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Welcome to the 2023 InsiderNJ **RETROSPECTIVE**

where we examine the most significant contests and political developments of the past year. Certainly, the biggest stories of the year include U.S. Senator Bob Menendez getting indicted (again), this time for allegedly working as an instrument of the Egyptian government, and Democrats handily holding onto the Legislature.

The GOP tried to make battleground contests about “parental rights,” in the aftermath of Attorney General Matt Plakin’s attempt to reinstate school district policies protecting the privacy of LGBTQ students. “Put simply,” said Platkin, “we can both keep parents informed about their children’s development and protect the civil rights of our most vulnerable students. Our laws require nothing less.”

Battleground Democrats fought back with a two-pronged argument for the most part that included the guarantee of reproductive freedom for women (especially important on the heels of the United States Supreme Court’s revocation of Roe v. Wade), and a plan to address rising senior citizen costs.

Finally, at least on Election Day, it proved a pretty status quo year, even



with Menendez doing his level best (or worst) to shock the static system with his gold bar caper, as the entire country now revs up for a likely rematch between incumbent President Joe Biden, a Democrat, and his multiply indicted Republican challenger, former President Donald Trump.

Praying for peace in the Middle East, and the enduring strength of America.

***Merry Christmas and
Happy Holidays.***

As always, we’ll see you on the other side.



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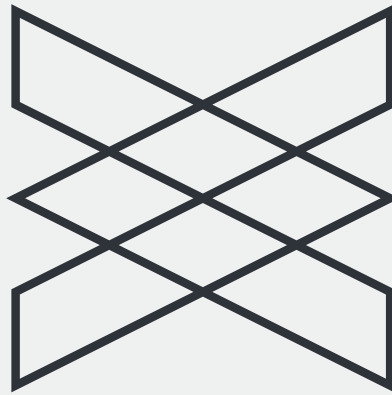
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Winner of the Year **VIN GOPAL**



Supposedly in a tough contest, the Democratic state senator from Monmouth County won almost 60% (more than 11,000 votes) to handily win reelection. In addition to helping the Senate Democrats' cause, Gopal's victory propelled his two running mates to victory, helping to enable Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-11) to avoid critical losses in the Assembly. "What we did tonight in Monmouth County is we drew political parties together to bring this massive landslide. If that doesn't send a message to our opposition, I don't know what will," Gopal told his supporters on Election Night.

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Winner Runner-up **JOHN BURZICHELLI**



When Senate President Steve Sweeney lost his LD-3 Senate seat to an over-the-road truck driver, it looked like the end of the line for suburban South Jersey Democrats. But Burzichelli, Sweeney's former running mate and a veteran of the Assembly Budget Committee, had other plans. He beat Sweeney's conqueror, incumbent Republican Senator Ed Durr, 53-47%, to grab back a senate seat for the wounded South Jersey Democratic Organization. His party ally, Assemblyman Paul Moriarty, likewise won in the neighboring 4th Legislative District to give South Jersey Dems some significant daylight after some lean years in the Trump era.

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Politician of the Year

KEVIN McCABE



The Middlesex County Democratic Committee chairman (a key ally of Speaker Craig Coughlin) committed at the start of the season to fighting to retain Democratic Party control – at the very least – in the critical battlegrounds of LD-11, LD-14 and LD-16. McCabe did that, in addition to working with Ocean County allies to help generate an LD-30 Democratic win with Rabbi Avi Schnall. Keep in mind, too, that the party chairman maintains close relations with Senate President Nick Scutari of neighboring Union County.

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Politician Runner-up **CRAIG GUY**

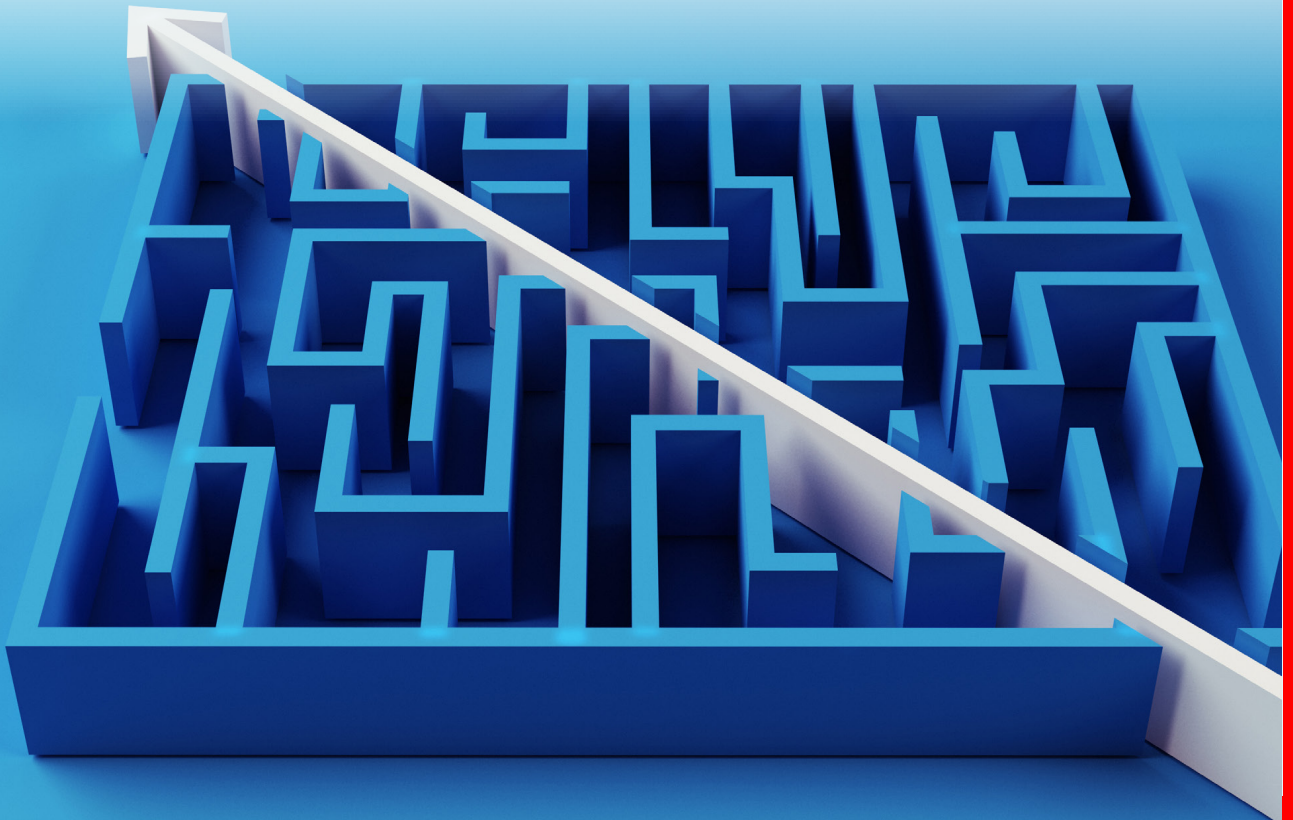


The longtime Democratic Party consigliere to retiring Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise this year undertook his own establishment-backed candidacy to succeed DeGise as the next Hudson County executive. Guy won handily, not a surprise when one considers the plurality of Democrats in Hudson, but no easy feat behind the scenes when assessing the abiding factions. A lifelong Democrat, retired Jersey City police lieutenant and proud father and grandfather, “I could not be more thankful to the people of Hudson County for entrusting me with the honor and responsibility of serving as your next County Executive, and I pledge to work tirelessly to deliver the progress that our residents need and deserve,” County Executive-elect Guy said on Election Night. “Hudson County has always been my home and I’ve devoted my life to serving all the people who live in our twelve municipalities — as County Executive, I will fight each and every day to improve quality of life and provide more opportunities for our residents.”

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County Chair of the Year

LEROY JONES OF ESSEX COUNTY



The Democratic State Party Chairman doubles as chair of the Essex County Democratic Committee. The general election certainly did not have the drama of battleground regions in the state (especially Middlesex, South Jersey, Somerset, and Monmouth), but the end result for Jones is the acquisition of two senators (Britnee Timberlake and John McKeon) whom the chair counts on as key allies. Their victories send an important message to the rest of the state regarding Jones' power in his home county.



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Loser of the Year

BOB MENENDEZ



The statewide staple of Democratic Party politics in New Jersey going back to 2006, powerful former chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Menendez and his wife Nadine this year absorbed indictments in New York on federal bribery conspiracy charges related to an allegedly corrupt relationship with three businessmen to benefit Egypt, according to CNBC.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams of the Southern District of New York laid out the three-count indictment. “He used his power and influence, including his leadership role on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to benefit the government of Egypt in various ways,” Williams said.

Menendez allegedly provided sensitive U.S. government material to Egyptian officials. In addition, the senator allegedly tried to improperly influence U.S. Attorney Phil Sellinger on behalf of those likewise charged schemer(s). “Fortunately, the public officials did not bend to the pressure,” said Williams. “That’s a good thing.”

The indictment claims the senator accepted gold bars as part of hundreds of thousands in bribes for public services rendered.

Although he maintains his innocence and wants to run for reelection, numerous key county party organizations shifted their support away from the senior senator to First Lady Tammy Murphy.



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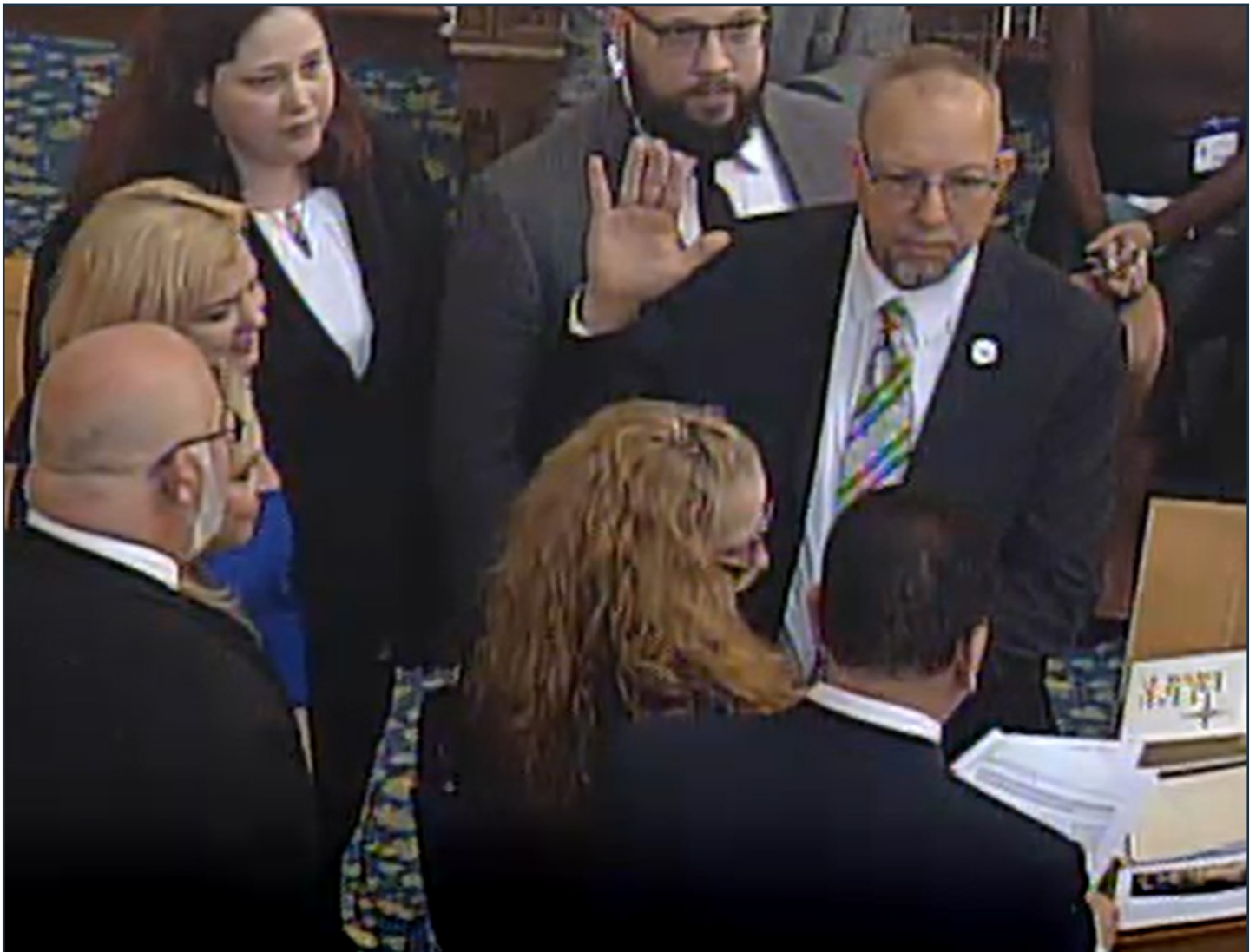
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Loser of the Year Runner-up **ED DURR**



The nonunion over-the-road truck driver gave off a folk hero glow after ignominiously toppling Senate President Steve Sweeney in 2021, but as it turns out, Durr lasted only a single term before South Jersey Democrats got their act together, ran a better-financed and more focused campaign, and took the Republican out of there behind the candidacy of a come-backing John Burzichelli (See above).

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Loser of the Year Runner-up

BOB HUGLIN



The chairman of the Republican State Committee never seemed to summon an effective strategy to score victories in critical legislative battlegrounds this year and left the field on November 7th having absorbed stinging defeats on all fronts.

Legislator of the Year

RICHARD "DICK" CODEY



Another title for this year's "Legislator of the Year" might as well be, "Thank you for Your Service." From the heart, we thank Governor Codey, who stepped into the breach to serve New Jersey with distinction – and a twinkle in his eye – after James McGreevey's 2004 fall from grace. Codey retired this year after 50 years in the legislature, the longest-serving in state history. On his Facebook page as he announced his retirement from the senate, Codey, an Essex Democrat, wrote, "I've fought for who and what I believe in, even when it wasn't easy. I've made lifelong friends and lifelong enemies — and I'm proud of both lists!"

Well said.

The retiring kid from Orange stood up to political bullies when it counted, and rendered service uncluttered by the invasive species of bosses overstepping the boundaries of both civil decorum, and democratic decency.

He will be missed.

In gratitude, here's hoping he and his lovely wife enjoy a well-earned retirement.

InsiderNJ also wishes well in retirement State Senator Nia Gill one of the finest inquisitors of the senate chamber, Assemblyman Tom Giblin, Assemblyman Ralph Caputo, and Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, Democrats all of Essex County.



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Legislation of the Year

SPEAKER

CRAIG COUGHLIN'S

STAYNJ PLAN



In an effort to address the rising costs facing senior citizens across New Jersey, Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin in May unveiled a proposal to cut property taxes in half for most seniors and significantly expand assistance for medical benefits. Speaker Coughlin introduced legislation (A1) that would create a new property tax credit program called StayNJ, which will make it more affordable for residents to stay in their homes. Additional legislation was introduced that will significantly expand medical assistance for health insurance and prescription drugs.

Under StayNJ, the state would provide a 50% credit on seniors' property tax bills, capped at \$10,000. Homeowners who are 65 years or older would be eligible for the tax credit on their principal residence, and there is no income limit for eligibility. Payments would be applied directly to tax bills, with benefits starting on January 1, 2025.

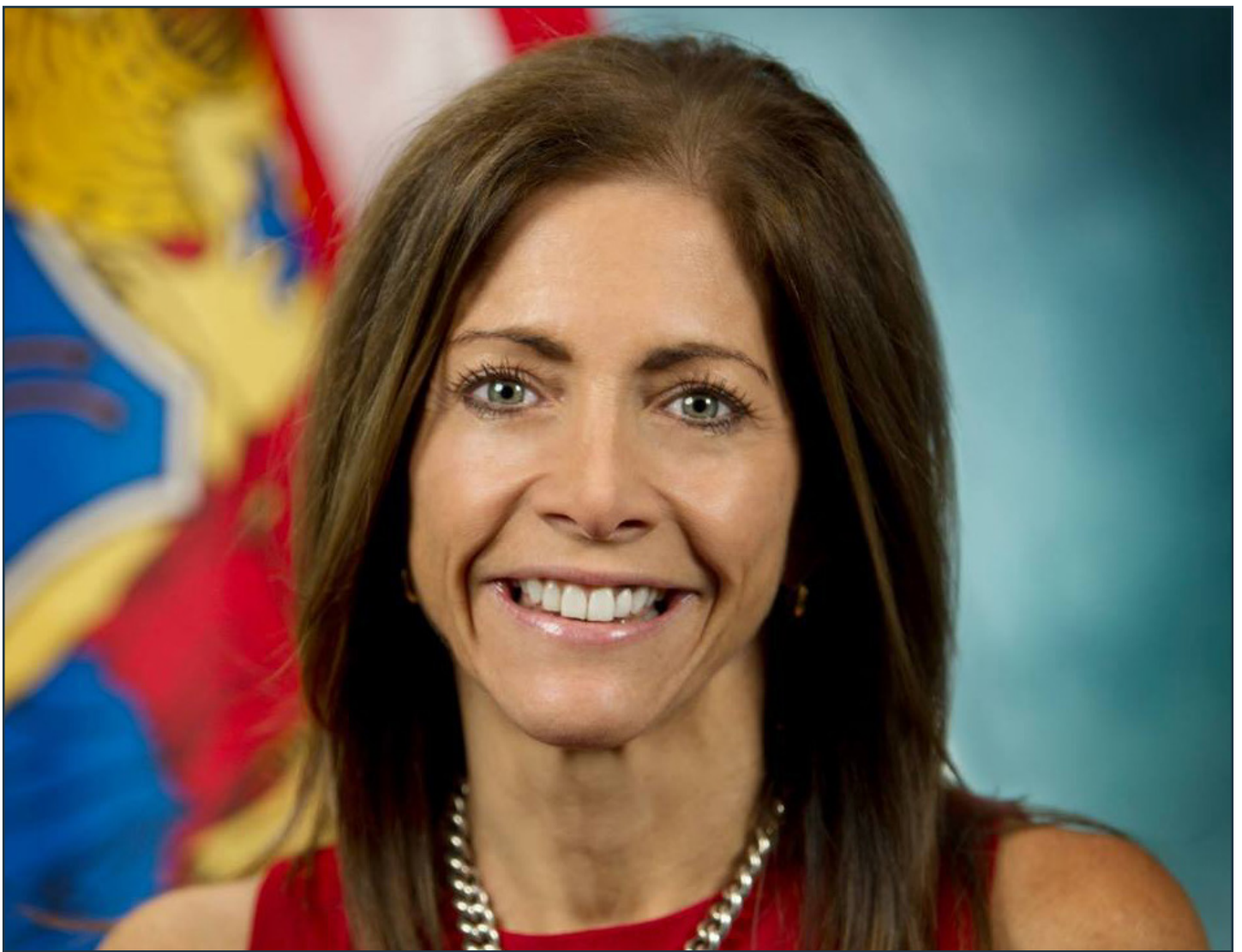
"I've heard from people who have to sell the home they raised their children in, and leave the neighborhood they've lived in for thirty years, because they can't afford to stay," said Speaker Coughlin. "My plan, StayNJ, will mean that seniors have the freedom to plan a future in New Jersey with friends and loved ones they've spent a lifetime making memories with."

The plan builds on efforts to make New Jersey more affordable. Governor Murphy and Democrats in the legislature have enacted 18 tax cuts over the past five years. Last year's budget included the largest tax relief program in state history, which included the ANCHOR property tax rebate program. Assembly Democrats are committed to continuing the ANCHOR program in the next fiscal year.

Ultimately signed into law by Governor Phil Murphy, StayNJ proved a significant resource for battleground Democrats to successfully augment their reproductive freedom message in the general election with a realpolitik economic argument.

WHO'S UP Going into 2024

TAMMY MURPHY



The First Lady of New Jersey ends the year with significant establishment support toward her candidacy for the nomination of the United States Senate. Murphy got in the race after the public meltdown of Bob Menendez (see above), who continues to assert his innocence.

MIKE TESTA



Unlike many other his party allies in other battlegrounds, the Republican State Senator (and party chair in Cumberland) had a good Election Night, not only handily winning reelection in a district he stripped from the Democrats in 2019, but electing Republicans countywide. Keep an eye on Testa. Now that U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-2) intends to run for reelection, and the state Senator won't be running for that congressional seat, he may turn his attention statewide, perhaps in the capacity of GOP state chair.

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ANDY KIM



The 3rd Congressional District representative will have a difficult time off the line defeating Tammy Murphy in the Democratic Primary (or anyone who has the benefit of the line), but his decision to come busting out of the gate declaring his candidacy for the United States Senate before most anyone else spoke on the subject of the embattled and politically intimidating incumbent already earned him many admirers. We'll see what happens in the statewide contest for senate next year, but gutsy progressive Kim has already made it interesting, and that's something in New Jersey, whose politics have been fairly static.

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AVI SCHNALL



The Assemblyman-elect in LD-30, Brooklyn born and bred, Director of the New Jersey office of Agudath Israel, the national advocacy organization for Hareidi Jewry, will, in the words of InsiderNJ Columnist Alan Joel Steinberg, occupy the catbird seat in the Legislature, significant, “in a time of Jewish torment, with Israel endangered as never before and antisemitism resurgent throughout the world, with the election of a fascistic Trump in 2024 a rising possibility, and with Biden’s resolve on behalf of Israel being sorely tested by anti-Israel elements in the Democratic Party and within his administration. All Jews can derive pride, regardless of party or ideology, in the progress of Avi Schnall.”

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JACK CIATTARELLI



The 2021 Republican nominee for governor has significant goodwill toward his 2025 statewide candidacy, as he continues to make a good impression with New Jerseyans in both parties as he avidly makes contact throughout the state.



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Contest of the Year

LD3



It had all the makings of a classic South Jersey matchup between a machine Democrat of substance and an upstart Republican who scorns the machine. InsiderNJ Columnist Fred Snowflack captured the race from the district when he wrote the following back in October:

It's been a "long, grueling year," Durr told supporters over lunch Wednesday at the M&M hunting preserve after his "first annual clay shoot" tournament. The senator, by the way, admitted not shooting very well that morning. No matter, he has other concerns as he runs for reelection in LD-3, which covers all of Salem and parts of Gloucester and Cumberland counties. A Facebook post by Durr back in 2020, which he points out was before he was elected, reads as follows: "A woman does have a choice. Keep her legs closed."

Democrats are running with this comment and trying to take it as far as they can. A group called the South Jersey Women's Alliance is campaigning hard to "Dump Durr."

That task falls on John Burzichelli, a long time Assemblyman who lost his job in 2021, a down ballot casualty of Durr's magical ride. He's now running for the Senate. "I've got better name recognition than he does," Burzichelli said quickly when I caught up with him a few weekends ago at a "town hall" in Pedricktown. I had asked about the problem of running against a "celebrity."

In the end, Burzichelli hung tough and ousted Durr.

Campaign of the Year

VIN GOPAL 2023



Securing a third term as the senator from the 11th District, Gopal made it look easy, like he barely broke a sweat.



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Comeback of the Year

JOHN BURZICHELLI



A respected lawmaker in his own right, Burzichelli achieved a significant political victory by earning the trust of those Democrats outside his region still fearful of the implications of a South Jersey organization win. In short, Burzichelli proved big enough to both have the backing of George Norcross III, and the party at large. He's that good.

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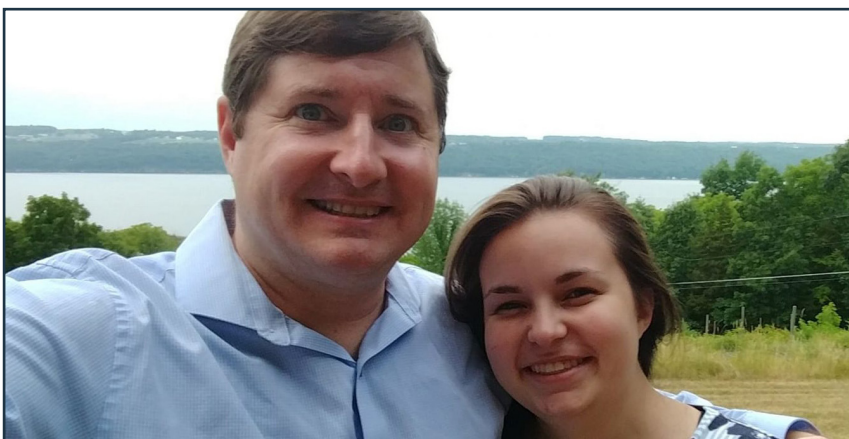
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Operative of the Year

MITCH SELM



The longtime veteran operative scored key victories this year in Toms River and Brick, as well as LD-11, where he worked the campaign of victories incumbent Senator Vin Gopal.



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Newcomer of the Year

LUANNE PETERPAUL



With the LD-11 Democrats' Election Night victory, Judge Peterpaul began her official journey to becoming NJ's first LGBTQ woman elected to Legislature in the state. The results of the LD11 Democratic County Committee vote ensured that Judge Peterpaul and her running-mate, Dr. Margie Donlon, will join Senator Vin Gopal on the ballot in June. "Luanne's candidacy is not just a win for visibility and representation- it's a win for the voters in the 11th Legislative District and every New Jerseyan. Her credentials are beyond impressive, but it's her dedication to community service and her desire to help those of us with the most need that will drive her policy and campaign approach. We're looking forward to supporting this ticket for the next nine months and getting Luanne to Trenton," said NJ LGBTQ Democrats Chairwoman Lauren Albrecht, continuing. "2023 is going to be a year for the record books!"



Pictured above:
Sean M. Spiller, President (center)
Steve Beatty, Vice President (left)
Petal Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer (right)

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QUOTE OF THE YEAR

*"Women do have a choice!
Keep their legs closed."*

-Ed Durr's 2020 Facebook page.

It came back and haunted the Republican Senate incumbent as Burzichelli aggressively made it a campaign issue.



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Rematch of the Year

FULOP vs SWEENEY



The announcement in December by former Senate President Steve Sweeney for Governor 2025 sets up another statewide pre-primary contest between Sweeney and Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop.

The pair waged a sharp elbowed battle back in 2016, in the lead-up to 2017 as they sought to succeed then-Governor Chris Christie.

Fulop was the first to formally enter the 2025 statewide contest, joined this month by Sweeney, as the pair attempt to muscle out others and establish themselves as credible contenders, even as each occupies the other's lane.



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PASSAGES

New Jersey lost many fine people this year.
Here are two of them:



RONALD L. RICE

A New Jersey political legend transitioned from the earth this year. Former State Senator Ronald L. Rice of Newark, never cynical, never timid, never canned, who pulled long range recon for our collective history as Americans, in times when our political culture frequently insists on occupying a space even outside the echo of histo-

ry, who determinedly advocated people power in a machine politics state, and specifically emphasized the power of lawmakers in a strong governor state, has died.

Vietnam combat veteran, Newark police officer and detective, trailblazing Newark City Councilman, deputy mayor and

community organizer, Legislative Black Caucus Chairman, a fighter to his core and a fiercely proud and outspoken lawmaker who often held the state budget hostage until he extracted social justice measures for New Jersey's impoverished and working-class people, former Senator Rice succumbed at the age of 77 after a battle with cancer.

PASSAGES

“When I took over as chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, I said, ‘We’re not where we need be because we’re not organized. Our people need help. They’re crying to us from the streets. Corporate America, the schoolhouses, the correctional facilities, and even the churches – they were not there for them, because in each case, they may only see one, three or four [Black representatives in those institutions],” Senator Rice said in December of 2022.



But he made the purpose of his life clear as he urged his colleagues to move forward with vigor.

“You have power you do not recognize,” Senator Rice said. “I don’t care what the president says. The only people who can make policy are the legislators.

“Black is beautiful,” the senator added. “It is also powerful.”

In August, the Newark lawmaker relinquished his legislative seat after a 36-year career in the state senate.

Reinforced by those in attendance at his retirement gala late last year, his life’s work – underscored by self-sacrifice, Marine Corps (1966-1970) public interest dedication, real-world groundedness on the streets of America, and a legislator’s sharp elbowed understanding of the system – Rice stood in stark contrast to many present day political figures, who strike Caligula-like self-idolizing poses in their resistance to the country’s history, to battles won and shifts of power gained, and a surreal, seemingly slavish dedication to pre-Civil War era anarchist nativist.

Legislative lion Rice, who represented Newark’s 28th District, based in the West Ward, in ill health and not the same since the 2020 death of his beloved wife Shirley, shared with his senate colleagues news of his retirement, effective August 31st.

The retirement of the unbought, unbossed, accessible

and publicly accountable Rice – from the seat he held as an independent Democratic Party voice since 1986, and retained with an off-the-line campaign against the party machine in 2007 – represented a major political event in New Jersey, a state governed by machine politics. At a gathering of Essex County Democrats last year, the senator’s longtime friend, political ally and colleague former Governor Richard Codey, identified him as “the most ethical” elected official in New Jersey. The ailing Essex County Senator this past summer sent letters to the Senate Majority Office and to his colleagues in the Legislative Black Caucus; and a personalized letter to each of his fellow senators.

“As I announce my retirement this is a heart-wrenching letter to compose,” Senator Rice wrote to the Legislative Black Caucus. “Together we have been etching compassion and equality into our society, one issue, and sometimes one person, at a time.”

To his fellow senators, the senator said he tendered his resignation “with a full heart,” describing his service as a New Jersey State Senator as the hon-

PASSAGES

or of his life. “I am proud of the many ways we have worked together to improve life in every community in our state, across every demographic. I am especially heartened by our desperately needed accomplishments toward racial equality and social justice.”

The senator shared both his gratitude and his sense of the value of friendships forged in Trenton, both past and present. “I’m thankful for how you sharpened my focus, defined by aspirations and brought out the best in me for the sake of my constituents,” Rice wrote.

The news today deeply impacted the New Jersey community. “I am so saddened by Senator Rice’s passing,” said U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12). “He was a true friend and warrior. He always referred to us as Nubian Queens reinforcing in us our nobility and worth. I can honestly say that I loved him. Rest in peace, dear man.”

Assemblyman Ralph Caputo (D-28) mourned.

“He is one of the most remarkable people I have met in life,” Caputo told InsiderNJ. “His

loyalty and his ability to represent people – second to none. Everything he did was for his constituents and his colleagues. I’m going to miss Senator Ronald Rice, and I am going to miss my true friend.”

Irvington Mayor Tony Vauss grieved when he learned of the senator’s death.



“So sad to hear about the loss of a great leader and please know that my thoughts are with friends and family,” said the mayor. “My deepest sympathies go out to the family of a fantastic role model. May God give them the peace that they seek.

Last year, on the news of Senator Rice’s retirement, goodwill poured forth from New Jersey’s political leaders.

“Everybody respects him,” said Essex County Democratic Party Chairman LeRoy Jones, a former state assemblyman who also serves as the Democratic State Party Chair. “I have the ultimate respect for him. He’s my former colleague. He has a stellar legacy of service.”

“Ron Rice will leave the state Senate as one of its most transformational members, a true maverick whose legacy of legislative successes will stand clearly on its own,” said Governor Phil Murphy. “He understood that public office is not about doing what’s best for individual politics or promotion but what’s right for the people we serve. He forced his fellow legislators – and to be sure, governors – to confront uncomfortable truths and wasn’t afraid to be a lone voice of dissent if he believed such dissent shined a light on injustice. In doing so, he made us all better at our jobs. While I have no doubt Ron will continue to advocate forcefully for social justice and the betterment of every community of color so long as he is able, his resignation leaves a huge void in the Legislature that will be hard to fill. I will always be proud to have called him my partner but even prouder to call him my friend.”

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Said South Ward Newark Councilman Pat Council, “Senator Rice is a consistent fighter for the state, his community and his people. The 28th District will miss not just the voice but the fight.”

“It is with a spirit of gratitude that I pen this letter,” said Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter (D-35), chair of the Legislative Black Caucus. “Senator Ronald L. Rice, I thank you for your decades of exemplary leadership. You have served not only for the people of the 28th District, but the entire state of New Jersey well. Your fearlessness, no non-sense outlook, and humor has been a staple for much of the progress our state has experienced. You have opened doors for so many people of color to hold executive positions, secure judicial appointments and serve as elected leaders. Your commitment to our community and our youth is unmatched. Thank you for being a champion for those who need it most.

“Throughout time, you have stood in the gap to be a voice for those who have historically been underserved, shedding light on the harms of inequities, disparities, and lack of

fairness. Your investigative acumen, ability to determine the root cause of issues, and create specific policy changes are a testament to your brilliance and pure heart. The strong connection you have to the people throughout the community and your gift to unify has allowed us to achieve historic gains at every level for our children and the most vulnerable populations.”

Rice served as both councilman and senator in that epoch when elected officials could occupy dual offices.

“I didn’t see it as a conflict of interest at all,” he said. “The real conflict of interest is people who work for someone else. I was getting things done because I was the councilman, and I didn’t have to go through anybody.”

He ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1998 (losing to James) and 2006 (losing to Booker). Booker and Aduvato aligned to dislodge him from the senate seat in 2007 but Rice – guerilla style – improbably won off the line.

“I hope when the time comes, they give me my just do,” said Rice, a grandfather. “You can’t

find anyone that got a job in government from me.

“I didn’t come here for my friends or to get the money,” he added.



As a senator, Rice – the leading statewide voice on decriminalization of marijuana and expungement, housing and police reform – founded and led the Legislative Black Caucus and fearlessly fought the Democratic power structure of Trenton and never become one of its obsequious enablers. He clashed openly with the South Jersey Democratic Party machine and its northern enablers and allies. The black caucus contributed those specific elements of the marijuana legalization legislation, without which there would be next to no social justice component.

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“This is political warfare,” Rice told InsiderNJ in 2019. “The black migration is one of the most important pieces of our history. And it’s hard to express that to a generation on social media that doesn’t know how to reach out and touch real things. You have to touch. What’s hurting us is back then [in the 1960’s], there was always a national leadership voice for black people, and as part of that you had people like Jesse Jackson, Dr. King, and Malcolm. But we don’t have a national voice anymore and we haven’t prepared one, and that hurts us. The national voice helped build the soldiers and leadership at the state levels so that when someone like Dr. King came, he would have lieutenants and ground troops keyed into the now.”

The senator helped his son, Ronald C. Rice, into the bruising New Jersey political arena, and the pair ran on opposing tickets in 2006, when the elder Rice ran for mayor against Cory Booker, allied with the younger Rice. For eight years, the two Rices together represented the West Ward, on the local and legislative fronts, a political alliance formed of blood and

equal commitment to substance and public service. After his son lost an anti-establishment bid for the 10th District Congressional seat in 2012 and did not pursue reelection to the council in 2014, Rice soldiered on alone in public life.

“It’s like this,” Rice told InsiderNJ. “Don’t be afraid to tell the political bosses you’re not going to deal with that. But here’s the problem. When you’re doing business or working for different people, you have to make a decision about whether you’re going to control your own destiny or are you

going to let people control it. If you’re going to be a lobbyist or you’re going to work for a corporation – I used to work for PSE&G, so I know this, see – you have to understand, you are going to be controlled to some degree. You have to make your mind up. And it’s like this. When you don’t take the hits for self-preservation, it means the people you purport to represent take the hits. They, we, get harmed in the process.”

A legend – New Jersey style, Newark style – died today.

So departed a man.



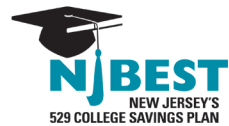
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JOE FIORDALISO

Joe Fiordaliso, president of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities and a native of Newark, died this year at St. Barnabas Hospital.

He was 78.

Said Governor Phil Murphy in a statement:

“Joe Fiordaliso was a consummate public servant, a trusted

colleague, and a good friend. Above all, he was a devoted husband to his wife Marilyn, father to Dana and Joe, and grandfather to six loving grandchildren. “As President of the BPU since the beginning of my Administration, Joe skillfully led our work to responsibly transition to a clean energy economy while always putting the needs of consumers first. He also was a key figure in our storm response efforts and

in ensuring that all New Jerseyans had access to critical services like clean water, electricity, and broadband. And, as a former three-time Mayor of Livingston and member of the Township Council, he was a dedicated member of his community.

“Every time you saw Joe he was wearing his signature offshore wind pin or handing one out to anyone and everyone he met. He had an infectious personality and generous spirit. Tammy and I will miss his wise counsel and friendship. May he Rest in Peace.”

Born and raised in the Ironbound section of Newark, New Jersey, Joseph L. Fiordaliso was nominated by Governor Richard Codey, and confirmed by the Senate, to serve on the Board of Public Utilities in 2005. He was renominated by Governor Christie in both 2011 and 2014. He also served on the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners’ Committee on Critical Infrastructure and Committee on Energy Resources and the Environment, and was a member of the Mid-Atlantic Conference



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of Regulatory Utilities Commissioners and also the Eastern Interconnection States' Planning Council.

Mr. Fiordaliso was elected to the Livingston Township Council in 1988 and went on to serve for three terms, including serving as Mayor three times during his tenure. In 1990, he was appointed by the Essex County Executive to serve as the Director of Planning and Economic Development. He served as Senator Codey's District Director and, in 2004, was named by Governor Codey as Deputy Chief of Staff.

Mr. Fiordaliso and his wife Marilyn resided in Livingston. They have two children, Joe and Dana, and six grandchildren.

In a statement, former Governor Codey said:

"Joe Fiordaliso was a great friend and dedicated public servant. I had the pleasure of working with him closely throughout my career and saw first-hand his impact on our state. He had a deep understanding of the issues that affected New Jerseyans and passion for doing great work.

"I will always remember one of

the biggest moments in both of our lives. It was August of 2004 and Gov. McGreevey stunned everyone with his announcement he was stepping down. For me, it meant I was to become governor. And for Joe, it meant he was about to become one of my top lieutenants and most trusted advisors. We got on the phone and I told him I needed him ASAP. There was only one problem: Joe and his wife, Marilyn, were vacationing somewhere on an island. Getting a flight was a problem, but Joe found a way. To this day, I'll never know how he got back to New Jersey as quickly as he did. But that was Joe in a nutshell. He found a way. He always found a way. My deepest condolences go out to Marilyn, their two children and six grandchildren."

Wrote Politico of the BPU under Mr. Fiordaliso's leadership:

"It is an often-overlooked agency that regulates services such as gas and electricity, but under Murphy it took on greater responsibility as he set a goal of reaching 100 percent clean energy by 2050 — and then moving it up to 2035, one of the most aggressive in the nation. That meant

the BPU under Fiordaliso was responsible for the regulatory push to electrify homes, overseeing the startup of the state's offshore wind industry and helping coordinate New Jersey's re-entry to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, among other things."



NJBIA President and CEO Michele Siekerka issued the following statement:

"NJBIA mourns the passing of Board of Public Utilities President Joe Fiordaliso today. Both as President and in his years prior with the BPU, Joe was truly and passionately committed to his job and its many missions. And even when we didn't agree on policy issues, President Fiordaliso always had an open

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door, took part in many NJBIA events and had receptive ears to our concerns. NJBIA offers our heartfelt condolences to Joe's family and friends. He will be greatly missed."

Said Speaker Craig Coughlin:

"I am sorry to hear about President Fiordaliso's passing. He was a talented, dedicated public servant in local and state government. He set a tone of collegiality and respect, bringing people together to get things done for New Jersey."

The following is a statement from Christina M. Renna, president & CEO, Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey:

"Throughout his esteemed career, President Fiordaliso was a dedicated public servant and leader in statewide energy policy. His impact extended beyond the realm of energy, as he was a respected figure within New Jersey's business community, working collaboratively with the CCSNJ and its members to promote economic development and job creation. The CCSNJ had the privilege of hosting President Fiordaliso many times during his tenure as President

of the Board, as recently as last month, and as always, we appreciated his willingness to address our members thoroughly and candidly. We send our sincerest condolences to his family during this difficult time."

Utility and Transportation Contractors Association (UTCA) Executive Director Dave Rible released the following statement:

"It would be difficult to find a

more caring, dedicated person than Joe Fiordaliso. He exemplified the best in what we could hope for in a public servant, first as a councilman and mayor, then in his work with Governor Codey and then leading the Board of Public Utilities. It is a remarkable legacy. Joe was approachable and easily likable but perhaps most importantly, he was a family man, dedicated to his wife, children and grandchildren. This is a sad day for New Jersey."

