


INSIDER100 POWER

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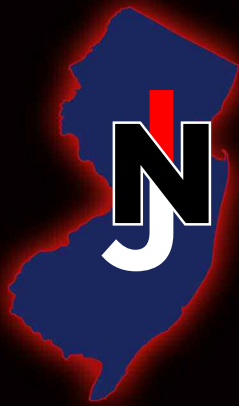
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Congratulations



**The New Jersey Food Council
Salutes the Honorees on the
Insider 100: Power List**





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★★★★★★



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Message from the Editor

INSIDER 100 POWER



Welcome to the 2020 InsiderNJ Power 100, where the basic infrastructure in this institutionally conservative state endures – but finds itself challenged by voters motivated to build a more egalitarian society. Certainly, the COVID-19 crisis altered life as we knew it, permanently for some, and reordered not only the way the survivors coexist, but the perspective from which we address our most pressing problems.

We made it (almost) through an unprecedented election year in which voters turned Republican Donald Trump out of office in favor of Democratic challenger Joe Biden. In the process of the campaign, the virus forced us to examine our institutions, which worked very well for some in the crisis, while proving painfully insufficient and neglectful for others.

The pandemic revealed the inadequacy of a healthcare system mostly generated through employment, as millions of working-class Americans found themselves having to choose between their jobs and their lives. If they continued going to work in the middle of a shut-down, they could continue to have healthcare coverage, which had no answers for the deadly virus they caught at work. In the midst of the crisis, the police killing of George Floyd in Minnesota further sparked a sense of inequity and a reevaluation of the relationship between law enforcement and the African American community.

Against that backdrop, which felt more like an all-engulfing miasma, we considered the power players in this state and while ranking them gave particular weight this year to those who occupied the front lines of that collision to dislodge the incumbent president, those who fought the virus, advocated for workers and healthcare, and those activists and first responders at the center of the conversation around justice reform. This was also the year that marijuana legalization made it onto the ballot and received affirmation from New Jersey voters.

In keeping with past InsiderNJ power 100 lists, I maintained a priority of excluding elected officials, judges and former governors, and almost succeeded in living up to that standard, with one notable exception. Given the range of those critical issues itemized above, I would like to note the work of three people who stood out this year: Senator Ronald L. Rice (D-28)

of Newark, who fought marijuana legalization with cogent arguments and drove police reform legislation in Trenton; Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29) of Newark, who proved a powerful advocate for New Jersey's children in demanding equity and uniformity in the application of our education resources during the pandemic; and People's Organization for Progress (POP) Founder Larry Hamm, whose campaign for the U.S. Senate gave him a platform to underscore the work of a lifetime.

It should be noted, of course, that Hamm lost, as did Rice, and as did Ruiz, whose continuing unwillingness to accept the hypocrisy of describing New Jersey as the beacon of education reveals the Senator's commitment to New Jersey actually becoming what we say we are, which can only happen when we prioritize the needs of those least among us impacted by every crisis with a special vengeance.

"What the pandemic has done has forced all levels of government and policy makers to have a reckoning with issues that have faced our communities for a very, very long time," said Ruiz. "Since I joined the Legislature, I have always argued about 'learning loss,' I have argued on the lack of resources, I have fought to move an agenda that is more equitable for students of color. Now, what the Pandemic has done is that everyone from one corner of a district to another has been talking about this 'learning slide.' The thing is for our Black and Brown communities, it gets even more projected and more critical, and much larger in that gap because of lack of resources and technology."

"Divide," a term used to describe the gap between those who have access to technology like laptops, computers and other devices, and those who don't.

"I've been screaming from the mountain top about the 'Digital Divide' since the second week of the pandemic when schools closed," Ruiz said. "In some cases, they're listening, but I think they're listening a little too late."

Max Pizarro

Max Pizarro

Editor, InsiderNJ



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Trish Zita and Jeannine LaRue**

**and to all the
Insider NJ's 2020
Power List Honorees**



INSIGHT | INTEGRITY | INFLUENCE

1. JOHN CURRIE

For starters, the retiring eight-year outgoing chairman of the Democratic State Committee retains his power base as chair of his beloved Passaic County Democratic Committee. But what a trip it's been for the rugged old football coach and car salesman turned party leader from Paterson. Currie originally rose to statewide prominence as a champion of the gubernatorial candidacy of Barbara Buono, refused to be cowed by the same South Jersey Democratic Committee that routinely acquiesced to Republican Governor Chris Christie, and in 2017 cohered the alliance that sent Phil Murphy



to Drumthwacket. Despite constant poking, junior high school jeering, and prodding by those Democrats stranded in a region of the state sympathetic to President Donald J. Trump, Currie led the Democratic Party with dignity, a touch of veteran chair's pragmatism, and big tent-conscious party-building. A North Jerseyan, he showed vision by tapping Somerset County Democratic Chair Peg Schaffer to serve as his vice chair, and acknowledged a strengthened progressive movement lapping at the gates of party power by picking Saily Avelenda as his executive director. He stared down an attempted coup by cutting his own deal to sustain his rule as chairman with Leroy Jones (see below), and presided during unprecedented wins by Democrats at a time when his party claimed more registered voters than at any other time in its history. While a lesser chair would have given the reins of a deep blue state to Christie-footsy-playing Norcross Democrats, Currie stayed true to himself – and true to the Democratic Party. A Joe Biden White House win (a 58.7% to 40.1% margin in NJ) was merely validation of the most successful state party chairmanship of modern times.



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2. LEROY JONES

If the chairman of the Essex County Democratic Committee decided that Governor Murphy shouldn't lead the state anymore, the Murphys would have to pack their bags. Jones not only serves as political leader of the New Jersey county with the largest plurality of registered Democrats, but he stands poised in June to take over as chairman of the Democratic State Committee, succeeding number one on this list. Also, critically, he cut the deal to be party chairman without the red region-mired South Jersey Democratic Party machine, which lost a congressman to the GOP in 2020. Deprived of the seven league boots Currie rightfully wore in the wake of the 2020 general election, Jones nonetheless could privately celebrate that end of the deal that allowed the sitting chairman to sit on the party throne in Milwaukee. As it turned out, there was no Milwaukee.



3. TAMMY MURPHY

One could make the case that the First Lady of the State of New Jersey wields more power than any other nonelected official. A regular attendee of her husband's COVID-19 briefings at the War Memorial who maintained – as usual – an active campaign schedule – Tammy Murphy continues to play the role of active first partner to the governor. Look for her activity to increase as Murphy – already an announced candidate for reelection – accelerates his 2021 campaign. Sources say short of a secretary of state position opening in the Biden Administration, Murphy digs in for another full tour of duty in Jersey, with Tammy Murphy in steely support.





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4. GURBIR GREWAL

A national player, the Attorney General for the State of New Jersey asserted himself as a foil to the Trump Administration on numerous fronts, challenging the President's attempts in a tweet to link affordable housing to suburban crime, and successfully defending New Jersey's COVID-19 VBM election rules within the framework of New Jersey politics, the AG arguably holds in his hands the fate of those main alleged Economic Development Authority (EDA) scandal perpetrators, whose prosecution could dramatically shake up New Jersey's political landscape. In short, the former Bergen County Prosecutor has distinguished himself from a bland or bumbling performance by much of the rest of the Murphy Administration. Now it all depends on who makes the recommendation (Booker, Menendez or Murphy) to Biden (not to mention who would take his place at AG), but you have to put Grewal in the mix of potential U.S. Attorney picks for New Jersey. You have to figure he's on a short list. If he were to grab the position, he'd have more heft to investigate some of the work he already aggressively started in the AG's Office.



5. JUDY PERSICILLI

At the heart of the 2020 presidential contest, Joe Biden and Donald Trump presented contrasting views about how American citizens should handle the deadly coronavirus. Trump mocked Biden for wearing a mask and demeaned him for maintaining a social distanced schedule. Biden disparaged the president for failing to take sufficient action to protect the country. Here in New Jersey, home to 17K coronavirus fatalities, the Commissioner of Health continues to have a busy year, where the state contends with a COVID-19 resurgence. This is a political list, of course, but health expert Persichilli ranks high on it this year because of the political implications of those pandemic protections she labors with Governor Phil Murphy to secure. In the fight between Biden's and Trump's vision for the country, Persichilli – “the woman who needs no introduction” – played New Jersey's blue-collar version of Dr. Anthony Fauci to a willing – and routinely grateful – executive.



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6. KEVIN MCCABE

The Middlesex County Democratic Committee Chairman stands in a good position politically. He enjoys the good graces of the South Jersey political establishment whose balancing act keeps McCabe county ally Speaker Craig Coughlin in power, while presumably simultaneously keeping an eye on North Jersey and the possibility of a power swing that would enable Middlesex to mount the senate throne. In short, he is truly the chairman of a county acting as a hinge to the entire state political power structure in New Jersey: already a player with Coughlin, who stands to gain if the south continues to bleed into the red zone and the north sees a way to truly empower its Democratic pluralities by teaming up with Middlesex.



7. MARIE BLISTAN

The labor leader demonstrated a new level of political canniness and stamina, seeing through to the bitter end and for the benefit of her members, a political rivalry that resulted in the most expensive legislative contest in United States history. After failing to take him out in 2017, the President of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) reestablished civil, opportunistic contact with Senate President Sweeney, and hammered out teacher-coveted Chapter 78 reform with her political enemy turned favorite 2020 chum. Sweeney got what he wanted: namely the assurance that the NJEA won't make him sweat the way it did four years ago, and a powerful union on his side instead of on the other side of the divide; while Blistan achieved what she wanted: lowered pension and health insurance costs for local education employers and a senate president willing to work with – instead of against – her.



8. PAUL JULIANO

The Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman quietly had a good year. Bergen had huge turnout and the chairman really didn't have to break a sweat, between U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-5) crushing his GOP challenger and Trump sapping the will of Republicans and independents in the suburbs. The chairman signaled his preference for Governor Murphy when he backed reupping Currie for state party chair and subsequently surfaced on the Horizon Board. That should make things interesting when the legislature reconvenes at the end of 2021 and Senate President Sweeney seeks another term on the throne.

An advertisement for CLB PARTNERS. On the left is a photograph of the golden dome of the New Jersey State Capitol building against a blue sky with clouds. To the right of the dome, the text "CLB PARTNERS" is displayed in a large, serif font, with a vertical red bar separating "CLB" and "PARTNERS". Below this, a list of services is shown, each preceded by a small black dot:

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At the bottom of the advertisement, the address "130 West State Street | Trenton, NJ 08608" and phone number "609-392-2332" are listed, followed by the website "CLBNJ.COM".

9. AMY DEGISE

Ordinarily the center of political intrigue and mayhem in New Jersey politics, going back to when Frank “I am the Law” Hague played a significant role in making FDR president, Hudson had a lower-key year than usual. But Joe Biden still drilled Donald Trump 74-25% here, under the auspices of the Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO) chair, who will no doubt play a significant 2021 role as Jersey City faces a mayoral election.



10. PEG SCHAFFER

The chair of the Somerset County Democratic Committee joined forces with Currie as vice chair of the party committee, helped U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski vanquish a financially well-connected (and tenacious) Tom Kean, Jr. campaign, and swept the countywide seats with wins by North Plainfield star Doug Singleterry and his Democratic running mates.



11. DALE FLORIO

The President and CEO of Princeton Public Affairs, Florio possesses a calm, in-control and results-driven demeanor, which makes him stand out as a leader in a state so often conditioned by hyperactivity – and little progress. Look for Florio to get involved in the GOP Primary as a longtime Somerset County ally of statewide candidate Jack Ciattarelli as Republicans try to rebuild in the aftermath of Trump’s Godzilla-like ravaging of the party.





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Fred Snowflack's Morris County 2020 Election WINNERS AND LOSERS

THE WINNERS:

ANTHONY M. BUCCO – It was a close call, but he survived his second election in two years. Last year, he won an office (Assembly) he wasn't going to take; this year he won a Senate seat when his 25th District – and his county – was going for Biden-Harris.

MIKIE SHERRILL – The most popular elected official in Morris County? Perhaps. Republicans sought to portray the CD-11 Democrat as a radical leftist who supports rioters torching police cars. It didn't work. Sherrill won re-election and again seems likely to win a majority of votes in Morris.

TAYFUN SELEN – Republicans never lose freeholder seats in Morris County. Selen came close to that dubious distinction, but he pulled ahead to stay a week after Election Day. This was a splendid achievement for a guy who likes to talk about coming to the U.S. from Turkey and taking a job pumping gas.

MORRIS TOWNSHIP DEMOCRATS – The Dems have been surging here, but they took a step back in 2019 when they fell short of taking full control of municipal government. They reclaimed their footing this year, easily winning two seats and keeping a 4-1 advantage on the township committee.

RANDOLPH REPUBLICANS – This affluent, suburban town may be moving into the “purple” category, but that didn't stop a quartet of GOP council candidates from scoring a big win and retaining a lock on the township council.

THEY WON SOME; LOST SOME

CHIP ROBINSON – The county's Democratic chair must be ecstatic that Joe Biden carried Morris County. The last Democrat to do that was LBJ. Robinson also can take credit for holding the CD-11 congressional seat Democrats won in 2018. But Dems failed to break into county and state government, losing elections for freeholder and the state Legislature.

LAURA ALI – The county's Republican chair also had “the glass is half-full” election. The freeholder board stayed “red,” as did LD-25. But Republicans failed to “reclaim” (see above) the congressional seat they very badly wanted to take back. The win by Biden-Harris was not a high point either. But give Ali credit for encouraging GOP supporters to vote by mail at a time when many in the party were condemning the concept.

THE LOSERS

PHIL MURPHY – The governor made a special Sunday morning visit to Randolph to help turnout the vote for county and legislative Democratic candidates. It didn't work. He also prematurely trumpeted how well Democratic candidates Rupande Mehta (Senate), Darcy Draeger (Assembly) and Cary Amaro (Freeholder) were doing when many votes were yet to be tabulated.

ROSEMARY BECCHI – The GOP candidate in CD-11 failed to seize the middle ground one needs to win. It seems clear that most voters didn't back Becchi's claims that Sherrill supports criminals suing cops and urban rioters.



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12. JOSEPH AND MICHAEL DECOTIIS

Co-managing partners of DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin LLP law firm, the two represent one of the most politically influential law firms in New Jersey, which boasts a roster of government and political affairs specialists in the public and private sectors, including the cannabis industry, transportation, and labor. Recognized for their impressive roster of national clients, they are routinely the backers of the movers and shakers in New Jersey politics.



13. GEORGE NORCROSS

Having failed to put his fingerprints on the next Democratic State Party chairman at the end of 2019, the boss from South Jersey had another tough year. First, U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2) squiggled away from the party. Then Amy Kennedy slapped him around in the CD2 primary, and hurt feelings and establishment-on-its-hands-sitting enabled Van Drew to win back his seat. It was a win for Norcross, you argue because of his deep-seated relations with former Governor Chris Christie, who helped engineer Van Drew's Republican welcome mat? Not really. South Jersey's as red as Northern Florida, and Norcross world was reduced to chest-thumping over Donald's victory, even as Senate President Sweeney looked more vulnerable than ever on the senate throne.





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- ☒ Gender Identity Death Certificate Equality (7.3.18)
- ☒ Transgender Equality Task Force (7.3.18)
- ☒ LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum (1.31.19)
- ☒ Ban the Gay+Trans "Panic Defense" (1.22.20)
- ☐ Bill of Rights for LGBTQ Older Adults
- ☐ HIV Criminalization Reform
- ☐ Funding for Homeless LGBTQ Youth
- ☐ Over-the-Counter Access to PrEP / PEP
- ☐ The Equality Act
- ☐ Overturn the Transgender Military Ban
- ☐ Safety Waiver for Name Changes
- ☐ Intersex Surgical Autonomy
- ☐ Restore Benefits to Discharged LGBTQ Veterans
- ☐ Amend Law Against Discrimination for
Health Programs & Activities

14. BILL CASTNER

The bespectacled El Cid of New Jersey politics, he played politics for years on Team Norcross, then turned around and donned a Murphy jersey to just as convincingly advocate for the boss-opposing governor. A technocratic bomb-builder, he is also just as comfortable in the role of cunning political chess player, a striking contrast to a cabinet and gubernatorial brain trust that too often resembles romper room.



15. BILL MULLEN

The President of the New Jersey Building Trades Council remains one of the strongest – and most vocal – allies of fellow union man Steve Sweeney, unafraid to routinely tee off on the governor to help boost the political fortunes of the suspenders-wearing senate president.



16. PAT COLLIGAN

The president of the New Jersey State Police Benevolent Association (NJSPBA) will continue to play a significant role not only as a labor advocate for cops, but as an eloquent spokesman for healing between law enforcement and the African American community. Look for Colligan to work to keep honest an NJ Democratic Party, which won't have Trump to kick around anymore.



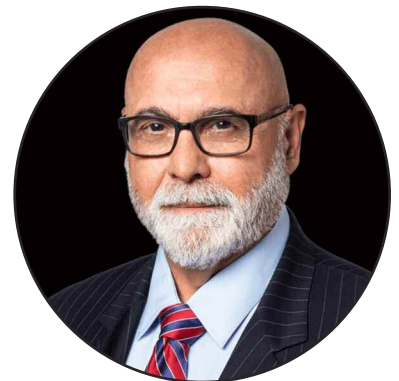
17. MAGGIE MORAN

Veteran Democratic Party operative Moran (who cut her teeth as a disciple of Assemblyman Tom Giblin) runs public affairs strategy firm Kivvit, which this year announced several high-profile hires and promotions as it expands its roster of public affairs professionals. Foundational players at the firm include Chris Donnelly, Adam Steinberger, Laura Matos, Megan Cryan and Hira Shaikh.



18. ANGELO GENOVA

They say you don't want to get caught on the stripes in the headlights. The same story applies here, only this variation changes the scene to a courtroom, where you don't want to be caught on the opposing side of power attorney Genova with the judge's gavel dropping. Just ask the legal team of Steve Rothman, which in 2012 found itself blandly teleconferencing in to a rainy pre-Election Day Passaic County courtroom where Genova showed up in person looking like an Army Ranger at Point du Hoc. The best election law expert in the state. The next U.S. Attorney from New Jersey?



The Race that Never Ended: We found it difficult in 2020 to assess the particular power structures of those Central Jersey counties impacted by the CD7 contest. As of this writing, the general election battle between incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski (D-7) and Republican challenger Tom Kean, Jr. had not yet officially ended. Two weeks after Election Day, Malinowski led Kean by about 4,700 votes, whittled down from 28,000 on Election Night. Having slowly and surely chipped away at Malinowski's lead, Kean was in striking distance - but the congressman's allies expressed confidence at being able to hold him back.



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We are a little proprietary about our counsel at InsiderNJ, and we would be remiss not to offer our congratulations this year on his receiving the prestigious O'Hern Award as a lifetime achievement recognition for professionalism in the law.

A partner at Pashman Stein Walder in Hackensack, Hayden has litigated complex criminal cases over a 50-year career in the law.

From his 2020 acceptance speech of the O'Hern Award:

“Here is one lesson my father taught me when I was a young lawyer and he was in the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office. I had represented the Chief of Police of Orange in two high-profile criminal trials during the 70’s and both cases resulted in hung juries. Since a hung jury is usually considered to be a win for the defense, there were pictures on the front page of the Star Ledger of us leaving the courthouse in a happy mood after a positive result. We tried the indictment against the Chief a third time and the case could not have gone in better, but the jury 5 came back fast only to shock us with a quick conviction on both counts. The picture in the paper the next day had the lawyers and client coming out of court with a glum and somber look. The next day dad called me and asked how I was doing, and I responded in a snippy way: “How do you think I’m doing, did you see the paper?” With that dad immediately responded, in a firm and forceful way: ‘If you are not prepared to try a case and lose, and have the verdict reported on the front page, do something else because you’re in the wrong business. It is going to happen.’ I believe that professionalism is learning how to lose because it is part of the process, and the lawyer has to learn to accept it. To the same extent, professionalism requires us to be a gracious winner and not attempt to grind our adversary or his/her client into the ground.

19. EDDIE DONNELLY

The President of the NJ FMBA played candidly in the battleground congressional races this year, losing in CD2 and CD7, but winning in CD5 and CD11. Also successfully championed consolidation of sprawling Hamilton Township's nine fire district's into one Hamilton Twp. Fire Department, and provided critical leadership to first responder firefighters during the COVID-19 crisis.



20. GREG LALEVEE

The shrivel-up of the Construction Workers in New Jersey put that much more emphasis on the political movements of the business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 825. Most critically, with the departure from office of Trump, Lalevee's union stands in a ready position to pressure the Biden Administration to get moving and completed the long-delayed Gateway Tunnel project.



21. KEVIN DRENNAN

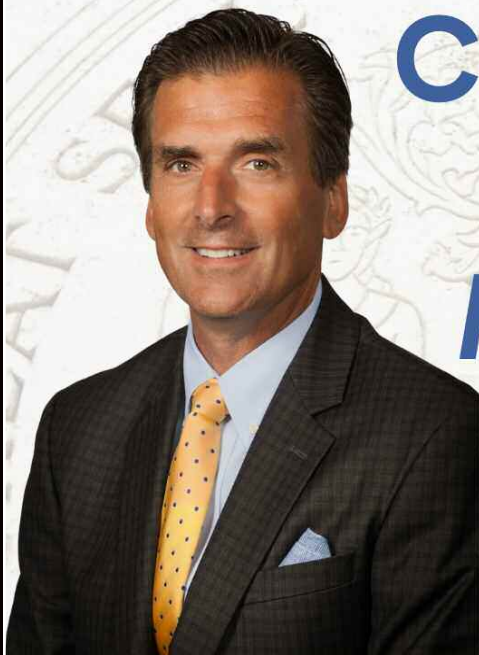
Executive Director of the New Jersey Senate Democrats, Drennan serves as chief of Senate President Sweeney's formidable senate shop, which has to date brought out the neophyte qualities of the Murphy Administration team as the two sides continue to clash. Whatever the shortcomings of the Sweeney-Norcross duopoly at this point, no one could ever cite Drennan as anything other than one of the last surviving government-grounded authorities.





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22. GEORGE HELMY

Chief of Staff to Governor Murphy, the Booker-honed insider demonstrated an early eagerness to interface with grisly Trenton types, even – or maybe especially – those whom his predecessor never bothered to call back, trying to leverage relationships as a way of getting on track an administration otherwise badly mauled by feeble relationship-building. Helmy offset some obvious administration COVID-19 stumbles with his successful effort to convince a crisis-era gulp-down of a millionaire's tax by legislative leadership.



23. MICHELE SIEKERKA

Routine critic of Governor Phil Murphy, the President and CEO of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association champions what she calls an economic plan seen through the lens of regional competitiveness and affordability. Through the COVID crisis, Siekerka – like Bracken – served as that voice of clarity on the economic engine front, pressuring Murphy not to lose sight of suffering New Jersey businesses.



24. TOM BRACKEN

President of the NJ Chamber of Commerce, Bracken (along with Siekerka) remains the state's leading business advocate, and proponent of a stronger state economy through implementation of the Chamber's Plan for an Affordable New Jersey. Significantly, he's partnering with the African-American Chamber to address racial and economic inequities – a good example of a pro-business group tackling a social/economic justice reality.



25. HETTY ROSENSTEIN

A key ally of Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey Director of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and her fellow red-shirted allies occupied a forward position of resistance to Senate President Steve Sweeney's (D-3) Path to Progress, which Rosenstein says unfairly shifts the cost of healthcare onto state workers. Long a millionaire's tax champ, this year she received her wish, albeit under strained circumstances.



26. CRAIG CARPENITO

Aside from his 2019 takedown of Atlantic City Mayor Frank Gilliam, and Hoboken power broker Frank "Pupie" Raia, U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Carpenito was mostly lowkey on the political corruption front since he took over from Paul Fishman. This year, as he heads toward the end of his tenure with a changing of the guard in the White House, he slapped kickback and bribery scheming charges on Newark City Councilman Joseph MacCallum.



27. KEVIN HAGAN

The veteran Princeton Public Affairs stand-out continues to aggressively and effectively represent Senate President Steve Sweeney's (D-3) political interests statewide. One of the sharpest Democratic Party operators in the state, and the ruthless chess player most obviously bottling up the Murphy minions on the other side of the divide.



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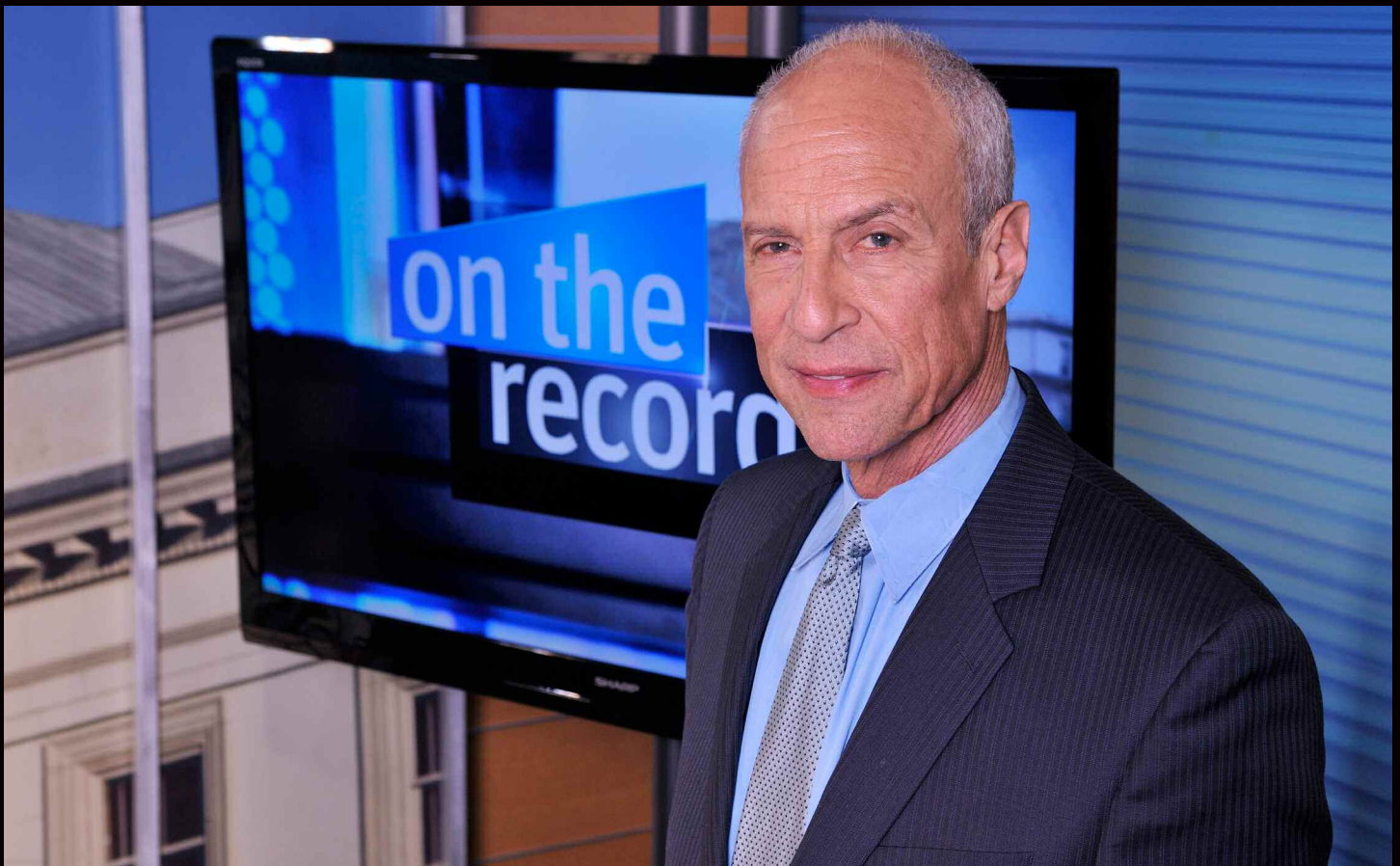
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A NOTE OF APPRECIATION TO MICHAEL ARON

The semi-retirement of NJTV Chief Political Correspondent Michael Aron this year constitutes a significant event in New Jersey politics. Like all true leaders, Aron helped build a team that lives up to his legacy with the station's continuing excellent coverage, enhanced by NJTV's partnership with NJ Spotlight. But Aron himself is that special individual whose full-time presence on the political scene in New Jersey meant a routine measure of gravitas in a place otherwise overgrown with government and media underlings. The respectability he brought to the public square was candidly sometimes more than that degraded space deserves: the equivalent of Richard Burton playing Shakespeare on a stage with Sonny and Cher. He never merely folded into the corruption-burdened herd, but instead elevated New Jersey in a way that no one else has, or likely will, with a voice as keenly and competently honed by facts and data as it was by that other missing ingredient: humanity. We're thrilled that he continues to maintain a schedule, but we also want to acknowledge the unprecedented work of one who is a friend and mentor not only to fellow reporters, but anyone of conscience who ever paid attention to the public life of New Jersey.

28. SKIP CIMINO

Mild-mannered Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19) benefits from having a guy with a stick behind him, and that's the Hamilton-based former Assemblyman Cimino, now executive director of the Assembly Majority Office.



29. JEFF TITTEL

No one in the state surpasses the political and environmental expertise of the executive director of the NJ Sierra Club, who also oversees an impressive daily output of press releases with strong, well-informed positions on issues pertaining to New Jersey's precious natural resources. In a newspaper desert, Tittel is a walking public-interest media outlet onto himself.



30. RAY GREAVES

Head of the Amalgamated Transit Union as Murphy tried to find funding to rebuild NJ Transit in the aftermath of the Christie nightmare, Greaves brings a Bayonne-schooled, waterfront tough guy attitude to Murphy's inner circle of key political allies come budget time.



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31. TIM SULLIVAN

The chief executive officer of the Economic Development Authority, Sullivan is trying to rebuild a state entity almost wholly defined in the public eye right now by the tax incentive scandal under investigation by the FBI and state Attorney General.



32. CHRISTIE TODD WHITMAN

We usually don't put former governors on the power list, but as Chris Christie and Tom Kean, Sr. became entangled in a fatal political brand, Whitman played an especially powerful winning national role this year with her Republican Party repudiation of President Trump and her decision to endorse President-elect Biden. A former Somerset freeholder director, Whitman watched Trump all but liquidate the GOP in her home county. When she publicly backed Biden at the virtual Democratic Convention, the two-term New Jersey governor and former Environmental Protection Agency director had seen enough.



33. AMIR KHAN

The Camden-based progressive activist put himself on the frontline at Sue Altman's side in the ongoing waterfront war between Murphy's allies and the South Jersey establishment run by real estate developer / powerbroker Norcross. Future mayoral candidate.





JAY LASSITER'S NJ POLITICAL POWER COUPLES: 2020 EDITION

**These dynamic duos drive the debate in Trenton and in NJ's halls of power.
WE HONOR THAT HERE.**

LAURIE McCABE & KEVIN McCABE

Laurie is the long-serving chief of staff in NJ's 19th legislative district home to Senator Joe Vitale, Assembly speaker Craig Coughlin and Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez. Senator Vitale chairs NJ's health committee giving Laurie McCabe an outsized, positive influence over the effort to curb COVID transmissions on NJ. Kevin is a lobbyist who also chairs Middlesex County's reliable powerful Democratic committee. Mr. McCabe's appointment as a commissioner at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey by Chris Christie provides bonus bipartisan *bona fides*.

STORM WYCHE & DEREK SANDS

As last year's list went to press, Storm Wyche, a top lieutenant on Cory Booker's 2020 reelection campaign, was walking down the aisle in a dazzling, bejeweled ivory-colored wedding dress to be married to Derek Sands, a Bergen Co operative and communications director for Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco. We honor them, and their first anniversary, on this year's list!

AMY KENNEDY & PATRICK KENNEDY

She married into the most storied, powerful political dynasty in American political history, but Amy Kennedy -daughter of a freeholder and city councilman- is no stranger to the political life. Amy scored a famous victory during last spring's Democratic congressional primary race then came tantalizingly close to winning the general election to represent NJ's 2nd district in Congress. For his part, Patrick is a former 8-term Congressman representing Rhode Island from 1995-2011. The couple, whose foundation is devoted to mental health and keeping pot illegal, live in Brigantine with their kids.

SAMANTHA DeALMEIDA & JOHN FRANCIS ROMAN

After helping end NJ's shameful practice of marketing vape products to kids, Samantha became the Government Affairs liaison at New Jersey Associated Builders and Contractors where she's also 2nd VP. Meanwhile, the voters in Linden just re-elected John Francis to a 2nd term on City Council where he's a thorn of righteousness in the side of Linden's mayor. Every year there's been one politically mixed couple on the list. Samantha and John Roman keep that four-year streak intact.

WENDY KOMJATHY & AL KOMJATHY

Wendy's service on the board of Lambertville Area Education Foundation has delivered years of grants to study arts, sciences, technology, and health to students in the South Hunterdon Regional School District. Al is a Trenton super lobbyist whose decades of tenure give him power and influence in the state house and beyond. When Al and Wendy opened their home to celebrate the recent swearing in of Lambertville Mayor Julia Fahl, the place was packed to the gills with the *good and the great* of central Jersey politics. Their effortless wit and hospitality created what was, in all likelihood, the most fun and festive NJ political celebration everyone there had ever seen!

KIM SCHULZ & FRANK SCHULZ

Kim does the Lord's work as assistant deputy public defender in Bridgeton, Cumberland County. She's the law school textbook definition of a zealous advocate for her client. Frank, one of US Senator Bob Menendez' top lieutenants, also serves on the Mercer County Park Commission. Frank's a rare specimen in NJ politics: someone unafraid to butt heads with and/or reign in his boss when necessary.

DANIELLE ALPERT & BRIAN ALPERT

Danielle is the VP at Strategy Group and a long time Trenton lobbyist. Brian is Deputy Executive Director for the NJ Senate Republicans. They've both been around for ages and both respected by both Dems and Republicans. They're the kind of people you really wish would run for office.

"It'd be hard to find anyone in Trenton who had a negative thing to say about either," one insider who advanced their nomination told InsiderNJ. "And even if you did, would say they're both damn good at their jobs."



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34. PAT CALLAHAN

As superintendent of the state police, the colonel proved a stabilizing public safety force on Governor Murphy's COVID-19 combat action strike force at the War Memorial. Routinely a signee of the governor's administrative orders and clarifications in his area of expertise.



35. LARRY HAMM

Founder of the Essex County-based People's Organization for Progress (POP), Bernie Sanders champion Hamm got blown out in his bid for U.S. Senate, but proved so much more along the way, as he used his candidacy to campaign against police brutality in the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd.



36. CHARLES BOYER

The founding director of the Salvation and Social Justice serves as the pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Woodbury and has the ears of some of the most powerful politicians in the state, including Governor Phil Murphy. A critical election year ally.



37. PARIMAL GARG

No one has an unkind word to say about Garg, the replacement for the retired Matt Platkin as the Murphy Administration's chief counsel. With Platkin gone to private practice, all eyes are on Garg in the legal review chair.



38. FRANK HOLMAN

When long-serving Ocean County Republican Committee Chairman George Gilmore stepped aside amid indictment entanglements, Holman, an accountant and former mayor of Jackson, occupied the throne in New Jersey Republicans' most important county. Co-host of a big successful seaside rally, Holman met the test of helping to reelect U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4), but got swamped by Burlington County in CD3, where the GOP hoped they could ride Ocean power to eradicate U.S. Rep. Andy Kim (D-3). 2021 will be a big year for Holman, as GOP candidates line up to kiss his ring in their bid to be the one who can take down Governor Murphy.



39. CRAIG GUY

Chief of Staff to Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise, Guy is one of the most politically astute people in the state of New Jersey, and a real old-fashioned born ward heeler who can put soldiers in key positions when it counts.



40. DOUG STEINHARDT

In addition to his statewide duties as Chairman of the Republican State Committee, the Warren GOP chair continues to stimulate discussion about his 2021 prospects as a Republican candidate for governor to take on incumbent Murphy. It was an awful year in 2020, as he stood on the tracks in a Trump t-shirt in front of the derailing Trump presidential candidacy in New Jersey. It's going to be difficult for Steinhardt, who will not only have to contend with Jack Ciattarelli, but the possibility of a self-funding candidate along the lines of Bob Hugin – not to mention the reality of Democrats outnumbering Republicans by over a million. That said, Democrats won't have Trump to kick around anymore, and will have to defend themselves (and the governor) in a legislative election year against proven warpaint-wearing aggressor Steinhardt.



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41. MARCIA MARLEY

The Montclair-based President of BlueWaveNJ leads one of the state's most potent progressive groups, which helped reelect U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-11) in the North Jersey suburban breadbasket that helped boot Trump out of office.



42. CHRISTIAN FUSCARINO

The executive director of Garden State Equality professionalized the outfit to make it indisputably the premier LGBTQ rights advocacy organization in New Jersey. Fuscarino had one of the best lines in the aftermath of Trump's general election loss when he tweeted, "Donald, you're fired."



43. DAVID CRUZ

The NJTV anchor and reporter has one of the most agile political minds in New Jersey, sharpened on the beat in Hudson and Essex counties. As much a dog-eared old newspaper guy as he is a radio and TV reporter, Cruz is one of the last of a truly unreplaceable breed of public servants devoted to telling it like it is. This year, he took over as the host of Reporters Roundtable from the semi-retired Michael Aron.



COMEBACK OF THE YEAR: GINA LAPLACA



After a close race in 2019 the Lumberton Democratic Chair had a successful 2020 and will now add Mayor to her resume in January. She shattered the record of most votes received by a candidate in the history of Lumberton. In doing so she beat Burl Co GOP chairman Sean Earlen locally two years in a row and now holds 5-0 control in her home town. We haven't heard the last of her.



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44. BRANDON MCKOY

President and chief executive of the progressive New Jersey Policy Perspective, McKoy was one of Governor Murphy's top allies in the statewide debate over a millionaire's tax, which legislative leadership this year came together with the governor to enact. He's the face – and mind – of the young progressive generation, and his organization the defacto policy position generator/validator for the front office.



45. CRAIG CALLAWAY

The maestro from Atlantic County could credibly occupy two places on this list: one as the local brains who helped land Amy Kennedy the backing of the Atlantic City Democratic Committee in time to win the primary, and two as the provisional ballot harvester on the U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2) team who helped defeat Kennedy in the general.



46. BOB AND GAIL GORDON

Former Bergen Senator Gordon now serves as a Murphy-appointed commissioner at the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), while Gail Gordon is a politically-connected attorney at Florio Perruci Steinhardt and Cappelli. Statewide power showed up for the former Senator's at the unveiling of a new senior complex bearing his name – a testament to his reputation – and he's also on the board of NJ Transit now.





Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

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

Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey thanks all of the decision makers, advocates, and activists who work to protect and expand access to reproductive health care services.

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Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey is a nonprofit, non-partisan group advocating on behalf of the tens of thousands of New Jerseyans who rely on Planned Parenthood health centers for high-quality, affordable reproductive health care.

www.PPActionNJ.org

47. HARRY HURLEY

Host of "Hurley in the Morning" radio program & Sr. Programming Consultant WPG Talk Radio 95.5 & 1450, Hurley breaks more stories than anyone in South Jersey, making him so much more valuable and important than the ideology-before-anything-else news personality types that populate television and radio. He's also the equivalent of a benevolent South Jersey boss, and a required interface for anyone running for public office.



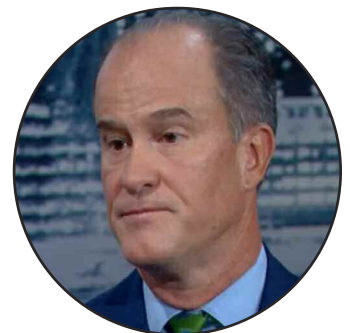
48. ALLEN STEPHEN POTTS

The Pastor of Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church in Newark welcomed Mayor Ras Baraka and Governor Phil Murphy to worship the morning after Democrats destroyed Republicans in the 2018 midterm elections in New Jersey. Spiritually – and politically – connected. Close to Baraka in particular, look for him to play a role in Murphy's 2021 reelection bid.



49. KEVIN QUINN

Like Sullivan, Chair of the EDA Quinn has the heavy task of trying to work with and re-channel a board entrenched in its own obstinate resistance to the governor, who put Quinn there to be the adult in the room.



50. ESTHER SUAREZ

Close to U.S. Senator Menendez, the Hudson County Prosecutor should be considered a possible choice for U.S. Attorney once sitting top cop Craig Carpenito leaves office.



51. BRIANNA VANNOZZI

The consummate NJTV pro this year rightly claimed the anchor chair from retiring pro Mary Alice Williams. A former Statehouse Bureau chief, Vannozzi came through hell after a car accident to demonstrate courage in addition to the news chops that have always characterized her New Jersey reporting.



52. IDIDA RODRIGUEZ

Partner with Jones at 1868, veteran operative Rodriguez has ties everywhere to political nerve centers, among them LD35 and Senator Nellie Pou, and Perth Amboy Mayor Wilda Diaz.



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Dale Florio, Bill Pascrell III,
Sonia Delgado, and Kevin Hagan
Named to Insider NJ Power List



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53. KEVIN BROWN

The Vice President and NJ State Director of 32BJ SEIU has had an impressive run of labor advocacy, including oversight of a master contract for over half of all workers at Newark Liberty International Airport, which puts the workers on track to receive \$19.00/hour by 2023. Brown is also on the frontline of a fight to unionize subcontract workers at the airport.



54. ALLISON MURPHY

The pragmatic chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2), Murphy faced the biggest test of her political career this year as she weathered the angst of her boss changing parties, and successfully helped oversee his reelection.



55. STEPHENINE DIXON

The Egg Harbor veteran operative had one of the all-time years in New Jersey political history, serving as regional organizing director for Mayor Pete Buttigieg's successful Iowa Campaign, then as Buttigieg's Alabama State Director, then going hyperlocal to successfully manage Mayor Marty Small's reelection campaign in Atlantic City – then heading across the state line to Philadelphia to lead the voter drives that ultimately put Joe Biden and Kamala Harris over the top in Pennsylvania to win the presidency.



56. TRISH ZITA AND JEANNINE FRISBY LARUE

A one-two punch combination at Kaufman Zita, Zita and LaRue are two of the most policy-grounded people in the state of New Jersey. A member of Weinberg's committee examining Trenton's toxic culture, LaRue also commands a highly influential podcast. A veteran of the Joe Doria years with institutional knowledge and connections spanning the state, Zita is always a deep-threat.



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57. JOE DEMARCO

Insiders highly value the former business administrator in Bayonne, who has played his own understory role in changing the face of government in his home county of Somerset. A sweep this year turned Somerset from 5-0 Republican pre-Trump to 5-0 Democrat as the president heads back to the greens of Bedminster.



58. GENE J. MULROY & GERRY GIBBS

The pair of public affairs specialists go back to back in the halls of Trenton at Capitol Impact Group. Firm diehard and VP Sabeen Masih had her own breakout year in the area of women's rights advocacy as a member of Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg's task force.



59. BILL & DAVID PASCRELL

The sons of U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-9) are, respectively, a Princeton Public Affairs lobbyist and one of the premiere experts on gaming; and co-chair of government and regulatory affairs for power law firm Gibbons.



60. AMIRI “MIDDY” BARAKA

Chief of staff to his brother, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, “Middy” is highly regarded as the political brains of the outfit, turning his brother’s poetic Jimi Hendrix-Walt Whitman riffs into real-world street level maneuvering.



61. DAVE PARANO

The CEO of Parano and Associates put together one of the most impressive win runs in recent New Jersey political history, including the election of Governor Phil Murphy in 2017, and the election of Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh in 2018. He ran into some brick walls this year, or one significant one, anyway, as Amy Kennedy went down to Jeff Van Drew in CD2, but look for him to resurface with a vengeance for Murphy’s 2021 reelection campaign.



62. SUE ALTMAN

A key ally of Governor Phil Murphy and consistent critic of the Norcross wing of the party, Altman landed in CD2 where she championed GOTV efforts on behalf of Amy Kennedy – too heavy a lift in the end. But no one could ever call into question the courage of the director of New Jersey Working Families.



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LUPEPAC is a non-partisan political action committee whose mission is to increase the number of
Latinas in elected and appointed office in the State of New Jersey.
We promote and support progressive Latinas running for local, state and federal office.

63. LAURA MATOS & SEAN DARCY



A shoreline power couple. Matos serves as general manager for Kivvit New Jersey, while Darcy, the consummate operative's operative, runs Round World Consulting, which has a history of key wins, including campaigns Darcy worked on for U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell and U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman.



64. TAI COOPER



On the senior leadership team at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Cooper serves as vice president for policy and communications, a capacity critical to the long-term restricting of the scandal-hobbled entity.



65. BILL MAER & KELLY STEWART MAER



He's a veteran senior partner at Public Strategies Impact Group and an adviser to sitting Democratic State Party Chairman Currie; while she heads state and federal government affairs for Capital Health Systems.

66. RUDY GARCIA

President of MBI Public Affairs Firm, Garcia – the former mayor of Union City – oversees a team of veteran professionals that includes Michele Jaker (formerly Director of Government Affairs at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey), East Orange Council President Chris James, and former Republican Assemblyman Dick Kamin.



67. NOREEN GIBLIN

Formerly chief counsel at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Giblin serves as Governor Murphy's cabinet secretary, charged with coordinating the governor's agenda among the administration's different departments. The daughter of Assemblyman Tom Giblin (D-34) served as state director for the late U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg and worked in the McGreevey Administration.



68. CHRISTINA TAN

Has she been great or what? New Jersey's epidemiologist never got the bright lights attention or gubernatorial drum roll reserved for Persichilli. But the Princeton University alum stood at the front line of New Jersey's combat operation against the virus.





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BURLINGTON COUNTY POWER LIST

The 2020 list itself contains multiple assessments of county power, notably Somerset and in South Jersey – but this year we extracted two counties to examine in-depth: Morris and Burlington – where the fulcrum of power bears special attention based on the outcomes of congressional races, especially CD11 and CD3.

1. MIKE MULLER

In addition to his DACC duties, as Mount Laurel Municipal Chair he annihilated the Republicans to gain control of township council in one of Burl Co's largest towns. He used Mount Laurel as a primer for 2021 and map change or not, he's ready.

2. ADAM MALAMUT

The new shot caller of Burl Co. As his law firm continues to grow and add talent so does his influence. He is the gatekeeper for all things Burlington county government and Senator Troy Singleton's right-hand man.

3. JASON CARTY

The labor operative and FMBA member added wins to his statewide resume by managing successful campaigns in May, July and November. Winning the first ever and then two more all-VBM races in an impressive style. His May and July candidates won by more than 2-1 margins despite ballot/column disadvantages. As the Michael Clayton of Burl Co. Carty is a valuable asset for Singleton, Kim and those he favors.

4. MARK NATALE

As Municipal chair of Burl Co's most populous town he delivered a big win giving Democrats 5-0 control in Evesham. Now with Adam Malamut's firm he has a seat at the table guiding the county party's future.

PEOPLE TO WATCH:

RAJ BATH: Aide to the governor and BurlCo resident who has his finger on the pulse of Asian-Pacific constituency in NJ.

STEPHEN STEGLIK:

Will be the new mayor of Mount Laurel, likely the youngest ever.

SOMETHING TO WATCH:

LD8: Does Senator Dawn Marie Addiego become the surrogate and retire from the Senate avoiding a fight with Ryan Peters?



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69. SAMUEL GONZALEZ

The Newark North Ward Democratic Chairman upholds the local political organizing tradition of the late Steve Aduato, Sr., (who died this year). Married to powerhouse state Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29), chair of the Senate Education Committee, and politically close to North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos and Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo, Gonzalez has a reputation as one of the guys you call when you actually want results.



70. ERICA DAUGHTREY

Few operatives double as key on-the-ground party committee members (emphasis on *key*), but that's Daughtery, communications director for U.S. Rep. Albio Sires (D-8), and vice chair of the Bayonne Democratic Committee.

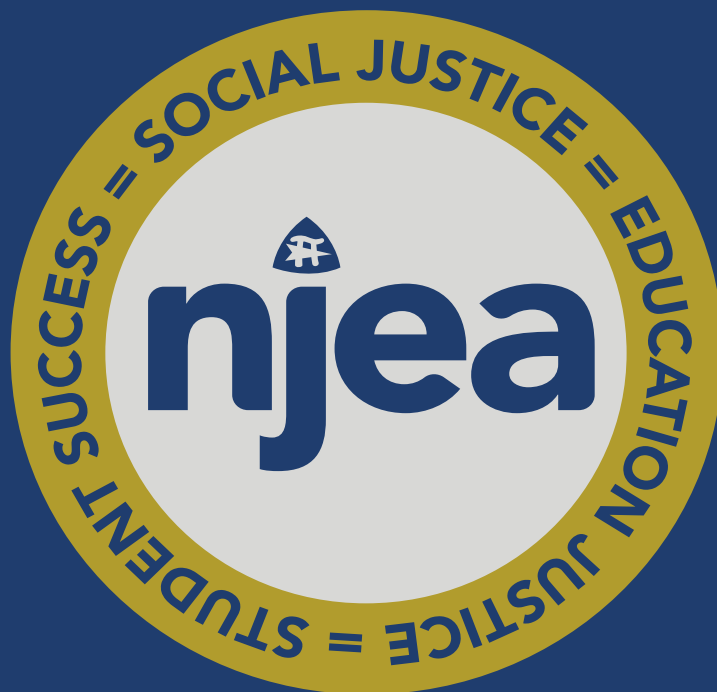


71. ISAAC AVILUCEA & JAY RAHMAN

Hard-hitting local journalism has never been as rare and necessary as right now. Pesky Trentonian reporter Avilucea nearly single-handedly turned the tabloid rag into a formidable, front-line drive-by window for capital city politics. Patersonian reporter Rahman never found a politician whose nervous system couldn't be breached with a compromising headline and some investigative leg work. He's the gold standard for citywide journalism in the state right now.



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Kevin Kelleher
Deputy Executive Director

72. RAY FERRAIOLI

The North Jersey Democratic operative plays a key role as adviser to Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman Jones and as a fundraiser for multiple North Jersey Democrats, including rising star state Senator Joe Lagana (D-38).



73. AMIT JANI

The Hudson County operative ascended to become the American Pacific Islander director for Joe Biden's presidential campaign, a position that put him at ground zero of 2020 national politics, and now appears to have the delivery system he needed to get to Washington D.C.



74. ARLENE QUINONES PEREZ

The Hunterdon County Democratic Committee chair and equity partner at the DeCotiis Law Firm has played a vital role in the firm's cannabis law practice, and the cannabis industry in general. She also possesses ties to the inner sanctum of Latina power players in the state.



75. SONIA DELGADO

The Princeton Public Affairs pro is one of the state's premier experts on healthcare policy. Possessing a valuable skillset for these times, Delgado served as a policy analyst with the New Jersey State Senate Democratic Office, and participated on the health transition teams for two governors and received an appointment by Governor Dick Codey to the Board of Trustees of UMDNJ where she served as interim Chairperson to the Board.



76. PATRICIA CAMPOS MEDINA

The top-notch academic (she earned her doctorate this year) with real world organizing experience is an expert in Hispanic Affairs and a key influencer within the Governor Phil Murphy political orbit.



77. JACK CIATTARELLI

The former Assemblyman from the 16th Legislative District will take his shot next year at the Republican nomination for governor. A policy wonk, good speaker and dynamic presence, Ciattarelli will have to fend off the Christie-Kean GOP establishment to get his shot at Governor Murphy.



78. MILLY SILVA

The executive vice president for 1199 SEIU, a local health care workers union affiliated with the Service Employees International Union and former candidate for lieutenant governor remains one of the most quietly effective and powerful labor leaders in the state, and a go-to source for working class people as New Jersey attempts to dig out from under COVID-19.



79. AL KOMJATHY & EILEEN KEAN

A popular and avuncular Statehouse veteran, lobbyist Komjathy has a client roster consisting of Fortune 500 companies and various statewide associations, and also sits on the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. Kean, a member of the Monmouth Board of Elections, serves as the State Director of NFIB. Alongside the NJ Chamber and NJBIA, they form a powerful political trio of advocates for pro-business policies in the state.



80. RUPA MOTWANI

The chair of the Westfield Democratic Committee – who helped propel Mayor Shelley Brindle to power – forges a powerful torque point in what was once very recently the scene of Christie's GOP brain trust. A key ally for Brindle, who faces a reelection bid next year at the heart of battleground LD21.



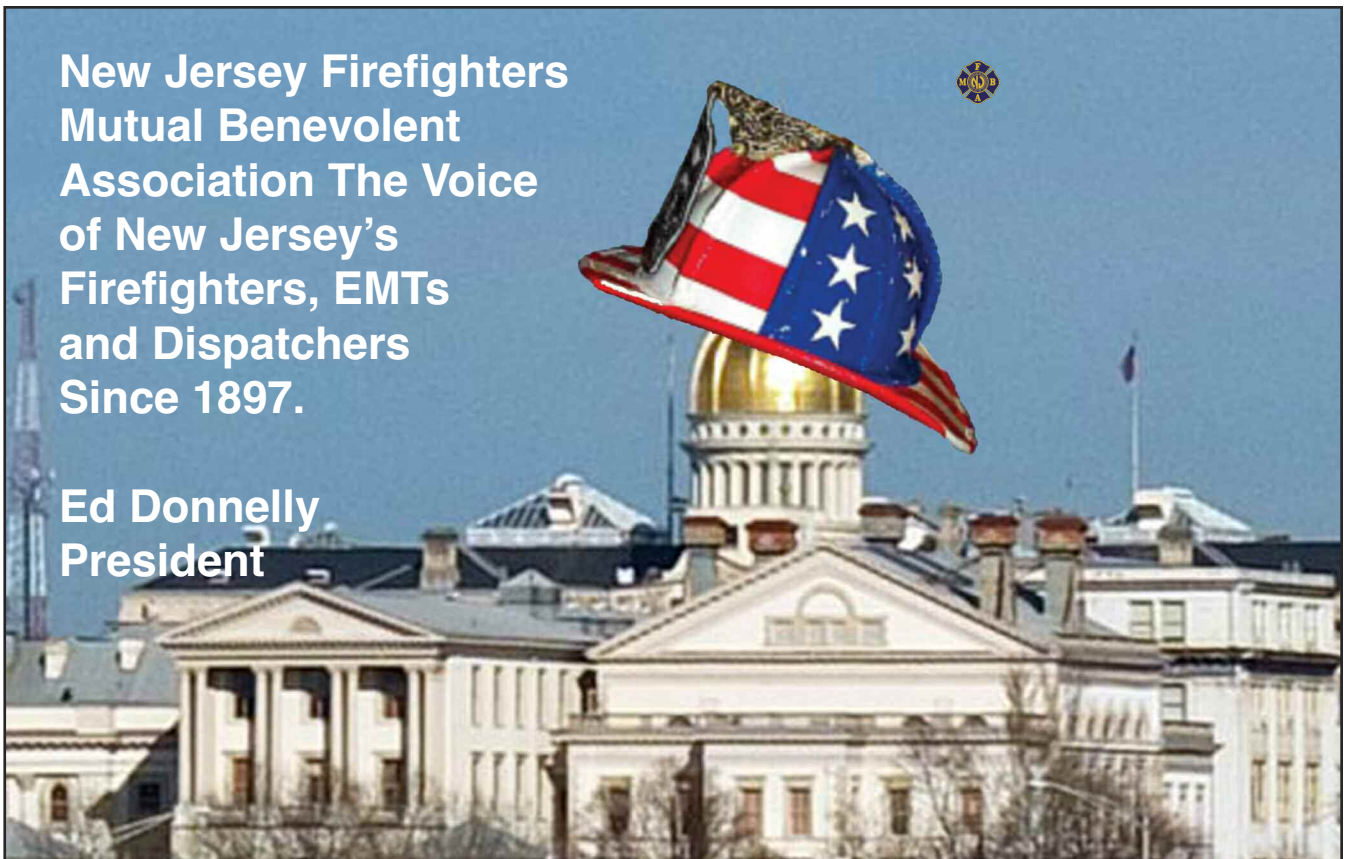
81. ANALILIA MEJIA

The talented, gutsy and policy-grounded Elizabeth-based former executive director of Working Families went national last year to take on the job of political director for the presidential campaign of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT). Unlike 2016, when Sanders glumly played the role of Hillary Clinton Campaign victim, the Vermonter this year jumped in solidly behind Joe Biden to defeat Donald Trump.



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82. KEVIN McARDLE

In the communications command chair at the office of Speaker Coughlin, the former statehouse reporter has helped to convey a spirit of cooperation, tolerance and grace under pressure – all hallmarks of the boss' leadership style.



83. DEB CORNAVACA

The Governor's Deputy COS. How many Fulbright scholars are running around the State House? Masters and PhD from UCLA. Tough as nails and Governor Murphy's strongest governmental connective tissue to New Jersey's reform community.



84. DIANNA HOUENOU

Following the voters' "aye" vote on legalizing adult recreational marijuana on the Nov. 4th ballot, Governor Murphy named criminal justice reformer Houenou as chair of the state's Cannabis Regulatory Commission. "This really is about not just looking at how can we promote representation and inclusion within the cannabis markets, balancing between folks who have the larger corporations and the smaller businesses, but it's also about making sure that communities that have been harmed are restored," she said.



85. MICHAEL ARON

The James Mason of New Jersey political reporting, Aron fashioned a legendary career out of the swamps and dead ends of an otherwise fairly dismal and dreadful landscape. Even in semi-retirement he possesses that rare combination here: street cred and gravitas.



86. TORMEL PITTMAN

The New Brunswick activist made a mark early in the anti-police brutality movement by spearheading the organization of critical rallies and protest actions, including one that featured the participation of the brother of the late George Floyd.



87. MASON ROBINSON

The former Scarlet Knight football star from Somerville emerged in Central Jersey as a critical voice in the anti-police brutality/Black Lives Matter Movement.



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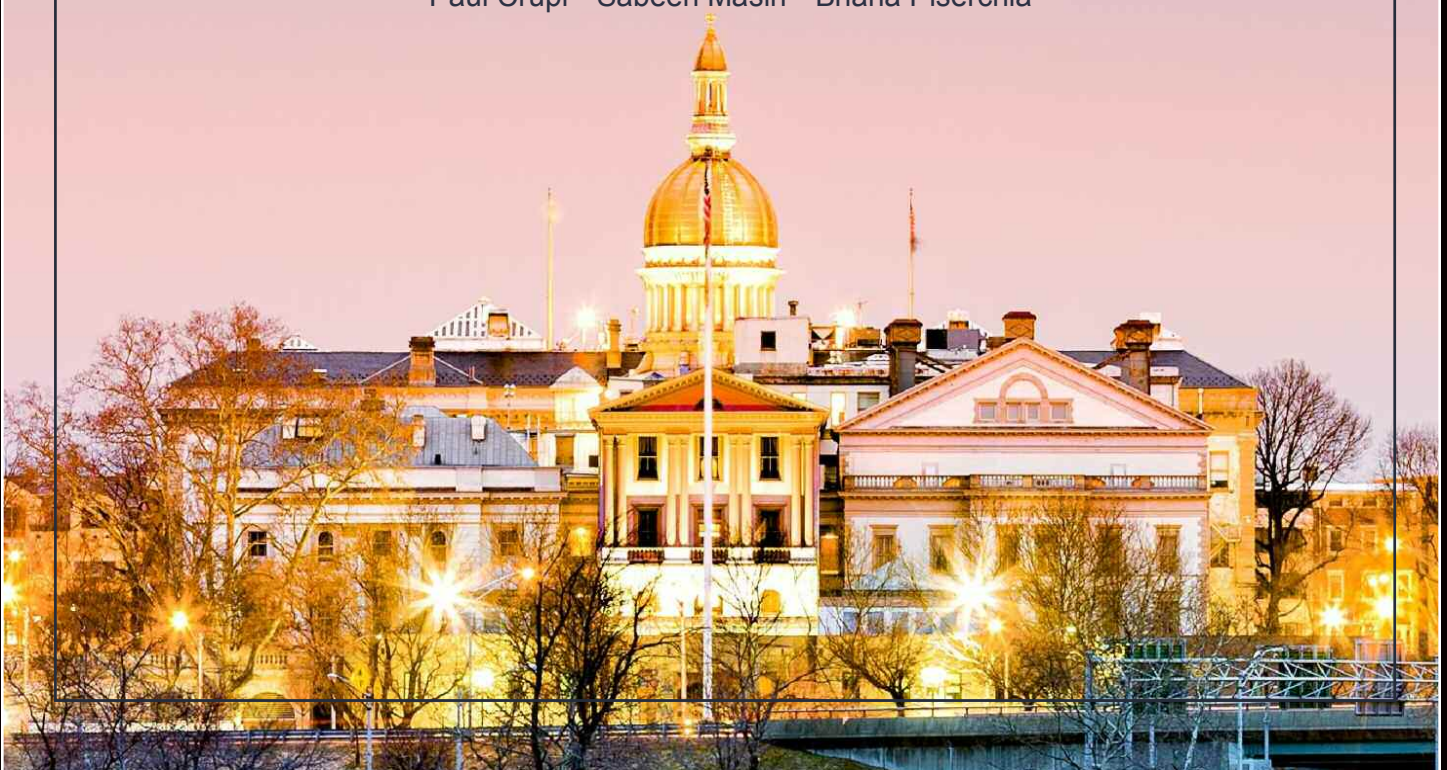


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FRED SNOWFLACK'S **MORRIS COUNTY POWER LIST**

The 2020 list itself contains multiple assessments of county power, notably Somerset and in South Jersey – but this year we extracted two counties to examine in-depth: Morris and Burlington – where the fulcrum of power bears special attention based on the outcomes of congressional races, especially CD11 and CD3.



1. JAMES GANNON

It must be something about the classic title of “sheriff.” Whatever the reason, Morris County sheriffs have been pretty popular going back four decades-plus. Gannon is no exception as he has worked on many bipartisan endeavors, most especially fighting opioid abuse, and is universally respected.

2. MIKIE SHERRILL

Now she’s won two elections. That proves the first was not a fluke. It also is a testament to the fact Sherrill is all over the county and the 11th district holding town halls (now virtual) and other events. This is quite a change from her predecessor, Rodney Frelinghuysen, who at least later in his career enjoyed keeping out of the public eye.

3. BRIAN BERGEN

He is still a freshman Assemblyman, and in the minority to boot. But Bergen has shown an admirable tendency to speak out and is not shy about lambasting the governor. His future seems bright.

4. TIM DOUGHERTY

He is the mayor of, arguably, Morris County's most prominent town. When the pandemic hit, the mayor of Morristown was very proactive, giving daily video updates and taking strong action – like a mask mandate before it was fashionable.

5. MICHAEL SORIANO

He merits attention, simply because he runs by far the county's most populous town. He also will be in the cross-hairs of Republicans next year when, presumably, he will seek to hold his seat.

6. LAURA ALI

The chair of the county's Republican Committee broke from many in her party by embracing vote-by-mail and urging supporters to stop whining about it and just vote. It wasn't a total success, but Republicans held on to seats they were in danger of losing and made some gains on the municipal level – namely Chatham Township, where they won for the first time in three years.

7. CHIP ROBINSON

Ali's counterpart on the Democratic side of the house can take credit for a "changing county," even if that change is not complete. Here's the highlight. The Dems' presidential ticket carried Morris for the first time since LBJ in 1964.

8. CHRIS CHRISTIE

Morris County affairs are probably too mundane for the former governor and now national political player. But he still resides in Mendham Township and has an office in Morristown. And we presume, Morris Republicans will consider his advice if he chooses to give it.

9. ROBERT CARROLL

He's unknown and he's not a politician in the true sense of the word. But the new Morris County prosecutor is a major player in the county by definition. His predecessor, Fred Knapp, chose to stay out of the public eye as much as possible. Let's see how Carroll handles things.

88. AMY KENNEDY

The former schoolteacher and mental health advocate from Brigantine ran a strong Democratic Party campaign against U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2), giving the turncoat congressman fits on television but ultimately lacking the nook and cranny ground game required to beat the veteran lawmaker, whose elected official footprints covered parts of the district for 20 years. In the process, Kennedy proved a likeable and tough competitor, who's likely to stick around.



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89. LORI BUCKELEW

The Assistant Executive Director/Dir. of Gov't Affairs for the New Jersey League of Municipalities literally walks into the Statehouse and sits behind closed doors to advocate for local governments and their constituencies.



90. RON FILAN

The campaign manager for U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2) successfully worked the corner of the Democrat turned Republican, helping him to an impressive 52-47% unofficial win over Democrat Amy Kennedy in the most-watched congressional contest of the 2020 cycle.



91. PHIL SELLINGER

Given his political connections in the Democratic Party and his background as assistant U.S. Attorney, the Co-Managing Shareholder of Greenberg Traurig LLP's New Jersey office and former co-Chair of the firm's Global Litigation Practice must be considered a possible successor to sitting U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito.



92. RAHAMAN MUHAMMAD

Schooled as a South Ward-grounded SEIU labor organizer where he served as president of local 617, the Deputy Mayor of Newark charges up the employment department, already a battlezone in fair weather and now ground zero of the city's rebuild effort amid the ravages of COVID-19.



93. BARRY BRENDDEL

Campaign Manager for Perth Amboy Mayor Wilda Diaz, the Democratic Party operative goes back to Atlantic City 1988, when he listened to what he describes as the best political speech he ever heard – delivered by U.S. Senator Joe Biden. Biden would lose that year – dismally – and go on to run another dreadful presidential campaign in 2008, before nailing it the third time in 2020, the same year Brendel helped propel New Jersey's only elected Latina mayor to the Perth Amboy runoff.



94. KEITH DAVIS

The Atlantic County Republican chair helped reelect U.S. Rep. Van Drew by keeping Amy Kennedy's margin of victory close in his home county. Look for Davis to again operate in the forward position next year as Republicans seek the reelection of state Senator Chris Brown (R-2).





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95. JOE ANDL

After muscling up last year with countywide wins, 2020 marked another winning year for the Burlington County Democratic Committee Chairman as Joe Biden outdueled Donald Trump 118K to 66K, according to unofficial results, and U.S. Rep. Andy Kim crushed his GOP rival David Richter 2-1.



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96. BERNADETTE MCPHERSON

A former Bergen County Freeholder Director with South Bergen political strength, the director of outreach for Millennium Strategies has close ties to U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-9) and Fanwood Mayor (and Somerset County Executive) Colleen Mahr. A pro's pro.



97. RAJIV PARIKH


The Genova Burns powerhouse handles cases for the New Jersey Democratic State Committee, the Democratic National Committee, and candidates running for office at all levels of government. His clients included presidential candidates Cory Booker and Pete Buttigieg.



98. ANNETTE ROMANO

Energetic, successful Millburn Democratic chair of what was once a GOP bastion. She led years-long effort to turn the town blue with a now 5-0 Democrat majority. Oversees efforts of 32 district leaders and was a major source of support for the re-election of U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski in CD-7.





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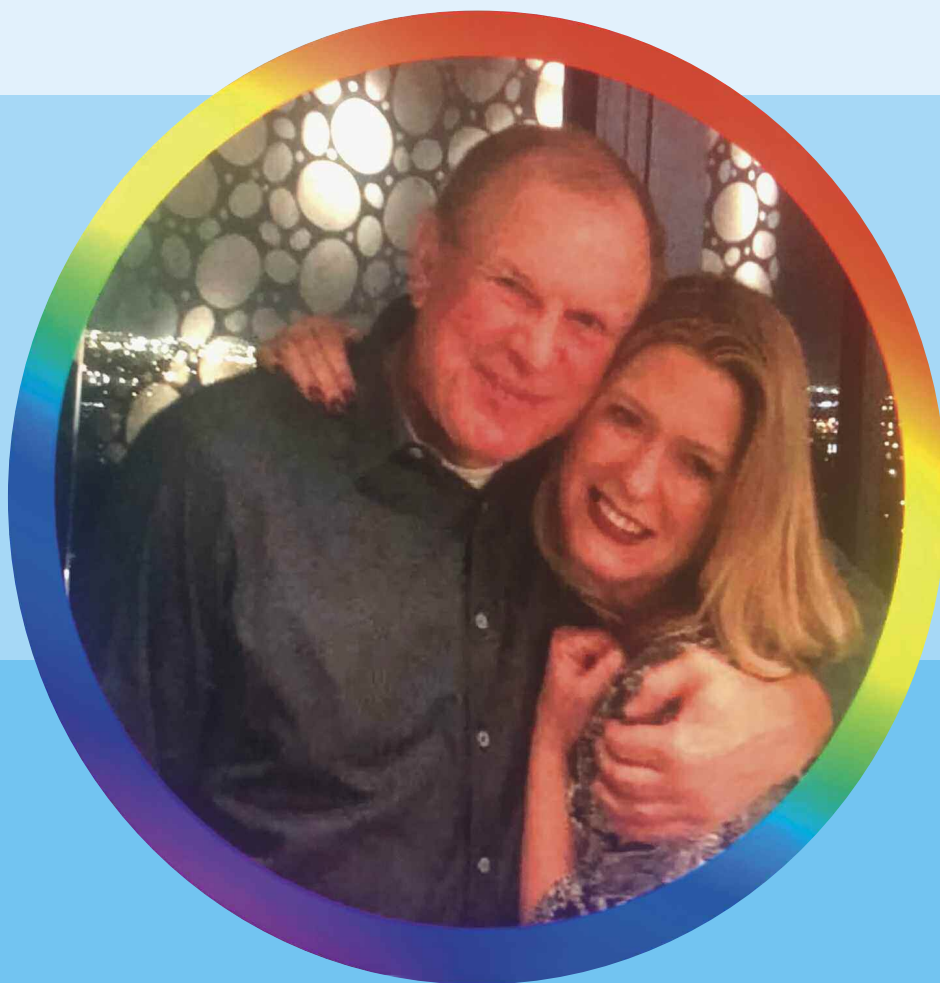


99. DIANE TESTA

The Fairview Administrator occupies a unique position of power as the voice of sprawling, politically complicated Bergen County – and the sole woman member of the Democratic Party’s 2021 legislative reapportionment commission.



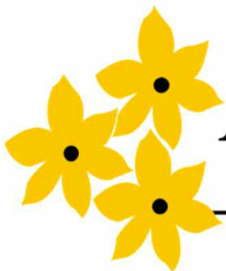
In memory of



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

100. ALEX ZDAN

The George Lazenby-like host of News 12's Power and Politics showed his fangs with splendid New Jersey aplomb when he told a post presidential contest "fake news" heckler intruding on his live broadcast to "buzz off".



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