
INSIDERNJ OUT 100
PUBLICATION!**

Paid for by O'Scanlon for Senate, PO Box 408, Bayville, NJ

2 CHRISTIAN FUSCARINO



When Christian Fuscarino took the helm at Garden State Equality back in 2016, he breathed new life into an organization that was struggling for direction and to fund itself in a post-marriage equality world. Since then Mr. Fuscarino has repeatedly demonstrated his fundraising prowess, marshalling resources for advocacy and programming that help advance liberty for Queer people.

Mr. Fuscarino has impressed his colleagues and critics alike from early on. His early work includes stints at GLSEN and the Hudson Pride Connections Center while still in high school. Along the way his video skills garnered an EMMY award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Science.

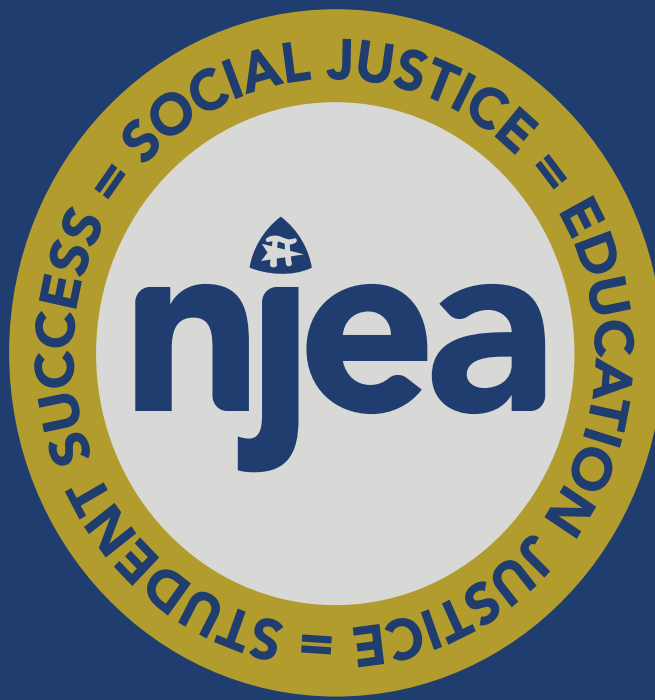
How many EMMYs did you win in high school?

Currently, Mr. Fuscarino's legislative legacy includes the passage of LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum for schools and the signing of "Babs Siperstein Law" making NJ one of the most transgender-friendly places in America.

With Election Day fast approaching it's worth noting that, under Mr. Fuscarino's leadership, an endorsement from Garden State Equality remains one of most coveted prizes for any candidate in the state of New Jersey.



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3 TONIO BURGOS

A legendary multi-state superlobbyist + newly re-elected DNC member from NJ. The following tribute was written by former Governor Jim McGreevy.



Louis XIII had Richelieu, Henry VIII had Wolsey, New Jersey and New York governors had Burgos. Mindful of Richelieu's insight that "nothing is as dangerous for the state as those who would govern kingdoms with maxims found in books," Tonio was blessed to learn his earliest lessons on the harsh streets of Spanish Harlem. Having no familial financial wealth but a loving family, Tonio's native keen intellect witnessed, catalogued, and applied the successive power plays of difficult playgrounds and school yards, NYC rough and tumble brass politics, and eventually the marbled corridors of Albany.

Tonio's greatest patron was born of an Italian immigrant family. Mario Cuomo quickly identified the young Puerto Rican Burgos for his astute political acumen, exceptional strategic skills, and his superlative ability to foster relationships with persons regardless of adverse political interests. Tonio's sensibilities, skills, and sapient advice ensured his status as "operative extraordinaire" for the then rising New York Secretary of State, next to become Lieutenant Governor, and eventually Governor. As Appointments Secretary, Burgos held great sway toward ensuring that the politics of the Cuomo Administration were protected. As Director of Executive Services, Burgos exerted his far ranging influence upon the government.

From his appointment as Commissioner, Port Authority and numerous boards and committees, including with Trans-Hudson Corporation for PATH, Lower Manhattan Economic Development Corporation, NJEDA, NJSCC, Camden Economic Recovery Board, NYC Police Foundation, President Clinton's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, Robert F. Kennedy Center, and the DNC. Tonio moved effortlessly in corridors of power, effectuating the objectives of the leadership he served, while being devoted and partial to the Latino community, which was his family, and the LGBTQ tribe to which he belonged.

Tonio Burgos, his persona, gifted abilities, and access and ability to effectuate power have made him a powerful and influential person. For a man of his generation, to be in these places required wisdom, discretion, and subtlety. The practiced skills of Tonio have benefited not only the principals for whom he served, but our community in times of distress on both the national and state stage.

4 JIM MCGREEVEY



Most of us know him as NJ's 52nd Governor. But for the 8,500 clients he serves at the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, Jim McGreevey is a mentor and a lifeline helping to end the revolving door of prison recidivism in New Jersey. Gov McGreevey is New Jersey's principal lobbyist for laws to enable former prisoners to thrive and contribute to society after they've served their time. With COVID raging, efforts to reduce prison population are more urgent than they've ever been.

When he isn't busy helping people navigate a criminal justice system that seems built for recidivism, Jim McGreevey is lobbying to create a system where people leave jail rehabilitated and with the tools they need to succeed on the outside.



"Hope will never be silent." -Harvey Milk

Congratulations
to our very own
Jeannine LaRue
for always speaking her mind
and showing her true colors!



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5 KATHY AHEARN-O'BRIEN & AXEL TORRES MARRERO

Kathy Ahearn-O'Brien is the executive director at the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation. Axel Torres Marrero is Hyacinth's Senior Director of Public Policy & Legal Services. Last year we likened Ms. Ahearn-O'Brien to Xena the Warrior Princess. But instead of battling bad guys, she fights HIV/AIDS and the stigma that (sadly) still persists. It's Kathy's job to ensure Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez bring more federal dollars to NJ for people with HIV/AIDS. When COVID blew holes in NJ's budget Kathy Ahearn O'Brien stood up to remind Governor Murphy that, when it comes to a pandemic, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.



This past year, Mr. Marrero held 19 leadership sessions which trained over 50 people living with HIV on civics, finding their voice, and how to speak with their legislators. A lobbying session with advocates, patients, and lawmakers is scheduled for later this year.

Together Ms. Ahearn-O'Brien and Mr. Marrero routinely brief Trenton lawmakers about HIV, both basic science as well as how the disease continues to impact on public policy. As we await the Statewide Taskforce to End the HIV Epidemic, Kathy and Axel continue their effort to end AIDS in NJ. This path, it could appear, is more straightforward than ever.

"Access to medical care is the most critical tool we have in the arsenal to end HIV," Ms. Ahearn-O'Brien told InsiderNJ. "Individuals with a suppressed viral load will not transmit HIV to another individual. We must ensure that every individual living with HIV has access to medical care, which means ensuring that Medicaid is available to low-income individuals living with the virus. PrEP is the second most critical tool. We need to ensure that PrEP is on-demand that an initial supply of PrEP can be made available."

6 ANDREW BRUCK & JEREMY FEIGENBAUM

Maybe it's just a coincidence that NJ's Office of the Attorney General is the most competent, capable, scandal / drama-free agency in Governor Phil Murphy's cabinet. The more likely explanation is the remarkable team assembled by NJ Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, a lineup including Andrew Bruck, NJ's newly minted Deputy AG and Grewal's top lieutenant. Mr. Bruck is AG Grewal's right-hand man on issues ranging from the environment to civil rights. Mr. Bruck is charged with shaping the OAG's response to Black Lives Matter. By examining excessive use of force by law enforcement, Mr. Bruck joins a long line of Queer people demanding police accountability that stretches back to the Stonewall Rebellion.



AG Grewal's team also includes Jeremy Feigenbaum, NJ's first State Solicitor. It's Mr. Feigenbaum's job to keep gas and oil pipelines far wary from delicate ecosystems and to defend Governor Murphy's executive orders. Over two dozen suits have been filed against Murphy's COVID-related executive orders and Mr. Feigenbaum has bested them all, a remarkable track record that helped NJ to flatten the curve.





CONGRATULATIONS OUT 100



LGBT POWER LIST HONOREES



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7 DAVID MIXNER

A tribute by David's friend Bill Baroni

In the quiet corner of New Jersey that is Salem County, in the quiet corner of Salem County that is Elmer, came one of New Jersey's most powerful LGBTQ+ figures ever. Arguably among New Jersey's first gay rights activists, DAVID MIXNER went from the farms of Salem County to the White House and beyond, making a life that used power to make lives better for all of us.



David Mixner started his activism in high school, when laws against deviant behavior were enforced everywhere. He marched with Dr. King. Jailed registering voters in the South. Formed the nation's first LGBT political committee. Campaigned against California's Briggs Amendment, which would have banned gay people from being teachers. Fought Anita Bryant in Miami – eventually stopping her from ending legal protections for gay Floridians. He led the California fight against Lyndon Larouche, who nearly passed a referendum to place HIV-positive people in permanent quarantine. In the battles in New Jersey for trans rights and marriage equality, he called countless legislators. He lost 300 friends to AIDS, but never stopped agitating with his friend Larry Kramer against the government slowing down treatments. He was an early supporter of Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton (his former roommate) and became the first out White House staffer in American history. Yet when President Clinton approved Don't Ask Don't Tell, he resigned in protest – getting arrested for chaining himself to the fence of the very White House he just left.

That is power.

After a lifetime of that kind of power and influence, it's clear that David Mixner is one of the most powerful LGBTQ+ New Jerseyans ever.

But that is not what gives David Mixner power.

For David Mixner, power is not what he has done in the past for the community; it is what he does every day for the future of the community. Because of David Mixner, countless LGBTQ+ people have become LGBTQ+ activists.

For David, mentoring is not just an aside to a life in power. That mentoring IS the life in power. I have watched David meet with countless progressive activists and help them become leaders in politics. He teaches how to be a force for good, for inclusion, for progress, for the community. These activists have gone on to Congress, to the State House, Town Councils. He has worked with Phil Murphy, Cory Booker, Corey Johnson (frontrunner to be New York's Next Mayor), Tom Prol, Peter Yacobellis, Jake Hudnut, and countless others.

That is power.

But David's real power, the one that makes him truly unique, is how he brings people together that would not ever be expected to be fighting together for the same causes. Democrats and Republicans call on David Mixner for guidance and to use his vast network to help the community. David has raised more than \$1 Million for the Ali Forney Center – an extraordinary place for LGBTQ+ homeless youth from New York, New Jersey, and beyond. And he has raised that money by telling the stories of how we all got here – our history.

This September, the Victory Fund is honoring David Mixner for his lifetime of helping LGBTQ+ candidates win public office. The Victory Fund, the natural successor to the first PAC that Mixner formed in 1976, helps new and upcoming candidates get the resources they need to win office – and power – in their own right.

That night among the speakers are two of David's closest friends, former Republican National Chairman Ken Mehlman and Congresswoman Maxine Waters (with whom David Mixner was jailed during protests in California) who will both talk about the impact David Mixner – son of Salem County and Woodstown High School – has had on America. These two leaders – Waters and Mehlman – from different parties, different states, different backgrounds – come together to show the world the work that David Mixner has done.

Now that is power.



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8 DR. PERRY HALKITIS



If there's one thing you should know about Perry Halkitis, who grew up in Astoria, Queens the son of Greek immigrant parents, it's that he didn't survive the AIDS crisis to keep his mouth shut with (another) pandemic raging.

Dr. Perry Halkitis is the Dean at Rutgers School of Public Health where he's a professor of biostatistics and Urban-Global Public Health. A nationally renowned public health expert, Dr. Halkitis has spent much of COVID educating Trenton lawmakers how to navigate a healthcare pandemic that arrived uninvited and without a rulebook.

"A one-size-fits-all approach to COVID-19 won't work," Dr. Halkiti told InsiderNJ before advising Trenton's Assembly Economic Development Committee on re-opening strategies. "There must be more nuance."

Dr. Halkitis, who lives in Newark's Ironbound neighborhood, has spent much of New Jersey's lockdown encouraging/cajoling/agitating the Murphy administration to adopt a smarter, more coherent contact tracing strategy so that we can get our kids back to school again.

"Our priorities at this point in the pandemic must be figuring out how to open schools that are functional and safe for children and their families, holding elections where we all feel safe to vote and no vote is suppressed, and regulations that allow small businesses to function safely to enable owners and their staffs to make a living. These are essential," Dr. Halkitis told InsiderNJ. "We *do not* need overcrowded football stadiums or Taylor Swift concerts (despite how great Folklore is) or over-the-top weddings. We don't need these to live. The latter are the benefits of a society functioning normally. We are far from normalcy."

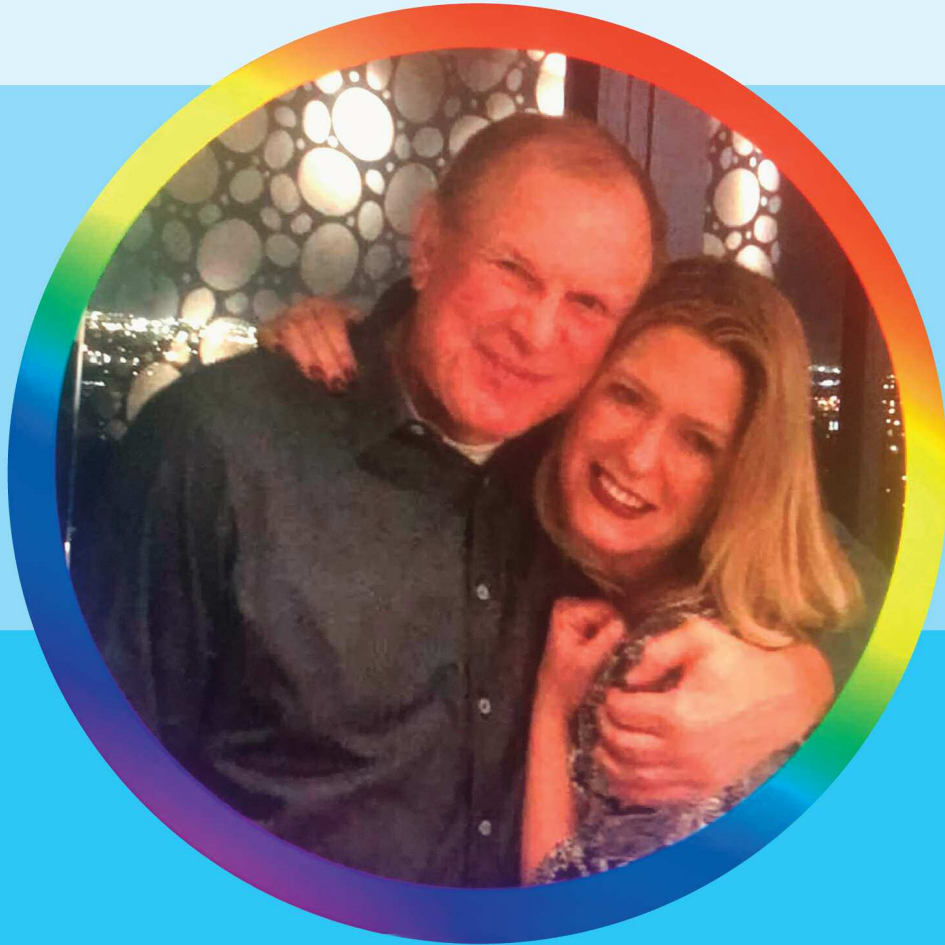
Dr. Halkitis also leads Rutgers Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies (CHIBPS) which tracks HIV/AIDS, substance use, and mental health issues facing LGBTQ people.

“For two decades my research center CHIBPS has conducted community-engaged, rigorous, well funded research,” Dr. Halkitis told InsiderNJ. “Important to the mission of CHIBPS is the training of the next generation of students dedicated to LGBTQ health. I have the honor of mentoring hundreds and hundreds of students who are all over the world doing great work as scientists, clinicians, and advocates. I am so proud of them. They are my legacy.”

Dr. Halkitis’ legacy also includes America’s first LGBTQ public health journal, *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health*, a who’s who of the LGBT health/research universe, which chronicles the social and political aspects affecting LGBTQ health issues.



In memory of



**New Jersey's #1 LGBTQ
Straight Ally Mrs. Salena Lesniak
who left us suddenly
July 3, 2019.**

9 CATHY RENNA

Cathy Renna is the interim communications director for the National LGBTQ Task Force, a national organization advancing full freedom for LGBTs beyond the marriage equality milestone.



Last year, along with NYC Pride, Ms. Renna coordinated media coverage for WorldPride/Stonewall 50, a special edition of Pride month commemorating a half century since the Stonewall uprising against police violence. This year she helped to organize Global Pride, a 26 hour virtual event that was viewed by 57,000,000 (!) people globally.

It's hard to recall a major LGBTQ issue of the past generation where Cathy Renna wasn't front and center, driving the debate. From the reaction to the murder of Matthew Shepard in 1990s to the fight for marriage equality and the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," Ms. Renna continues to work to ensure LGBTQ voices were part of the media narrative.



10 GARY PAUL WRIGHT

*A special tribute by
Christian Fuscarino*



Gary Paul Wright is the Godfather (and Godmother) of the LGBTQ community in New Jersey. He has committed his entire life to service and thus saving countless lives over the decades.

Gary Paul does the often thankless work of providing vital lifesaving services to young gay and bisexual men of color-reaching deep into the corners of the most marginalized in the LGBTQ community to ensure that no one is overlooked.

Gary Paul is unapologetically Black and by proudly leading as his true self, he has inspired future generations of Black Queer and Trans leaders to be their true selves. He founded the African American Office of Gay Concerns, an organization decentering whiteness by focusing specifically on Black folks and communities of color. He is always paving the way.

Long before hit TV shows like “Pose” and mainstream organizations championed Transgender women of color, Gary Paul and his organization created “T.G.I.F. – Thank Goodness I’m Fabulous”, which was the only state-funded program specifically designed for Transgender women of color at the time.

Most importantly, Gary Paul has made great contributions to slowing the spread of HIV and eradicating AIDS. Staying true to his beginnings in the movement back in the 1980’s Gary Paul gives all of himself to ensure people of all ages, especially young people, know the importance of using a condom and getting on prevention medication.

Queer and Trans folks in our state are safer because of Gary Paul and his partner, Peter Oates, who is a Nurse Practitioner. These two were married on World AIDS Day – a true power couple giving a lifetime of service to our community.

We couldn’t be in better hands.



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The LGBTQ officeholders most poised to end up in Trenton or in Congress.

Sadly, when it comes to electing LGBTQs to office, New Jersey punches well below its weight. NJ's 14 member Congressional delegation includes no LGBTQ members. Likewise the 120-member New Jersey General Assembly is called "the most heterosexual state legislature in America" for a reason. That's the opposite of progress. Fortunately there's a deep bench of LGBTQ talent to break that cycle, at least on the Democratic side.

- **REBECCA WILLIAMS** – The Union County Commissioner is smart, opinionated, and brimming with potential. Commissioner Williams is the future of the Democratic Party. Fortunately for our sake, she's also the present!
- **REED GUSCIORA** – The mayor of NJ's capital city Trenton was the first openly LGBTQ person in the New Jersey General Assembly.
- **BRUCE JAMES** – The long-serving Passaic County Commissioner of one of the most well-regarded and well-respected politicians in the Garden State.
- **MICHAEL DeFUSCO** – The Hoboken Councilman easily repelled a challenger this year and is poised to represent his downtown district for another stint.
- **JULIA FAHL** – The sky's the limit for the mayor of Lambertville who leads the next vanguard of LGBTQ leaders. She's among the generation of LGBTQs that could dream big right from the start and it shows.
- **MARIANNA PONTORIERO** – She sailed to victory to win another term in Brick township, NJ's 12th largest town. The top vote-getter in her last election.
- **PATRICIA HANSEN** – She led a Democratic tsunami in Evesham, romping to victory, snatching a council seat, and shattering the NJGOP stranglehold of her Burlington Co. town in the process.
- **BETSY DRIVER** – The mayor of Flemington triggered a blizzard of snowflakes by speaking to Trump voters the same way Trump speaks to everybody else.
- **Dr NINA DAVIS & RICH ROCKWELL** – This brilliant, dynamic duo comprise 1/3 of City Council in Bloomfield, in Essex County.
- **ED ZIPPRICH** – The long-serving Councilman from Red Bank has paved the way and mentored many of the names you'll read elsewhere on this list.

11 MARSHA P. JOHNSON



We've never honored someone posthumously on our OUT 100 LGBTQ Power List but the late Marsha P. Johnson continues to influence policy and politics in NJ and beyond. A Netflix documentary, *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* chronicles a Queer activist who never really got her due. A statue of Ms. Johnson's likeness is being planned for her hometown of Elizabeth, NJ to honor the enduring legacy of an American hero. That effort is led by, among others, Union County Commissioner Rebecca Williams.

Ms. Johnson, who cemented her place in American history at the Stonewall uprising in 1969, found herself in the middle of a melée that set the table for things like marriage equality, gay adoptions, and workplace protection.

The Stonewall Rebellion kicked off the modern LGBTQ rights movement that tamed the AIDS crisis and left a raft of pro-LGBTQ legislation in its wake. The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, was the target of frequent raids by the police who targeted LGBTQs back then because they could. When LGBTQ people finally fought back against systemic police violence, they called us rioters. Sound familiar?

When the AIDS pandemic struck a decade or so later, Ms. Johnson marshalled that same Stonewall tenacity advocating for people with AIDS and others on the margins.

Danni Newbury leads the Office of LGBTQ Affairs at Union County. "Marsha P. Johnson was an outspoken and prominent figure in the gay liberation movement, tireless advocate for homeless LGBTQ young people rejected by their families, those affected by H.I.V. and AIDS, and other marginalized groups," Ms. Newbury told InsiderNJ. "At 23, she was a leader in the monumental Stonewall Uprising of 1969. After Stonewall, Marsha was a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front, an activist with ACT UP, and a co-founder of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, or S.T.A.R., along with close friend and trans activist Sylvia Rivera."

When Marsha P. Johnson was murdered in 1992, the police called it a suicide. The mystery surrounding her death endures to this day.

12 SHAWN LATOURETTE



Shawn LaTourette is Deputy Commissioner & Chief of Staff at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. With roots as a community organizer helping vulnerable communities access clean water, he rose to become a director of the environmental law department at one of the state's largest law and lobbying firms (Gibbons PC) advising on critical infrastructure projects.

Shawn's the gatekeeper for DEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe and also for the Administration's environmental and climate policy more broadly. When he's not busy reshaping NJ's environmental regulations he's quietly negotiating the most progressive environmental justice legislation in the country to protect Black, Brown and low-income communities from a historic ill that has forced them to bear a disproportionate amount of pollution.

If you've been to the Trenton Starbucks on a Tuesday or Thursday morning you may observe Shawn LaTourette mentoring budding environmental lawyers and advocates from throughout the state and region. Mr. LaTourette also recently chaired the LGBT Rights Section of the NJ State Bar, which advises and nurtures novice Queer lawyers. That commitment to mentorship may be Mr. LaTourette's most enduring legacy, an impressive feat given his sterling credentials.

“

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On New Jersey's environmental justice bill signing.





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13 FRANCELINE EHRET



When Senator Loretta Weinberg set up the Workgroup on Harassment, Sexual Assault and Misogyny in NJ politics, Francine Ehret's testimony was the the first bombshell moment. Ms. Ehret's detailed accounts as a Queer woman doing battle within the so-called Boy's Club humbled and shamed some of the most powerful men in NJ politics.

Ms. Ehret is a longtime staff representative at the Communications Workers of America, which represents over 700,000 workers nationwide. Fran's recent appointment by Governor Phil Murphy to NJ's LGBTQ Taskforce prioritizes issues like youth homelessness (including young adults aging out of housing) and housing discrimination against LGBTQ seniors.

As the COVID pandemic smolders, Ms. Ehret leads a coalition of worker advocacy groups to fight for safety and health regulations to protect workers from the coronavirus and to gain the right to refuse to work if an employer has not created a safe work environment from the spread of Covid-19.

14 TOM PROL



Tom Prol, New Jersey's first openly gay State Bar president, is the strand of continuity from Garden State Equality's debut back in the aughts until today. He currently sits on GSE's Political Action Board. Tom is also general counsel to the Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey.

His work at the bluechip Newark law firm Sills Cummis & Gross gives Tom an expanded platform for his political advocacy work as well for his litigation and environmental & land use legal practice.

Tom helped start the LGBTQ rights section of the State Bar back in 2004 as a vehicle to mentor LGBTQ lawyers in more conservative areas of the state. This broke down the closet door and allowed these lawyers to be the social justice warriors they were meant to be. In addition to teaching Constitutional law at Seton Hall, Mr. Prol's monthly column on LGBTQ legal issues for the *New Jersey Law Journal* continues to amplify our community's legal concerns.

15 CHRISTOPHER STARK & TONY HOWLEY

A tribute by their friend Christina Renna

To know Chris Stark and Tony Howley is to love this GOP Power Couple, who were loyal Monmouth Countians until their move to Jersey City. Tony serves as State Director for Americans for Prosperity – New Jersey, the well-known conservative political advocacy group who is not afraid to (loudly) remind Governor Murphy, Sens. Booker and Menendez and the New Jersey Legislature about the importance of fiscal responsibility.

Chris left the Trenton proper-scene to serve as Regional Vice President for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC), still covering Jersey, along with seven other Northeastern states, and is an issue expert on all things property / casualty insurance. Proud alumni of NJGOP's Young Republicans, in their limited spare time you can still find Chris and Tony knocking on doors or making phone calls for the candidates or issues most important to them.

Seeing how far they have come in their respective careers in a few short years, I can't wait to see where they are going... and go along with them, because anywhere they go is fun.



16 MARIA RODRIGUEZ

Yes, it's true. And for anyone close to her, the clues that Maria Rodriguez is bisexual have been there the whole time.

Ms. Rodriguez is a former two-term state lawmaker from Burlington County and one of the more high-profile voices working to curb domestic violence in New Jersey. As a Republican member of NJ's General Assembly, she sponsored the original bill permitting transgender New Jerseyans to update gender markers on their birth certificates.

Maria knows there's a big difference between being out to a few friends and being out to the whole world. She agreed to be on this year's list to highlight her efforts to pass LGBTQ-inclusive domestic violence legislation here in New Jersey.



17 AMY QUINN



Amy Quinn wears lots of hats including that of Deputy Mayor of Asbury Park, the undisputed LGBTQ capital of our Garden State. Amy Quinn has spent her career pushing for LGBTQ equality in Asbury Park and beyond. More recently, working with the Mayor and town Council, Amy has nurtured the most progressive fair housing policy in the State. Amy's commitment and dedication to electing more women to public office remains without peer in New Jersey.

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18 ANNA WONG

A tribute by Lisa Volpe Yakomin



As a founding member of the NJ5 Coalition, co-chair of Action Together New Jersey, and Board Member for Women for Progress, activist Anna Wong has built a fierce reputation as a highly-respected political powerhouse among New Jersey's progressive party base. Her unparalleled ability to engage and mobilize supporters, particularly Gen Z and Millennial voters, can be attributed to the infectious energy and passion she brings to her advocacy for social justice, empowerment, and equality. Although the Democratic primary challenger she backed against CD5 incumbent Josh “the human fundraising machine” Gottheimer fell short this year, it was Wong’s formidable grassroots ground game and skilled voter outreach efforts that made the race one to watch right up to the end.

While her attempt to push back against the entrenched party machine may not have succeeded at the ballot box, she effectively tapped into a growing segment of restless Democrats who are unhappy with the glacial pace of political change—an accomplishment that establishes Wong as a force to be reckoned with for many election cycles to come.

19 WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM

A tribute by Jon Christian Olivera



New Jersey has never had an openly LGBTQ Congressperson.

No matter the level, it takes a lot of courage and tenacity to run for office and put yourself out there. It takes even more courage to run as a member of a marginalized community against the forces that are working against us. There was not a single primary challenger this cycle that upended the status quo, but William’s campaign ran a good, respectable fight. He did that against the Norcross machine. He did that against millions of unchecked Super PAC money. He did that against family political dynasties. He did that without the support of New Jersey’s foremost LGBTQ advocacy organization and the national LGBTQ Victory Fund.

Years ago, I had the pleasure of organizing campaigns in South Jersey right in Atlantic County, and make no mistake, it’s no easy task. William put himself out there as an openly gay Black man and spoke truth to power. William isn’t the first openly LGBTQ person to run for Congress in New Jersey, but his voice and his candidacy are another step forward in paving the way for what we all know is inevitable. With hard work and determination, in future years, it will hopefully be him.

20 KARI OSMOND

First Lady of Lambertville +
Deputy Chief of Staff for Congresswoman
Bonnie Watson Coleman

A tribute by Meagan Warner



Kari Osmond is a natural mentor, always providing others with the opportunities they need to grow and succeed. I met Kari my freshman year of college at a College Dems meeting — our instant connection was living in the town we both love, Lambertville.

Kari invited me to apply to intern for Congresswoman Watson Coleman's office, and the rest, they say, is history. She opened the door for me to take a leap into the world of New Jersey politics, and has been a constant resource and font of wisdom over the past few years, always providing a quick response and advice whenever needed. All of this was made more convenient when she and her wife (Lambertville) Mayor Julia Falh moved in a few houses down the street, where she was many times a much-needed mental health break during my first gig as a Field Organizer on Congressman Tom Malinowski's campaign in 2018.

Kari is just the sort of person you'd want in a mentor, friend, and neighbor, always selfless and with a stark moral compass. Her devotion to justice and progressive issues is what helps move Lambertville forward every day, and why she was any easy fit into our tiny city with a taste for politicking.

Gratitude would be an understatement for all of the wisdom and support she's provided me over the years, so suffice to say I'm glad she's fighting on our side of the issues.

21 JACKIE CORNELL

The former #2 at the New Jersey Department of Health where she promoted HIV eradication and novel approaches to NJ's heroin crisis, Jackie Cornell is currently Chief of Policy and Health Innovations at 1906 New High, a cannabis startup that's working to perfect the dosing of medical cannabis edibles.



The table was set for today's marijuana reform movement by Queer people during the AIDS crisis, so it's fitting and proper that someone like Ms. Cornell is at the vanguard of a burgeoning, booming gazillion dollar marijuana industry.

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22 CHRISTOPHER HILLMAN

*A tribute by Donna C. Abene, Vice
Chair of Democratic District 39*



Christopher Hillmann was my first. No, No not “that” first— my first friend in politics.

He was the first person to reach out to me after I was elected to council in my cloistered, little northern New Jersey town. He taught me stuff. He stood next to me at political functions while I cowered in the corner suffering from imposter syndrome. He introduced me to people. He helped me celebrate my triumphs and laugh off my losses—all the things a friend would do.

I’d like to think I am special, but no. Chris is there for everyone.

Chris Hillmann is one of the premiere voices championing LGBTQ rights in our state, and has helped lift many an LGBTQ candidates out of the shadows and into the forefront of NJ politics. On a wider scale, he has spearheaded many movements to benefit the health and welfare of the Queer Community and continues to be a prominent activist for countless causes associated with inequities suffered by LGBTQ folks...Oh, and he married the man he loved.

As Councilman in Hasbrouck Heights, Chris is always first to fight for transparency, vote against a budget he feels is not in the interest of the townspeople, and answer his phone when a constituent has an issue. He serves both with bravery and integrity.

He is first to donate to your fundraiser, and first to have a fundraiser for you if need be. His keen sense of right is rivaled by few. His commitment to the advancement of all humanity is evident. His laughter is infectious.

Chris is a devoted son, a loving husband, a dedicated public servant, and my friend.

Christopher Hillmann is a man of firsts, and we are all the better for it.

23 DEAN DAFIS

Maplewood Councilman Dean Dafis is among the most compelling and persuasive voices in America against so-called conversion therapy, a barbaric practice where LGBTQ kids are tortured ostensibly to turn them straight. Conversion therapy is cruel and it doesn't work. You can't "pray the gay away."

Mr. Dafis' recent efforts to expand the Hetrick-Martin Institute mean more healthcare options for Essex County's LGBTQ community.



24 DAVID PARANO

The president and CEO of Parano and Associates, David Parano is among the savvy, smartest, and shrewdest campaign managers of his generation. His wizardry has propelled numerous LGBTQ candidates into office including Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora and Lambertville Mayor Julia Fahl.

A NJ operative who's not afraid to battle NJ Machine Politics, Mr. Parano's stellar track record also includes wins for Governor Phil Murphy, Congressman Bill Pascrell, and NJ Senator Loretta Weinberg.



25 SONIA DAS

She has long burned brightly as one of the brightest lights in NJ's political constellation and during that time, Sonia Das has worn many hats: Super-lobbyist, chief of staff, community organizer, mentor. But we'll save her impressive list of *bona fides* for another year.

"My wife Janet and I are very proud of our family," Ms. Das told InsiderNJ.

Ms. Das suggested we use this space to thank Senators Nick Scutari and Richard Codey + Assembly members Valerie Huttel, Annette Quijano, and Jim Kennedy, the prime sponsors of legislation which streamlined the adoption process in NJ for LGBTQ parents.



26 PETER YACOBELLIS



When Peter Yacobellis took his oath of office to become Montclair's newest councilman, he did so with a mandate: he notched the most votes in a 5-way race for an at-large council seat in Montclair, NJ, population 38,000ish.

Peter's list of endorsements was an impressive display of local-, regional-, and national support, a testament to decades of pro-LGBT advocacy. A former finance director for Garden State Equality, Peter worked for some of NY's biggest names including Hillary Rodham Clinton and Andrew Cuomo.

"I was 18 years old when Ellen DeGeneres came out," Yacobellis told InsiderNJ. "I had never heard of Harvey Milk when I was a kid and I didn't truly understand what being gay meant until late in my teen years. There certainly were no prominent openly LGBTQ elected officials in my youth either. Today, mothers are writing me notes thanking me for being out and open in my run because of the example it gives to their children. What a beautiful evolution."

We couldn't agree more.

27 AARON POTENZA



Aaron Potenza is one of the most hardworking, versatile, and frankly underrated activists of his generation. His time as policy director for Garden State Equality was immensely fruitful and includes the expansion of health insurance coverage for transition-related care for transgender New Jerseyans and a modernized birth – and death certificate process allowing transgender and non-binary people to access identity documents.

Aaron chaired NJ's Transgender Equality Task force which studies legal and social barriers to equality for Transgender New Jerseyans. The groundbreaking report, released last year, is a blueprint for progress for NJ's Transgender and non-binary residents.

Enduringly relevant, Aaron is currently the Manager of Strategic Initiatives at NJCASA, the NJ Coalition Against Sexual Abuse which combines political action with education and outreach to combat sexual violence and abuse in NJ.

It's easy to overlook stalwarts like Aaron Potenza because he's too busy doing the hard work to be hogging a microphone.

We honor unsung heroes like Aaron Potenza here.

CONGRATULATIONS

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28 MEG COLUMBIA-WALSH



Currently at AWS, Meg Columbia-Walsh is among the most successful female tech entrepreneurs in the county. But it's Meg's service to the Board of Lambda Legal that's perhaps her most important and meaningful work to date. Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to liberty for LGBTQs and people living with HIV through litigation, education and public policy work.

"The work of Lambda Legal, from litigating for the freedom to marry to fighting discrimination in employment, healthcare and education, makes an enormous impact on people's lives," Columbia-Walsh said. "I'm thrilled to be part of an organization that is advancing equality both in the courts and in statehouses across the country."

Meg Columbia-Walsh is also a decorated jock. She rode a full basketball scholarship to Rider University where she's in the Hall of Fame for both basketball and volleyball.

29 JEANNE LOCICCERO

A tribute by Allison Pelzman of the ACLU NJ



Jeanne LoCicero steers the ship for some of the most consequential civil rights litigation in the Garden State. Within the ACLU, an organization known for its innovative litigation, the ACLU of New Jersey has a reputation for pioneering new approaches and cutting-edge advocacy. That bold legal work – and the seamless integration of litigation in other forms of advocacy – is due in no small part to Jeanne's leadership as legal director.

During COVID-19, the ACLU of New Jersey has met the moment undaunted. Jeanne's team has filed suits round-the-clock to save lives in immigration detention, prisons, and jails by lowering population numbers and making social distancing possible.

Amid national conversations about police misconduct, an issue the ACLU-NJ has led for decades, the organization entered the legal fight to make police disciplinary records public. A ruling at the Appellate Division earlier this month sided with the organization's arguments.

During an unprecedented election, Jeanne's team was at the forefront of the battle to protect voting rights. In October, the ACLU-NJ filed a suit to pursue a failsafe alternative option for people displaced by COVID-19 to receive and cast mail-in ballots, and her team is providing support for anything and everything that may hinder the democratic process before, during, and after Nov. 3. (Call 1-866-OUR-VOTE or go to 866ourvote.com/!)

These projects are massively important, and they're only a fraction of the workload the ACLU of New Jersey legal department handles. Rarely one to take the credit, Jeanne would be the first to bring attention to the efforts of the team – a team helmed by a fierce advocate, a brilliant mind, and a visionary leader.

30 JAKE HUDNUT



Jersey City prosecutor Jake Hudnut is among the most visionary law enforcers in the state of NJ. A couple years ago, he teamed up with JC Mayor Steve Fulop ostensibly to decriminalize recreational cannabis in NJ's 2nd largest city.

Mr. Hudnut has been front-and-center leading Jersey City's charge against the Coronavirus, leading his town's enforcement of COVID-19 state and local executive orders.

Mr. Hudnut, widely believed to be the only openly LGBT lead prosecutor in the state, will expand his office next year into a new and innovative Division of Public Safety, a community-driven effort devoted to increasing the quality of life in Jersey City.

31 DANNI NEWBURY



No one has done more to streamline the adoption process for LGBTQ couples in NJ than Danni Newbury, a Rahway Councilmember running for a 2nd term in November. She spends her days running Union County's Office of LGBTQ Affairs which was established by the Freeholder Board in 2018 and is the first county government office of its kind in the State of New Jersey.

"We don't want to be the only County," Ms. Newbury told InsiderNJ.

32 SHANNON CUTTLE

A gatecrashing history-maker, Shannon Cuttle snagged the most votes – first place – in an 8-way race for school board to become NJ’s first transgender elected official. Cuttle is a rising star in the state and national Democratic party as evidenced by high profile roles at this summer’s DNC.



33 ED WENGRYN

The NJ Farm Bureau’s man on State Street, Ed Wengryn spent the past year helping pass hemp legislation and fighting for appropriations for Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station.

Ed’s deft touch helped ensure agriculture in NJ didn’t come to a halt when COVID-19 struck. Farm stands, farmers markets, garden centers, and greenhouses all stayed open for the duration. This year Ed and his team worked closely with NJ health officials to protect farm workers from COVID-19.



34 BENJAMIN FELDMAN

The sartorially gifted Benjamin Feldman is a brilliant campaigner with a knack for getting on well with the myriad warring factions that comprise NJ politics. Mr. Feldman is currently the deputy chief of staff and Senior Advisor to Chairman Kevin O’Toole at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Previously, Mr. Feldman was ED for the Middlesex County Democrats before his leading role on NJ Governor Phil Murphy’s winning run for governor in 2017.

“Ben is very intelligent, determined, and hardworking and an invaluable asset to me,” Chairman O’Toole told InsiderNJ. “Ben’s strong skill sets are at work 24/7 helping the Port during this very difficult pandemic.”



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and all the honorees listed in the 2020 InsiderNJ Out 100



35 JENNIFER WILLIAMS



When Jennifer Williams ran for a seat in the NJ General Assembly last year, she made history as the first transgender candidate to run for the state house. Along the way, Ms. Williams snagged nearly 10,000 votes in her longshot effort to knock off the incumbents. That impressive tally is 2000+ votes more than both Republicans received (combined) in 2015, the last year the Assembly candidates topped the ticket.

Knocking on all those doors and changing all those hearts and minds along the way is an important part of Jennifer William's legacy which also includes decades of service to NJ's republican party.

Jennifer Williams was re-elected this summer to lead the Trenton Republican Committee for another term, the vote was unanimous. She won because of her grassroots prowess and her commitment to building her party. Her gender was a non-issue.

And that's the point isn't it?

36 LAUREN ALBRECHT



She's your Election Day "ride or die" and there's no one better in the trenches with consequences on that line than Lauren Albrechts, the director of NJ Democratic State Committee's LGBTQ caucucs. She's also the co-chair of LGBTQ for Biden NJ. When she's not storming the bastille for queer liberty, Lauren Albrecht is a fierce advocate and lobbyist for people with disabilities.

Joe Forte is Ms. Albrecht's top deputy at the LGBTQ caucus.

"Lauren is the point person on all LGBTQ issues," Mr. Forte told InsiderNJ. "She knows how to get things done. Not only is she a policy wonk but a fundraising guru."

37 ROBYN GIGL

A tribute by Aaron Potenza



A partner at Gluck Walrath and an attorney with over 35 years of years of experience in employment law and discrimination, Robyn Gigl is a longstanding member of Garden State Equality's Board of Directors, a member of the New Jersey Supreme Court's Committee on Minority Concerns, and a Past Chair of the NJ Bar Association's LGBT Rights Section.

Fierce and steadfast, Robyn's work to advance legal equality for transgender New Jerseyans has resulted in critical civil rights decisions including the recent transfer of a transgender woman improperly confined to a New Jersey men's prison for over 17 months. Robyn was instrumental in the passage of much of the legislation advancing transgender equality in New Jersey over the past decade. She worked with the New Jersey School Board Association to advance the rights of transgender students and serves as a member of the Transgender Equality Task Force and the OAG's working group on LGBTQ issues in Law Enforcement. In addition to legal and policy expertise, Robyn has long been making the issue of transgender rights personal to those who might say they don't know us, bringing her own experience as a transgender woman to her training and speaking work in the corporate, non-profit, and public sectors.

An author of numerous legal articles, Robyn is also a published fiction writer whose work deals with issues of gender identity, law, and society as they intersect with myriad axes of social difference against the backdrop of the Garden State.

38 CJ GRIFFIN



A long time member of ACLU-NJ's board of trustees, CJ Griffin is New Jersey's preeminent expert on government transparency and NJ's open public records laws. Brandishing sunlight as a weapon to highlight government nincompooery at all levels, Ms. Griffin is why, for example, NJ medical marijuana users can't get fired for using their medicine.

CJ's stewardship of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center enabled her firm Pashman Stein Walder Hayden P.C. to punch way above its weight in the field of police transparency, an especially timely issue in NJ and beyond.

CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR HEROES--
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NJ LGBTQ DEMOCRATS



LAUREN ALBRECHT, CHAIR

DAVID GRANT, VICE CHAIR

JOE FORTE, SECRETARY

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39 SHARRONDA WHEELER



A Newark native and member of the LGBTQ Democratic National Committee, Sharronda Wheeler was thrust into the activist life when she lost her only son to gun violence back in 2007. A volunteer since 2013, Ms. Wheeler became president of Newark Pride Inc in 2015. The event has blossomed under her leadership attracting more participants and events than ever. Ms. Wheeler's commitment to service includes her personal life (15 years working in social service) and her personal time as well. Ms. Wheeler monitors LGBTQ teens, many since grown, and acts as a bridge that connects her community to resources and opportunities.

40 JOE VOTRUBA



Since coming out to his radio audience in 2015. Joe Votruba, NJ1015's longtime producer and on-air presenter, has become an outspoken advocate for the LGBTQIA community. He has dedicated countless hours of air time to issues that affect the community including reparations to LGBTQ service members unfairly discharged from the military.

It's easy to preach to the choir. What makes Joe unique and special is his willingness to serve digestible equality nuggets to a largely conservative audience at NJ1015, NJ's largest radio station.

41 JOE SIMONETTA



A widely respected lobbyist and fundraiser, Joseph "Joe" Simonetta is a senior partner at Public Strategies Impact, a bluechip government affairs firm in Trenton. Mr. Simonetta has a busy 12 month. When he's not raising money for the Joe Biden/Kamala Harris campaign, Mr. Simonetta might be in Trenton protecting the arts community from this year's covid-related budget armageddon.

42 ELIZABETH “LIZ” SCHEDL



Elizabeth Schedl is the newly minted Executive Director at Hudson Pride Center, the largest and only full-service LGBTQ Center in the state of New Jersey. In addition to planning Pride events around Hudson county, population 690k, their offerings include healthcare services and job training for anyone who needs it, including LGBTs living on the margins.

Liz Schedl courageously embraces the enduring challenges facing the LGBT community, including drug addiction and HIV/AIDS, which disproportionately affects our people.

Congratulations to the 2020 InsiderNJ OUT100 LGBTQ+ Honorees!

The NJDSC is proud to support the leaders of the LGBTQ+ community. We are committed to the fight for a more equal society free of discrimination and prejudice.



John Currie, Chairman
Peg Schaffer, Vice Chair
Saily Avelenda, Executive Director

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43 MATT ARCO

A political reporter for Star Ledger and NJ Advance Media, Matt Arco is among the most talented, well-respected journalists in the biz. When COVID first struck and NJ's casualty count began to skyrocket, most of us were safe at home on lockdown. Not so for Matt Arco who braved the virus every day to report on the story and to disseminate the info NJ residents needed to stay safe and healthy.

Matt Arco risked his own health to help NJ flatten the COVID-19 transmission curve. If you ever needed proof that journalists are essential, there you go.



44 DEB GUSTON

Deb Guston is a nationally recognized pioneer in LGBTQ-focused family and adoption law, from birth certificates to estate planning, helping a generation of New Jerseyans to navigate life's many civil contracts.

Deb is past-president State Bar Association's LGBT Rights Section and sits on the board of ACLU where she's also past president.

"In the last 50 years, LGBTQ rights have advanced so dramatically it can be hard to keep up," Allison Pelzman, ACLU NJ comms director said. "With a career spanning four decades, family law attorney Debra Guston's mission, from domestic partnerships to civil unions to marriage, has been to stay on top of those laws and help people navigate them."



45 CHARLES EADER & KAREN CARROL

A tribute by Peg Schaffer

Charles and Karen were instrumental in 2020 in putting together the proposal to the Somerset County Commissioner Board to establish the LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, which was enacted unanimously. Charles was subsequently named the Board's first Chairperson. The mission of the Somerset County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer / Questioning, Plus (LGBTQ+) Advisory Board will be to raise public consciousness of the diversity of our county and the contributions of this community to the County of Somerset; and act as an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community.

In 2019 and 2020, the caucus has been actively positioning PRIDE awareness with the 21 towns in Somerset County through donating rainbow flags for municipalities, houses of worship, and other public spaces for June festivities.



46 BRIAN HACKETT

Brian Hackett is perhaps NJ's most influential animal rights advocate. As state director of the Humane Society of the US, NJ chapter, Mr. Hackett manages to foster and cultivate close ties with lawmakers in both parties. His advocacy helped secure a commitment from Governor Murphy to end the bear hunt next year.

Mr. Hackett also works closely with law enforcement agencies around the state on better enforcement of animal cruelty laws.



Congressman Andy Kim Congratulates the LGBTQ Leaders Who Are Making New Jersey Proud!

Andy fights for the freedom of LGBTQ+ Americans by:

- **Cosponsoring the Equality Act**
- **Honoring our LGBTQ+ Service Members and Veterans**
- **Ending Discrimination in Healthcare**



47 NEALON ISAACS

A prodigious fundraiser with grassroots- and legislative pedigree, Nealon Isaacs just finished his successful first year as Developmental Manager of Garden State Equality. Prior to his leadership role at GSE, Mr. Isaacs was legislative director for Senator Raymond Lesniak.



“Nealon was one of my best legislative directors,” Senator Lesniak told InsiderNJ. “His smile is infectious and he brings great insights into the issues facing us.”



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48 JOE FORTE

Joe Forte, one of the most diligent and well-respected political operatives in the state, co-chairs LGBTQ+ for Biden NJ and is deputy director for the NJ Democratic State Committee LGBTQ Caucus.



49 ROBIN KAMPF

When award-winning filmmaker Robin Kampf's wife Luanne Peterpaul became a judge, we cheered because elevating LGBTQ people to prominent, important positions is what equality is all about. But her promotion to judgeship took Luanne out of the activist life. And just like that NJ's quest for LGBTQ liberty got a little harder. And so it was up to Robin Kampf, a professor and filmmaker, to carry the torch of activism in the family and that's what she did.



Appointed by Senator Vin Gopal to the District 11 Economic Recovery Council, Ms. Kampf is helping Monmouth Co businesses navigate COVID's murky waters to reopen safely. Ms. Kampf, who has spent decades mentoring and nurturing the next generation of film filmmakers, sits on the board of the Garden State Film Festival. She's also a board member of 180 Turning Lives Around which empowers families affected by domestic violence.

When Robin Kampf wrote, produced, and directed the award-winning film "Love Wins" she was documenting the fight for marriage equality in real time. Since its debut, "Love Wins" has become an educational tool for countless students. And because "Love Wins" chronicles a pair of septuagenarian lesbians fighting to get married, Ms. Kampf's award-winning film has empowered older LGBTQs in unexpected and exciting ways.

Robin Kampf would be the first to admit that no one will ever replace Luanne Peterpaul's absence on the activist circuit. And so she's blazing her own path and NJ is infinitely richer for it.

50 KATE ROTONDI



Katie Rotondi was the first ‘out’ county chair in New Jersey. Under her leadership, the Sussex County Democratic Committee’s executive board had multiple LGBTQ+ identifying members, a first time in the Republican dominated area. Prior to becoming chair, Rotondi was a part of the first LGBTQ+ ticket to run for office anywhere in Sussex County, running with another queer woman, Kailey Denzer-Weiler for Hampton Township Committee. In her personal time, Rotondi uses art to support the LGBTQ+ community, and is currently making a documentary about aging with HIV that prominently features members of the LGBTQ+ community.

51 KATIE INGERSOLL




The VP of the Collingswood Progressive Democrats, Kate Ingersoll was the secret weapon who recently handed a humbling, unforgettable defeat to the much-vaunted Camden County Democrats. That surprise victory last year gave her organization control of the municipal party for a two-year hitch. Ms. Ingersoll and her crew later helped propel Amy Kennedy to a smashing Democratic Congressional primary victory.

Look for Ms. Ingersoll’s ranking to rise if CPD consolidates last year’s gains and/or Ms. Kennedy snags that seat in Congress.

52 MICHAEL “MIKEY” SPADORO



A longtime, indefatigable campaign stalwart, Mikey Spadoro is the political and finance director for Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman’s re-election campaign. Mikey shattered fundraising records as director of Garden State Equality’s annual “Equality Walk,” a series of state-wide (super-fun) fundraising events. Mr. Spadoro showed his versatility at the microphone while emceeing the Governor’s most recent LGBTQ reception at Drumthwacket.



BLACK *TRANS* LIVES MATTER



**GARDEN STATE
EQUALITY**

53 ALANA BURMAN

A grassroots community activist from Trenton, Alana Burman was just hired by the Anti-Defamation League as their associate director for the New York/New Jersey region. ADL is an organization that's devoted to stopping "the defamation of Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all."



54 ALLISON "AK" KOLARIK & KATHY KELLY

Kathy Kelly chairs the Asbury Park Business District. Allison Kolarik, better known by the *nom de guerre* AK Hanrahan, is the social media and communications director for the Asbury Park Democrats, one of the most activist-rich municipal committees in the state. Together with AP Dems Chair Joe Grillo and Julie Andreola, they conceived and helped stand up the Asbury Park Dinner Table, a nonprofit to support local restaurants affected by COVID by feeding families in town. Since their humble beginnings on March 19, the Asbury Park Dinner Table has raised over \$200,000 to purchase 70,000+ meals from a dozen Asbury eateries to feed local residents whose lives have been disrupted by the pandemic.

The hospitality industry is the economic lifeblood of Asbury Park, our state's undisputed LGBTQ capital. AK and Kathy's swift, nimble, Zoom-driven efforts sustained over a dozen restaurants and hundreds of jobs in the process.



55 BRIAN DERRICK



A prodigious fundraising guru with regional impact, Brian Derrick is the finance director for Mikie Sherrill's Congressional reelection campaign. Since taking office in 2018, the Sherrill for Congress campaign has hauled in over \$6m, including \$1.5m in the most recent quarter! Those eye popping numbers are a testament to a remarkable candidate and also to Mr. Derrick himself.

Prior to leading Congresswoman Sherrill's fundraising team, Mr. Derrick was the major gifts officer for Lambda Legal, an organization committed to liberty for LGBTQs and people living with HIV through litigation, education and public policy work.

56 ZOE HEATH

A tribute by Jacky Staple,
Mom of 2 LGBTQ kids



Zoe Heath has been running Sussex County Pride for 3 years working with area schools to implement Gay Straight Alliance programs and high school and college students to build the next generation of LGBTQ activists. Wise beyond her years, Zoe is exactly the person needed to show conservative NJ that there's more to our LGBTQ community than the ignorant statements made by our former county officials. The annual Pride rally, held in June every year, has quickly outgrown the location under Zoe's leadership. Zoe was a member of the Sussex County Democratic Committee executive board, current secretary of the Vernon Democrats and County committee member from Vernon. She's gotten the rainbow flag raised for the first time ever in many places and has impressed her colleagues with decades more experience.

She's adored by everyone who knows her and is a welcome sight to so many young LGBTQ kids looking for someone like them.

We need a thousand more Zoe's in this world.

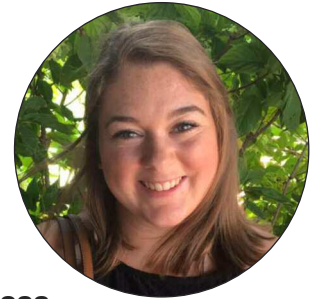
57 BRIAN MCGINNIS

Brian McGinnis cut his teeth in New Jersey politics as a blogger for BlueJersey.com back in the aughts. After a long stint doing communications in the General Assembly, Mr. McGinnis went to law school. He built his legal career around ending workplace discrimination against LGBTQ people ensuring Mr. McGinnis's high profile role at the LGBTQ Bar's most recent annual conference.



58 KATIE WERTHEIMER

There's no one in Trenton working harder to keep the government out of your womb than Katie Wertheimer, chief of staff for veteran lawmaker Valerie Huttie. A newcomer to this list, Ms. Wertheimer's fingerprints are all over 1) landmark legislation to expand abortion access and 2) a package of bills to improve support for sexual assault survivors.



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59 PETE ONEGLIA



Having worked as both a Senate and Assembly staffer at different points, Pete is a co-owner, a co-founder, and the General Manager of Insider NJ. He's responsible for the daily creation of Insider NJ's popular Morning Intelligence Briefing, delivered to your inbox every morning. He's also a co-owner of a TAPinto news site in his hometown of Hawthorne, serves as a Board of Trustees member of Act Now Foundation, and serves as a member of Hawthorne's Pride Alliance. For the past three years, Pete has worked hand-in-hand with Jay in shepherding this very list to completion, from inception to publication, and all the steps in between.

And if you've ever enjoyed Insider NJ's annual soirée during the League of Municipalities conference in Atlantic City, you already know that Pete knows how to throw a helluva party!

60 JENNIFER GODOSKI



A government affairs pro 2+ decades in the game, Jennifer Godoski directs policy and government affairs at New Jersey Resources. She's worked for three Governors including a stint for the NJ Department of Transportation where she served as chief of staff.

Multiple decades in Trenton give her more longevity than nearly everyone on this list.

61 JULIO CEASAR ROMAN III



Julio Roman's destiny as a fighter (and a carer) was forged very early. Mr. Roman, a fearless advocate and activist from Newark, was 11 years old when he helped his Mother care for their Aunt Naomi as she died from AIDS. That fateful experience propelled Mr. Roman to become one of NJ's most respected AIDS activists. Mr. Roman currently directs community, LGBTQ & supportive services at the North Jersey Community Research Initiative, one of New Jersey's largest and most comprehensive HIV/AIDS organizations serving the Newark metroplex.

62 GORDON SAUER

Gorden Sauer runs GAAMC, NJ's oldest LGBTQ rights organization, where he's working to archive Queer history in Morris County where GAAMC is located. Mr. Sauer has dedicated his retirement to working for SAGE where he lobbies to protect the rights of elder LGBTQs in housing and healthcare.



As Professional Development Coordinator for GLSEN Central Jersey, Mr. Sauer organizes and presents school workshops to teachers, administrators, and student groups on making schools safer for LGBTQ students and teachers. Mr. Sauer's testimony on behalf of New Jersey's Inclusive Curriculum Bill propelled the historic legislation into law. A retired educator with over 40 years experience, Mr. Sauer was uniquely well-suited to advise the Department of Education on establishing guidelines for implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum.

63 ALYSSA KAYE DAWSON

Once the youngest councilwoman (Westwood) in New Jersey history, Alyssa Kaye Dawson is the chief of staff for Assemblywoman Holly Schepisi (R-Bergen.) Ms. Dawson won an eye-popping 70,686 votes in her longshot bid to become a Bergen County commissioner.



64 ED POTOSNAK

The longtime director of the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, Ed Potosnak is a respected leader on environmental issues in New Jersey. He's also a school board member and Democratic municipal vice chairman in Franklin, NJ.



65 DAN FATTON

Trenton's Dan Fatton, who chairs the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, sits on the board of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. When he's not helping to distribute over \$15,000,000 annually to support environmental/climate advocacy, the arts, and education, Mr Fatton is consultant and NJ State Director for Energy Foundation and their sister organization, Energy Action Fund.



66 ELAINE HELMS

Elaine Helms founded the Reaching Adolescents in Need (RAIN) Foundation in East Orange to combat the tragically high rate of prostitution among homeless LGBT kids who engage in so-called "survival sex" out of desperation.

It's hard, gritty work and Elaine Helms is there in the trenches lifting up our most vulnerable youth and helping their reach their vast potential.



67 KRIS BERRIOS

Despite his recent move to Somerset County, Kris Berrios has remained active with the Union County LGBTQ Affairs Ad Hoc Committee which recently announced plans to honor Elizabeth, NJ native Marsha P. Johnson, the transgender AIDS activist who probably threw the first brick at the Stonewall Rebellion back in 1969.

Mr. Berrios is also advisor to an advocacy group called Be the Change, devoted to counting anti-trans bias coming out of the White House.



CONGRATS *to the* INSIDER OUT 100 LGBT POWER LIST!

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68 CHRIS CANNELLA



Chris Cannella is a teacher by day and also a Union potentate who was recently honored as an NJEA Equality Champion for his work “to ensure equal rights for all students, including for LGBTQ+ youth.”

A Bergen Co and Lodi municipal Democratic committeeman, Mr. Cannella led a coalition of advocates who crafted LGBTQ-inclusvise educational curriculum in NJ schools. Mr. Cannella is president of the Cedar Grove Education Association and also the 2nd VP of the Essex County Education Association.

69 JADE KOHUT



Jade Kohut is a proud MAGA conservative from Jefferson (Morris CO) who made history as the NJ GOP’s first transgender municipal chair. Ms. Kohut was unanimously reelected by Jefferson Township committee members for her current term, a testament to her winning track record and the GOP’s growing acceptance of LGBTQ people.

70 KATE OKESON

A tribute by Red Bank Councilmember Erik Yngstrom



Kate Okeson, of Red Bank, is a party leader and designs Red Bank, Matawan, and Aberdeen’s campaign ads. When she isn’t helping elect Democrats to office, she is a member of the Human Relations Advisory Committee in Red Bank. Kate also runs the non-profit, Make It Better For Youth, an organization that helps, counsels, advocates for and educates LGBTQ Youth.

In her day job, Kate is a Fine Arts Educator in her neighboring school district, Rumson/Fair Haven. Keep your eye out for Kate, she is a future Mayor or Council member in Red Bank.

71 NEIL ABADIE

Biden's North Jersey LGBTQ co-chair, Neil Abadie keeps himself busy as a board member of Hudson Pride and also as the Jersey City Ward E liaison for the Hudson County Democratic Organization (where he's also on the LGBTQ caucus.)

If we're doing it Senior Superlatives-style, then Neil is mostly likely to insinuate himself onto the board of education!



72 MOIRA NELSON & MICHAEL PENNA

This year's Democratic candidates for Monmouth County Commissioner, Moira Nelson and Michael Penna are busy harnessing grassroots people in their bid to dislodge the long-time GOP incumbents. The Democrats haven't snagged a commissioner seat since 2008, but Ms. Nelson and Mr. Penna – the only slate of LGBTQ candidates in the state – served notice in the primaries by outpacing their GOP rivals by several thousand votes. That hasn't happened in a Presidential year since at least 2004.



73 DAVE D'AMICO

He's a longtime member of Garden State Equality's executive board, but it's Dave D'Amico's work to foster better relations between police and the LGBTQ community that stand out. Mr. D'Amico's efforts to build bridges between law enforcement and queer people is among GSE's most important and innovative work.

The 1969 Stonewall uprising was a pent up reaction to decades of police violence againsts LGBTQ people. There's work to do still to build trust. But Dave D'amico, a gay man who spent his entire career in law enforcement, is a reminder of the progress made toward better relations between LGBTQs and police.



74 GAETANO LARDIERI

NJ will probably approve a ballot measure to legalize cannabis in November. If that's something you're glad about, you might send a thank you card to Gaetano Lardieri, only of NJ's more durable and well-respected pot advocates.



75 IAN MOSLEY

Representing the Norcross wing of the NJ Democratic Party with unswerving enthusiasm, Ian Mosley is one of seven (elected) LGBTQ from NJ who nominated Joe Biden at the Democratic National Convention this summer.

A mentor to children from his church, Ian Mosley is also vice chair of Lindenwold's municipal committee.



76 MEAGAN WARNER

It's been a fruitful run of form for Meagan Warner, the outgoing president of the NJ College Democrats. She helped flip NJ's 7th Congressional district in 2018 and elect a new mayor in her hometown of Lambertville in 2019 *while juggling a full university course load.*

Ms. Warner just finished her stint on the national board of the College Democrats. In the meantime, she keeps busy running the NJ Students for Biden group.





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77 THERESA MARKILA

Theresa Markila is the founder of Mutual Morris, a mutual aid network that now has almost a hundred volunteers supplying basic needs like food, toiletries, medicine, and more to hundreds of families during COVID-19. (Because not with the podcast NJ Revolution Radio anymore)



78 ROBERT LOWERY

New Jersey's preeminent harm reduction tactician, Robert "Bobby" Lowery spends his days in Asbury Park dispensing healthcare solutions at the Visiting Nurses Association Health Group's LGBTQ-centric healthcare clinic. When he's not curbing HIV/Covid/hepatitis transmission rates, he's probably lobbying lawmakers for fairer AIDS prevention funding *because an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure*.

There's a pandemic happening. That makes Mr. Lowery's timely harm-reduction message a critical matter of life or death.



79 RICK KAVIN

A PhD candidate at Rutgers studying and teaching LGBTQ politics, Rick Gavin's day job is in Trenton, where he's a top aide to Mayor Reed Gusciora. Mr. Gavin was appointed as Trenton's first LGBTQ liaison to "ensure any issues relevant to the LGBTQ community are addressed in a respectful and timely manner."

The volunteer position is the first of its kind and something to marvel at for anyone who grew up never imagining such a thing.

Mr. Gavin is also VP of operations for the Pride Center of New Jersey located in Highland Park in Middlesex County.



80 ASHLEY CHIAPPANO



LGBTQ students deserve to learn about themselves and their history in NJ public school and Ashley Chiappano's job was to make it so. As Safe Schools and Community Education Director for Garden State Equality, Ashley led a team of 10 paid writers (+volunteers) to develop LGBT-inclusive curriculum for NJ public schools. Ashley also led GSE's Educators for Equality program which boasts over 350 members.

Over the past two years at Garden State Equality, Ms. Chiappano expanded existing programming and developed new initiatives that serve LGBTQ+ student and educators.



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Building Awareness One Mind At a Time!

81 TYRA GARDNER

An award-winning activist from Jersey City, Trya Gardner is the Empowerment Coordinator at the PRIDE Center in Newark where she supervises the LGBTQ team. Ms. Gardner recently won the Marsha P. Johnson lifetime achievement award for being a powerful voice for trans women of color during her 12 year stint at the PRIDE Center.



82 JEN FLUHARTY

A longtime Monmouth County rabble-rouser, Jen Fluharty is the chief nemesis to Republican Congressman Chris Smith, Congress' most notorious homophobe. Ms. Fluharty's birthday is Election Day Nov 3. Her birthday wishlist includes a new president, a Democratic-controlled Senate, and legal weed.



83 ALISHA DELORENZO

A tribute by Christian Fuscarino

We are fortunate to have Alisha DeLorenzo as a member of our community – doing work within and externally to advance the cause of social justice. From racial equity to women's rights, Alisha approaches her work through an intersectional lens—leaving us all in a position to benefit from her knowledge and decades of experience. A sought after leader in the education world—Garden State Equality is nothing short of lucky to have the opportunity to have her on the team.



84 JUDY AMOROSA

An indefatigable anti-machine Liberal from Cherry Hill, Judy Amorosa has devoted herself to bringing transparency and accountability into NJ politics. Ms. Amorosa helped carve the niche for today's crop of grassroots-minded gatecrashers to thrive.



85 WESLEY MCWHITE

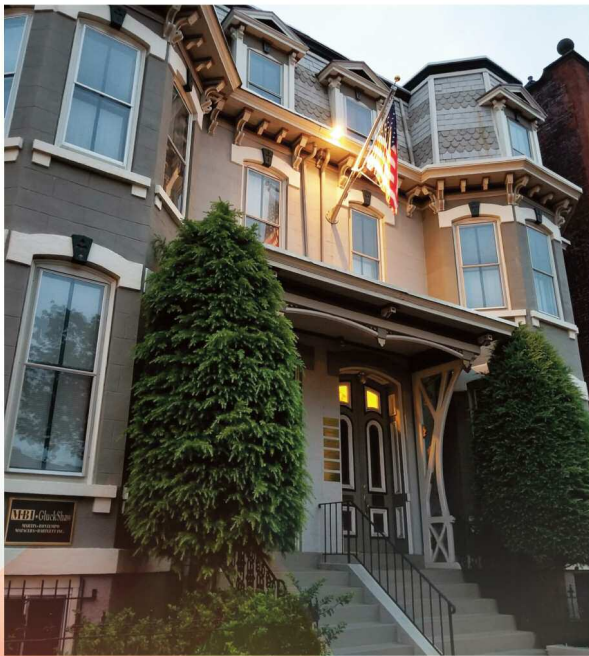
He wears many hats, but community organizer Wesley McWhite is the Policy Associate, Public Advocate & Community Organizer at Hyacinth AIDS Foundation where he fights for the longevity and well-being of over 37,000 NJ residents currently living with HIV.



86 MIKE STRACCO

The educator has taken the helm of the recently-created multi-member Pride Alliance in Hawthorne – a first for the town. Stracco has hit the ground running, determined for the Pride Alliance make a positive impact in the town. In fact, the entire council, mostly Republican, attended the Alliance's first event.





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87 JOHN JUSKA

Garden State Equality's Volunteer of the Year two years running, John was an activist on the frontlines of the AIDS epidemic. He saved countless lives at a time when others were afraid to step up. Today, he's a full-time volunteer who elevates the work of Garden State Equality. Put simply—he's the moral compass of the organization—ensuring they never forget the past while building an ever brighter future.



88 KOREN FRANKFORT

When Koren Frankfort demanded an honest (and long overdue) discussion about sexual harassment culture in NJ politics but the world was (for the most part) not yet ready to hear it. Fast forward the #MeToo era, Ms Frankford's words are more profetic than ever.

When she's not dealing with the BS caused by men behaving badly (and creating a better climate for those who follow) Ms Frankford is one of the most prodigious political fundraisers in NJ and the region.



89 JESS ALAIMO

A newly minted Tinton Falls Democratic committee member, Jess Alaimo is part of a growing chorus of activists working to shape legislation to protect campaign staff and volunteers from sexual harassment.

Jess Alaimo continues to drive the debate from her perch at the venerable *TriCity News* where she pens the always witty Rainbow Room column.



90 JACOB RUDOLPH

Parsippany's Jacob Rudolph's "coming out" to his high school classmates when viral back in 2013, setting the tone for a lifetime of activism and leadership. Mr Rudolph currently leads the Pride Network an organization offering "emerging LGBTQ+ leaders opportunities for personal transformation and professional development to create change within themselves and in our communities."



91 DEMETRIUS M. TERRY

Politically precocious and with a flair for bipartisanship, Demetrius Terry, is a Hudson County rabble rouser who's not afraid to speak truth to power is service to his equality agenda. Mr. Terry has devoted himself to electing more LGBTQ people into office, especially in Hudson County which Mr. Terry calls "one of the most diverse counties in NJ."



92 MATTHEW PISARSKI

Bridgeton's Matthew Pisarski is the newly-ish minted Planning Department Director of Cumberland County. Mr Pisarski and his husband are a sounding board for the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners to ensure county government considers the LGBTQ perspective when making county policies.



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congratulates all who have been recognized this
year including our very own

Danni Newbury

Action Vice President, NOW New Jersey

We salute our LGBTQ+ members and
leaders who have been advocating in the
fight for EQUALITY for decades.

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EQUITY | NOTHING LESS**



93 AMANDA HOFFMAN

Cannabis legalization is on the ballot this year in NJ so we honor grassroots stalwarts like cannabis advocate Amanda Hoffman whose activism brought us this far. When voters choose liberty and everyone starts congratulating themselves for making history, Ms. Hoffman will be right back in the trenches to prevent politically connected types from dominating NJ's cannabis market and charging \$500 for an ounce of crappy weed.



94 REGGIE BLEDSOE

As a school board member, Reggie Bledsoe fought to ensure that in every school in the Newark school district (NJ's largest) there's someone on staff who's responsible for LGBTQ student concerns.

A widely-respected education policy guru, Mr Bledsoe recently left the Department of Education for the Department of Community Affairs.



95 LOUISE WALPIN & MARSHA SHAPIRO

They were the first gay couple to legally marry in New Jersey which imparted instant ICON status on Marsha Shapiro & Louise Walpin. The historic wedding, held in the home of Senator Raymond Lesniak and his late wife Salena Carroll, was one for the ages.



96 BARBARA LESINSKI, CONNIE BREECH & ERIC PICKNEY



The Asbury Park school district includes three LGBTQ elected school board members. Barbara Lesinski, a former Board president, and decades-long resident, fought for greater transparency and accountability throughout her multiple terms on the board. Connie Breech founded the Asbury Park Toy Drive. Eric Pickney (AKA Miss Savannah Georgia), the board's newest member is the founder of the annual Pink Prom charity event and has been an advocate for more literacy programs in Asbury Park's schools.

97 MARTIN PAGE

A Princeton alum with a flair for both digital and old school communications, Martin Page is the LGBTQ caucus chair for the New Jersey Young Democrats.



98 PATRICK COVENY

A Middlesex County Democratic operative based in Woodbridge, Patrick Coveny was among the youngest elected delegates that nominated Vice President Joe Biden at the DNC.





Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

Congratulations to Insider NJ's 2020 OUT 100: LGBT Power List Honorees!

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Congratulations to This Year's Honorees!

"As the first transgender person ever to run for New Jersey's Legislature, I am immensely proud of the work we have all done to increase Liberty, Freedom & Opportunity for our community. Let's keep working hard and changing the world."

- Jennifer Williams
fmr. Assembly Candidate (LD-15)



99 DAVID GRANT

He recently found love and decamped to Philly, but community organizer David Grant makes the cut for the ½ year he spent as Presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg's most vocal NJ booster.



100 ANYONE STILL CLOSETED

Even in 2020, the closet remains a lonely, damaging place. With all the recent advances on LGBT rights, its easy to forget that there's still plenty of anti-LGBT stigma out there. I hate to end on a down note, but it's important to bear witness to that loneliness.

We do that here.