



**CANCER PATIENTS
GROWING WEED GO
TO JAIL FOR 5 YEARS,
BUT GROWING FOR \$
IS OKAY IN N.J.**



The Insider 100: Cannabis Power List

*The 2022 Insider tribute to the TOP 100
influential voices in the cannabis debate.*

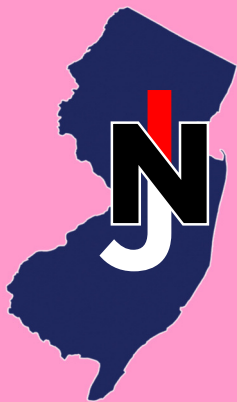


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Message from Jay Lassiter

Cannabis POWER 2022

COME OUT, COME OUT

WHEREVER YOU ARE!

Welcome to Insider NJ's 2022 Cannabis Power List...

A tribute to politically influential voices in New Jersey's cannabis movement. You'll meet activists and advocates who did the work to legalize weed as well as lobbyists, lawyers, caretakers, and industry types looking for their slice of New Jersey's multibillion dollar cannabis industry.

There are many good reasons to legalize cannabis such as giving sick people better access to medical cannabis therapy. There's also the growing consensus that locking people up for weed is a very bad and very costly idea.

But what about legalizing pot because there are people who enjoy getting stoned?

Let's normalize that, shall we?

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.

So It's easy to understand why folks remain circumspect (or even closeted) about marijuana use, even in the year 2022. Anyone old enough to read this grew up during the cannabis prohibition era when using or purchasing weed was very much illegal and very heavily stigmatized.

That stigma persists until more people come out of the pot closet but (and it's a big but) folks remain closeted about their pot use because of the stigma.

It's a vicious cycle.

The tributes on this year's Cannabis Power List are devoted to ending that cycle.



Sincerely,

Jay Lassiter



DUANE MORRIS IN NEW JERSEY: LOCAL ROOTS, NATIONAL REACH

As a first mover into the cannabis space and with the vast resources of one of the nation's largest law firms, Duane Morris provides clients with national capabilities informed by our local experience in New Jersey and other cannabis-friendly jurisdictions from coast to coast. Our cannabis industry work has earned widespread recognition and accolades from leading publications, including *Insider NJ*, *Chambers and Partners*, *The Legal 500*, the *New Jersey Law Journal*, the *National Law Journal*, *The Legal Intelligencer*, *MG Retailer*, *Cannabis Law Report* and *Cannabis Insider*. Additionally, Duane Morris has been recognized by BTI Consulting as both a client service leader and one of the most feared law firms in litigation. Our cannabis-related experience includes:

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NO. 1 WILLIAM CARUSO

A man of many talents, William “Bill” Caruso is a partner at Archer Law, the largest law firm in South Jersey and the 4th largest in the state. In addition to his role as NJ’s top cannabis lawyer, Mr. Caruso is a bona fide activist who spent the past two decades toiling to end cannabis prohibition in NJ.



During his sterling career in NJ politics that includes a decade as a Congressional chief-of-staff followed by a half dozen years running the NJ General Assembly, Mr. Caruso has moved the needle by changing hearts and minds along the way.

“In NJ, we successfully worked to change hearts and minds concerning the stigma around cannabis,” Mr. Caruso told InsiderNJ. “And while I am heartened by President Biden’s recent comments, at the federal level cannabis remains a Class 1 controlled substance along with dangerous drugs like heroin. This is why kids don’t take us seriously when we discuss the dangers of cannabis to developing brains and why more Americans aren’t turning to cannabis rather than opioids for pain management. It’s long past time that Congress act to fix this.”

Bill Caruso is one of the folks on this Cannabis Power List that I’ve actually smoked pot with and spoiler alert: it was good cannabis. We laughed (a lot) which is precisely what sharing a joint is all about.

NO. 2

DIANNA HOUEYOU

When Governor Phil Murphy picked Dianna Houenou to lead New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, it was a signal to the world that New Jersey's version of cannabis legalization would prioritize people and neighborhoods disproportionately negatively affected by the War on Drugs.



That means giving minority communities a place at the table for an industry with boundless economic and social potential. Ms. Houenou, a UNC alum with ACLU pedigree, has overseen the most conscientious rollout in cannabis legalization history right here in New Jersey.

As leader of the CRC (which governs all aspects of NJ's cannabis industry) Dianna Houenou has many stakeholders with competing values to answer to and to accommodate and she does so with a high level of competence and integrity that's far too uncommon in New Jersey politics.

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NO. 3

LEO BRIDGEWATER



An Army veteran who enlisted post-9/11, Leo Bridgewater served as a communications specialist in Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon returning stateside to Trenton, he watched fellow vets navigating their post-wartime life and noticed that many were taking pills for ailments like chronic pain, depression, anxiety, insomnia, and PTSD. Leo Bridgewater knew there had to be a better way. And that's when he began transforming himself into one of the toughest and thoroughly well-respected cannabis advocates in NJ history.

Mr. Bridgewater made it his primary mission to add PTSD to the list of qualifying conditions for NJ's medical cannabis program. It was a pivotal, momentum-building step forward for cannabis reform and a godsend for anyone who, like Mr. Bridgewater, must manage the enduring burden of trauma. If you're at the cannabis dispensary in Secaucus, check out Mr. Bridgewater's namesake strain for PTSD called Bridge H2O.

Leo Bridgewater is still in Trenton and still committed to ensuring a place at the table for communities most impacted by the War of Drugs.

NO. 4

CHRIS GOLDSTEIN

A legendary New Jersey cannabis pioneer, Chris Goldstein is NORML's regional organizer for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. 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 (Temple U.)



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 predicted early on that an effective cannabis legalization strategy must include a separate path to concurrently decriminalize the sale, use, and public consumption of cannabis in New Jersey. That double legalization/decriminalization strategy stopped tens of thousands of cannabis arrests in New Jersey paving the way for a new generation of Americans who'll never have to worry about getting locked up for weed.

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 debate over marijuana reform in the Garden State. When we call Chris' 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. (Spoiler alert: it's Assemblyman Herb Conway's fault homegrow got struck from the bill.)

Mr. Goldstein leads the cohort of activists who sacrificed their time and resources to end cannabis prohibition only to be priced out of the legal market. That so many people who did the heavy lifting to legalize weed can't afford medical marijuana in New Jersey is proof we have a ways to go yet.



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Investors, multistate operators, first-time entrepreneurs, and other cannabis industry participants rely on McCarter's Cannabis Group to address complex legal issues, navigate current and pending laws and regulations, and handle sophisticated financing and M&A transactions. Our clients range from startups to mature cannabis enterprises, including the largest privately held medical cannabis company, for which McCarter is its government affairs agent in NJ.

Our group has represented numerous businesses in successful exits, with aggregate deal consideration of approximately \$1 billion. Our representation on such deals is particularly effective given the added advantage of real estate, tax, trusts and estates, and environment and energy lawyers on the team who understand the nuances of this expanding industry.

Our clients trust McCarter's team not just for our legal acumen, but for our in-depth understanding of the complicated regulatory framework and knowing elected officials at every level. As we help our clients expand their businesses, our geographic footprint and practice offerings continue to grow. Our client relationships have flourished as we have helped existing clients venture into the cannabis space and offered new cannabis clients our full range of services.

NO. 5

SETH TIPTON



One of the top cannabis lawyer in the state of New Jersey, Seth Tipton is a partner at Florio Perrucci Steinhardt Cappelli Tipton & Taylor LLC, one of New Jersey's most politically influential law firms. Mr. Tipton has represented applicants for medical cannabis permits in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, guiding them on private capital raises, application requirements, and real estate.

Mr. Tipton also counsels clients on all aspects of formation and compliance.

In addition to his longevity in the cannabis space, Mr. Tipton co-chaired the first-ever New Jersey Bar Association Cannabis Special Committee for three years. In this role, he helped to create an annual cannabis symposium (and numerous CLEs) for New Jersey attorneys to learn about cannabis. In short, Mr. Tipton helped educate many New Jersey attorneys about the fast-growing cannabis industry, demystifying cannabis for the legal community while removing the stigma for lawyers looking to represent cannabis clients.

Mr. Tipton was the inaugural guest lecturer for NJ Canna Certified where he taught state and federal cannabis law basics to hundreds of students looking to get a start in the cannabis industry.

Mr Tipton's influence on the next generation of lawyers and criminal justice majors can't be understated. What started as a single cannabis class at Raritan Community College in 2020 expanded to community colleges in Mercer, Atlantic Cape, Essex, Middlesex, Union, and Passaic, as well as Rowan College in South Jersey.

Co-5

PAUL JOSEPHSON

Paul Josephson has been one of New Jersey's top pot lawyers for a very long time.

The longtime policy and regulatory counsel for New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association, Mr. Josephson leads the Cannabis Industry Group at Duane Morris, an international law firm with strong roots in New Jersey.



Mr. Josephson got a peek at what ending cannabis prohibition might look like during his college years in the 1980s in Ann Arbor Michigan, a municipality that decriminalized weed back in 1972. Mr. Josephson's time at university (where he was student body President) overlapped with the Reagan administration's backwards and punitive approach to drug policy. This was also the height of the AIDS crisis, a deadly plague that demonstrated the immense benefits of cannabis therapy for sick and dying people. All of this had an impact on the would-be lawyer.

"I was student body president in a town where cannabis was decriminalized for years without adverse impacts," Mr. Josephson told *InsiderNJ*. "But the many social inequities in education, law enforcement, etc. visited upon my fellow students from underserved communities were evident to me every day. That experience as a student advocate led me to the law as a toolbox for helping people and solving problems."

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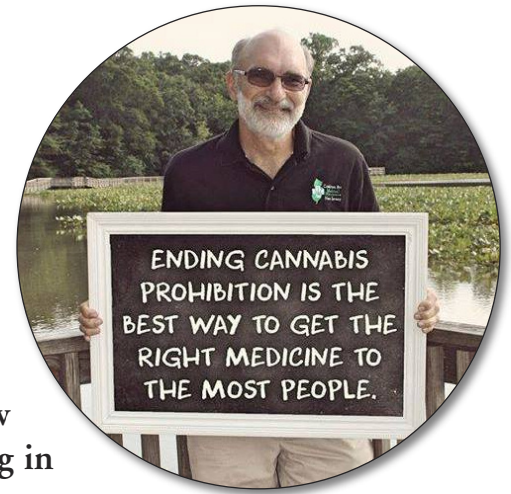
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NO. 6 KEN WOLSKI

The most venerable and well-respected cannabis activist in New Jersey history, Ken Wolski was preaching the gospel of cannabis decades before most of us arrived on the scene. The founder and chief potentate at the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of New Jersey, Mr. Wolski spent years and countless hours toiling in obscurity to fight the cannabis stigma while educating the masses about the health benefits of medical cannabis therapy.



Ken Wolski and his team at CMMNJ received the 2021 NJ State Governor's Jefferson Award for their extraordinary dedication to leaving New Jersey better and fairer than they found it.

A registered nurse since 1976, Mr. Wolski co-founded CMMNJ, an all-volunteer non-profit educational charity dedicated to ending cannabis prohibition back 2003, an era when attitudes toward medical and especially recreational cannabis were very different than they are today. By doing the hard work of retail politics to more skeptical crowds, Ken Wolski has done more to end cannabis stigma than anyone and everyone on this list.

Under Mr. Wolski's leadership, CMMNJ played a huge role getting medical cannabis legislation introduced (in 2005) and ultimately passed into law in 2010. During the Chris Christie era, a long dark time for cannabis advocates, Ken Wolski was, stylistically and ideologically, an intriguing counterpoint to Gov. Christie's arrogant bombast.

CMMNJ officially endorsed legalizing recreational cannabis in 2014 calling it the best path to better access for medical cannabis users and their ambitious set of post-legalization goals includes home cultivation for patients, insurance coverage for medical cannabis, expanding qualifying conditions, and normalizing cannabis therapy in hospital and institutional settings for qualified patients.

NO. 7 SAM DELGADO

A proud product of the Bronx NYC housing projects and the U.S. Marine Corps, Sam Delgado is vice chair of NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission. The five-member CRC regulates and governs the medical and recreational cannabis industry in New Jersey giving each member massive power and influence over the Garden State's gazillion dollar cannabis industry.



Mr. Delgado was nominated to the CRC by NJ Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin and remains the only commissioner who did time for weed when he served four days in county jail back in the 1970s. An entrepreneur (he's the former owner of Minuteman Press of Newark) + a military veteran and corporate government affairs executive with public policy experience and statewide relationships, Sam Delgado has come a long way from his humble beginnings in Edenwald Projects in the Bronx and where he witnessed the War of Drug's pitiless wrath on over-policed communities like the one he grew up in.

In addition to injecting common-sense business acumen into NJ's cannabis debate, Sam Delgado has a deeply personal connection to the success of NJ's medical cannabis program. His sister died of AIDS before treatments were available and cannabis therapy was legal.

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

***Congratulations to KZG's
Patrizia Zita & Jeannine LaRue
and to all those named to
Insider NJ 2022 Cannabis Power List!***



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NO. 8**KEVIN HAGEN**

A man who's worn many hats over the years, Kevin Hagen is a Trenton government affairs pro at the blue chip firm Princeton Public Affairs Group. Mr. Hagen is one of the most powerful, influential, and politically connected pot lobbyists in the game.



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NO. 9

MATT PLATKIN

New Jersey's Attorney General Matt Platkin occupies one of the most powerful AG's offices in the nation. It takes someone with that kinda juice to fight the greediest impulses of NJ's Corporate Cannabis Industrial Complex.



Spineless legislative leadership combined with the tremendous lobbying clout of NJ's cannabis industry means the home cultivation of cannabis is a non-starter in NJ for the time being. And that's a tough pill to swallow, especially for patients who pay way too much for average weed at one of NJ's medical dispensaries.

Currently, a single, solitary pot plant could mean 5 years in jail in NJ where home cultivation of cannabis is legally akin to making meth and yes, you read that correctly. This puts the Garden State wildly out-of-line with other states where legalization means patients can grow their own.

But there's a workaround that could get us halfway there, if not for recreational users, *at the very least* for NJ's 130,000 (or so) medical cannabis patients. And that's where NJ's Attorney General Matthew Platkin comes into play.

Our Attorney General Matt Platkin could ostensibly decriminalize home cultivation with a memorandum of guidance to New Jersey's 21 county prosecutors to lay off those who run afoul of NJ's absurdly punitive anti-home grow laws.

It's not the whole loaf or or even half a loaf, but it's the best we can do without legislative intervention. And it's a helluva lot better than locking people up for weed.

Congratulations to our Cannabis & Hemp Law team on being named to the **Insider 100: Cannabis Power List 2022**



CJ GRIFFIN

Director, Justice
Gary S. Stein Public
Interest Center



SEAN MACK

Co-Chair, Cannabis
& Hemp Law
practice



GREGG H. HILZER

Co-Chair, Cannabis
& Hemp Law
practice



DILLON J. MCGUIRE

Attorney, Cannabis
& Hemp Law
and Criminal Defense



**ALANA HANS-
COHEN**

Attorney, Cannabis
& Hemp Law
and Corporate &
Business Law practice

NO. 10 SCOTT RUDDER

Scott Rudder is a rare breed: an insider who did his time in the trenches to earn the respect of New Jersey's cannabis reform movement.



The affable former GOP mayor and state lawmaker, Scott Rudder founded the NJ CannaBusiness Association, New Jersey's oldest cannabis industry/trade association. Mr. Rudder recently stepped down as president at NJCBA where he still serves on the Board of Directors.

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

A long-time cannabis consumer in his own right, Mr. Rudder remains devoted to creating a climate where open and honest conversations about cannabis are easier to have, especially with our youth, who after decades of "just say no" nonsense, deserve a more honest approach.

NO. 11**JOSEPH DeCOTIIS
and ARLENE
QUIÑONES PEREZ**

After decades of stigma, cannabis is now well-represented within the legal community. With heavy-hitters like Joseph M. DeCotiis and Arlene Quiñones Perez at the helm, DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP has consistently demonstrated their ability to help their clients to score cannabis licenses in New Jersey. 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.



Joe and Arlene have successfully guided Verano NJ to claim one of the (original) six lucrative and highly prized licenses for a medicinal cannabis and later with the expansion of the operation's footprint to include a second dispensary in Lawrence. Additionally, Joe and Arlene use their leadership at the New Jersey State Bar Association to educate fellow attorneys on medicinal and recreational policies.

Joe and Arlene have 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.



WILLIAM J. CARUSO

Managing Director, Archer Public Affairs

#1 RANKED

2022 INSIDER NJ CANNABIS POWER LIST

CONGRATULATIONS TO WILLIAM CARUSO, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ARCHER PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ON HIS TOP RANKING. APA ALSO RECOGNIZES THIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENT SHARED BY ALL OF THE 2022 HONOREES

Archer Public Affairs provides full-service government and regulatory affairs advice and advocacy to businesses in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Our members help ensure our clients achieve their business objectives by crafting strategic plans and advocating for their issues at all levels of government. By providing access to key decision makers and timely data, we offer our clients the political and legislative presence that is critical to success.



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NO. 12

CJ GRIFFIN

One of the brightest lights on in New Jersey's legal constellation, CJ Griffin is a partner at Pashman Stein where she leads the firm's Stein Public Interest Center that focuses on, among other things, undoing the damage caused by America's War on Drugs.



As a lawyer and bonafide drug law reformer, CJ Griffin remains an influential force shaping the legal landscape surrounding cannabis legalization. In addition to acting as outside pro bono counsel to NJ CAN 2020, the PAC which successfully campaigned for the legalization of recreational cannabis, under CJ's direction the Center 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 secured important New Jersey Supreme Court victories for cannabis 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 #7 on InsiderNJ's most recent OUT 100 Power List, a tribute to influential LGBTQs in NJ politics. There's a growing consensus that the hard work legalizing cannabis was done by queer people and their caretakers during the AIDS crisis. If that is so, and we believe it is, CJ Griffin is part of a long and venerable tradition of LGBTQ people doing the heavy lifting to fix America's notoriously lousy pot laws.

NO. 13

LOU MAGAZZU

A former Cumberland County Commissioner and Freeholder Director, Lou Magazzu has transformed himself into one of the most powerful and influential cannabis lawyers in New Jersey.



The principal at Magazzu Law Offices in Vineland, Mr. Magazzu represents heavy hitters like Columbia Care one of multiple medical cannabis dispensaries whose path to opening with smoothed by Mr. Magazzu's legal and land-use prowess.

Mr. Magazzu caused a stir with an OpEd urging his fellow cannabis lawyers to step up and take the lead on expungements and to 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, Mr. Magazzu's glittering Rolodex is a testament to a pragmatic bipartisan streak as well as his influence that extends well beyond his South Jersey base.

A photograph of four construction workers wearing white hard hats with the ABC logo. They are standing in front of a red safety barrier. The text 'BUILD WITH THE BEST' is overlaid in large, bold, blue and red letters.

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NO. 14

AMOL SINHA



As Executive Director of ACLU of New Jersey, AMOL Sinha has long played a pivotal and outsized role influencing and shaping the cannabis debate in New Jersey and the region, especially the social justice side of the debate. But Mr. Sinha wears other hats too. As part of NJ CAN, the coalition that legalized pot in New Jersey, Mr. Sinha demonstrated his underrated campaign savvy as the YES side romped to victory in record-setting numbers.

NO. 15

REGINA P. APPOLON and 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 lobbying firms.

The theme of this year's Cannabis Power List is ending cannabis stigma, a theme Ms. Appolon and Mr. Weinstein emphasized in an OpEd they co-authored.



A snippet:

"Education is needed to combat previous stigmas on cannabis, as the thought of 'Reefer Madness' still exists, despite the beneficial and therapeutic qualities of the drug.Only then can New Jersey truly realize that: 'The Garden State and Cannabis – They're Perfect for Each Other.'"

We couldn't agree more.

NO. 16**ERIK ALTIERI**

A Gloucester County native whose local and regional cannabis advocacy propelled him into the national leadership spotlight, Erik Altieri is Executive Director of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, an organization he's led for 6 years.

The youngest ED in NORML's history, Mr. Altieri has presided over the most fruitful era of cannabis reform in the history of mankind.

Before taking the helm at the nation's most venerable cannabis institution, Erik Altieri helped legalize medical cannabis in New Jersey and usher in decriminalization in Philly, America's 5th largest city where cannabis arrests have plummeted.

NO. 17**TARA SARGENTE**

Tara Sargente is a long time board member of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, New Jersey's oldest and most powerful cannabis industry trade association.

One of New Jersey's original cannabis entrepreneurs, Ms. Sargente is the owner of Blazin' Bakery, the first legal, woman-owned edibles company in New Jersey. At Blazin' Bakery, Tara optimizes brownie mixes so anyone can make potent DIY edibles at home with no experience needed. Her products are sold in more than 1,000 shops nationally.

With a dozen years of cannabis industry experience, Ms. Sargente still applies her deep knowledge base and professional experience to help advance New Jersey's cannabis industry.

NO. 18 JENNA MELLOR



The co-director of the NJ Harm Reduction Coalition, Jenna Mellor is one of NJ's most gifted and influential drug policy experts. Ms. Mellor recently collaborated with New Jersey Policy Perspective to author "*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.

Jenna Mellor is a rare breed in Trenton, someone who does the hard work without fanfare or regard for who gets credit. New Jersey is lucky to have someone as brilliant and selfless as Ms. Mellor working to fix our state's profoundly backwards drug laws.

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NO. 19

**SEAN MACK and
GREGG HILZER**

Sean Mack and Gregg Hilzer are two of New Jersey's most powerful and influential cannabis lawyers.

An industry leader since 2015 when he helped with early drafts of the bill to legalize cannabis in New Jersey, Sean Mack co-chairs the Cannabis & Hemp practice at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, which he founded in 2015. Mr. Mack also founded his 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.

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 to the cannabis industry consistently turn to Mr. Hilzer for strategic solutions, risk management, and guidance with the complicated regulatory requirements at both the state and municipal level.

Pashman Stein Walder Hayden's novel approach to cannabis makes them unique and, we think, very special and worth emulating. Not only are they attentive to their clients' cannabis-related legal needs but their Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center remains devoted to undoing the decades of harm done by America's irrationally punitive cannabis laws.

NO. 20

MARIA DEL CID-KOSSO

Maria Del Cid-Kosso serves on New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, which governs NJ's medical and recreational cannabis industry.



Her objectives as a commissioner includes (something akin to) insurance coverage for medical marijuana purchases in New Jersey to which we say “godspeed Commissioner!”

NO. 21

AMI KACHALIA

A campaign strategist at ACLU NJ and board chair at NJ Harm Reduction Coalition, Ami Kachalia is one of New Jersey's most brilliant and underrated drug policy experts. Ms. Kachalia is often busy ensuring New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission is pursuing a more equitable and inclusive cannabis marketplace.



Ms. Kachalia leads the ACLU-NJ's cannabis work and recently organized a memorable rally at the state house in support of using cannabis revenue for community reinvestment. Ms. Kachalia is the go-to person that advocates (and reporters) turn to for info on New Jersey's ongoing cannabis legalization implementation process.

~ Best Wishes ~

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NO. 22

RYAN MAGEE

Ryan Magee is a partner at Riker Law LLP, one of the largest, most influential law firms in New Jersey. Mr. Magee heads Riker's Cannabis practice making him one of the Garden State's top cannabis lawyers.

A graduate of Seton Hall Law School, Mr. Magee spent 10 years at the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, much of that time under the wing of Gurbir Grewal who'd go on to become the most pro-pot Attorney General in New Jersey history.

Under Ryan Magee's leadership, Riker Law LLP has helped their clients score a dozen highly-coveted licenses from New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission. In addition to helping his cannabis clients break into New Jersey's cannabis industry, Mr. Magee doubles as a criminal lawyer representing people charged with marijuana crimes. Ryan proves it's possible to undo the damage caused by the War on Drugs while simultaneously keeping your cannabis clients well-serviced. Both are possible at the same time and every lawyer doing business in NJ's boundlessly lucrative cannabis industry should take note.

NO. 23

CHRIS DONNELLY



Chris Donnelly, General Manager of Kivvit's New Jersey office, has always been a doer who lets his body of work speak for itself. And in a world full of media-hungry show ponies, we think that makes Chris Donnelly very special.

A Trenton stalwart with decades of media and legislative experience under his belt, Mr. Donnelly has long been a conscientious voice in New Jersey's cannabis debate. From his perch at Kivvit, one of New Jersey (and America's) most powerful and influential PR firms, Mr. Donnelly has more than once, twice kept the cannabis debate from going off the rails.

When we opened the nominating process for this year's cannabis power list, suggestions poured in, including a half dozen or more for Chris Donnelly, a tribute to Chris' reputation as a man who gets it done for his clients and for cannabis users in New Jersey.

NO. 24

JACQUELINE FERRARO



Jacqueline Ferraro is co-founder and Managing Director of the Cannabis Advisory Group, a politically-wired cannabis trade association. A well-rounded drug reform advocate, Ms. Ferraro is leading the fight to bring psilocybin out of the dark ages to untap the medical and therapeutic benefits of psilocybin, commonly known as "magic mushrooms."

Ms. Ferraro's day job is at a women-led cannabis consulting firm called Cannability.

NO. 25**MAGGIE MORAN**

After a quarter century as one of NJ's most influential insiders, Maggie Moran took her many considerable talents to the cannabis space where she's a consultant for companies looking to break into NJ's boundlessly lucrative cannabis industry.

**NO. 26****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 one 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 and punitive outlier.



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

Ms. Zito, whose family was devastated by America's War on Drugs, now splits her time between New Jersey and Virginia making her a one-woman regional powerhouse to end cannabis prohibition in America.



Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

At Planned Parenthood, we believe that everyone – no matter who you are, where you live, your identity, your income, your immigration status, or your insurance coverage – deserves access to comprehensive health care, education, and information. This is health equity – and the fight for access to legal cannabis is entwined in the fight for control of one's sexual and reproductive health.

In the 1980s, as HIV/AIDS began tearing through LGBTQ+ communities across the country, stigma and homophobia resulted in a lack of institutional health care response to the crisis. Activists in California noted the medicinal use of cannabis to ease symptoms and suffering, and as treatment for HIV/AIDS began to be more widely available, cannabis was used to combat the nausea and discomfort that these early drugs caused. In the 1990s, leaders like Dennis Peron, Mary Jane Rathbun, and Paul Scott created access points and advocated for legislation that would allow for the legal use of medicinal cannabis across the state.

From these efforts we can draw a clear line to the broader legalization efforts we now see across the United States. We must thank LGBTQ+ activists who tirelessly fought for recognition, for health care access, and for equity. As we as a nation continue to reckon with those who seek to take away our autonomy and our freedoms, we thank the activists who came before us and refused to back down in the face of adversity.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jackie Cornell'.

Jackie Cornell

Executive Director

Planned Parenthood Action
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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

NO. 27

GUILLERMO ARTILES

Guillermo Artiles is a partner at McCarter & English, LLP, the oldest and largest law firm in New Jersey where he leads the firm's Cannabis Group. Mr. Artiles also chairs his firm's Government Affairs Practice, making him a familiar face in New Jersey's halls of power.

Previously, Guillermo Artiles was one of NJ Governor Phil Murphy's top legal lieutenants when he, among other things, helped hammer out Jake's Law, legislation that nixed much of what was wrong with New Jersey's medical cannabis program. Thanks to Jake's Law (and people like Guillermo Artiles) patients no longer pay sales tax on their medical cannabis. Jake's Law also ended the onerous requirement that patients recertify their qualifying condition once a month (!) in favor of a yearly check up.

The very existence of a Cannabis Group at McCarter & English LLP, which is perhaps New Jersey's most venerable law firm, suggests that cannabis-related stigma within the legal community is on the wane. However, McCarter's Social Justice Project to dismantle structural racism and combat racial inequality is proof there's still much Drug War-related damage to undo.

NO. 28

JIM MILLER and
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*.

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.

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.”



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NO. 29

CHARLES BARKER



Charles Barker serves on New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, which governs the cannabis industry in the Garden State.

A Passaic City, New Jersey native, Mr. Barker was appointed to the CRC by Gov. Phil Murphy. Previously, Mr. Barker was a top lieutenant for Senator Cory Booker where his portfolio included cannabis and criminal justice reform.

In 2018 Charles served as a Strategic Advisor to Anthony Cureton's successful election campaign to become the first Black sheriff in Bergen County, the largest county in New Jersey by population.

AT THE INDUSTRY
FOREFRONT

**We congratulate Mike McQueeney
on making 2022 The Insider 100: Cannabis**

Foley Hoag has been at the forefront of the medical and adult-use cannabis industry since the very early stages of its regulation and legalization across the U.S. and Canada.



MIKE MCQUEENY
New York

foleyhoag.com

NO. 30

TRISH ZITA and
JEANNINE LaRUE

Trish Zita and Jeannine LaRue are cannabis' dynamic duo in New Jersey.

A bluechip lobbyist from Kaufman Zita, the firm which bears her name, Trish Zita is an early investor and board director at TerrAscend NJ, which opened multiple dispensaries in New Jersey.

A winning Rolodex (plus her uncanny ability to convince municipalities to say yes) make Trish Zita a critical contact for anyone looking to score a cannabis license in NJ. The hundreds of applicants vying for a precious few 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 3rd region.

That's power.

Ms. Zita's "partner-in-good trouble" is Jeannine LaRue, perhaps the most sought-after lobbyist for anyone looking for a viable social equity program in New Jersey's cannabis industry. Her handiwork helped TerrAscend dominate the competition to score a coveted dispensary license.

The Grande Dame of NJ's LGBTQ community, Jeannine LaRue is part of a long tradition of Queer people taking a lead to fix America's badly broken cannabis laws.



NO. 31

KRISTA NASH

Krista Nash serves on New Jersey's Cannabis Regulatory Commission, which governs the Garden State's cannabis industry. Ms. Nash was appointed by former Senate President Steven Sweeney. Since her appointment, Ms. Nash has earned a reputation for sticking up for workers in New Jersey's boundlessly lucrative cannabis industry.

Commissioner Nash came to the CRC from Volunteers of America Delaware Valley where, as director of the PROMISE Program, she worked to address the unique needs of individuals exiting the criminal justice system. In short, Ms. Nash's work helped to curb the re-incarceration rate in New Jersey. We honor that work here.

Prior to her time as commissioner gatekeeping NJ's cannabis industry, Ms. Nash devoted her professional career to social justice initiatives like working with formerly incarcerated individuals battling homelessness, substance use, and mental health issues.

NO. 32

MICHAEL MCQUEENEY

Mike McQueeney's path into the cannabis industry began when a close family member got sick and needed medical cannabis which wasn't legal at the time. Suddenly it was personal and Mr. McQueeney vowed to play his part to increase access for sick people in New Jersey (and beyond) who rely on medical cannabis therapy for their well-being.

A lawyer at Foley Hoag LLP, one of New Jersey's most influential and politically-wired law firms, Mr McQueeney works with a diverse client base ranging from larger multistate operators to upstart hemp farmers. In short, he's out there helping clients score cannabis licenses.

Counsel to the New Jersey Cannabis Trade Association, Mr. McQueeney remains a trustee for the Hyacinth Foundation and teaches cannabis law at New York University Law School. The Hyacinth connection is powerful and profound considering their work to fight HIV/AIDS is an ongoing reminder that the AIDS crisis set the table for cannabis reform in America.

A policy wonk at heart, Mr. McQueeney is still at it, working to ensure that New Jersey's version of legalization dispenses with the worst and borrows from the best for his legal clients and for cannabis consumers, especially medical users, alike.

CONGRATULATIONS SETH TIPTON, ESQ.!



Seth Tipton, Esq.
Cannabis Lawyer
stipton@floriolaw.com

A statewide leader in cannabis law, Seth represents a wide variety of clients in the cannabis industry. He assists applicants for medical and adult-use cannabis permits and licenses, guiding them on private capital raises, application strategy and submission, real estate matters, and regulatory compliance.

Seth served for three years as the inaugural co-chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association Cannabis Law Special Committee. As a New Jersey Cannabis Certified instructor, Seth teaches the fundamentals of cannabis law to hundreds of students through programs with nine colleges in the state.



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NO. 33

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 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 from 18,000 when he took over to 105,000 on Mr. Brown's watch and most (if not all) improvements to NJ's medical cannabis program have Mr. Brown's fingerprints all over them, including nixing the Chris Christie-era rule forcing patients to re-certify their qualifying condition on a monthly basis.

If you're reading this and thinking to yourself "did Chris Christie really make patients recertify every month?" the answer is yes, he did.

NO. 34

FRUQAN MOUZON



Fruqan Mouzon is a partner at Fox Rothschild LLP where he focuses his practice on cannabis law, litigation, and regulatory compliance. Mr Mouzon is one of New Jersey's top cannabis lawyers.

From his perch at a bluechip law firm, Mr. Mouzon continues to influence the 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. 35 DAN ULLOA

Dan Ulloa is the man behind *Heady NJ*, New Jersey's independent source for cannabis news, politics, and culture. His coverage of state politics in Trenton as well as the cannabis debate at the municipal level make him a media watchdog as the cannabis debate continues to unfold in New Jersey.



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NO. 36

MATTE KANE and
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-workers get a fair deal from the green-rush.

"The UFCW also believes that a safe and equitable workplace leads to better quality cannabis," Mr. Giordano told InsiderNJ.



For the past half-dozen years the Union tandem of Matte Kane and Hugh Giordano have shown up (sometimes multiple times) at nearly every municipality in the state for council and zoning/planning meetings advocating on behalf of patients, workers, and business owners. They've also fought municipal bans on medical and recreational cannabis which hurt working families because blanket bans are bad for business and also for patients and consumers.

And they're playing the long game. Under the leadership of Mr. Kane and Mr. Giordano, UFCW spent the past year working with state and county workforce development agencies to kickstart cannabis skills apprenticeship programs to create the job force to attract larger grow facilities to South Jersey .

Recently, Mr. Kane & Mr. Giordano have taken on another (and potentially more economically critical) facet of the cannabis industry: hemp, marijuana's non-psychoactive cousin. It says a lot about cannabis stigma that hemp was long maligned, mostly illegal to grow, and untapped as a resource (fiber, food, fuel) *even though hemp doesn't get you high.*

The duo has championed the cause of hemp usage in soil remediation projects along the coast, as an organically expedited mode of soil reclamation, primarily from dredging spoils from heavily-trafficked barrier islands. Stay tuned!

As indoor warehouse grow facilities and hydroponic industrial farms begin to dot NJ's landscape, Matte and Huge 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. 37**EDMUND DEVEAUX**

Edmund DeVeaux is President of the New Jersey CannabisBusiness Association, NJ's most influential trade cannabis association. A man with a military background, Mr. DeVeaux is one of the hottest tickets on the cannabis speaking tour.

**NO. 38****MARC PRESS and
ROBERT DiPISA**

Marc P. Press and Robert M. DiPisa co-chair the Cannabis Law group at Cole Schotz PC, the blue chip law firm where they guide cannabis clients through regulatory compliance, risk management, governmental affairs and licensing issues. Under the leadership of Mr. Press and Mr. DiPisa, Cole Schotz helps investors and entrepreneurs alike manage the opportunities and challenges presented by New Jersey's emerging cannabis industry.



An early practitioner of cannabis law, Mr. Press advises both plant-touching and ancillary businesses in connection with various corporate matters. He's a member of New Jersey CannaBusiness Association and CannaGather NJ and NY.

Mr. DiPisa helps clients navigate regulatory compliance, risk management, governmental affairs, licensing and the leasing and acquisition of real estate property in connection with cannabis related uses. He is also a member of several trade organizations including New Jersey CannaBusiness Association and CannaGather and a regular speaker on cannabis-related issues.

Congratulations to all those recognized on the InsiderNJ Cannabis Power List.

My appreciation to all those who supported my recognition for which I am very thankful.

Below are some pictures from during the past year when I have been able to promote the emerging New Jersey market.



Cannabis Emerging Expo 5/18/22



Cannabis Boot Camp 9/12/22



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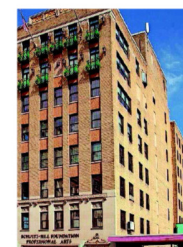
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NO. 39

**AUBREY NAVARRO
CONWAY**

Thanks to Aubrey Navarro Conway's efforts, medical cannabis users have fewer obstacles and pay no sales tax on their medical cannabis purchases in New Jersey. Ms. Navarro Conway was a driving force behind legislation known as Jake's Law that vaulted NJ's medical program from the dark ages into something that actually looks compassionate.

NO. 40

TRACY MC HUGH

A cannabis activist who doubles as a disability advocate, Tracy Mc Hugh has done more to end cannabis stigma than anyone on this list. And she won't stop until the stigma surrounding cannabis is a thing of the past. A regular presenter on the weekly cannabis podcast *Sativa Cross*, Ms. Mc Hugh paid her dues by showing up to educate lawmakers and regulators about the health benefits of cannabis therapy.

A CBD and Cannabis Industry tax professional, Ms. Mc Hugh's day job is ensuring cannabis businesses remain in compliance with tax officials.

NO. 41

WESLEY McWHITE



Wesley McWhite III directs NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission's office of diversity inclusion. He's there to ensure the same communities long over-policed by the War on Drugs get their fair share of the economic dividends of legalized cannabis.

Mr. McWhite's background means he's uniquely qualified for the job. Because if there's one thing we should know about cannabis by now – two things, actually – is that 1) America's pot laws have long been weaponized against people of color and 2) the heavy lifting to change those crappy laws happened in Queer communities during the AIDS crisis.


Mr. McWhite's appointment to the CRC continues a long and venerable tradition of LGBTQ people reforming America's backwards and remorseless marijuana laws. It's also a resounding reminder that the days of ensnaring Black kids into legal trouble for a dime bag are rapidly winding down.

NO. 42

HUGH O'BEIRNE



The director and co-founder of Cannabis Advisory Group, Hugh O'Beirne previously served as President and Board Chair of New Jersey Cannabis Industry Association. Mr. O'Beirne was nominated to this year's power list by the folks at AYR/Garden State Dispensary who credit Mr. O'Beirne for creating the climate for AYR to take root and to thrive in New Jersey.



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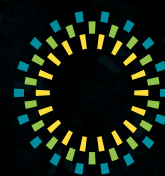
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NO. 43**DARRIN CHANDLER JR**

Darrin Chandler Jr. is devoted to using business & entrepreneurship to transform cannabis into a wealth-building tool in communities disproportionately over-policed and most harmed by the War on Drugs.

Mr. Chandler is founder and owner of Premium Genetics, a wholly African American-owned and operated New Jersey cannabis company. Premium Genetics scored a cultivation license earlier this year and seem poised to snag a processing license as well.

Mr. Chandler is also Director of Real Estate at RIPCO, the powerful retail Real Estate brokerage. Ending cannabis-related stigma in the Real Estate industry is just another of Mr. Chandler's many considerable talents.

The son of a successful music producer, Mr. Chandler witnessed much of what his father's music clients (like Jay Z and Queen Latifa) were rapping about (such as police violence) during the War on Drugs.

NO. 44**KHARI EDWARDS**

Khari Edwards is Head of Corporate Responsibility at Ayr, one of NJ's largest cannabis dispensary chains.

As Ayr's Head of Corporate Responsibility, Mr. Edwards is responsible for providing strategic leadership and advancing Ayr's commitment toward being a force for good by creating a culture of inclusion and providing avenues of opportunity in the cannabis industry.

NO. 45

JAKE HONIG (RIP)

Jake Honig is a legend in the battle to end cannabis prohibition in the state of New Jersey. His fingerprints are on everything that's good about NJ's medical cannabis program.



Jake's battle with brain cancer was made less awful because of medical cannabis therapy which he used to manage pain and stimulate his appetite. His namesake legislation, aka Jake's Law, was signed by Governor Murphy in 2019, ended sales tax on medical cannabis in whole eliminating barriers (like extra doctor visits) to access medical cannabis.

NO. 46

EDWARD "LEFTY" GRIMES

Longtime disability advocate and cannabis iconoclast Edward Grimes is used to being underestimated. But he's too busy working to roll back cannabis stigma to worry about it too much. If you've ever noticed a certain skunky odor emanating from the State House lawn nearly early every Thursday for the past 10 years, that's Mr. Grimes, who still hosts *Sativa Cross*, an award-winning pot podcast, live from Trenton.



Every single person on this list is better situated on the cannabis bell curve because of Lefty Grimes, whose enduring brand of activism is predicated on persistence, visibility, and showing up.



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NO. 47

MICHAEL HOFFMAN

New Jersey's expungement king Michael Hoffman Esq. is the greatest enemy of cannabis convictions in the State of New Jersey, having established himself as the leading expert on NJ's badly broken expungement system.



NO. 48

TENISHA VICTOR

Tenisha Victor is the Director of Emerging Markets at Ayr, one of New Jersey's largest dispensary chains. An 8-year veteran in the Cannabis industry, Tenisha previously served as Director of Operations at IAnthus. Her senior level management background is all-encompassing from P&L Management, M&A, Regulatory & Compliance, Organic license acquisition, Supply chain management to E-commerce, and B2B sales strategy.



Her current focuses within Ayr are developing the new retail markets in adult use and medical states as well as developing social justice reform and community outreach programs within the Mid-Atlantic Region.

NO. 49

COLLEEN BEGLEY



What do we do with people who lost their voting rights because of a marijuana conviction now that cannabis *isn't* illegal anymore? That's the question Colleen Begley wants an answer to.

Long before medical cannabis was the law in this Garden State, Ms. Begley actually served time for helping sick people access medical cannabis therapy. Basically she helped sick people get weed.

Nowadays, with politically-connected dispensary owners getting richer by the day, Ms. Begley's story vividly embodies the enduring incoherence of NJ's cannabis laws.

A Burlington County native with a decades-long track record, Colleen Begley showed her commitment and resilience to the cause 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, an issue our legislature should be paying very close attention to.

NO. 50

RANDY THOMPSON



A long-time CEO of Help Not Handcuffs, Randy Thompson led Asbury Park's historic 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, Mr. Thompson led numerous legislative efforts to legalize recreational marijuana. When minority 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.

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NO. 51

JESS GONZALEZ

A lawyer by trade but an activist at heart, Jess Gonzalez proves that the newest vanguard of cannabis leaders has already snatched the baton and dreamed bolder than previous generations ever did.

Ms. Gonzalez serves as a cannabis and trademark attorney at Hiller PC as well as outside general counsel for the national organization Minorities for Medical Marijuana Inc, a group devoted to equity in the cannabis industry. She also led the social impact committee for NJ CAN 2020, the winningest coalition in cannabis referendum history,

This semester, she'll add the title "college professor" to her glittering résumé. She's going to be Hudson County Community College's first cannabis adjunct professor. She'll also be teaching a cannabis policy course at Rowan University this academic year.

NO. 52

MARIANNE BAYS, PhD

A longtime cannabis industry business consultant with a winning track record in multiple states, Marianne Bays is Vice President at the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, NJ's most influential trade group.

NO. 53

MATT FRIEDMAN



Politico NJ's Matt Friedman is one of the best, most seasoned writers on the NJ Politics beat. Mr. Friedman changes hearts and minds and influences New Jersey's political class who start their day devouring Mr. Friedman's (pot) innuendo-laced NJ Playbook.

In a world filled with cliché-prone reporters writing (not) clever headlines or making dumb jokes about weed, Matt Friedman stands out because he actually knows how to land the joke. Wit and wordplay are powerful tools to end stigma and Matt Friedman is good at both of those things, especially when he's writing about (or smoking) cannabis.

NO. 54

ROB CRESSEN



A former GOP State Chairman, Rob Cressen is a founding board member at the NJ CannaBusiness Association. The following tribute was written by his friend 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.

NO. 55**AMANDA HOFFMAN**

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

**NO. 56****CHARLANA McKEITHEN**

The director of Cannabis Laws Matter, and before that NORML NJ, Charlana McKeithen is (still) 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.”



Ms. McKeithen currently serves on the board of Cannabis Advisory Group, an influential cannabis trade association.

Ms. McKeithen’s candor about the rampant sexism in New Jersey’s cannabis space came with a heavy price like it always does for women who speak out. But in doing so, Charlana McKeithen sacrificed to make things better for the women who came later.

NO. 57**ALANA HANS-COHEN**

Alana M. Hans-Cohen is an associate in Pashman Stein's Cannabis & Hemp Law practice group where she focuses her practice on the intersection of cannabis law with corporate and business law, real estate, government, and public policy.

A self-described "cannabis nerd," Ms. Hans-Cohen is also on the board of trustees at the Cannabis Advisory Group.

**NO. 58****JENNA-RAE RUSSO**

Jenna-Rae Russo is the newly-minted Deputy Director at the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, NJ's most influential trade group.

**NO. 59****IMANI OAKLEY**

A brilliant and unapologetic iconoclast, 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.





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NO. 60**MARLEINA UBEL**

Marleina Ubel is a rising star at NJ Policy Perspective and leads the think tank's drug policy and criminal justice policy work. Ms. Ubel quickly established herself as an expert at the intersection of drug policy and policing, and advocates for non-punitive, community-led public safety models.

**NO. 61****MOIRA NELSON**

Monmouth County stalwart Moria Nelson is Director of Drug Policy Reform for Action Together New Jersey where she continues to make a compelling and persuasive argument why cannabis reform is a good deal for the taxpayer. Prohibition is expensive, especially considering the diminished prospects of someone ensnared by the War on Drugs.

**NO. 62****BRANDON "CEE" CHEWEY**

The president of the Asbury Park Cannabis Community Inc, Brandon Chewey is also the founder of Shroorganix, a cannabis consulting firm.



After successfully using cannabis to detox from heroin, Mr. Chewey has become NJ's most powerful voice promoting and legalizing cannabis therapy as a detox tool from opiate abuse disorder.

NO. 63**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.

The cannabis expungement issue continues to bedevil Trenton lawmakers and regulators so why not empanel an expungement commission and put Alma Saravia in charge? (Governor Murphy, are you listening?)

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

NO. 64**FELICE TWADDLE**

A longtime cannabis advocate, Felice Twaddle is the treasurer at the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, New Jersey's most influential trade group.

NO. 65**PETER ROSENFELD**

The longtime board member of the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of New Jersey, Peter Rosenfeld is one of the most venerable, battle-tested cannabis advocates you'll find in New Jersey.



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NO. 66

DiAnA McELROY

DiAnA McElroy is founder and CEO of Higher High, LLC, a cannabis consulting firm focused on the needs of the cannabis industry. Ms. McElroy is a director at the Cannabis Advisory Group, an influential cannabis trade group.



Ms. McElroy believes that open and honest conversations are the only path to remove stigma and misinformation around cannabis so every one of NJ's 118,473 qualified patients can find the right medication for what ails.

NO. 67

STACEY UDELL

Stacey Udell is a director at the Cannabis Advisory Group, a powerful NJ trade association. Ms. Udell currently serves as leader of the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants' Cannabis Industry Group.



NO. 68**DENISE and
RICH MOROSKI**

Of all the good reasons to legalize weed (ie: business opportunities, social justice, to help sick people,) longtime cannabis advocates Denise and Rich Moroski are eager to remind the world that smoking cannabis is fun. In a world where “because it’s fun” was never a sympathetic enough reason, Denise and Rich Moroski’s exuberism for having fun while doing cannabis activism is a radical, stigma-quashing act of defiance.

NO. 69**ROB MEJIA**

A man of many talents, Rob Mejia is a professor at Stockton University where he helped to develop Stockton’s cannabis course load enabling Stockton students to minor in Cannabis Studies, putting them on the path to success in this lucrative new industry.

By changing hearts and minds in academia plus his pro-pot influence on the next generation, Mr. Mejia has probably done more to quash cannabis stigma than anyone on this list.

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NO. 70**TONI-ANNE BLAKE**

Toni-Anne Blake is communications director at the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission which establishes and enforces the rules and regulations governing the licensing, cultivation, testing, selling, and purchasing of cannabis in the state.

**NO. 71****RON MONDELLO**

With homerule alive and well New Jersey's local cannabis licensing process, the need for good counsel to assist overwhelmed municipalities has never been more necessary. Ron Mondello has filled that gap, serving as cannabis council for Jersey City, Hoboken, Oakland, and Atlantic City to create thoughtful and balanced local licensing regimes. With towns bearing the brunt of some of the hardest decisions in New Jersey cannabis, Mr. Mondello helps NJ municipalities to navigate the best path forward.

**NO. 72****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 racial equity in the legal cannabis market.



Mr. Lardieri is part of a long and venerable tradition of LGBTQ people doing the heavy lifting to fix America's lousy pot laws.

NO. 73**SHERGOH ALKALANI**

Shergoth Alkalani is a long-serving board member at the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, NJ's most influential cannabis trade group.

**NO. 74****LEO ASHE**

Leo Ashe is a cannabis advocate and good-government watchdog whose non-profit On the Record seeks accountability from those in power. Mr. Ashe is founder and CEO of Voltaire Cannabis, which received a conditional license from NJ's Cannabis Regulatory Commission.

**NO. 75****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.





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NO. 76

LEE VARTAN

An attorney at Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi PC, Mr. Vartan was once shortlisted to become US Attorney. Mr. Vartan represents a number of aspiring cannabis clients in New Jersey, building on CGS Law's winning track record helpline clients score cannabis licenses.



NO. 77

CHARLES “CHUCK” LATINI

Charles Latini is a Director of the Cannabis Advisory Group and a staunch advocate for comprehensive planning with respect to cannabis uses state-wide. Recognizing the inequalities in licensing present at the local level, Chuck uses his platform to advise municipalities on their potential licensing blind spots and other barriers to entry. Mr. Latini has worked with municipalities and cannabis businesses alike securing local approval for the cannabis projects he designs. Mr. Latini also serves as Planner for the Township of Ewing, a municipality praised by the CRC for its inclusivity and forward-thinking as it relates to cannabis businesses.



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NO. 78

HARRIS LAUFER

Thrice-nominated for this year's Cannabis Power List.

Harris Laufer is legislative director for NJ Senator President Nick Scutari, New Jersey's self-appointed pot sherpa and the President of the New Jersey Senate. Mr. Laufer's ranking will skyrocket if he can convince his boss to post legislation to legalize the home cultivation of cannabis in New Jersey.



NO. 79

REV CHARLES BOYER

For years, Rev. Charles Boyer has been the conscience of NJ's cannabis debate. An ardent supporter of fairness and justice, Rev. Boyer continues to unapologetically promote a framework that prioritizes communities most impacted by the War on Drugs.

A third-generation preacher who pastors at the Greater Mount Zion AME Church in Trenton, Reverend Boyer also founded Salvation and Social Justice to explore the intersection of public policy and theology with a devotion to liberating public policy theologically.

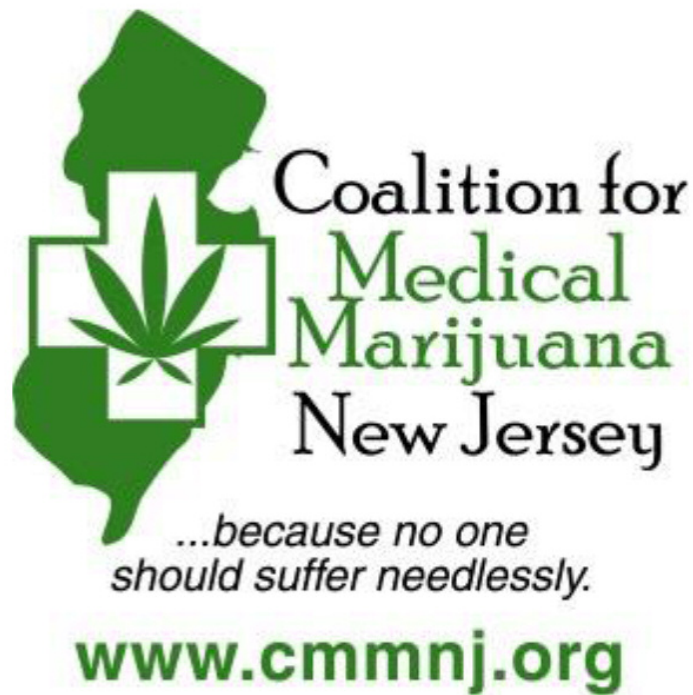


NO. 80

DEBI MADAIO

A nurse and a longtime cannabis advocate, Debi Madaio is one of New Jersey's unsung drug law reformers.





The Coalition for Medical Marijuana New Jersey, Inc. (CMMNJ) is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization and public charity.

CMMNJ has been helping patients through education and advocacy since 2003. CMMNJ was instrumental in getting the Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act introduced into the state legislature in 2005 and signed into law in 2010.

CMMNJ's post-legalization goals are to expand patient access while building a more robust cannabis industry. To do this, we must provide:

- Insurance coverage for medical cannabis;
- Expanded qualifying conditions;
- Hospital and institutional access;
- Home cultivation rights, and,
- Full Entheogenic (Plant Medicine) access.

Ken Wolski, RN, MPA, Executive Director

Email: info@cmmnj.org

Facebook: [Friends of the Coalition for Medical Marijuana-NJ](#)

Twitter: @CMM_NJ

CMMNJ blog: <https://cmmnj.blogspot.com/>

NO. 81**DILLON MCGUIRE**

Dillion McGuire is an associate at Pashman Stein, one of New Jersey's most politically influential (and cannabis-friendly) law firms.

**NO. 82****MICHAEL BRENNAN**

Michael Brennan is a board member/trustee at the Coalition for Medical Marijuana, NJ's most venerable cannabis reform organization. Mr. Brennan frequents Trenton's halls of power, making the case for reforming our state's remorseless drug laws.

**NO. 83****JEFF BOOKER and
NICHELLE SANTOS**

Jeff Booker along with Nichelle Santos co-founded CannaCoverage to meet the growing insurance needs of the gazillion dollar cannabis industry.



NO. 84**MOLLIE HARTMAN
LUSTIG**

Mollie Hartman Lustig is a partner at McLaughlin & Stern, one of New Jersey's most powerful law firms, where she leads the firm's Cannabis Practice Group.

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NO. 85

JOANNE SIDOTI



Joann Sidoti is the newly-minted deputy communications director at the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission which establishes and enforces the rules and regulations governing the licensing, cultivation, testing, selling, and purchasing of cannabis in the state.

Ms. Sidoti was nominated to this year's power list by Mahen Gunaratna, Gov. Murphy's former communications director.

NO. 86

JEFF OAKES (RIP)



NJ's cannabis community mourned when esteemed and beloved advocate Jeff Oakes lost his battle with cancer.

We honor him posthumously here.

Mr. Oakes spent his dying days 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 Oakes' legacy the day home-cultivation comes to New Jersey.

NO. 87**ADAM UMANSKY**

Longtime cannabis advocate/activist Adam Umansky sits on the board of Sativa Cross, a charity focusing on medical cannabis and disability rights.

**NO. 88****TRICIA MULLER**

One of the most politically-connected people in South Jersey, Tricia Muller currently holds a leadership role at Cannabis Advisory Board, an influential cannabis trade association.

**NO. 89****YOUR BUDTENDER**

Maybe you're a medical user in New Jersey. Perhaps you've hit a recreational dispensary in New Jersey or visited a state where pot is legal. Your budtender is your cannabis barista, ie: the person who's selling you cannabis at the dispensary.

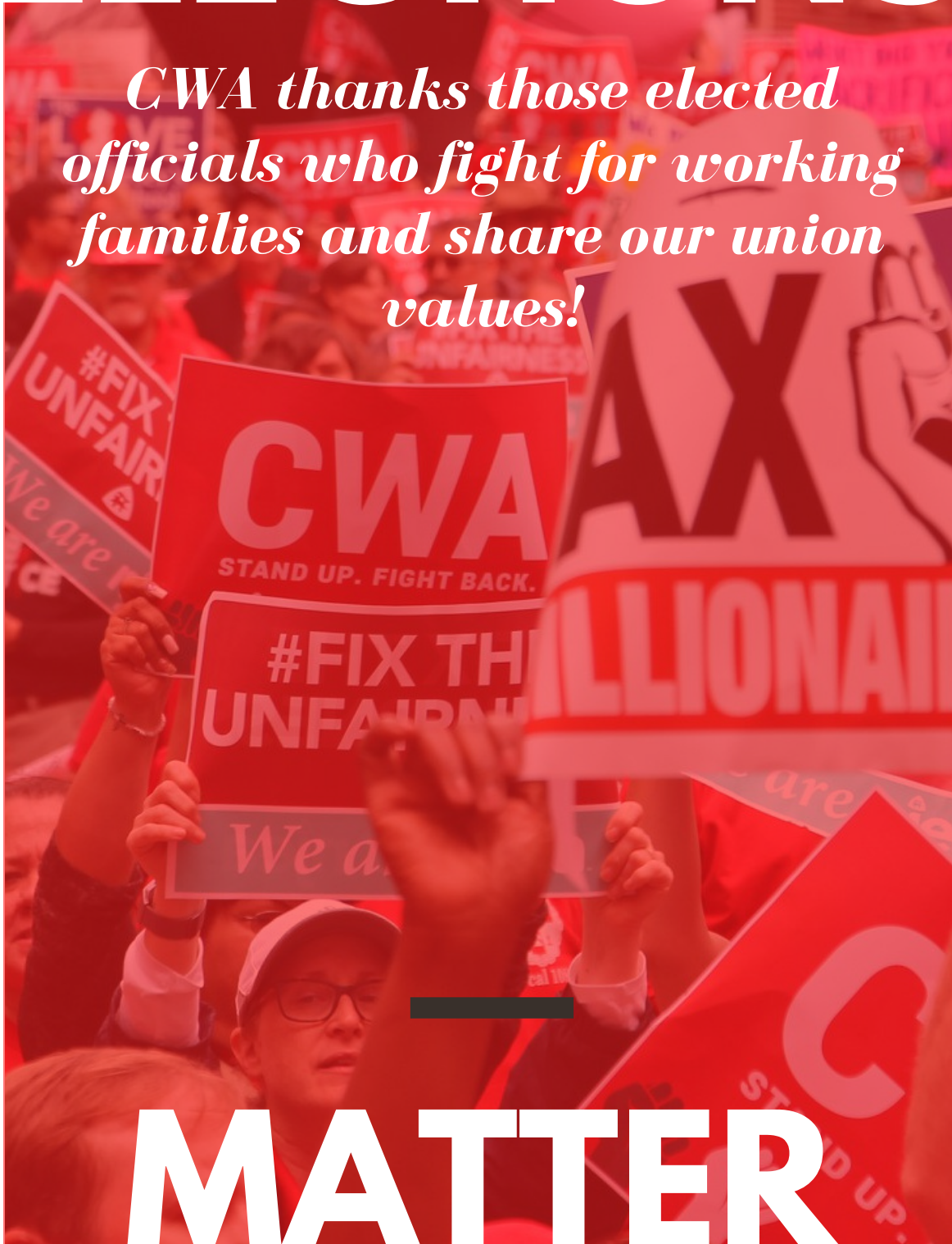


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NO. 90**JON-HENRY BARR**

A Republican and a municipal prosecutor, Jon-Henry Barr might seem an unlikely cannabis advocate, but he's fashioned himself into one of the most effective cannabis activists in New Jersey history by constantly reminding anyone who'll listen of the societal consequences of locking people up for weed.

**NO. 91****FAYE COLEMAN**

Faye Coleman is co-founder and CEO of Pure Genesis LLC, a women and minority-led cannabis company. Ms. Coleman also serves on the board of the New Jersey CannaBusiness Association, NJ's oldest and most politically influential cannabis trade group.

**NO. 92****JULIE WINTER**

Julie Winter is the VP of Retail in New Jersey for Ayr, one of New Jersey's largest cannabis dispensary chains. Ms. Winter has over 8 years of compliance management experience in the cannabis industry.



NO. 93**WEDNESDAY MAYER**

Wednesday Mayer is one of the most committed and well-respected medical cannabis advocates in the state of New Jersey.

**NO. 94****DIANE RIORTELLA (RIP)**

When the fight to legalize medical cannabis was raging back in 2009-2010, the most compelling, persuasive testimony of the entire debate came from Diane Riortella, of Egg Harbor, NJ. She was breathtaking. Diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, Diane sacrificed her dying days to fight for medical cannabis acceptance and legalization. Diane passed in 2012 but not before changing more hearts and minds than anyone on this list.



There's a memorial plaque at Compassion Care Foundation in Egg Harbor honoring Diane Riortella as a cannabis crusader.

NO. 95**JASON THOMAS**

The founder and CEO of Precision Quality and Compliance, Jason Thomas is one of New Jersey's well-respected cannabis advocate. He won the "Most Selfless" award at the recent Real Cannabis Entrepreneur Conference in Newark.



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NO. 96

EVAN NISON

A longtime member of NORML NJ, Evan Nison is one of the most indefatigable cannabis advocates in New Jersey.



NO. 97

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 recently crossed the 118,473-mark. Spare a thought for the roughly 8,606 (or so) patients who've passed away after spending the last days 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.

We bear witness to that loss here.

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NO. 98**JOHN ZEBROWSKI**

The recently retired Sayreville Police Chief, John Zebrowski was one of the loudest anti-pot voices in New Jersey's decades long battle to legalize medical and recreational cannabis. Chief Zebrowski's legacy lives on every autumn when police offices around the nation send out breathless, unsubstantiated press releases to scaremonger parents into believing there might be (razor blades/fentanyl/pot gummies) in their children's Halloween candy.

Spoiler alert: pot gummies are expensive in New Jersey! Literally no one is giving pot gummies out to trick-or-treaters.

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NO. 99

MARY PAT ANGELINI

A former state lawmaker from Monmouth County, Mary Pat Angelini is one of the most influential anti-pot policy makers in New Jersey history. A “Just Say No” devotee in the mold of Nancy Reagan, Ms. Angelini is now largely swimming against the tide in a state that overwhelmingly voted to legalize weed.



NO. 100

PATRICK KENNEDY

One of the loudest anti-pot voices in modern American history, Patrick Kennedy, the former Congressman who resides in Ocean County, has spent much of his post-Congressional life clinging to the last remaining vestiges of cannabis prohibition in America and, in turn, working to impose his views on the rest of us.



Patrick Kennedy is still an influential voice in the cannabis policy debate in America. But he's a lot less influential than he used to be in New Jersey where voters legalized recreational cannabis by a historic 2-to-1 margin.