



# The Insider 100: Cannabis Power List

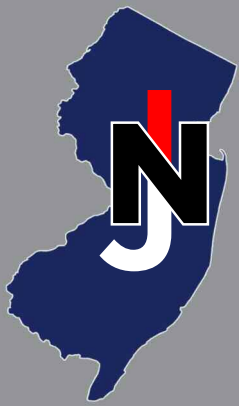
*The 2021 Insider tribute to the TOP 100 influential voices  
in the cannabis debate.*

# Congratulations to the Garden State on legalization!



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# INSIDER NJ

Message from Jay Lassiter

## Cannabis **POWER** 2021

### Welcome to the 2021 Cannabis 100 Power List



*InsiderNJ's 2nd tribute to influential voices in New Jersey's long battle to end cannabis prohibition. This year's list emphasizes many whose advocacy finally made legalization happen here in New Jersey.*

I've been a cannabis user since college and if you call me a stoner that's ok because I like to smoke pot *and there's nothing wrong with that*. I'm also HIV+ so I use marijuana for medical purposes, too.

My life as a cannabis activist/archivist began *in earnest* on April 16th 1998 in San Francisco. The exact date is memorable because an LA Times reporter was there to chronicle what shaped up to be to the first medical cannabis raid in American history.

It's hard to properly convey how scary and traumatizing it was watching hundreds of medically frail AIDS patients get manhandled into the streets by lots of men with guns. Those who resisted, and there were many who did, were cuffed and hauled away.

I was a scared, clueless kid far from home and super-closeted about my HIV status. There would be no resistance from me that day. I was afraid of going to jail and especially of having my weed confiscated. So I complied, even while my liberties were assaulted and stripped away.



## The AIDS Connection

California voters made history in November of 1996 by passing Proposition 215, America's first successful referendum to legalize medical cannabis. It's no coincidence that the winning tally, over a million votes, was assured by huge margins in Los Angeles and San Francisco, two cities deeply devastated by America's AIDS crisis.

Wasting away, covered in lesions, neglected by the government and often abandoned by their families is a staggeringly undignified way to die and it happened all the time.

Cannabis made dying of AIDS less awful.

The first line of anti-HIV meds in 1994 felt miraculous but they came with grueling side-effects. Cannabis curbed most of those symptoms allowing many HIV+ people (including myself) to tolerate the first generation of HIV drugs.

As New Jersey embarks upon its own experiment with marijuana legalization, I feel an urgent need to remind the world that AIDS set the table for marijuana reform in America. **The earliest activism to get us here was done by people with AIDS and their caretakers.** The suffering caused by AIDS changed enough hearts and minds that within a generation, America was ready to embrace marijuana reform.

And *that's* how this all started.

## 2021

Phil Murphy embraced marijuana legalization when he ran for Governor back in 2017. He won handily. His leadership on this issue means fewer pot arrests and, hopefully, eventually, the expungement of low-level pot crimes for anyone in New Jersey. Governor Murphy could have done this sooner but the legislature could never quite line up the votes for meaningful reform.

***In the end, New Jersey voters did the heavy lifting. By a more than 2-to-1 margin, we amended our constitution to permit recreational cannabis.***

New Jersey's cannabis bonanza will be massive. Politically connected license-holders should cash in. Beyond that, much work remains to carry out the will of New Jersey voters whose demands to reform our marijuana laws still reverberate throughout the statehouse.



***Finally...***

There's a tired cliché in some circles that both parties are the same. The marijuana debate in Trenton should put that notion to bed. Since those early medical cannabis votes back in the aughts until today, whenever cannabis has been up for a vote in Trenton, most of the "YES" votes come from Democrats while the GOP usually mostly votes "NO."

But that's changing, little by little.

The late NJ Senator Gerry Cardinale spent many years voting "NO" whenever a cannabis bill crossed his desk. But the results of New Jersey's cannabis referendum prompted him to reconsider his strident opposition.

Shortly before his death in February, Sen. Cardinale sponsored a bill so patients in New Jersey's medical marijuana program could grow their own.

Somewhat ironically, given his enduring anti-pot track record, Cardinale's bill fixes much of what's still wrong with NJ's medical marijuana program including price and accessibility.

Like millions of Americans, Senator Cardinale evolved on the issue of marijuana reform. We honor Cardinale's legacy by passing laws to bring New Jersey in line with the rest of the nation by allowing medical cannabis patients to grow their own medicine.

That would be huge progress here in New Jersey where one pot plant means up to five years in jail. No joke.

***That's not progress!***

And that's *nothing* like what voters demanded in November.

Sincerely,

*Jay Lassiter*





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## **NO. 1** **NJ Voters**



**When NJ votes were asked to legalize recreational cannabis in 2020, we didn't just speak, we roared.**

After years of trying (and failing) to legalize recreational cannabis in New Jersey, Trenton lawmakers finally gave up and let voters settle the matter.

And boy oh boy did we settle the matter. In the end, Marijuana drew more votes than either Joe Biden or Donald Trump in New Jersey in last November's election.

According to the final tally, 2,737,746 voters checked the "YES" box to legalize pot on last year's general election ballot. That's more than twice the number of "NO" votes for a staggering 67.08%-32.98% tally on Election Day.

The margin of victory for cannabis legalization in NJ (roughly 34%) shattered all previous pot referendum records.



## NJ Voters *Continued*

So far, fourteen states have legalized recreational cannabis. Two of them, Vermont and Illinois, did so legislatively. The other 12, including New Jersey, did so at the ballot box.

NJ's resounding YES tally, 67.08%, is presently the high-water mark, a record no one else can touch. No other state comes close. Only Arizona (60.03%) cleared 60% *by a hair*.

The emphatic message sent by New Jersey resounded loud and clear and should positively impact the debate in neighboring states like Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware.

Soon enough, our neighboring states will join New Jersey and legalize recreational cannabis. None should approach New Jersey's overwhelming margin of victory.



# New Jersey Support

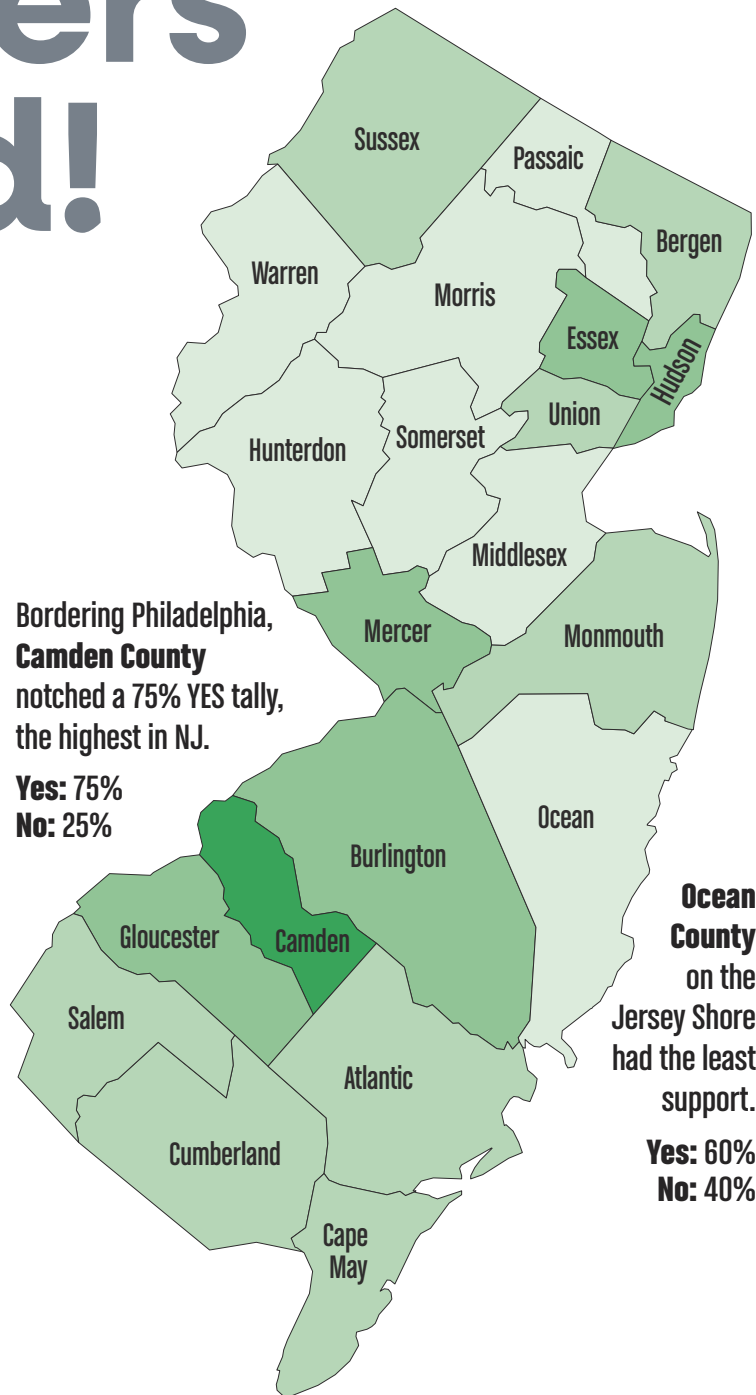
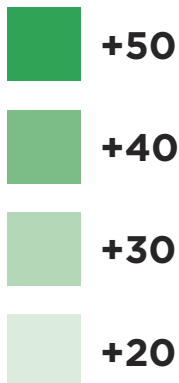
## NJ Voters Roared!

Voters in each of NJ's 21 counties voted overwhelmingly to legalize recreational cannabis last November.

*With a 75% YES vote, Camden County is the most pro-pot county in NJ. Even NJ's "lowest" tally was 60%. A supermajority, in Ocean and Morris.*

NJ's resounding YES vote, 67.08%, is the highest tally on a recreational cannabis referendum in American history.

### Support by percentage points



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, New Jersey Department of State, Marijuana Business Daily research.  
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A large, dark, semi-transparent image of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown, positioned on the left side of the page, serving as a background for the header text.

# Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center

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**CJ GRIFFIN, DIRECTOR**

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## NO. 2

### Dianna Houenou

Dianne Houenou is the inaugural chairperson of New Jersey's newly empaneled Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC). The five-member CRC will regulate and govern medical – and recreational cannabis in New Jersey, giving each member massive power and influence over the Garden State's gazillion dollar cannabis industry.



The Commission includes three members chosen by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy plus one each from the Senate president and Assembly speaker. These are political appointments. And since NJ is a place where relatives (and donors) of powerful people often end up on commissions like this, advocates were relieved when someone as well-qualified as Ms. Houenou got the nod to lead. In fact, Gov. Murphy's appointment of Dianna Houenou to spearhead this process might be the smartest move he's made in office thus far. Ms. Houenou's impeccable, unimpeachable credentials include a 3 year stint at ACLU-NJ where she led their cannabis legalization efforts.

Despite the overwhelming racial disparities of pot arrests in NJ, there are those who still doubt and indeed mock the social justice component of cannabis reform. That's the climate we're still in. Having a brilliant and fair-minded leader like Dianna Houenou will ensure NJ's version of legalization includes restorative justice for communities over-policed during the War on Drugs.

## NO. 3

### Ed Forchion aka **NJWeedman**



Principled. Strident. Visionary. These traits come to mind whoever I think of Ed Forchion, the most influential free speech and marijuana advocate in New Jersey's history.

No one fought harder or sacrificed more to normalize and legalize cannabis in the state of New Jersey than Mr. Forchion. He's lived the consequences of yesterday's marijuana laws by risking arrest to create NJ's multi-billion dollar marketplace.

Mr. Forchion was born inpatient. That sense of urgency would propel the man known as NJWEEDMAN into a political powerhouse and a cultural leader who spent his life challenging America's retrograde cannabis laws. Mr. Forchion fought the law while changing hearts and minds along the way. And he did it by demonstrating how incoherent and crappy our pot laws have always been.

Decades ago, when medical marijuana was still controversial, Ed Forchion was risking arrest in the trenches so sick people could get their medicine. The time Ed Forchion spent behind bars for something New Jersey voters just legalized is a testament to his principled commitment to reform.

After dozens of marijuana arrests, NJWEEDMAN figured out how to game a broken criminal justice system. So confident in his ability to nullify at least one juror, Mr. Forchion nowadays usually wins cat-and-mouse with the police. There's not a jury in NJ that would convict Ed Forchion for smoking or selling pot and every prosecutor in the state knows it.

*That's power.*

NJWEEDMAN doesn't get enough credit for his smart and strategic mind. The entire time he was second-guessed by late-comers, Ed Forchion did more to move the bell curve on cannabis than the rest of this list combined. His media savvy and relentless dedication to changing America's drug culture are without equal.

Ed Forchion will probably never get a license to grow or sell weed because of his criminal record for...growing and selling weed.

New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission would be wise to hire Ed Forchion as a consultant to help NJ deliver on the promise of cannabis reform. Mr. Forchion's peerless social justice credentials and his entrepreneurial savvy are exactly what New Jersey needs.





The Supreme Court's conservative supermajority  
is about to show us its true colors

Washington Post, May 17, 2021



# WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR NEW JERSEY?

Two-thirds of New Jersey voters support the  
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## NO. 4

### William "Bill" Caruso

Most of the lawyers and lobbyists eager to influence NJ's cannabis debate didn't actually do much to get us to this point. The opposite is true for Bill Caruso, one of the most venerable voices of NJ's cannabis debate.



Respected by lawmakers, regulators, and activists, Bill Caruso has been the “adult in the room” keeping the debate from going off the rails on numerous occasions.

Unlike his late-to-the-party legal cohorts, Mr. Caruso spent the past 15 years reforming New Jersey's backwards, remorseless marijuana laws from medical to decriminalization, and finally legalization. He's donned many hats over the years: Congressional chief-of-staff, director of the NJ Assembly Democrats, media pundit, and super-lobbyist/ lawyer at Archer Law in South Jersey

A lot of law firms in NJ have a cannabis bureau nowadays. Archer Law was smart enough to pick a man like Bill Caruso, a cannabis policy expert with actual longevity who spent years paying his dues in the activist trenches.

## NO. 5

### NJ Attorney General Gurbir Grewal



The outgoing Attorney General of New Jersey, Gurbir Grewal used his extraordinary law enforcement powers to reign in the War on Drugs. Grewal's time as Attorney General was spent methodically rolling back decades of harm caused by cannabis prohibition.

One example was the memo from the AG's office urging NJ municipal prosecutors to adjourn most non-violent cannabis charges pending last November's election. When NJ voters legalized pot by a lopsided margin, Attorney General Grewal issued another directive governing dismissals of certain pending marijuana charges. The AG's directive urges "all prosecutors operating under the authority of the laws of the State of New Jersey to dismiss pending marijuana-related charges."

That's a giant leap toward making whole those arrested for something voters just legalized.

Part of Mr. Grewal's pro-reform legacy is the Attorney General's Marijuana Reference Card, a convenient resource for law enforcement as New Jersey puts the finishing touches on cannabis prohibition, offering the guidance and clarity that's sorely lacking from the NJ legislature who continue to struggle with things like expungements and home cultivation.

With Grewal headed to DC for a leadership post at the Securities and Exchange Commission, look for New Jersey's acting Attorney General Andrew Bruck to keep the pro-reform momentum going.



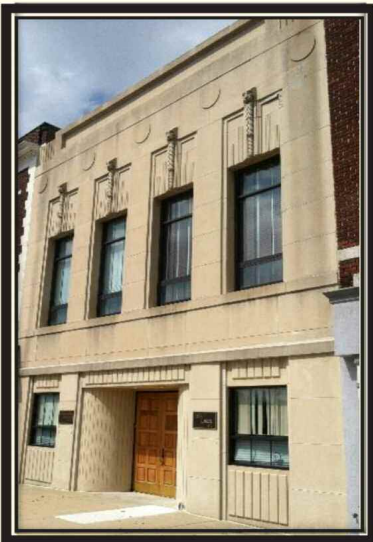
# A message from the Law Firm of **LOUIS N. MAGAZZU, LLC**

I am thankful and humbled to be included in the INSIDERNJ Cannabis Power List and congratulate all those who are also on the list. I particularly congratulate all of those who labored for so long for the passage of the legalization legislation.

As a former Cumberland County Freeholder Director, municipal attorney and prosecutor I recognize the benefits and challenges which lay ahead from this legislation. This can be a tremendous economic development tool for those communities which embrace the opportunity. South Jersey's rich farming history will blend well with local and new businesses which take advantage of the legislation.

I am grateful to prior clients Columbia Care and Livwell as well as my newest client, Savage Kollaborations for entrusting me with their representation. Finally, I am committed to the social justice obligations which accompany the legislation.

Louis N. Magazzu



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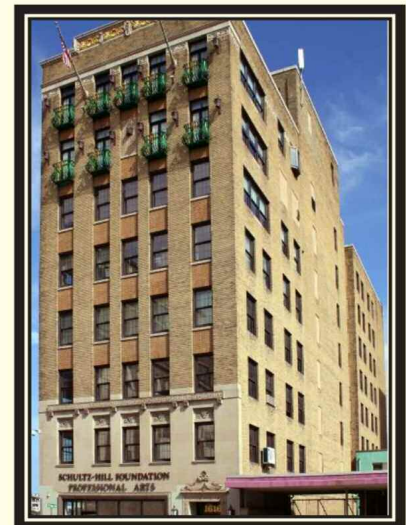


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## NO. 6

### Matt Klapper

After multiple stints as Senator Cory Booker's chief of staff, Summit's Matt Klapper decamped to Washington to become chief-of-staff to US Attorney General Merrick Garland. Senator Booker is widely considered the most pro-cannabis member of the US Senate and Mr. Klapper's fingerprints are on every piece of drug reform legislation from Booker's office.



Senator Booker had this to say about his former top lieutenant:

“For more than 20 years, Matt worked with me in the trenches fighting to advance social, racial, and economic justice for New Jerseyans and all Americans, most recently as my Senate chief of staff, where he moved mountains and bridged divides, bringing people together around ideas that made our country more just and fair,” Senator Booker told InsiderNJ.

“I’m lifted knowing that he is bringing to the Justice Department the knowledge, grit and empathy our nation needs right now to fight for the most vulnerable and ensure equal justice for all. He’s the best person for the job — and I could not be prouder. I’m so grateful for Matt’s leadership that has helped millions of Americans in New Jersey and around our country. It’s impossible to quantify the impact Matt has had on so many — from all corners of this nation to the staff he led here in the Senate.”

## **NO. 7**

### **Axel Owen**



A veteran political operative/campaign manager who helmed numerous competitive Garden State political battles, Axel Owen dazzled as campaign manager for NJ CAN, the coalition to legalize recreational cannabis in New Jersey. The final result, a more than two-to-one margin, made Axel Owen the chief architect of the most successful cannabis legalization referendum in American history.

Mr. Owen made an impression guiding Senator Vin Gopal into office in 2017, a race run during conventional pre-COVID circumstances. Axel Owen's nimble problem-solving ability ensured a well-funded and successful campaign despite a global pandemic that threatened fundraising while upending all campaign norms.

Earlier this year, Axel Owen availed his many considerable talents to Phil Murphy's re-election campaign where he's perched through November. With a track record like Axel Owen's, Murphy's opponents should be scared.

“However beautiful the strategy, you should  
occasionally look at the results.”  
-Winston Churchill

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## NO. 8

### Arlene Quiñones Perez & Joseph DeCotiis



Cannabis is now well-represented within the legal community, but DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP is the only firm that can boast about receiving a license in each round in New Jersey, with heavy-hitters like Joseph M. DeCotiis and Arlene Quiñones Perez at the helm.

Joe and Arlene have successfully guided Verano NJ to not only claim one of the six lucrative and highly prized licenses for medicinal cannabis, but also with the expansion of the operation's footprint in NJ to include a second dispensary in Lawrence. The duo are widely recognized in the industry as leaders who navigate the cannabis industry and represent so many public entities. Joe and Arlene understand the role government plays in the application process as well as how a business can be successful in a highly-regulated industry.

Additionally, Joe and Arlene use their leadership at the New Jersey State Bar Association to educate fellow attorneys on medicinal and recreational policies.

They work to ensure that attorneys review cannabis with a holistic approach, so minority communities are part of the very fabric of the implementation of regulations and policies.

Joe and Arlene have also toiled to alleviate the social injustice that occurred when NJ's marijuana laws were weaponized to over-police minority communities. They continue the work to ensure that NJ is a leader in putting policies in place that are reflective of the impact of the War on Drugs in minority communities.



## NO. 9

### Amol Sinha



In 2014, the ACLU-NJ saw the future – or more likely jump-started it – and conceived a campaign not only to legalize cannabis, but to do so with racial and social justice at the forefront.

Amol Sinha, the ACLU-NJ's executive director, has been a pivotal force in seeing those efforts to the finish line.

No organization played a larger role than the ACLU-NJ in making it politically imperative for any legalization blueprint to put racial and social justice front and center. Amol's leadership is a significant reason why.

Once it was clear in late 2019 that legalization was headed for a ballot referendum, the ACLU-NJ under Amol quickly marshaled together diverse organizations to form a campaign committee, NJCAN2020. NJCAN2020 waged a full-court press to pass the ballot question with an emphasis, as always, on racial and social justice, both in making the case for legalization and in future implementation.

At every stage, Amol and his ACLU-NJ squad have led. As a result, New Jersey committed historic funding toward addressing the injustices of the drug war and set a new standard in decriminalizing up to 6 ounces (cutting off a mechanism police leaned on for decades to arrest people of color disproportionately.)

When the Legislature forced advocates to testify on legislation sight-unseen, the ACLU-NJ spent sleepless nights developing snap analysis, a resource that the advocacy community used to hold lawmakers to their promises of social justice.

Even executive branch decision-making reflects the influence of the ACLU-NJ under Amol. The chair of the Cannabis Regulatory Commission, Dianna Houenou, debuted in New Jersey as ACLU-NJ policy counsel.

The ACLU-NJ is gearing up a call to allow homegrow, to prioritize impacted people in licensing, and to close loopholes that allow rich actors to take advantage of equity programs, among other measures.

Whatever comes next, Amol remains one to watch.

CONGRATS  
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**ACLU-NJ.ORG**

We thank all New Jerseyans on the front lines of liberty fighting to advance cannabis justice in the Garden State.

## NO. 10 CJ Griffin



As Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center, CJ Griffin continues to be an influential force shaping the legal landscape surrounding cannabis legalization. In addition to acting as outside pro bono counsel to NJ CAN 2020, the political action committee which successfully campaigned for the legalization of adult use marijuana, under CJ's direction the Center still spearheads advocacy for the rights of marijuana users.

For example, you can't be fired from your job for a positive drug test if you're a medical marijuana patient. If you think that's a good thing, please send CJ a note of thanks!

With CJ at the helm, the Center assisted in securing important New Jersey Supreme Court victories for marijuana users to bring disability discrimination claims and to be reimbursed by an employer for medical marijuana in connection with a work-related accident.

CJ Griffin is New Jersey's preeminent expert on government transparency and NJ's open public records laws, brandishing sunlight as a weapon against government malfeasance at all levels. A long time member of ACLU NJ's board of directors, CJ was #38 on InsiderNJ's most recent OUT 100 Power List, a tribute to influential LGBTs in NJ politics.

## NO. 11

### Sam Delgado

Sam Delgado is the newly-minuted deputy director of NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission. This all-powerful commission was empanelled to oversee and regulate medical and recreational cannabis in New Jersey. Chosen for the commission by Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Mr. Delgado was an unknown quantity for some advocates.



Sam Delgado's life story reveals a man uniquely suited to serve on NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission. His childhood neighborhood in the Bronx was devastated by the War on Drugs. At the CRC's first public meeting, Mr. Delgado shared details of his own marijuana arrest back in the 1970s.

So basically, Sam Delgado's spot on this commission proves that New Jersey values the perspective of those most harmed by America's War on Drugs.

A retired Marine Corps officer, Sam Delgado brings traits to the table like discipline and teamwork and leadership. More recently, Mr. Delgado's time as a Verizon executive means plenty of government- and constituent affairs fluency that NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission can count on.

When we reached out to Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-Middlesex) to find out why Sam Delgado got the nod, the Speaker was generous with praise.

*"Sam Delgado's professional and military service is outstanding and I strongly believe he is the best person to serve on the Cannabis Regulatory Commission," Speaker Craig Coughlin told InsiderNJ. "Sam is an expert in the fields of community leadership, business management, strategic planning, supplier diversity and regulatory policy. He will bring these talents to the Commission and is a valued addition. I congratulate Sam. His life experiences, background in public policy and business leadership also made him the ideal choice for Vice Chairmanship of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission."*



## NO. 12

### Alixon Collazos

A multi-talented political powerhouse with statewide reach and influence beyond her Essex Co base, Alixon Collazos is a proven leader with a winning track record in New Jersey's cannabis industry. Ms. Collazos helped her client GTI NJ score the first vertically-integrated dispensary license awarded during the Phil Murphy administration. Ms. Collazos guided GTI NJ through NJ's byzantine Chris Christie-era regulations to dominate the most recent round of the permitting process.



# Torrissi

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## **NO. 13**

### **Dr. David L. Nathan, MD**



Dr. David L. Nathan is the founder and board president of Doctors for Cannabis Regulation, America's first physicians' association dedicated to the legalization and effective regulation of cannabis. A founding steering committee member of New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform, Dr. Nathan helped lead the successful NJ CAN 2020 campaign to pass New Jersey's cannabis legalization ballot initiative.

Dr. Nathan has been busy since our last Cannabis Power List was published. In 2019, he was one of two physicians to testify at the first ever House Judiciary Committee hearing on cannabis legalization. He was also the first physician in New Jersey history to testify in favor of cannabis legalization before the state legislature in 2015, and he has since testified dozens of times in eight US states.

Equally savvy among academics and students as he is in the state house, Dr. Nathan is a clinical associate professor at Rutgers RWJ Medical School and a community fellow at Mathey College of Princeton University.

It's possible (and even probable) that Dr. David L Nathan has done the most to advance how cannabis is viewed by medical professionals. He's currently working to hold the American Medical Association responsible and accountable for their decades long support of cannabis prohibition.

## NO. 14

### Kevin Hagan

The superlobbyist from Princeton Public Affairs Group, Kevin Hagan represents the best interests of his marijuana industry clients with credibility and with vigor. In addition to helping clients who are “navigating the maze of issues, challenges, and opportunities related to the quickly evolving cannabis industry,” Mr. Hagan’s deep and enduring connection to NJ Senate President Steve Sweeney gives Hagan’s clients a real leg up against their competitors (or would-be competitors.)



NJ dispensaries don’t want potential customers growing their own cannabis for obvious reasons. In this interest of his dispensary-adjacent clients, Mr. Hagen successfully flexes his considerable clout to keep the home cultivation of cannabis out of New Jersey for the time being.

## NO. 15

### Brandon McKoy

Brandon McKoy currently leads the New Jersey Policy Perspective, a left-leaning think tank that always punches above its weight in Trenton. Mr. McKoy primarily fights to ensure that communities over-policed by the War on Drugs can share in the spoils of NJ’s hugely lucrative legal cannabis marketplace.



A new report from NJPP called “A War on Us; How Much NJ Spends Enforcing the War of Drugs” allows us to imagine a world where billions of dollars are reallocated to things like roads and schools instead of policing, arresting, and incarcerating people for pot.

When Mr. McKoy teamed up with the ACLU NJ to issue a landmark report on how much revenue NJ could raise (and save) by ending cannabis prohibition, it provided a mathematical framework upon which the final push to legalize cannabis was ultimately waged.

Mr. McKoy’s constant presence in Trenton’s halls of power will ensure that ending cannabis prohibition means clearing marijuana convictions through expungements that are free and convenient.

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- License application development.



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## NO. 16

### Erik Altieri

Erik Altieri recently began his 5th year as executive director of NORML, the National Organization for the Reformation of Marijuana Laws, based in Washington DC. He took the helm at NORML after playing a huge role decriminalizing marijuana in Philly, America's 5th largest city.



Mr. Altieri's leadership at NORML has overlapped with the most extraordinary acceleration of marijuana reform in American history. Illinois, Vermont, South Dakota, Arizona, Montana, Virginia, New Mexico, New Jersey, and New York have all legalized recreational cannabis during Erik Altieri's tenure running America's most venerable cannabis reform organization.

It's a remarkable legacy for a guy who never forgot his Gloucester County roots.

"I'm definitely most proud of passing legalization in New Jersey," Mr. Altieri told InsiderNJ. "It was very rewarding to bring reform to the state I grew up in and to bring its benefits to all of my immediate family and friends who still live there. Something is also vindicating about seeing your fifth grade teacher post excitedly about it online with an article you're featured in."

## NO. 17

### Jeff Brown

A former deputy secretary at NJ's Department of Health, Jeff Brown was chosen by Governor Murphy to be executive director of NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, a 5-member panel who'll govern and regulate medical – and recreational cannabis in the Garden State.



Prior to his appointment at CRC, Mr. Brown worked at DOH to mend New Jersey's chronically lagging medical cannabis program after the previous administration's breathtakingly poor management. Enrollment in NJ's medical cannabis ballooned on Mr. Brown's watch from 18,000 when he took over to 105,000 when he left to lead the CRC. Most (if not all) improvements to NJ's medical cannabis program have Mr. Brown's fingerprints on them, including nixing the Chris Christie-era rule forcing patients to re-certify their qualifying condition on a monthly basis.

When COVID stuck, it was all hands on deck for everyone at the Department of Health including their medical cannabis bureau. Mr. Brown was DOH's liaison to a massive pandemic field hospital in Atlantic City where, as part of the incident command team, he helped the NJ National Guard staff up and operate a 250-bed field hospital.

Mr. Brown also used COVID to loosen some of NJ's more stringent medical cannabis regulations. And so now patients enjoy curbside delivery, bulk discounts, and a vastly streamlined certification process which is now possible by phone or telemed options.

## NO. 18

### Aubrey Navarro-Conway

Aubrey Navarro-Conway is the patient advocate at Breakwater Treatment & Wellness, the 3rd biggest dispensary (by sales) in New Jersey.



Ms. Navarro-Conway earned her reputation as a brilliant, no-nonsense, scrappy warrior while fighting in Trenton to lower insulin co-payments for diabetics in NJ. Ms. Navarro-Conway's compelling testimony drew tears and unanimous whip counts on numerous committee votes.

She took that same savvy and zeal to expand medical marijuana access in the Garden State. One of the most talented and persistent pot advocates in NJ's history, Aubrey's fingerprints are on each and every improvement to NJ's long-suffering medical cannabis program. This includes expanding qualifying conditions, streamlining a byzantine regulatory system, and ending sales taxes on medical cannabis sales.

Because NJ's insatiable appetite for opioids didn't go away during COVID, Ms. Navarro-Conway is currently working to promote cannabis to fight New Jersey's persistent opiate crisis. She wants to reform how opioid recovery is handled in sober houses and in drug courts where medical cannabis is still viewed skeptically.



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## NO. 19

### Amanda Hoover



One of the most talented and influential reporters in the state house, Amanda Hoover consistently breaks the best pot news in New Jersey, including frequent cannabis-themed scoops from the NJ Attorney General's office. A writer for NJ Advance Media/ NJ.com, Ms. Hoover's beat includes both cannabis and sexual harassment meaning her words are amplified on two of this generation's most critical social/policy issues.

Anyone lamenting the state of the media in 2021 should take comfort knowing the reporters in Trenton are very good and usually very fair, including and especially NJ.com's Amanda Hoover, who's one of the best.

## NO. 20

### Trish Zita



A blue chip lobbyist from Kaufman Zita, the firm which bears her name, Trish Zita is an early investor and board director at TerrAscend NJ, which opened two medical dispensaries since the last Cannabis Power List was published in June of 2019.

Ms. Zita's winning Rolodex (combined with an uncommon ability to convince municipalities to roll out the welcome mat) make Trish Zita a critical point person for anyone looking to score a cannabis license in NJ.

The hundreds of applicants vying for a precious few (only 6) licenses endured an extremely rigorous and competitive application process. TerrAscend NJ's applications, quarterbacked by Trish Zita, took top marks in two (of three regions) and finished second in the only region they didn't win.

That's power.

## NO. 21

### Maria del Cid-Kosso



Roughly 106,000 patients are currently enrolled in NJ's medical cannabis program. Many of them (self-included) took comfort in Maria Del Cid-Kosso's appointment to NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission by Gov. Phil Murphy. After last November's legalization referendum, the CRC replaced NJ's Department of Health regulating and governing NJ's medical cannabis program.

Ms. Del Cid-Kosso, DoH's former director of policy and legislative services, will provide much-needed continuity.

## NO. 22

### Edmund DeVeaux



A long time cannabis industry lobbyist and advocate, Edmund DeVeaux is president of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Industry Association, an industry trade group that prioritized social justice alongside the group's business-related goals.

A graduate of Rutgers University and a commissioned officer in the United States Army, Mr. DeVeaux brings a wealth of state and national private, public, and not-for-profit sector experience to this team.

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## NO. 23

## Honig Family



*The Honig family with Governor and First Lady Murphy at the signing of Jake Honig's namesake cannabis legislation.*

Jake Honig fought to improve New Jersey's underwhelming medical cannabis program for most of his short life. When he succumbed to cancer at age 7, Jake's parents Janet and Mike Honig pressed on with Jake's powerful and important legacy: a better deal for sick people who rely on medical cannabis for their quality of life.

There's no more persuasive voice than a parent who lost a child. Janet and Mike are still at it, using their voice to ensure that families in a health crisis won't be additionally burdened by obstacles to cannabis therapy.

On July 2, 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the Jake Honig Compassionate Use Medical Cannabis Act into law, an enduring tribute to Jake and his dedicated family.



## NO. 24

## Rev. Dr. Charles Boyer



From his perch as Pastor at Greater Mt. Zion AME Church in Trenton (and before that at Bethel AME Church in Woodbury,) the Reverend Dr. Charles Boyer continues a long tradition of using the Gospel to change the world, in Rev. Boyer's case to end the War of Drugs that ran roughshod over minority communities in America.

Rev. Boyer was nominated for this list by, among others, Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter.

"Rev. Boyer was a constant reminder that legalization of cannabis must have a reparative and restorative impact for Black people," Assemblywoman Sumter told InsiderNJ. "Rev. Boyer identified the need for equity for marginalized communities with a direct a cannabis excise tax to repair the harm done by the drug war."



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**NO. 25****Jackie Cornell  
& Jackie Ferraro**

Two of the most respected voices in NJ's cannabis debate, Jackie Cornell and Jackie Ferraro founded the Cannabis Advisory Group, a multi-state non-profit dedicated to educating and promoting cannabis best practices.

“The intention of the Cannabis Advisor Group is to serve as a cannabis movement ‘think tank,’” Ms. Cornell told InsiderNJ. “We aim to be a valuable resource for policy and public awareness through research and education with an expressly regional bent.”

As NJ's principal deputy Health Commissioner, Ms. Cornell inherited NJ's badly beleaguered medical cannabis program from the Chris Christie administration. Most of what's better about NJ's program since then has Ms. Cornell's fingerprints on it. While she recently returned to health equity work, she remains on the Business Advisory Board for 1906 New High, a cannabis startup that's working to perfect the dosing of medical cannabis edibles.

The second half of this dynamic duo, Ms. Ferraro does PR for Ascend, NJ's original medical cannabis dispensary located in Montclair NJ. As communications advisor for the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association, Ms. Ferraro helped draft decriminalization – and both expanded medical – and adult use bills.

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## NO. 26

### Leo Bridgewater



A son of Trenton and a military combat veteran, Leo Bridgewater is one of the most effective and influential voices in the long debate to legalize medical and recreational cannabis in New Jersey.

While lessening the stigma surrounding trauma on (or off) the battlefield, Mr. Bridgewater has along the way amplified the voice of anyone using cannabis to manage PTSD, especially veterans.

Mr. Bridgewater is perhaps the only name on this entire list with a strain of cannabis named after him. For sale at the Harmony Dispensary in Secaucus, *Bridge H2O* is a strain that's bred with characteristics to combat the symptoms of PTSD.

## NO. 27

### Dale J. Florio



A New Jersey superlobbyist with more government affairs expertise than anyone on this list, Dale Florio founded Princeton Public Affairs Group, a blue chip firm with a growing influence over the cannabis debate. PPAG's ever-increasing roster of cannabis clients and their influence over legislative leaders and regulators keep Mr. Florio and his firm front-and-center in NJ's cannabis debate.



## NO. 28

### Charles Barker



The fifth (and final) member of NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, Charles Barker brings to the table years of social justice and marijuana reform advocacy including, but not limited to, a 4 years stint managing cannabis policy for Senator Cory Booker, widely regarded as the most pro-pot member of the US Senate.

Mr. Barker was appointed to the CRC, which regulates all aspects of NJ's medical and recreational cannabis regimes, by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy.

## NO. 29

### Sarah Fajardo



From her first day as ACLU-NJ policy director, part of Sarah Fajardo's job description has been to eat, sleep, and breathe marijuana legalization. Figuratively speaking, of course.

She started in her role just days after efforts to legalize outright through legislation failed to materialize in spring 2019, and the urgency only ratcheted up from there. For years, she's risen to the moment, whether giving testimony at all-day marathon hearings, calling every legislator who could ever conceivably be a yes vote, working in coalitions and on campaign committees to get the ballot question past the finish line, and mobilizing tens of thousands of ACLU supporters to call on legislators to put racial justice front and center.

# Congratulations

## Lou Magazzu



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## NO. 30

### Parimal Garg

The chief counsel to NJ Governor Phil Murphy, Parimal Garg is the single most knowledgeable person in the Governor's inner circle on cannabis policy. Look for the Cannabis Regulatory Commission to lean hard on Mr. Garg, a sartorially gifted, Harvard-trained lawyer, as NJ's cannabis legalization experiment takes flight.



## NO. 31

### Jeannine LaRue

One of Trenton's most valuable and venerable voices, Jeannine LaRue is also one of the most sought-after lobbyists for anyone looking for viable social equity programs in New Jersey's cannabis industry. Her handwork helped TerrAscend dominate to competition to score a coveted dispensary license.



Number 1 on last year's InsiderNJ OUT 100 LGBT Power List, Jeannine LaRue is part of a long tradition of Queer people taking a lead to fix America's badly broken cannabis laws.

## NO. 32

### Jake Hudnut

Jersey City's chief municipal prosecutor since 2018, Jake Hudnut piloted NJ's first city-wide experiment with marijuana decriminalization. His office, along with Mayor Steve Fulop, basically stopped pursuing low-level, non violent pot convictions in municipal court. NJ's Attorney General wasn't particularly impressed with Mr. Hudnut's initiative, but advocates state-wide applauded Jersey City's slightly rouge efforts to dent the War on Drugs.



Mr. Hudnut is currently running for Jersey City Council on "the line" with Mayor Fulop.

## **NO. 33**

### **Krista Nash**

One of five members of NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, Krista Nash is a prominent and powerful member of the much-vaunted South Jersey Democratic Machine. A social worker with a long track record of civil and animal rights activism, Ms. Nash was chosen for the committee by NJ Senate President Steven Sweeney.



## **NO. 34**

### **Chris Porrino**

An attorney at the firm Lowenstein Sandler, Chris Porrino represents, other blue chip clients, Beth Stavola at MPX NJ in their ongoing litigation with the beleaguered MSO iAnthus over the control of the MPX NJ permit.

Mr. Porrino is NJ's most recent former Attorney General.



## **NO. 35**

### **Scott Rudder**

The affable former GOP mayor and lawmaker, Scott Rudder founded the NJ Cannabusiness Association, NJ's oldest cannabis industry/trade association.

Despite his party's reputation for voting against marijuana, Mr. Rudder earned his activist stripes the old fashioned way: by rolling up his sleeves and transforming himself into an actual activist. In doing so Scott Rudder did more than anyone on this list to soften anti-pot sentiment in Trenton's GOP caucus.

Mr. Rudder recently stepped down as president at NJCBA where he still serves on the Board of Directors. He's now the Chief Strategy Officer at the American Journal of Endocannabinoid Medicine, a peer-reviewed medical journal focusing on the endocannabinoid system to advance medicalize cannabis therapeutics.





**NO. 36****Jo Anne Zito**

Among New Jersey's most prominent and well-respected cannabis advocates, Jo Anne Zito currently leads the charge to permit NJ's medical cannabis users to grow their own medicine. Ms. Zito's efforts are particularly urgent in NJ, where one cannabis plant can fetch 5 years in prison! This includes NJ's medical cannabis patients who face legal jeopardy for growing their own medicine. Ms. Zito is often in Trenton reminding lawmakers that every other state with medical cannabis permits some version of home cannabis cultivation, making NJ an odd outlier.

There are multiple bills in Trenton that would permit the home cultivation of cannabis in NJ. One of these days one of those bills will pass. Whenever that happens, Jo Anne Zito deserves the ceremonial first pen from the bill signing ceremony!



**Brendan Gill**  
President & CEO

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**NO. 37****Sean Mack & Gregg Hilzer**

Sean Mack has been an industry leader since 2015 when he assisted in early drafts of the bill to legalize adult use marijuana in New Jersey. He is currently co-chair of the Cannabis & Hemp practice at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, which he founded in 2015, together with the firm's NJ Cannabis Blog. Mr. Mack has extensive experience and has emerged as a trusted advisor representing clients on a broad range of cannabis- and hemp-related issues, including the licensing application process, appeals of the 2018 and 2019 rounds of medical marijuana license applications, advertising, and protections under the Jake Honig Act.

A co-chair of Pashman Stein's Cannabis & Hemp Law practice group, Gregg Hilzer has emerged as a key player in the New Jersey cannabis industry. He has extensive experience advising existing medical marijuana operators, as well as guiding companies and entrepreneurs through the competitive State licensing application process. Operators, individuals, and ancillary businesses in the cannabis industry consistently turn to Mr. Hilzer for strategic solutions, risk management and guidance with the myriad regulatory requirements at both the state and municipal level.

Matt Best is Managing Partner at Joywave Consulting, a firm that nurtures and advises medical and recreational cannabis startups.

"As consultants to cannabis businesses throughout the country with a proven track record in the cannabis licensing and application process, we know we can turn to Sean Mack and Gregg Hilzer to help navigate New Jersey's emerging cannabis market."

## NO. 38

### Richard T. Smith

As President of the NAACP New Jersey State Conference, Richard Smith is one of the most credible and strategic voices in New Jersey's sometimes cacophonous marijuana debate.



“Justice delayed is justice denied” Mr. Smith articulated when he reminded the world that “it is easy to say ‘wait’ if you are resting in the comfort of a solid job and secure housing. It is easy to say ‘wait’ if you can apply for public assistance or financial aid. It is easy to say ‘wait’ if your life has not been derailed by a charge of marijuana possession.”

We're still waiting.

## NO. 39

### Louis Magazzu

One of the more intriguing lights on NJ's political candelabra, Louis Magazzu is also one of South Jersey's top cannabis lawyers. The principal at Magazzu Law Offices in Vineland, Mr. Magazzu represents heavy-hitter clients like Columbia Care and Livewell, two medical cannabis dispensaries whose path to opening was smoothed by Mr. Magazzu's legal – and land-use prowess.



A former Cumberland County Commissioner Director, Mr. Magazzu caused a stir earlier this year with an OpEd urging his cannabis lawyer cohorts to step up and take the lead on expungements and get to work clearing the tens of thousands of pot convictions pro bono.

Despite his close ties to powerful south Jersey democrats like Congressman Donald Norcross and Assemblyman John Burzichelli, Mr. Magazzu's glittering Rolodex is a testament to a pragmatic bipartisan streak and his influence that extends well beyond his South Jersey base.

## **NO. 40**

### **Patrick Kennedy**

A former Rhode Island Congressman who now lives in Brigantine, Patrick Kennedy is America's most prominent voice in opposition to marijuana legalization. Whenever someone like Mr. Kennedy comes to Trenton to testify, there's considerable media buzz giving Mr. Kennedy outsized influence in Trenton and beyond. In the end, Patrick Kennedy's passionate defense of a Just Say No status quo became increasingly less persuasive to lawmakers and especially to voters to rejected Patrick Kennedy's version of drug reform.

Mr. Kennedy was #2 on InsiderNJ's most recent Cannabis Power List. But NJ's lopsided YES vote for legalization, an emphatic repudiation of the War on Drugs, sent Mr. Kennedy's ranking into freefall.



## **NO. 41**

### **James DiGuilio**

James DiGuilio is partner at and general counsel of O'Toole Scrivo LLC, a politically-wired law firm based in Cedar Grove, Essex County. An expert in the burgeoning field of cannabis law, Mr. DiGuilio remains sought-after by many potential applicants for both medicinal and recreational cannabis use.

As Governor Christie's Senior Counsel, Mr. DiGuilio oversaw the Department of Health, including initiatives for expansion of medicinal marijuana. His role continued, on a larger scale, as Chief Counsel to the Governor.

Now in private practice, he represents one current medical marijuana ATC licensee, helping them expand operations while navigating their regulatory obligations. In addition, he represents a significant stakeholder in another current licensee. Many of these submitted applications are awaiting determination from the State of New Jersey following pending litigation. Which means having a lawyer like James DiGuilio on their side is more critical than ever.







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**Congratulations to all those named to the  
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and especially to our board members:**



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Bays**



**Edmund  
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**Rob  
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## NO. 42

### Chris Goldstein



A legendary NJ cannabis pioneer, Chris Goldstein is NORML's regional organizer for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. A pioneer, Mr. Goldstein was among the first writers in America to have a cannabis column (in the Philly Inquirer) or to teach a pot-themed course at a major American university.

With his encyclopedic knowledge of marijuana reform in NJ, Mr. Goldstein is a dream source for journalists chronicling marijuana legalization in NJ giving him an enduringly outsized role driving the marijuana reform debate in the Garden State. When we call his knowledge "encyclopedic" it's not an understatement. For example: if you ever wanna hear the story about the exact moment home-grow provisions were stripped from NJ's medical cannabis legislation, Chris Goldstein can tell you in vivid detail.

Always a regional threat, in addition to helping keep NJ's medical cannabis program less awful, Mr. Goldstein helped to draft Philadelphia's law decriminalizing cannabis.

Mr. Goldstein's press accolades include the Hunter S. Thompson Media Award in 2017.

## NO. 43

### Jessie "Jess" Gill



A tribute by Mike McQueeney

Jess Gill is the standard bearer for patient-focused care and activism in the New Jersey medical marijuana program. When so much of New Jersey's public discussion on legalization has focused on promises of a windfall, of economic opportunity, Jess has continued to reemphasize that the true reason for medical expansion and ultimate legalization should be to expand access to greater portions of the population who can and will benefit from the plant's pharmacological properties.

## **NO. 44**

### **Ami Kachalia**

Behind every face of a movement, there's an army of unsung heroes making sure the gears are well-oiled and everything's humming along. Ami Kachalia of the ACLU-NJ is one of them.



## **NO. 45**

### **Chris Donnelly**

From his perch at Kivvit, a public affairs and media juggernaut that's without peer in New Jersey, Chris Donnelly is among NJ's most media-savvy political operatives.



Scott Rudder, who founded the NJ CannaBusiness Association called Mr. Donnelly the unsung hero in the effort to end cannabis prohibition.

A brilliant writer with a teamwork mentality, Chris Donnelly's expertise should help keep social justice front and center as marijuana legalization in New Jersey begins to take flight.

## NO. 46

### Rob Cresson



A former GOP State Chairman, Rob Cresson is a founding board member at the NJ CannaBusiness Association.

A tribute by Scott Rudder

One of the most impactful speakers during the legislative hearings for legalizing adult-use cannabis and expanding the medical program over the past few years has been Robert Cressen, a medicinal cannabis patient. Rob's testimony has received over a million views on social media and he's received calls from all across the country thanking him for his courage and motivation.

Rob is also an unlikely hero in the cannabis movement. Rob is a former professional competitor in marathons, triathlons and Iron Man competitions. He also holds the distinction of being the only person to have served as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Republican party under two different governors.

Like so many others, Rob never tried cannabis as a teenager and through his 20's and 30's. It wasn't until he contracted a debilitating disease, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), that now forces him to live in a constant state of pain, so severe and incapacitating, that he was prescribed the strongest of opioids just to get through the day and hopefully a few hours of sleep at night, that he finally tried cannabis.

Prior to that, Rob was on so many different opioids and other medication that he suffered multiple kidney failures and other negative side-effects that made his already challenging world nearly unbearable.

Then, through the encouragement of friends and family, Rob found a doctor who helped wean him off of opioids and transition him to medicinal cannabis. Rob himself will tell you, cannabis saved his life and has given him a second chance to make a difference in other people's lives.

Today, Rob is a patient advocate who helped launch the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association where he serves on the Board of Directors. Wheelchair-bound and stricken with multiple daily seizures, when Rob testifies at legislative hearings or speaks to groups, people stop what they are doing and listen.

He understands the concerns and reluctance political and community leaders have regarding legalizing cannabis. Those concerns were his concern and he now addresses them head-on and helps people better understand the value of cannabis as a medicine as well as the importance of ending its prohibition. Every moment of every day, Rob is in pain.

Until they find a cure, that will not change. What never changed is Rob's passion for making cannabis readily available and affordable for patients as well as putting an end to the failed policy of cannabis prohibition.



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## **NO. 47** **Matte Kane & Hugh Giordano**



America's cannabis industry is already booming and only getting bigger. United Food and Commercial Workers Union representatives Matte Kane and Hugh Giordano go to work everyday to ensure that rank-and-file workers get a fair deal out of the cannabis green-rush.

Over the past 5 years the Union tandem of Matte Kane and Hugh Giordano have shown up (at least once) at nearly every municipality in the state for council and zoning/planning meetings advocating on behalf of patients, workers and even business owners.

In the past 18 months Mr. Kane & Mr. Giordano have taken on another (and potentially more economically critical) facet of the cannabis industry: hemp, marijuana's non-psychoactive cousin.

As indoor warehouse grow facilities and hydroponic industrial farms begin to dot NJ's landscape, Matte and Hugh are currently working with the Agricultural Committees in Trenton to restructure labor laws for non-seasonal farm workers (previously exempt from collective bargaining) to be recognized as bargaining units.

This is a huge step in protecting future generations of cannabis and hemp workers in the Garden State.

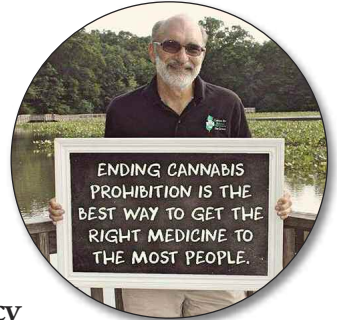
## **NO. 48** **Lynn Nowak**



Lynn Nowak has been a leading champion of legalization in Trenton for years, through her role as executive vice president of Porzio Government Affairs and co-chair of Porzio's Cannabis Task Force, bringing decades of experience as one of the most skillful lobbyists in New Jersey. She has served to hasten legalization as a representative on New Jersey United for Marijuana Reform since its 2015 founding and in lobbying work for the ACLU of New Jersey.

**NO. 49****Ken Wolski**

The conscience of the campaign to end cannabis prohibition in New Jersey, Ken Wolski has for decades haunted Trenton's halls of power, methodically pressing the case for marijuana reform in New Jersey. The founder of the Coalition for Medical Marijuana NJ, Ken's advocacy was never limited to sick people and New Jersey is infinitely better and fairer for it.

**NO. 50****Jenna Mellor**

The co-director of the NJ Harm Reduction Coalition, Jenna Mellor is of NJ's most gifted and influential drug law reformers. She recently collaborated with New Jersey Policy Perspective where she authored "A War on Us; How Much NJ Spends Enforcing the War of Drugs," a fiscal and moral foundation upon which the marijuana debate is waged moving forward.

**NO. 51****Beth Stavola**

Beth Stavola crashed the gate the old fashioned way: with deep pockets and a savvy business acumen. An advisor and megadonor to NJ Governor Phil Murphy, Ms. Stavola is one of the very few people in NJ with a license to grow, manufacture, and sell legal cannabis.



Ms. Stavola is currently a trustee at the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association.

## NO. 52

### Chirali Patel

Chirali Patel began her journey in the industry in 2016 through organic networking, and now serves as an executive board member for the New Jersey State Bar Association Cannabis Law Committee. As the South Asian liaison for NJ CAN 2020, Ms. Patel served as an influential voice in the community in the successful “vote yes” campaign led by the ACLU-NJ to legalize adult-use. As part of the Cannabis & Hemp Law team at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, Ms. Patel is poised to use her extensive legal skills to further her mission to ensure an equitable cannabis marketplace with opportunities for all.



## NO. 53

### Dara Servis & Hugh O’Beirne

Dara Servis is co-founder and executive director for the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association a politically-wired cannabis trade association. Hugh O’Beirne is is NJCIA’s long-serving president.



## NO. 54

### Marianne Bays

Marianne Bays, PhD is a cannabis industry business consultant, entrepreneur, analyst and advocate whose influence extends beyond NJ’s borders. Dr. Bays is a founding board member and the current Vice President of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association (NJCBA). She also chairs NJCBA’s higher education committee.

According to Scott Rudder, founder of NJCBA, Dr. Bays earned her stripes as an advocate for, among other things, advocating for those who use cannabis as medicine.

“Marianne Bays’ passion for cannabis as a medicine and advocacy for social equity in the industry is something to applaud,” Mr Rudder told InsiderNJ. “As the cofounder and VP of NJCBA, Marianne used her incredible knowledge of the plant and the industry to help shape responsible policy that will give patients greater access.”







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# CONGRATULATIONS

EDMUND DEVEAUX  
&  
SCOTT RUDDER

*and all the other  
Cannabis Insiders*

## NO. 55

### Janice Kovach

She's mayor of Clifton in Hunterdon County but it's as president of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities that Janice Kovach wields a unique influence on New Jersey's rapidly unfolding cannabis debate.



According to their website, the NJ League of Municipalities (aka “the league”) was “created to help communities do a better job of self-government through pooling information resources and brain power. It is authorized by State Statute, and since 1915 has been serving local officials throughout the Garden State. All 565 municipalities are members of the League.”

Among NJ's various 565 municipalities there are many opinions about marijuana and how to implement legalization. Or not.

It's Janice Kovach's job to ensure each of NJ's 565 municipalities is heard, including the towns – sometimes neighboring towns - going in totally different directions on the cannabis debate. Legal cannabis raises novel issues of zoning and taxation and home rule that've never come up before. There's the challenge to properly funding municipal counts to handle a crush of expungement petitions.

Since it's the municipalities where NJ's experiment with legal marijuana actually unfolds, we're better off listening to Janice Kovach when she tells us what towns and municipalities need to make legalization and expungements happen smoothly.

## NO. 56

### Amanda Hoffman

An activist who splits her time between defending New Neutrality and ending cannabis prohibition, Amanda Hoffman is a board member and social media manager for the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of New Jersey, the oldest cannabis reform group in New Jersey.



**NO. 57****Charlana McKeithen**

The director of Cannabis Laws Matter, and before that NORML NJ, Charlana McKeithen is one of the most resilient and brilliant cannabis activists in the game.

According to her website, she and her organization focus on “supporting blacks, Latinos and our communities hit hardest by the war on drugs to have them also benefit from the legalization of Cannabis.”

**NO. 58****Dana Rone**

A former Newark Councilwoman, Dana Rone was nominated for this year’s Cannabis Power List by Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter who called Ms. Rone “fearless in the pursuit of making sure that NJ created enterprising opportunities for women and minorities. Dana was a champion for licenses to be reserved for women and minorities to own businesses in this new cannabis industry.”

Assemblywoman Sumter praised Ms. Rone for “elevating the importance of equity for applicants to participate in this new industry.”

**NO. 59****Cuqui Rivera**

According to the most recent US Census, nearly 9,400,000 people live in New Jersey and none has done more than Cuqui Rivera to amend America’s drug laws and replace it with something that wasn’t designed to harm people, families, and communities.

A long time social justice advocate at the Latino Action Network. Ms. Rivera was an integral part of LAN’s push to endorse legalization and then fight for it.



# CONGRATULATIONS

— *to the* —

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**NO. 60****Imani Oakley**

Brilliant and unapologetically progressive, Imani Oakley's recent Op Ed "The War on Drugs is Able to Live On Through ICE Contracts in NJ" is a reminder that a low-level, non-violent pot arrest can lead to deportation or time in an ICE detention camp.

Ms. Oakley's sober warning is that unless and until we snuff them out, the vestiges of the War on Drugs will keep harming vulnerable populations for years to come. Ms. Oakley announced her campaign for Congress in NJ's 10th district as this list was going to press.

**NO. 61****Mike Davis**

The *Asbury Park Press*' very best award-winning reporter Mike Davis has for several years covered NJ's cannabis debate.

Mike's portfolio include numerous honors for his cannabis reportage.

Mike Davis is versatile. One day he's snagging the prestigious public service award from the NJ Press Association. The next day, he's at a pot rally churning out prose so vivid you *might just get a contact buzz!*

**NO. 62****Dhaval Shaw**

An investor at Canna Syndicates and a partner at Jersey extracts, Dhaval Shaw is a founding member of the Asian Cannabis Roundtable, an organization dedicated to expanding opportunities to Asian-Americans in the cannabis industry.



## NO. 63

### Jon-Henry Barr

The longtime municipal prosecutor from Union County, Jon-Henry Barr was an early and sometimes lonely voice to end cannabis prohibition, lonely especially among his prosecutor colleagues.



Now, the media-savvy Mr. Barr is one of the most respected cannabis voices in the states. When New Jersey State Prosecutors Association endorsed legalizing marijuana, that seachange had Mr. Henry's leadership written all over it.

## NO. 64

### Mike McQueeney

Mike McQueeney's path into the industry began when medical cannabis benefitted a close family member in need. He vowed to play a small part increasing access to sick people who rely on medical cannabis for their well-being.



A lawyer at Foley Hoag LLP, Mike McQueeney works with a diverse client base ranging from some of the larger multistate operators to upstart hemp farmers. Counsel to the New Jersey Cannabis Trade Association, Mr. McQueeney is also a trustee for the Hyacinth Foundation, and teaches cannabis law at New York Law School.

A policy wonk at heart, Mr. McQueeney works to ensure that state-specific legalization dispenses with the worst, borrows from the best, and creates a more perfect stab at the ongoing experiment of legalization.



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**NO. 65****Moiria Nelson**

Moria Nelson is Director of Drug Policy Reform for Action Together New Jersey. She's whip smart. And she makes a compelling and persuasive argument why cannabis reform is a good deal for the taxpayer. Prohibition is expensive, she's be the first to tell you, especially considering the diminished prospects of someone ensnared by the War on Drugs.

**NO. 66****Jon Sandelman**

The CEO of Ayr Wellness, Jon Sandelman just became a major player in New Jersey when Ayr moved to acquire Garden State Dispensary, home to arguably the best and most potent medical marijuana in New Jersey.



Garden State Dispensary is NJ's 2nd largest dispensary, by sales, and the first in New Jersey to have three locations.

**NO. 67****Randy Thompson**

A long time resident of Asbury Park and the CEO of Help Not Handcuffs, Inc, Randy led Asbury Park's effort to pass New Jersey's first resolution by a governmental body calling for the legalization of marijuana.



This was a significant milestone during the administration of Chris Christie, a staunch prohibitionist.

Subsequently, Randy led numerous legislative efforts to legalize recreational marijuana. When black communities like Asbury Park were excluded from the legislative benefits of being designated "Impact Zones" in New Jersey's legalization process, Randy was the sole voice testifying for the need to address this oversight.

Mr. Thompson is an enduring voice connecting state violence with oppressive policies such as the drug war.




**NO. 68**

## Allison Peltzman + Kate Oh + Paloma Aguas, ACLU-NJ Comms Team



When it comes to driving New Jersey's cannabis debate, no one has done more (or done better) than ACLU-NJ's communications team throughout their campaign to legalize, and senior content manager Allison Peltzman, a brilliant wordsmith with matchless rhetorical skills, helped steer the conversation from "Reefer Madness" to righteous anger over the racial injustices of the drug war. They get stuff done.



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Host & Executive Producer

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CATCH SEASON ONE &amp; TWO



**NO. 69****Regina P. Appolon  
& Sam Weinstein**

Regina Appolon and Sam Weinstein are the cannabis point-persons at Princeton Public Affairs Group/PPAG, one of NJ's most venerable and influential government affairs firms.

**NO. 70****Felice Potash Twaddle**  
*A special tribute by Scott Rudder*

In every movement, in every organization, there is always an “unsung hero” that quietly moves mountains, makes things happen, and they never seek the spotlight for their efforts. They are there because they believe in the cause. They believe in the mission and they only want it to succeed.



That is Felice Twaddle.

Felice, a founding member of the NJ CannaBusiness Association's Board, dedicated countless hours organizing events, connecting people together, pushing elected officials to do the right thing, and essentially anything and everything to end cannabis prohibition in NJ.

Without her efforts, her often unrecognized efforts, we might still be arguing about legalizing cannabis in NJ. She did not get the accolades that others received, she just made sure the work got done to make it happen.

**NO. 71****Edward “Lefty” Grimes**

If you’ve ever noticed a certain skunky odor take over the State House grounds in Trenton nearly every Thursday for the past 7 years, that’s Edward “Lefty” Grimes, who still hosts Sativa Cross, a venerable, award-winning pot podcast, live from Trenton.

**NO. 72****Lorna O’Hara**

A government affairs stalwart at the blue chip firm Princeton Public Affairs Group/PPAG, Lorna O’Hara is also executive director of the New Jersey Marijuana Retailers Association.

**NO. 73****Paul Josephson**

An attorney at Duane Morris LLP, Paul Josephson is regulatory counsel for the New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association.

**NO. 74****Alma Saravia**

A cannabis-savvy attorney at Flaster Greenberg, a politically-wired, Cherry Hill-based law firm, Alma Saravia is one of NJ’s foremost legal experts on the expungement process.

When she’s not warning lawmakers to better prioritize expungements, Ms. Saravia helps clients (and reporters) navigate New Jersey’s byzantine regulatory culture.





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## NO. 75

### Jeff Oaks

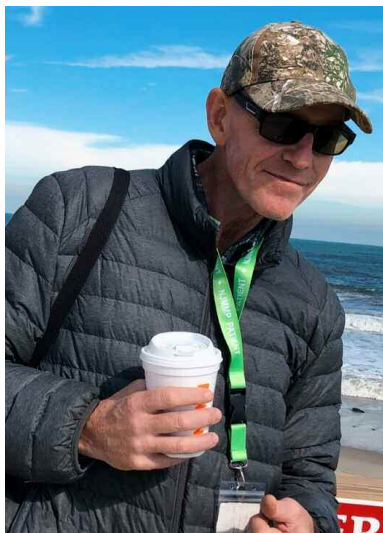
NJ's cannabis community mourned when esteemed and beloved advocate Jeff Oaks lost his battle with cancer this past November.

We honor him posthumously here.

Mr. Oaks spent his dying days and months working indefatigably to leave NJ's medical marijuana program better than he found it. Jeff's tireless resilience is an inspiration to many of the names listed here.

Creating provisions for NJ medical cannabis users to grow their own should be the easiest thing Trenton lawmakers ever do. We properly honor Jeff Oaks' legacy the day home grow comes to New Jersey.

#### **Jeff Oaks, a tribute by Aubrey Navarro Conway**



*Jeff lived up to his name of “Oakes.”*

*He was a mighty, mighty, man. And he brought a level-headed and sympathetic approach to advocacy as only a stage 4 cancer patient, fighting for others, can.*

*Full of bravery and unstoppable compassion, his message was strictly to govern, think, and act with compassion at the root of all. He kept the spirit of Jake Honig's #BeLikeJake and #NEGU (never ever give up) as his mantra. Those of us who grew closest to him now carry “the mighty Oaks” with us as we continue to remember compassion is the goal above all else.*

**NO. 76****Roseanne Scotti & Meagan Johnson Glaser**

Leaders in the cannabis movement until the Drug Policy Alliance inexplicably folded their New Jersey chapter, Roseanne Scotti and Meagan Johnson Glaser have done more to legalize cannabis than many on his list combined.

Their peerless drug reform legacy lives on in New Jersey despite DPA leaving.

**NO. 77****Peter Rosenfeld**

Collingswood's Peter Rosenfeld is a long-serving board member at the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of NJ. Frequently pressing the case for reform in the halls of power, Mr. Rosenfeld remains one of the most venerable, respected citizen lobbyists in the game.

**NO. 78****John Boehner**

After spending his entire political career (all of it) defending and upholding cannabis prohibition including his time as Speaker of the House of Representatives, John Boehner evolved and hopped on the legalization bandwagon once it became apparent how lucrative it was gonna be.



Mr. Boehner is on the board at Acreage Holding which owns several dispensaries in South Jersey including Compassionate Care Foundation in Egg Harbor, home of the most expensive medical cannabis in the nation.

**NO. 79****Gaetano Lardieri**

Gaetano Lardieri is a Newark-based cannabis Activist/Researcher/Advisor and entrepreneur. The media-savvy Mr. Lardieri was recently given the “Black Wall Street People’s Choice” award by Eyes Wide Open Hope for advocating for racial equity in the legal cannabis market.

**NO. 80****Montel Williams**

I might be ahead of my skis on this one, but there’s growing credible chatter that TV star Montel Williams is poised to break into New Jersey’s cannabis marketplace. Mr. Williams, along with co-founder Kemel Dawkins, founded CannTech, a multistate cannabis company sniffing around for real estate to expand in New Jersey.



After decades living with Multiple Sclerosis, Mr. Williams “came out” as a medical cannabis user back in the aughts. A Naval Academy alum and US Marine, Montel’s military pedigree lent a degree of mainstream credibility to the cannabis debate that, at the time, lacked the momentum of today’s movement.

Montel William is a leader and pioneer in America’s ongoing experiment with cannabis legalization. And if his New Jersey plans come to fruition, his ranking on next year’s list should skyrocket.

**NO. 81****Joe Johnson**

Georgetown law grad Joe Johnson is a Law Fellow at the ACLU-NJ. In this role, he assists other attorneys and policy personnel on pressing civil rights issues as they arise here in New Jersey.



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## NO. 82

### Dan Ulloa

The state house bureau chief and editor of *Heady NJ*, Dan Ulloa purposefully claimed his spot on NJ's cannabis media scene by making *Heady NJ* New Jersey's source for cannabis news, info, and culture. With the possible exception of gay marriage, politics and culture have never been more intertwined in Trenton than they are right now with the cannabis debate. Dan's focus on the political – *and* the culture of cannabis reform make him a double threat as both activist and cannabis influencer.

A first-generation Peruvian-American, Mr. Ulloa also serves on the board of NJ United for Marijuana Reform where he represents the Latino Action Network.



## NO. 83

### Tracy McHugh

Oaklyn, NJ-native Tracy McHugh is a self-confessed activist/big mouth who's in Trenton every Thursday pressing the case for cannabis reform. Countless medical marijuana patients in NJ benefit from Ms. McHugh's strident demands for dispensaries to up their game.



## NO. 84

### Christina Pinzon

As founder of Stateside Affairs, Cristina Pinzon offers her cannabis clients an array of services that will ease their entry in the state and help establish a successful business.

Her status as a bilingual, minority, and woman-owned firm with extensive experience in government affairs and public relations puts her in the unique position of being able to offer her clients a complete range of services.

Ms. Pinzon has been an advocate on the education of cannabis in minority communities. She has worked extensively in ensuring black and brown communities get a fair shot in the cannabis industry whether as a business owner, employee, or consumer.



**NO. 85****Fruqan Mouzon**

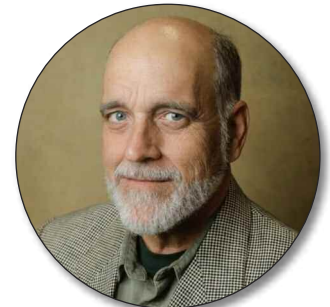
On counsel at McElroy Deutsch Mulvaney & Carpenter where he chairs the firm's Cannabis Practice Group, Fruqan Mouzon continues to influence NJ's cannabis debate in meaningful and important ways (which he's done since his days as General Counsel for the New Jersey State Senate Majority Office.)

**NO. 86****Brandon "Cee" Chewey**

The president of the Asbury Park Cannabis Community Inc, Brandon Chewey is also the founder of Shogreganix, a cannabis consulting firm. After successfully using cannabis to detox from using heroin, Mr. Chewey has become NJ's most powerful voice promoting and legalizing cannabis therapy as a detox tool from opiate abuse disorder.

**NO. 87****MD Brennan**

A long-time, extremely vocal board member at the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of NJ, MD Brennan is one of the most affable, well-respected voices in NJ's ever-expanding cannabis space.

**NO. 88****Mary Pat Angelini**

A former 4-term assemblywoman from Monmouth County, Mary Pat Angelini for years preached a strident, unflinching gospel of "JUST SAY NO!" and it made her one of the most powerful and high-profile cannabis naysayers in NJ history.

Her ranking took a dive after NJ voters decisively rejected Ms. Angelini's drug policy philosophies. But she's not going anywhere and continues to drive the debate thanks to her enduring media savvy and close political connections.



**NO. 89****Lee Vartan**

An attorney at Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi who was on the shortlist to become US Attorney, Lee Vartan represents a number of aspiring cannabis clients in New Jersey.

**NO. 90****John Zebrowski**

Sayerville's chief of police John Zebrowski is one of the loudest voices in NJ still advocating to keep cannabis a crime. Mr. Zebrowski's ranking took a dive after NJ voters legalized pot last November.





**NO. 91****Todd Scattini  
& David Serrano**

Todd Scattini and David Serrano are both distinguished military veterans who have dedicated their professional careers to bringing social equity to the burgeoning, complex, and rapidly evolving cannabis industry. They met in 2017, while advocating to get PTSD listed as a qualified medical condition for cannabis use in Colorado.

Todd is a West Point graduate, who was raised in a Mexican-American household and majority hispanic community in California. He saw up close the unequal application of cannabis laws in his state and how lives and communities had been destroyed with harsh punishments for cannabis. This experience is what led him to focus on the justice reform and social equity impacts surrounding this issue. He has committed his professional career to unpacking all of cannabis' possibilities to heal veterans, communities and the planet in order to legitimately contribute to a global economy.

David Serrano grew up in Hudson County, NJ and was personally impacted by the war on drugs. His cannabis advocacy began at a young age when he experienced relief from injuries he had suffered while serving in the U.S. Navy. He also became a caregiver for his mother and witnessed the significant positive impact cannabis had on her well-being. As a U.S. Navy veteran, David has been a pioneer in the cannabis industry, and a fierce advocate for social and environmental justice.

Todd and David are applying experience, leadership, and technology to help social equity applicants in New Jersey achieve a competitive, sustainable advantage in competing against big cannabis businesses through their Cognitive Harmony Technologies (CHT) Accelerator program.





One of the barriers to entry into the cannabis market they aim to target is the complex and cumbersome application process to become a licensed cannabis operator. The duo has assembled a team of application writers that have won hundreds of licenses across the United States. With CHT, they are committed to using technology to lower that barrier of entry for micro-businesses by providing materials, intellectual resources, and guidance through every part of the process to allow more groups to compete effectively and affordably. CHT has been named a social equity partner of NJ.com's Cannabis Insider. They have also sponsored more than a hundred small businesses in the Garden State to provide them with equal economic participation at various programs, trade shows, and networking events.

CHT is actively seeking partnerships to fund social equity applicant scholarships for cannabis license applications and business training through strategic partnerships with minority organizations that have been impacted by the war on drugs. They aren't just talking, they are walking the walk. Through their actions, they are proven leaders in leveling the playing field for minorities in the cannabis industry.

## NO. 92

### Brian Powers

The long time Union stalwart Brian Powers is a writer and presenter of Revolution Radio, a far left-leaning podcast dedicated to, among other things, marijuana reform that puts people before profits.





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LATINA CIVIC FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

**LAURA MATOS**  
LATINA CIVIC PAC PRESIDENT

## NO. 93

## Jim Miller &amp; Cheryl Miller (RIP)

Jim Miller is one of the most venerable cannabis advocates in NJ. We're proud to reprise Bill Caruso's emotional tribute to Jim and his late wife Cheryl from the previous edition of InsiderNJ's Cannabis Power List.

**Jim & Cheryl Miller, a tribute by Bill Caruso**

*I first met Cheryl and Jim Miller in the lobby of Congressman Rob Andrews' office in Washington. I was a senior staffer and had been called by a young aide at the front desk to attend to an irate visitor who demanded to see the Congressman to talk to him about marijuana. When I stepped into the room, I encountered a frustrated man wheeling his significantly disabled wife with a modified stretcher. He was visibly upset and made sure I knew it. My job was to tell him that the Congressman couldn't meet with him since he didn't have an appointment and we would happily take his name and address and mail out a position paper explaining all the reasons why the congressman opposed medical marijuana.*

*But fate, hope, and compassion would intervene that day. When I mentioned to the congressman that a man and his disabled wife had traveled from New Jersey and were in the lobby eager to speak to him about medical marijuana, he immediately gestured for me to bring them in to his office for a brief meeting. He began to explain all the reasons why he was opposed to marijuana and then listened to both Cheryl and Jim's impassioned, informed and genuine pleas for help.*

*Cheryl educated the congressman about the complications of her disease, Multiple Sclerosis and how marijuana helped her. And then it happened! After an emotional meeting, Rep. Andrews apologized. He admitted he had been wrong about this issue and it was the advocacy and devotion of this wife and her husband that had changed his mind. Congressman Andrews offered to not only sign on to legislation but help to advocate for it.*

## Jim & Cheryl Miller, a tribute by Bill Caruso




*Cheryl would visit Washington, D.C. a total of 9 times prior to her death in 2003 including a famous showdown with Rep. Barr that contributed to his failing to be re-elected.*

*Jim Miller continues to honor his wife's legacy by being one of the most knowledgeable and effective cannabis activists in New Jersey. He has helped to train a legion of new activists and is responsible for helping to lobby for the passage of New Jersey's first medical cannabis law as well as subsequent statutory and regulatory changes.*

*Both Cheryl and Jim were honored for their tireless advocacy with the Peter McWilliams Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement in Advancing the Cause of Medical Marijuana at the 2003 National NORML Conference.*

*I owe much to these wonderful people. They taught me (at a critical point in my career) that good people committed to a cause – not just wealthy interests with high paid lobbyists – can bring about change. They taught me to never give in to excuses concerning fatigue or frustration – neither of them did. But most of all, they taught me about love and respect. I will never forget the way Cheryl looked upon Jim and Jim's devotion to Cheryl. It is one of the most profound memories I have regarding my career to date and I am honored to have been able to know them both. Although, Cheryl did not live long enough to see the fruits of her labor, Jim continues to remain a strong advocate for patients as well as legalization and has been a great mentor and resource to the cannabis community.*





# **BLACK *TRANS* LIVES MATTER**



**NO. 94****Nafeesah Goldsmith  
+ Bernice Evans**

To legalize in a way that advances social justice, you have to shed light on the injustices that are taking place.

Nafeesah Goldsmith and Berenice Evans are warriors in that respect. They shared their harrowing story of the wrong that had been done to them – the traumas of a police raid and legal system for a distribution charge, the financial devastation of a marijuana conviction foreclosing opportunities for work – to give others the privilege of avoiding what they had to go through. Countless others have suffered.

It takes unfathomable strength to share the worst moments of your life to make others' lives better.

**NO. 95****Colleen Begley**

Long before medical cannabis was the law in New Jersey, Colleen Begley actually served time behind bars for helping sick people access cannabis. Nowadays, with politically-connected dispensary owners getting richer and richer, Ms. Begley's story vividly embodies the incoherence of NJ's drug laws. A Burlington County native with a decades long track record, Colleen Begley showed her commitment and resilience by testifying before a committee about marijuana legislation 6 days after giving birth to her daughter Katrina.

Ms. Begley remains committed to helping restore voting rights to Americans who lost theirs because of a marijuana conviction.

## NO. 96

### Tara Sargente

Tara “Misu” Sargente is a business owner who founded Blazin’ Bakery, New Jersey’s first legal, woman-owned cannabis edibles company. According to her website, Tara optimizes brownie mixes so anyone can make potent DIY edibles at home with no experience needed. Her products are sold in more 1,000+ shops nationally. With a decade of cannabis industry experience, Tara applies her deep knowledge base and professional experience to advance New Jersey’s cannabis industry.

Ms. Sargente is also on the board at the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association.



## NO. 97

### Evan Nison

As 1st Vice Chair, Evan Nison is the youngest member of the NORML Board of Directors. He also serves on the board of Students for Sensible Drug Policy. An advocate and entrepreneur, Mr. Nison founded Nison Co, a cannabis-centric communications and PR firm “which connects leaders in the legal cannabis, medical marijuana, and hemp industries with influential journalists across the U.S. and world.”



## NO. 98

### Tatyana & Ricardo Rivera

Tatyana “Tuffy” Rivera is a girl from Camden who uses cannabis to treat a severe form of epilepsy. She shattered the stigma surrounding cannabis therapy for children and she did it by charming the great and the good of New Jersey politics. Tuffy’s caretaker father Ricardo, a gifted lobbyist in his own right, was a constant presence in Trenton fighting to secure his daughter’s quality of life.

Tuffy and Ricardo’s journey means better access and less stigma for those who followed.





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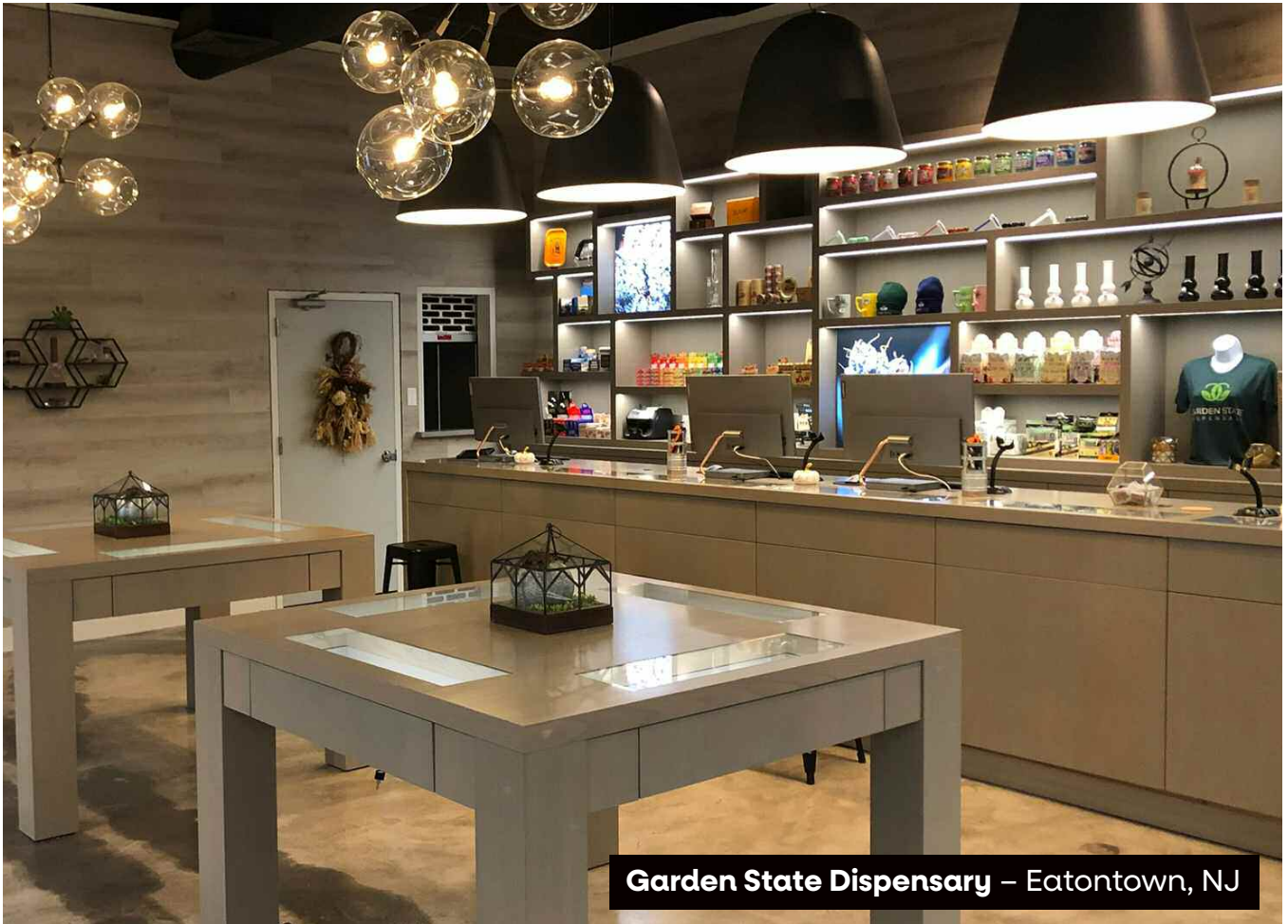
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## NO. 100

### Jess F. Gonzalez

Jersey City's Jess F. Gonzalez is an attorney at Bressler, Amery & Ross and one of the most brilliant cannabis business lawyers in New Jersey. Jessica sits on the Policy Committee for the Minority Cannabis Business Association and is the Chair of the Social Equity Webinar Series for the International Cannabis Bar Association.



As a cannabis attorney, Jessica assists cannabis clients navigate the legal cannabis and hemp industry in the areas of corporate, intellectual property and state licensing applications.

## In Memory



According to stats from NJ's Cannabis Control Commission, the pace of patient enrollment in NJ's medical marijuana continues to accelerate at a rapid clip.

NJ's patient registry crossed the 106,000 person mark as this list

went to press. That figure does not include the roughly 5,600 patients who've passed after spending the last weeks and months of their lives using legal medical cannabis. As Wall Street lines up to cash in and stoner culture takes root in unexpected ways, it's important to remember that the roots of cannabis reform has always been sick (and sometimes dying) people trying to have a better quality of life.

## The Honorable mention on this year's Cannabis Power List goes to the unsung heroes in the NJ Office of Legislative Services (NJOLS)

*The following tribute was written by one of their "friends in the partisan offices and the government affairs profession"*

To those that have ever complained that people who work in Government are lazy, they clearly never met anyone from the NJOLS. To those that do not know what NJOLS is, they are the nonpartisan support staff for the Legislature. Their endeavours are not easy; at times sisyphian, and certainly not glamorous. These are the people that can take loose concepts from politicians and stakeholders, and then string them together in a cohesive fashion to make a workable bill draft that is legally feasible.

Whereas the politicians, advocates, and lobbyists like to chest beat on a bill's signage into law, brag about how it was "all their idea" or that "they wrote that law," these are the people that actually wrote the law. They typed dozens of drafts until their fingers calloused and proofread until their eyes had more red than white. They basically operate 24/7 trying to bring the will of the people to fruition.

Anyone who has ever gotten any bill across the finish line owes a huge debt of gratitude to this office. This is particularly true for complex bills like Jake Honig's Law, and the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act. If you are a person appreciative of these laws and ever happen to bump into Michael Fahncke or David Lorette in the Statehouse, know that we'd still be on the first of drafts without them.

*To Mike, Dave, and all the Staff in OLS that made cannabis legalization happen...*

*Thank You!*