



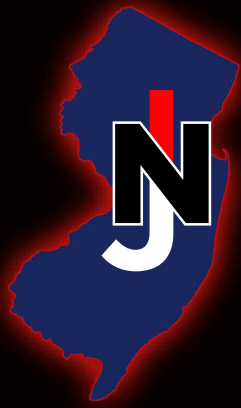
THE 2019 INSIDER OUT 100 NJ'S LGBT POWERLIST

Photos courtesy of
Jeremy Lentz, Teaneck



WE'VE COME A LONG WAY!

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★★★★★★



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INSIDER NJ

2019 LGBT POWER

Welcome to InsiderNJ's 2nd Annual OUT 100 Power List, a tribute to influential LGBTs in New Jersey politics. I approached last year's list as a one-off but the massive response demanded an encore edition.

WE'RE HAPPY AND GRATEFUL TO OBLIGE!

This year's OUT 100 Power List emphasizes LGBT office holders in New Jersey. That's why you'll notice the top 50 is mostly loaded with elected officials who also happen to be Queer. Sadly, none of those LGBT officeholders sits in NJ's Legislature, home to 120 state lawmakers, none openly LGBT.

In a state where party line usually carries the day, the county party bosses vet- and ultimate select who's on the ballot. And the 40+ women and (mostly) men running NJ's county parties always choose a straight person. Does that feel like progress to you? Me neither.

NJ's political candelabra grew dimmer this year with the passing of friends and allies like Babs Siperstein, Salena Carroll Lesniak, and Garfield DeMarco. We will venerate their colorful legacies in the pages below.

We're eager to highlight the next generation of LGBT activists on this year's list. They belong.

I'm proud to amplify the and to highlight their vast, boundless potential. Get to know their names and get ready to watch them impact New Jersey politics in a meaningful way.

When I acquired HIV as a teenager back in 1992, it would've seemed miraculous that in 2019, the archivist would be me. Surviving the plague was hard, that's widely recognized by now. But what most people don't realize is that many Queer activists of my generation were ostensibly orphaned by AIDS.

Our mentors were dead or dying and we had no power to stop it.

But don't feel badly, *that's not why I brought this up*. I invoke the AIDS crisis, basically our darkest hour, to remind you how resilient this LGBT community truly is.

There are 100 example of that resilience in the pages below!



Sincerely,

Jay Lassiter



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NJ's 2nd OUT 100 Power List

Certainly, breaking down New Jersey's tremendously talented and influential LGBTQ+ community to a list of 100 – let alone 1,000 – is no easy task. But, we need this list now perhaps more than ever before. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, and the beginning of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement. Each and every one of us follows in the footsteps of the heroes of Stonewall, and we continue their work today to create a New Jersey that honors everyone as equals.

We are proud of all that this administration has done, alongside our friends in the LGBTQ+ community – many of whom are on this list – and countless allies, from ensuring the rights of our transgendered neighbors, to seeing the contributions of our LGBTQ+ community taught in our public schools, to leading the fight against discrimination in the workplace and in our armed forces, and more.

There is still much more work to be done. We all know that. And, with this list, we know who will be standing at the forefront. But, beyond them, we know there are countless others across our state's LGBTQ+ community – activists and ordinary New Jerseyans, alike – who add tremendously to the vibrancy of our state and the urgency of our shared cause.

We've both said it many times – Pride isn't something that should be celebrated on one day or across one month. In New Jersey, we celebrate Pride every single day of the year. The OUT 100 Power List reminds us why.

Thank you to Jay Lassiter and InsiderNJ for making this list possible. And, again, congratulations to the honorees and our entire LGBTQ+ community!



**Our very best,
Governor Phil Murphy &
First Lady Tammy Murphy**

1 REED GUSCIORA

Mayor of Trenton



When Reed Gusciora ran for a seat in the New Jersey General Assembly back in 1995, he was still in the closet. And it's easy to understand why. There were very few legal protections for LGBT people at that point. In fact, most laws relating to queer people worked against us. For example 1) "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" forced LGBT service members into the closet and 2) the so-called Defense of Marriage Act which delayed marriage equality for a generation. That was the political climate when 35-year-old Reed Gusciora won his campaign for Assembly in November of 1995.

A lot has changed since then which enabled Reed Gusciora to publicly "come out" a decade or so later to take the mantle of first openly LGBT state legislator in NJ history.

Reed Gusciora's presence at the table helped usher in marriage equality and marijuana reform, two issues Reed owned long before it was cool or easy. Reed's more unsung work as Assemblyman includes the protection of animals and their habitat. Reed could always be strident or even militant for the right cause. But he was most influential in subtler ways. The impact he's had on his fellow state lawmakers can't be overstated. In Reed, lawmakers saw a colleague who embodied competence and decency, further proof that representation matters.

When Reed gave up his seat in the Assembly to run for mayor of Trenton, he wasn't the odds-on favorite to win. Leaving a safe seat in the State House is a risk most politicians would never take. But Reed embraced his underdog status, worked his butt off, and ultimately scored the most votes at the polls. He proved his mettle and strategic campaign acumen by scoring that big win. Two wins actually. The campaign squeezed into a run-off and then scored the election day victory a few weeks later.

When we interviewed Mayor Gusciora last spring, we asked what motivated his long-shot run for mayor.

"Because I like a challenge. And because I love Trenton," he told us.

Reed Gusciora, mayor of NJ's capital city after a distinguished run as a state legislator, was an easy choice to lead this year's InsiderNJ OUT 100 Power List, a tribute to influential LGBTs in NJ politics.

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2 REBECCA WILLIAMS

Union County Freeholder




She's smart, she's black, and she's unapologetically liberal. That makes Rebecca Williams the perfect counterpoint to the guy in the White House. As freeholder, Rebecca represents one of the most diverse, densely populated counties in America. She easily dismissed her primary rivals last spring and is running in November for another term representing Union County, home to roughly 560,000 people.

Rebecca is all about conserving and adding hundreds of acres of land to Union County parks for public recreation and nature. Rebecca is also a tireless advocate for increased shared services to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Rebecca Williams remains at the forefront of advocacy, working with the Union County Office of LGBTQ Affairs on outreach and advocacy to address housing, senior services, education, health, public safety, and community engagement.

With an nurturing eye on the next generation, Rebecca is the faculty co-advisor to the Essex County College's Gay/Straight Alliance where she also teaches literature and English composition.





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3 JULIA FAHL

*Mayor of Lambertville
A tribute by Congresswoman
Bonnie Watson Coleman*



I had the distinct honor of marrying Julia and witnessed the vows she made with her wife, Kari Osmond. They promised to be each other's strongest advocates and to work for goodness in each other's lives and within their community. These vows continue to guide Julia in the daily challenges of executive leadership and shape her decisions as an elected official. Serving as the State's youngest mayor and Lambertville's first OUT mayor, Julia is in a position to inspire and lead, and I fully trust her moral compass to make the right decisions for the community she serves.

Her energy and tenacity are unmatched, as is her desire to serve with integrity and compassion.



Julia Fahl takes her oath of office from Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman as Julia's wife Kari Osmond looks on. The Congresswoman was battling cancer at the time.

CONGRATULATIONS to New Jersey's Top LGBT Leaders!

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4 CHRISTIAN FUSCARINO

*Working Harder and Smarter
A tribute by Christian Jon Oliveira*



Having worked with every past executive director, I've never been more confident about the direction of Garden State Equality than with Christian Fuscarino at the helm. Now in its fifteenth year, GSE is still passing transformative laws that reach and protect every LGBTQ New Jerseyan, and Christian has fully built out the life-changing community programs that his predecessor Andy Bowen launched to realize true, lived equality beyond the letter of the law.

Under Christian's leadership, GSE has won legislative victories for The Babs Siperstein Law, Transgender Student Guidance, the first-in-the-nation statewide Transgender Equality Task Force, and the second-in-the-nation LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum law. Looking into the future, GSE, in collaboration with its partners, will be working to ban the gay and trans "panic defense," pass HIV criminalization reform, secure funding for homeless youth, and pass a bill of rights for older adults.

GSE's community programs for safe schools and healthcare impact literally hundreds of thousands of people annually, and within those spaces, it's launched projects that have never been done before. For safe schools, GSE is developing LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum to offer every NJ school at no cost. For healthcare, GSE and Rutgers School of Public Health are building a web portal where you can find vetted LGBTQ-affirming doctors near you.

Christian has moved GSE this far in a post-marriage equality landscape—where other state orgs are shrinking or shutting down—because he's prioritized coalition building and relationships. And he's secured its future by building a financially solvent profile supported by a vast army of small donors, a diverse grant portfolio, and generous sponsorships.

Most importantly, Christian has been a friend to every member of our community, no matter who they are, what they look like, where they come from, or what their history is— including me.



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5 ANDREW BRUCK & JEREMY FEIGENBAUM

NJ Attorney General Gurbir Grewal's team of top lieutenants includes two brilliant legal minds who also happen to be gay. Executive Assistant Attorney General Andrew Bruck is #3 at the AG's office where the leadership team also includes Jeremy Feigenbaum, Counsel to the Attorney General.

Andrew and Jeffrey are smart and tough, traits clearly prized by our AG as he battles big pharma, illicit 3D gun manufacturers, predator priests, and sex traffickers.

A Princeton grad who studied law at Stanford, Andrew Bruck's efforts have made New Jersey a leader on data privacy. He also reinvigorated NJ's affirmative litigation work after years of neglect during the Chris Christie era.

Jeremy Feigenbaum put his Harvard law degree to use by keeping ghost guns and large capacity magazines out of New Jersey. Jeremy also managed to persuade a panel of three judges on the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, all GOP appointees, to keep the Penn East gas pipeline at bay for the time being.



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6 DR. WARTYNA "NINA" DAVIS & RICH ROCKWELL

Nina Davis and Rich Rockwell make up 1/3 of City Council in Bloomfield, NJ, an Essex County town with a population of 48,000 residents, give or take a few.

Nina, who organized Bloomfield's first LGBT pride celebration, has spent her career educating and nurturing the next generation of civics scholars, currently as Associate Dean and Professor of PolySci at Williams Paterson University. There aren't many black lesbian officeholders in New Jersey, Nina was among the very first. When she's not paving the way for the rest of us, Nina is probably busy taking the twins to swim practice.

Rich Rockwell was appointed to his at-large seat and is running for a full term this November. He's a committed environmentalist and history buff who sits on his town's historical preservation commission. His passion includes conducting tours of the Morris Canal Greenway, a spectacular archipelago of parks and preserves along parts of the former canal route that transported coal from Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley on to Newark and Jersey City.





SENATOR VIN GOPAL

Majority Conference Leader

*Congratulates all the
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In Memory of my good friends
Ann Baker and Babs Casbar Siperstein



"It takes no compromising to give people their rights. It takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no survey to remove repressions"

-Harvey Milk

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7 BRUCE JAMES

Bruce is a no-nonsense lawmaker who's proven his solid progressive *bona fides* during 5 terms as Freeholder in Passaic County, population 504,000. In fact, Bruce's career as an elected official is basically an extension of his decades of work as a social worker.



With Bruce James, there's an enduring commitment to making sure county government improves quality of life for all kinds of people, especially for older residents and folks with autism. In a world filled with show ponies, Bruce is a workhouse, a stalwart, whose current passion include expanding building trades opportunities for high school students from distressed communities in Passaic County.

"If you can't make a difference and make peoples' lives better, you don't belong here," Freeholder James told InsiderNJ.

When Bruce James isn't making Passaic a better place to be, he's protecting our waterways as a member of the NJ Highlands Council. He's also a top advisor to NJDSC director John Currie.



the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders



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8 SONIA DAS

A tribute by Senator Loretta Weinberg



I love Sonia Das.

She is shorter than I am, with a powerhouse, but gentle voice. I first met Sonia when she was a community organizer working in various campaigns and first transitioned into government work during the administration of Governor Jim McGreevey. She went on to become Assistant Press Secretary to Governor Richard Codey and later served as Assistant research Associate for the Senate Democratic Office. Throughout this public service, I've always known Sonia to act with intelligence, integrity and with concern for equal rights and equal justice.

Sonia then became my Chief of Staff where she managed my very diverse and LGBTQ-friendly legislative agenda, always helping me to move the ball forward.

I am proud to say that currently Sonia is the Vice President of State Government Affairs for the Advocacy Management Group (AMG) a very respected Trenton lobby firm where she still works to move the ball forward. As a minority woman of influence who happens to be gay, Sonia Das' powerful voice is important to all of us in the movement.

Sonia and her wife, Janet, are the proud parents of a beautiful son, Aaron which I'm sure she will consider her greatest accomplishment.



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9 BRUCE HARRIS



As he winds down his long career in public service, we honor Bruce Harris who spent the last 20+ years as Mayor and city councilman in Chatham, Morris County, population 9,000. A moderate republican, Mayor Bruce proved that sustainability is good for business. He helped Chatham maintain its AAA bond rating while achieving Silver Certification from Sustainable Jersey in 2012, 2015 and 2018.

Bruce Harris was one vote shy of becoming a NJ Supreme Court judge. Former Gov. Chris Christie tapped Mayor Harris for the court in 2012. Sadly, the nomination fell victim to state house recriminations and Senate Democrats voted down Bruce's nomination. Our Supreme Court would be better with Bruce Harris on it. What a pity for New Jersey that a man of Bruce Harris' character became another casualty of state house pettiness.





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and powerful.**



**Congratulations to
all those recognized
this year!**



**GARDEN STATE
EQUALITY**

10 CAROL RIZZO



Carol Rizzo is the first lesbian mayor of Neptune Township, Monmouth, County, population 28,000. Neptune Township shares a border with Asbury Park which remains NJ's undisputed LGBT capital.

Carol Rizzo's business acumen from decades of leadership in multiple Fortune 500 companies alongside her compassion for her residents has made Mayor Carol Rizzo a powerful voice in the Democratic stronghold.

Carol proudly sits on the boards of The Possibility Project and Emerge NJ helping train and elect more democratic women to office statewide.



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11 **BETSY DRIVER**
A tribute by Joey Novick



Ms. Driver is in her first term as Mayor of Flemington, county seat of Hunterdon County, population 4,600. When elected to Borough Council in 2017, she was the first openly intersex person to hold elected office in the United States. Recently, she was one of 10 Community Heroes honored by NYC Heritage of Pride at NYC 2019 World Pride. Betsy was very much ahead of her time in LGBTQ issues, as she started the first online intersex support organization in 2001 and cofounded Intersex Awareness Day in 2004. It's now acknowledged by the United Nations and governing bodies throughout the world.



12 **JEANNINE LARUE**



The indefatigable Ms. LaRue is an unintimidated presence in New Jersey's halls of power. When requests for applications went out to expand NJ's notoriously limited medical cannabis program, Jeannine's client TerrAscend NJ was in the hunt. Not only did TerrAscend NJ win a license, their application set the standard scoring higher than all the other hundreds of bidders.

Jeannine is currently the principal lobbyist for NJ's Crown Act. Y'all surely recall last year when a referee in South Jersey forced a high school wrestler to shave his dreadlocks to avoid disqualification. The whole thing was caught on camera and went viral. The Crown Act would make that sort of discrimination illegal in public schools.

13 MICHAEL DEFUSCO



Mike is the first openly gay man to hold an elected position on the municipal level in Hudson County. He beat a 21-year incumbent in 2015 to represent the city as the First Ward Councilman and fights to bring new energy and new ideas to Hoboken everyday. Prior to his time on Council, Mike served as the youngest zoning board commissioner in Hoboken for five years.

As the first chairman of Hudson County Democratic Committee’s LGBT Caucus, Mike DeFusco launched a Path to 100 plan to help and encourage each of Hudson County’s towns to adopt more inclusive policies.

The year before Mike DeFusco became city councilman in 2015, his town of Hoboken scored abysmally on HRC’s Municipal Equality Index which “examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are (for) LGBTQ people who live and work there. Cities are rated based on non-discrimination laws, the municipality as an employer, municipal services, law enforcement and the city leadership’s public position on equality.”

Within 2 years of Michael’s swearing in, Hoboken tallied a perfect score, 100/100.



14 AMY QUINN



She’s Deputy Mayor of Asbury Park, NJ’s undisputed LGBT capital. But the word “FEMINIST” tattooed onto her arm in all caps shows what motivates Amy Quinn’s activist heart. Her commitment to electing more women to public office is legendary and peerless.

Amy’s a substantive policy wonk who spent the past year reformulating a progressive affordable housing plan for Asbury Park, New Jersey’s most venerable, iconic shore shometown. The development taking hold all over town includes two affordable housing projects with over 160 units. In addition to all that substance, Amy Quinn knows about optics and symbolism too. The rainbow-colored crosswalks all over town were largely Amy Quinn’s doing.



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15 CHRISTOPHER HILLMANN



Living in Hasbrouck Heights, a town long dominated by the GOP, Chris is aiming to unseat the incumbent Mayor on November 5th. His 2017 Council victory led to another Democratic win in '18 and now they're poised to flip control of the southern Bergen town. Republicans once relied on Hasbrouck Heights in District 38, but due to Chris Hillman's leadership and commitment to the community, it now trends blue.

After 11 years with legislators Connie Wagner & Tim Eustace, he joined HPAE which helped him build a strong relationship with labor in a County with deep ties to union leadership. As former NJ LGBTQ Democratic Caucus Chair, passed the baton to Lauren Albrecht, keeping the Caucus one of the most active in State Democratic politics. Chris now works at the Motor Vehicle Commission helping legislators craft policy and fix constituent issues.

His husband Patrick, a non-profit fundraiser, has raised thousands for Garden State Equality and recently joined the Board at Big Apple Performing Arts.



16 CHRISTINE DANSEREAU



Christine Dansereau is the first female mayor of Roselle, NJ, with a population topping 22,000 located in Union County. She's Mayor after a dozen-years-long career on Roselle City Council. When Union County Chairman Nick Scutari denied her the coveted county line in the primary last spring, Mayor Dansereau didn't flinch. She rolled up her sleeves and campaigned her heart out and ultimately trounced the county-backed slate. Christine Dansereau is smart and she's got a big heart. But if you stand in her way, she'll take you to the woodshed just like she did to Nick Scutari.

17 MARIANNA PONTORIERO

Just one year after voters in Brick NJ, population 76,000, choose Donald Trump by a mile, they went back to the polls to choose a new City Council. The top vote-getter that day was a big-hearted incumbent Democrat by the name of Marianna Pontoriero, a proud Italian-American who also happens to be gay. A lesbian dominating on election day in a town that overwhelmingly (24,320-11,736) voted for Trump might seem like a hard result to top.

But Marianna’s successful battle against cancer is surely her biggest, most inspirational victory yet.



18 PATRICIA “PAT” HANSEN

A savvy, relentless campaigner, Pat Hansen was elected to her first term on Evesham City Council last November. Pat led a Democratic tsunami that day which ended the NJ GOP’s protracted stranglehold.



Thanks to Pat Hansen’s winning ticket, Burlington County now has progressive new Congressman named Andy Kim and Democrats control Evesham, Burlington County’s largest municipality, with a population of 47,000.

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19 DEAN DAFIS



In the past 12 months Dean helped Hetrick-Martin Institute expand into suburbia by bringing them to Maplewood to serve and support LGBTQ youth and adults throughout Essex County. Dean spurred the creation of NJ’s only suburban civilian review board – an idea he championed after racially biased policing was exposed. In the coming weeks Maplewood will pilot a public Wi-Fi program to bridge the digital divide in town. The Wi-Fi pilot was the winning idea chosen by participatory budgeting voters, a democratic process in which community members choose how to spend part of their town’s budget.

In addition to his duties on Maplewood town council, Dean Dafis is busy working to reform NJ’s backwards, remorseless marijuana laws. Dean also serves on the board of the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice in Princetown.

When Dean talks about conversion therapy, a barbaric practice meant to turn LGBT kids into herosexuals, he’s speaking from personal experince. It’s a testament to his resilience that Dean uses his platform to ban conversion therapy, a practice that’s still legal in many states.



20 CARYL “CHRIS” SHOFFNER

Chris Shoffner is the mayor of South Bound Brook, a Somerset County town with a population just shy of 5,000. Chris has notably returned integrity and competence to city hall in the wake of a notorious corruption scandal that engulfed Chris’ predecessor.

21 DANA RONE



A former Newark City Councilwoman, Dana Rone is currently Essex County Register, an elected official responsible by law for recording and archiving all property transactions within the 22 municipalities of Essex County, population 800k.

Dana Rone is also a well-known advocate for children who attend public school in distressed communities. Dana's commitment to the next generation is evidenced by decades of activism and advocacy for underserved students.



22 SUE FULTON



Sue Fulton, Chief Administrator of the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission, is the only openly LGBTQ member of the Cabinet. As Gov. Murphy is fond of reminding us, Sue graduated from West Point's first class to include women. A former Army officer, she is also a longtime LGBTQ activist, having run two different national organizations to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and to end the military's ban on trans service. She serves on West Point's Board of Visitors, and stays connected with the military – even recently attended the swearing-in of the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as his guest.

At MVC, Sue Fulton has quietly made dramatic improvements, upgrading IT systems, adding online services, queuing and appointment systems in the offices, increasing front-line counter staff, and launching REAL ID.

As a Cabinet member, she stays out of the political scrum, but frequently speaks at LGBTQ events like Stonewall 50 (adjacent to Parkland gun-safety activist Emma Gonzalez) and GSE's Equality Walk. Fulton's wife Penny Gnesin, who passed away in February, 2019, was beloved in the community and actively worked for accessible beaches and disability rights. The pair were the first same-sex couple to wed at the Cadet Chapel at West Point.

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23 BOB BRESENHAN, JR
*A tribute by Raymond A. Giacobbe,
Mayor of Rahway*



Rahway Councilman Bob Bresenhan advocates not only for the LBGTQ community but for all members of our diverse and inclusive city and we are proud to have him as a Councilman and Community Leader. He is a champion for the residents of his ward and the City as a whole and ensures all resident concerns are not only heard, but addressed. Councilman Bresenhan dedicates his time and energy to our citizens and pushing Rahway to new heights, and we couldn't be more proud of him.



24 MICHAEL "MIKE" WARREN



Three years ago, first time candidate Mike Warren won an incredibly closely-fought race for town council in Rochelle Park, population 5,700. There he got a promotion, and served as deputy mayor of his Bergen County town. He's now the deputy mayor of his Bergen County town. Mike is also a public school teacher in Hasbrouck Heights High School where he teaches history, government, and politics.



25 SHAWN LATOURETTE



Shawn was a late addition to last year's list after joining the NJ Department of Environmental Protection as chief counsel. He's now Chief of Staff (and right-hand) to DEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe. Shawn is the driving force behind the implementation of Governor Murphy's environmental agenda. He has worked to revitalize the DEP's program to recover natural resources damages (which was shelved under Christie), he's nurtured the expansion of DEP's Community Collaborative Initiative to hasten brownfield redevelopment, and he's helped the DEP to prioritize and expedite the State's response to climate change.

Shawn also has been at the center of the State's response to water infrastructure challenges, including efforts to address lead in drinking water.

26 PATRICK CURRERI



Patrick is the newest councilman in Vernon, Sussex County’s largest town, with a population of roughly 24k. Patrick sponsored the first-ever Pride proclamation in Sussex County history. He also helped shepherd the introduction and passage of an anti-hate resolution, no small feat in the reddest, most conservative corner of New Jersey.



27 MICHAEL NOHILLY

Michael Nohilly is mayor of Interlaken NJ, a tiny village of 900 residents tucked between Asbury Park and Deal. But don’t let that proximity to Asbury Park fool you because Interlaken voters chose Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton back in 2016. Like Trump, Mayor Nohilly is a Republican. And when he goes to work, he sees a lot of gay people because Interlaken boasts not one, not two, but FIVE LGBT council members!

Robert White, John Butler, and Mindy Horowitz are the republicans on Interlaken council. Arthur Fama and Margaret Maloney make up the Democratic minority. Five out of six council members plus Mayor Nohilly make Interlaken the gayest city council in all of New Jersey – and possibly the world.

And FWIW – that’s a long flat A in Interlaken. Rhymes with Bacon. Because it’s Monmouth County and not Switzerland.



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28 ED ZIPPRICH



A mentor to many and a councilman to Red Bank’s 12,900 (or so) residents, Ed Zipprich is his town’s first openly LGBT elected official. He’s now halfway through his fourth term as Red Bank councilman. That’s 11 years in office if you’re doing the math and that adds up to tenure. While in office, Ed’s efforts gave teeth to Red Bank’s innovative historic preservation commission. He also serves as council liaison to the downtown business community. You can expect big numbers out of Red Bank on Election Day where Ed’s the municipal democratic party chairman.



29 BETH ASARO



Beth is currently serving her 4th term as a councilwoman in the City of Lambertville, population 4,400. She was appointed city council president this past January. Beth founded the city’s Human Rights Council whose work includes Immigrant education sessions, ‘We Are One’ city-wide annual picnics, and reaching out to under-served communities within the City to offer understanding and assistance.

In 2007, Beth and her partner Joanne Schailey became the first NJ couple to be joined in a Civil Union. That’s history. They were among the very first first married gay couples in NJ in 2013. (We were there and yes there’s video.) Three state lawmakers were at the ceremony, including Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (now Mayor of Trenton), who was the state’s first openly gay lawmaker and a prime sponsor of marriage equality legislation.



30 BOB ZUCKERMAN



Before he ran for office and became the first openly LGBT official in South Orange, Bob Zuckerman ran the South Orange Village Center Alliance for 5 1/2 years. SOVCA runs the special improvement district for downtown. Bob currently chairs the Planning and Economic Development Committee for South Orange, Essex County, population 16k.

31 REGINALD “REGGIE” BLEDSOE



A member of Newark’s Board of Education, Reggie Bledsoe is the youngest gay male elected office holder in the city. He expertly manages to keep tight with Mayor Baraka’s team and the powerful North Ward Organization while working for the state of NJ at the Department of Education. Within his first 100 days in office, Reggie managed to push a comprehensive resolution supporting LGBT students in Newark, the largest school district in the state.

Reggie Bledsoe will be NJ’s Education Commissioner some day. You heard it here first.



32 PAMELA RENEE



A team player with a tireless work ethic, Pamela Renee is running for Mayor of Neptune City, population 5k, where she’s currently the city council president. After years of GOP control, Democrats control Neptune City Council and Pamela Renee was the tip of the spear.



33 JEANNE LOCICERO



Jeanne is legal director for American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey and a civil rights advocate with a long-term vision for LGBT liberty. She’s led strategy for some of the boldest cases and causes the ACLU-NJ has taken on and she remains a fierce defender of the first amendment.

Along the way, Jeanne has mentored a generation of lawyers who are better advocates because of it.



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34 JOSEPH DEIORIO



The at-large councilman from Roselle Park, population 13,700, Joe DeIorio also did a long stint as mayor of the Union County borough. A moderate Republican, Joe is part of a bona fide power couple. His husband Thos is a former councilman from Roselle Park's 4th Ward.



35 BRETT CANNON



Brett Cannon is borough council president for Matawan NJ, population 9,000. Born and raised in Matawan, Brett is seeking a 2nd term next month. 2019 marked first pride flag flying within the borough due to a proclamation Brett initiated. That's no small feat in Matawan, a pro-Trump town in far northern Monmouth County.



36 TONY HOWLEY



Tony Howley is the newly-minted state director at Americans for Prosperity NJ, the libertarian organization that's working to get the government out of your bong. Tony's marriage to Christopher Stark created one of New Jersey's most lovable and enduring power couples.

37 CAITLIN GILES-MCCORMICK



The tangible impacts of public policy have always driven Caitlin to be involved in politics and was a key reason she ran for Borough of Flemington Council in 2018. Caitlin is currently working on improving all methods of communication with all members of the diverse Flemington community, while better utilizing the municipal and community resources to make Flemington an even better place to live, work, and play.

Caitlin utilizes her Masters in Public Policy and Administration as the Program Coordinator at the Center for Non-Profits, providing other New Jersey nonprofits with the tools, training, and resources they need to better serve the people of New Jersey. Her work with other nonprofits allows her to multiply her impact across the state to improve care and services. Her nonprofit career is the perfect balance to her Flemington-focused service on Council.



38 BOBBY TULLOCK



Alderman Bobby Tullock is in his second term representing Boonton's 2nd Ward. He leads the Morris County chapter of NJ's LGBT Democratic Caucus, a PAC to elect more LGBTs to office. His stock went up considerably when Democrats flipped the 11th Congressional district which includes all of Boonton's 8,400 residents.



39 FRANCELINE EHRET



Franceline Ehret is national staff rep for Communication Workers of America, which represents 700,000 workers. Fran is the former president of the New Jersey Turnpike Workers Union, IFPTE Local 194. A fierce critic of Chris Christie and Steve Sweeney, Fran is one of the toughest and most skilled union negotiators in New Jersey. Fran stands out in New Jersey's labor movement which is largely dominated by straight white men.

Assemblyman Jamel Holley Congratulates the LGBTQ Leaders Who Are Moving New Jersey Forward!

“ *There has never been a more important time for people of all backgrounds, all races, all sexual identities and genders to come together in the name of progress. I am proud to congratulate all of the LGBTQ Leaders who are doing the important, meaningful work of making New Jersey a more progressive state each and every day. Let's Go!* ”

- Jamel Holley ”



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40 TAMI PETERSON



In less than 3 years on Frenchtown Town Council, Tami Peterson has been a strong and vocal advocate for affordable housing, smart community development, and improved health and public safety for Frenchtown residents.



41 SHANNON CUTTLE



Last November, 11 candidates ran for 3 seats on South Orange/Maplewood’s Board of Education and longtime LGBT advocate Shannon Cuttle came out on top, snagging the most votes and a seat at the table. Shannon, who uses pronouns they/them/their, is probably the first openly Trans/Non-Binary elected official in New Jersey. With the passing of Babs Siperstein, who topped last year’s list, Shannon remains heir-apparent to Babs Siperstein as the leading transgender advocate in New Jersey.



42 BRIAN HACKETT



During Brian Hackett’s stint as NJ State Director for the Humane Society of the United States, New Jersey was the first state in the nation to ban wild animals from being used in traveling shows and circuses. Brian this year led the effort to criminalize the sale, use, and possession of dogfighting paraphernalia. A moderate Republican, Brian gets bonus points for cultivating relationships on both sides of the aisle, a rare trait in today’s politically polarized times.

43 DAVE PARANO



The campaign maestro with a highly covetable, dominant track record on election day, Dave Parano is president and CEO of Parano and Associates. He wins the tough races in imaginative ways with a singular focus on the prize: 50% + 1 on election day.



44 KARI OSMOND



The First Lady of Lambertville and so much more. In addition to co-engineering her wife Julia Fahl's campaign to become Mayor of Lambertville, Kari Osmond is a top lieutenant for Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman.



45 KATHY AHERN O'BRIEN



She's like Xena the Warrior Princess. But instead of battling bad guys, Kathy Ahern O'Brien fights HIV/AIDS and the stigma that still persists. It's Kathy's job to ensure Senators Cory Booker and Bob Menendez are fighting to bring more federal dollars to NJ to end HIV/AIDS. Forever.

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46 EDWARD POTOSNAK



He's busy. In addition to leading New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, Ed Potosnak serves on the Franklin Township school board where he's former president. Ed is also Vice Chair of the Franklin Township Municipal Democratic Committee. Ed received 71,486 voters when he ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2010.



47 KATE TRIGGIANO



She scored bragging rights as the top vote recipient among the five candidates on the ballot. Kate ran on a Bernie-inspired platform which, judging from the final tally, Red Bank voters like the most.



48 JONATHAN PETRO



Jonathan Petro has a decent chance to become the next Mayor of Toms River, population 94,000, the 8th largest town in NJ by population. This has been a conservative stronghold for ages but with the GOP in disarray after a nasty primary, there's a path to victory for a wonky, competent, credible alternative that just happens to be a moderate Democrat.

49 GARY PAUL WRIGHT



A venerable warrior and peerless elder statesman, Gary Paul Wright has fought for LGBT liberty since the 1970s. His in-the-trenches fight to combat HIV/AIDS is why LGBT people (like me) aren't dead of AIDS.

Please let that sink in for a minute.

Gary Paul Wright currently runs the African American Office of Gay Concerns, an HIV/AIDS resources in Newark, the Garden State's largest city.



50 SUDHAN THOMAS



Sudhan Thomas is president of the Jersey City Board of Education. In 2017, he drafted a comprehensive LGBT policy for Jersey public schools including training for parents, transgender bathroom policy, LGBTQ curriculum, and school-based LGBT societies and events.



51 TOM PROL



The past president of the New Jersey Bar Association, Tom Prol is one of the most brilliant legal minds in the state of New Jersey. A committed environmentalist, Tom is also a long-serving executive board member at Garden State Equality, providing stability and continuity to NJ's largest LGBT organization.

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

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52 JENNIFER WILLIAMS



Trenton’s Jennifer Williams is running to become the first transgender person in the New Jersey legislature. As chairperson of the Trenton Zoning Board, she’s often at the crosshairs of Mayor Reed Gusciora and his restive city council.

She’s a moderate Republican who’s working tirelessly to expand the NJGOP tent. She’s out to prove that her longshot run for Assembly isn’t such a longshot after all.



53 TIM EUSTACE



When Dr. Tim Eustace was sworn into the NJ General Assembly in 2008, his late husband Kevin Williams by his side, it marked the first and only time an openly LGBT non-incumbent ran for state house office and won. Tim was out as mayor of Maywood (2008-2012) and before that during his dozen-year-long stint on town council dating back to 1995.

And back in 1989 when he and Kevin adopted two children with AIDS at the height of the AIDS crisis, Tim was openly gay then too (although the NYTimes used the term “homosexual” when profiling Tim and Kevin’s controversial adoption journey.)

Tim Eustace has done more to curb the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS than anyone on this list, a remarkable legacy for a remarkable man.



54 LAUREN ALBRECHT



The leader of the NJ Democratic State Committee LGBT Caucus, Lauren Albrecht is the loudest, most credible voice in the room for greater representation in politics at all levels of government. An integral part of Monmouth County’s steady, seemingly inexorable leftward turn, Lauren is your “ride-or-die” best friend on election day: sleeves rolled up, bending over backwards, knocking on every door win or lose.

55 KEVIN RIORDAN



The venerable scribe from Haddon Heights, Kevin Riordan was the very longtime South Jersey columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer where he's now a full time member of the editorial board. Not only has Kevin profiled everyone who's anyone in South Jersey politics, he also writes vividly and candidly about sobriety. With LGBT people more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, Kevin's brand of gentle temperance is critically valuable.



56 JOE FORTE



Joe serves in the Murphy Administration as a communications liaison at the Civil Service Commission. He's also secretary of the NJ LGBT Democratic Caucus and national board member for the Victory Fund. Joe is currently wrapping up his second masters at Rutgers University and has demonstrated his wealth of knowledge about the structure of state government and its various branches.



57 MICHAEL "MIKEY" SPADORO



He's a bona fide political Wunderkind, but it's hard to believe Mikey Spadaro is only 25 years old. A relentless campaigner, Mikey splits his time between raising money for Garden State Equality and ensuring Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman's reelection.

STRAIGHT ALLIES

Years from now someone will write the definitive anthology of queer liberation with the historical perspective it deserves. And when that happens you'll surely notice that many of the heroes weren't even LGBT. Here we honor the straight allies who marched with us and who made our cause theirs.

You could fill several scrolls with the very long list of straight allies who had our back along the way. The names below are the most durable, unwavering straight allies that NJ's LGBT community has ever knows. Their commitment to our cause never faltered once.

- **JAMEL HOLLEY** – When he officiated the very first gay wedding in NJ history Jamel Holley forever cemented himself into the annals of queer liberation. If there's pro-LGBT legislation in the statehouse, Jamel is probably the prime sponsor.
- **JENNIFER HOLDSWORTH** – I'll go ahead and say it: she worked to propel Mayor Pete Buttigieg onto the national stage and then she helped set the table for Pete's historic run for president. LGBTs figure prominently on each campaign Jennifer Holdsworth has ever run. And that's a lot of campaigns.
- **SALENA CARROLL LESNIAK** – Our beloved friend Salena passed away this year after a lifetime commitment to her LGBT family. Our broken hearts still mourn.
- **ROSI EFTHIM & JOEY NOVICK** – The godmother and godfather of Blue Jersey Nation, Rosi and Joey sat with us at the back of the bus. Then they took us through domestic partnerships and onto civil unions and finally marriage equality. And then they sat with us at our weddings. Rosi and Joey. When they're not sitting with us, they're standing *for* us.
- **GURBIR GREWAL** – When Gurbir Grewal became NJ's Attorney General, he looked to our LGBT community to fill multiple leadership posts. For most of my activist career, relations between law enforcement and the LGBT community have been fraught. So for NJ's AG to stand with us so emphatically is a remarkable sign of progress.
- **TAYLOR HUDSON** – A former NCAA Division 1 varsity wrestler, Hudson Taylor has wholeheartedly dedicated himself to increasing opportunities for queers in sports by founding Athlete Ally.
- **SHANNON PETERSON-PRESTON** – Shannon runs the needle exchange program in Asbury Park and her advocacy protects our community from expensive, IV drug-related cooties. She goes to work every day to protect LGBTs on the margins. And she's tirelessly creating a climate where drug users are more likely to get help.

- **KEVIN RYAN** – LGBT kids are more likely to find themselves homeless than their straight peers. As CEO of Covenant House, Kevin Ryan fights to ensure safer, more inclusive and affirming care for the disproportionate number of LGBT kids who show up because they quite literally have nowhere else to go.
- **STEPHANIE HUNNELL** – The Monmouth County-based attorney has lent her legal savvy to the cause of LGBT equality for long enough that she scored the most nomination for this list. I think that makes her Most Popular.
- **CHRISTOPHER MENSCHNER** – New Jersey’s Deputy Health Commissioner leads NJDOH’s division of HIV, STD and TB services. Equality includes sexual health too. And Christopher’s commitment to curbing transmissions and ending the stigma is legendary.
- **ANNETTE QUIJANO** – As chairwoman of the NJ Assembly Judiciary Committee, Annette Quijano bangs an actual gavel for equality. That’s not a metaphor.
- **JANE CLEMENTI** – She devoted her life to our cause when her son Tyler committed suicide after being bullied and humiliated by his roommate. No one has paid more dearly to earn her stripes as an ally than Jane Clementi. And so here we honor her and bear witness to her incalculable loss.

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Jersey City’s Brian Platt

Robert Seda-Schreiber from Bayard Rustin Center

Essex Freeholder Pat Sebold

Rev Linda Pope of First Baptist Church in Moorestown

Cannabis legalizer Ken Wolski

Brick’s Emma Thompson Mamano

Reverend Linda Lillian Krooze Debreuil

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58 JENNIFER GODOSKI



Jennifer Godoski is director of policy and government affairs at New Jersey Resources. She’s worked for three Governors including a stint as chief of staff for the NJ department of transportation. Multiple decades in Trenton give her more longevity than nearly everyone on this list.



59 ELIZABETH "LIZ" SCHEDL



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

A community organizer at heart, Liz Schedl courageously embraces the gritty unglamorous challenges facing the LGBT community. And she'll keep doing it as long as drug addiction and HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects our people.



60 BREANNA GEORGES

A high school senior who’s wise and resilient beyond her years, Breanna Georges’ boundless potential to be great and do good is matched by her deep reservoir of courage. It was a minor sensation when the LGBT-themed rainbow mural Breanna painted at her school was covered over at the urging of Catholic religious officials who own the building in Hackensack where Bergen Arts and Science Charter School is located. She successfully advocated to have her school pilot LGBTQ curriculum in the aftermath of that fracas. Breanna is also a member of Garden State Equality’s Queer Youth Advisory Committee for curriculum development.

61 **TERRENCE T. MCDONALD**



Terrence is a political writer with a penchant for highlighting some of the shadiest figures on New Jersey’s political candelabra. His work has appeared in *The Record*, *The Star-Ledger*, *The Jersey Journal* and on NJ.com and NorthJersey.com.

Terrence has hauled in dozens of industry accolades for his lofty, ambitious political reportage. This includes an astonishing 23 New Jersey Press Association awards plus two Tim O’Brien Awards for Investigative Journalism using the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) from the New Jersey Society of Professional Journalists.

If this year’s theme was Twitter prowess, Terrence would easily top this list.



62 **CHRISTOPHER STARK**



Christopher is regional VP for National Association of Mutual Insurance Services and is responsible for membership services and the organization’s legislative and regulatory lobbying efforts in Trenton. He’s the husband of AFP-NJ’s Tony Howley, who’s also featured on this list.



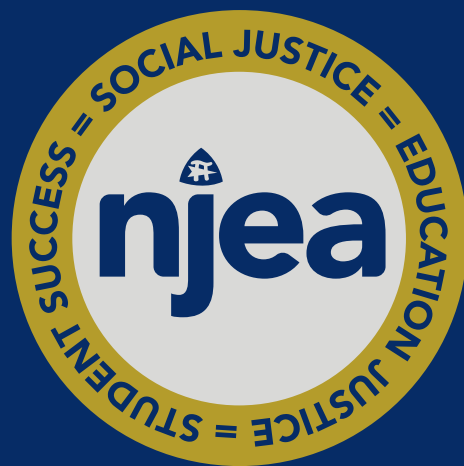
63 **ANNA WONG**



Anna Wong, the high priestess of grassroots people-power, puts the little D back into democracy. A steering member of Indivisible 5th District – which knocked on over 30,000 doors in 2018 – the group works to combat the anti-LGBT sentiment from the White House. She’s one of the most credible, well-respected activists in the state.

If your Congressman stinks, let Anna know. She’s literally that friend who’ll organize the primary challenge.

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64 SERGIO BICHAO



Some people read about politics. Some people write about politics. And some people write about politics and get awards for it. Sergio Bichao falls in the latter category. An award-winning journalist for NJ1015, NJ’s largest radio station, Sergio snagged prizes from the New Jersey Society of Professional Journalists for his coverage of NJ’s pension crisis and the Paramus bush crash. Reportage of the bus crash led to immediate reforms. Unfortunately Trenton lawmakers haven’t absorbed the lessons from Sergio’s pension coverage. But that’s not Sergio’s fault. He’s a journalist, not a magician.



65 CHARLES EADER



When he founded the Somerset Democratic LGBT Caucus, Charles Eader was keen to 1) recruit LGBT candidates and committee members and 2) flip some seats from red to blue. He’s accomplished both goals. Thanks to Charles and his organization, Somerset ran up a huge margin in Tom Malinowski’s thrilling upset victory over Leonard Lance to snatch NJ’s 7th Congressional seat.



66 JEN SCIORTINO



She’s one of the most well-respected communications experts in the state but Jen Sciortino’s real power comes from her decades of longevity channeling the words and intentions of NJ’s most powerful people. She’s currently Director of Communications at New Jersey’s Treasury Department, a position she held at the Department of Health, and then-Senate President Dick Codey. She was also Governor Codey’s deputy press secretary.

67 EILEEN DELLA VOLLE



There are currently no LGBT state lawmakers in Trenton. Zero. Does that sound like progress to you? Eileen Della Volla didn't think so and so she grabbed a clipboard, gathered hundreds of signatures and got herself on the ballot for the NJ State Assembly. She's out to prove that the race to upset the 10th district incumbent really isn't such a long shot after all.

Eileen serves locally as the treasurer of the Brick Democrats, she's on the Ocean County Democratic Committee, and she's also a committeewoman for the NJDSC. She also represents Ocean County for the Monmouth/Ocean LGBT Democratic Caucus.



68 KIM TAYLOR



She's been making history and building bridges for a long time. Nationally, Kim was the first NJ resident and the first black woman ever appointed to the national board of Log Cabin Republicans. Statewide, she's co-founder of EqualityGOP-NJ. An expert on housing policy, she's Vice Chair of the Trenton Housing Authority board of commissioners. A member of the National Association of Redevelopment Officials based in DC, she was appointed to their International Research and Global Exchange Committee, representing public housing locally, nationally, and internationally.

A black lesbian who happens to be a moderate republican, Kim Taylor is a rarity. And if the NJGOP followed Kim's lead, they'd probably have a better results on Election Day.



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69 CHRISTIAN JON OLIVEIRA



Christian Jon began his political career during college in 2008 when he was hired by John Adler’s congressional campaign in one of the most competitive, closely-fought races in NJ political history. Christian Jon was deputy field chief in (very red) Ocean County where Adler’s team kept the numbers close enough to snatch victory based on his Burlington County margins. Until Andy Kim won in that district last year, John Adler was the only Democrat to hold that seat in well over a century, largely thanks to the work ethic and field savvy of campaign staffers like Christian Jon Oliveira.

Christian is currently doing his second stint Garden State Equality where he’s Director of Communications and membership. And not for nothing, hes easily the best graphic designer in the state.



70 SHARRONDA WHEELER



As President of the Board of Directors, Sharronda Wheeler deserves much credit for growing and expanding Newark Pride into an epic and wonderful celebration of community, friendship and life.

Sharronda paid dearly for her perspective on gun violence. Tragically, her son Ammar was shot and killed shortly before his highschool graduation. Through that unimaginable grief her motto remains, “Be the change you seek.”



71 ASHLEY CHIAPPANO



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

72 **ALYSSA KAYE DAWSON**



She was the youngest councilwoman in New Jersey (Westwood) when she left office and now Alyssa Kaye Dawson is chief of staff for Holly Schepisi, a Republican Assemblywoman with a very bright future. Alyssa is currently on the ballot in Bergen County where she's running for Freeholder in the 2019 general election.



73 **BRIAN MCGINNIS**



Brian McGinnis was part of Blue Jersey's original lineup and spent much of the previous decade disrupting and pioneering the media landscape we're living in. After a long stint doing communications in the General Assembly, he went to law school. Brian McGinnis' ranking slipped this year when he lost the Collingswood municipal Democratic chairmanship in a stunning upset to an off-the-line, slate of liberals. He lost the Collingswood municipal Democratic chairmanship earlier this year, in a stunning upset to an off-the-line, slate of liberals. But he's still got everyone in Norcross World on speed-dial and that goes a long way in this state.



74 **PETER FRYCKI & MARIA "SAM" MARTINO**

Peter is publisher and Sam is editor at *OUT IN JERSEY*, the colorful bi-weekly dedicated to news and politics relevant to LGBTs in New Jersey. An indefatigable duo, they've been going strong and hitting their deadlines since 2002.

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75 GAETANO LARDIERI

Gaetano Lardieri is on the advisory board of the Coalition for Medical Marijuana of New Jersey and is one of the most prominent voices in New Jersey advocating cannabis legalization.



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76 **DAVE D'AMICO**



A career law enforcer who sits on Garden State Equality's executive board, Dave D'Amico works to foster better relations between police and the LGBT community. Dave's work to build bridges between law enforcement and queer people is among GSE's most important and innovative work.



77 **GERALD LYONS**

Longtime educator Gerald Lyons has done two stints on the Jersey City Board of Education where he currently sits. If you come to a Board of Education meeting and badmouth LGBT people, you're gonna get an earful from Gerald Lyons.

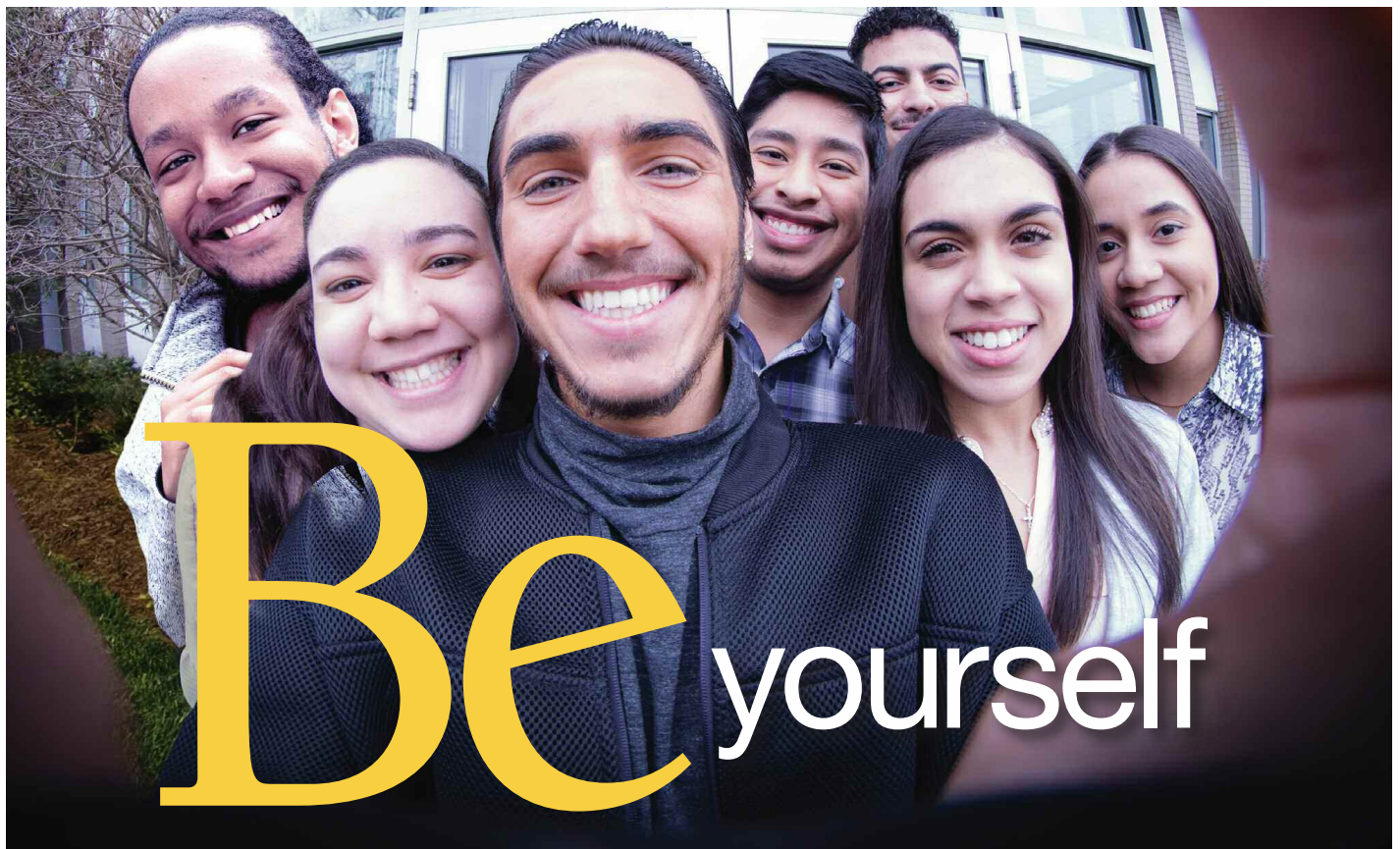
Gerald is currently the principal of the Hudson County Schools of Technology.



78 **CELESTE & JODI ARGENTINO-FIORE**



Celeste and Jodi are a Montclair-based power couple who also happen to be two of NJ's leading LGBT family lawyers. Brilliant and precocious, Jodi recently received the National LGBT Bar Association's Best LGBT Attorney Under 40 Award. Not to be outdone, Celeste, who's non-binary and uses pronouns they/their, was also recognized as one of the Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40. The pair married in 2013, shortly after marriage equality became the law of the land.



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79 **BIANCA MAYES**



Garden State Equality’s Director of Wellness and Health, Bianca Mayes leads the 2nd generation of anti-AIDS warriors who are committed to curbing HIV transmission and ultimately curing this disease.

Bianca’s focus on the issues and challenges facing older LGBT adults is unsung heroism. Because no one should have to go back into the closet just because they’re old.



80 **STEVEN GOLDSTEIN**



A force of nature, Steven Goldstein founded Garden State Equality in 2004. Most of the 200+ pro-LGBT laws in New Jersey passed on his watch. A close ally and confidante of Senator Loretta Weinberg, Steven just published a book called *THE TURN ON: How the Powerful Make Us Like Them-from Washington to Wall Street to Hollywood* from HarperCollins.



81 **MICHAEL PENNA**

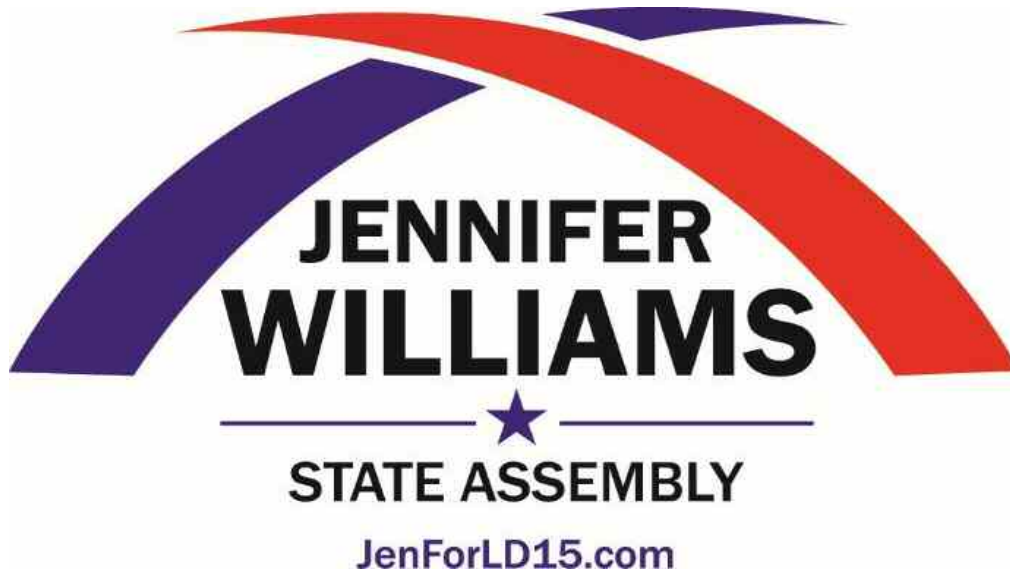


Driven by a desire for social justice, Michel Penna is this November’s Democratic freeholder candidate in Monmouth County. A Long Branch resident, Michael teaches English and Drama to at-risk and special-needs students at Collier High School in the rural section of Wickatunk in Marlboro Township.



Congratulations to Everyone on the Insider NJ Out 100: LGBT Power List!

As the first transgender candidate for the NJ State Legislature, I am immensely proud of the work we have all collectively done to increase Liberty, Freedom and Opportunity for our community. Let's keep working hard and changing the world. For You. For All of Us.



PAID FOR BY JENNIFER WILLIAMS FOR ASSEMBLY

82 JULIO CAESAR ROMAN



Julio directs community, LGBTQ & supportive services at the North Jersey Community Research Initiative, one of New Jersey’s largest and most comprehensive HIV/AIDS community-based organizations serving the Greater Newark Area.



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83

DEBRA GUSTON



Debra Guston is a venerable civil rights warrior/family lawyer extraordinaire and past board president for the ACLU NJ.

She's recognized nationally as a pioneer in LGBTQ-focused family and adoption law, guiding a generation of New Jerseyans from birth certificates to estate planning, and whatever social contracts life serves up in between.

ACLU NJ was behind the bill Governor Murphy signed outlawing prolonged solitary confinement in NJ. That's part of Deb Guston's enduring, ever-expanding legacy.



THE POLITICAL VOICE OF NEW JERSEY WOMEN



The Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey (WPCNJ), founded in 1972, is a chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus and is the authoritative voice for women in New Jersey politics. WPCNJ is a *multi-partisan* organization dedicated to increasing the number of women in elected and appointed positions in government, protecting reproductive freedom, and promoting equal rights for women.

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84 GINA GENOVESE



The ex-tennis pro, former mayor of Long Hill Township, and one-time candidate for NJ governor, Gina is most influential for her tireless work on municipal consolidation. It's gritty, unsexy work and no one does it better than Gina, a no-nonsense advocate for NJ taxpayers who remain the most overtaxed in the nation.

If Gina's argument prevailed and some of NJ's small towns consolidated their duplicative bureaucracies, our property taxes would go down. Listen to Gina, you know she's right.

With life on the pro tour long behind her, Gina keeps her skills sharp as a teaching professional who runs Gina's Tennis World in Berkeley Heights.




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85 ROBIN KAMPF

Luanne Peterpaul, the brilliant lesbian rabble-rouser and #12 on last year's list, is now a municipal court judge in Long Branch and so the activist duties in the family fall to Luanne's wife Robin Kampf, a brilliant filmmaker who uses art 1) to drive the debate and 2) to chronicle queer history. When she's not snagging prizes on the indie film circuit, Robin might be found nurturing the next generation as a professor and mentor.



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86 BARBARA LESINSKI, CONNIE BREECH, & ERIC PICKNEY

Asbury Park, the school district that produced Dr. Lamont Repollet, NJ's Commissioner of Education also includes three LGBTQ elected school board members.

Barbara Lesinski, a former Board president, and decades-long resident, fought for greater transparency and accountability throughout her multiple terms on the board. Connie Breech founded the city's popular Toys for Tots charity drive. Eric Pickney (AKA Miss Savannah Georgia), the board's newest member is the founder of the annual Pink Prom charity event and has been an advocate for more literacy programs in Asbury Park's schools.



87 DAVID GRANT

David does government affairs in Trenton after a stint as chief of staff for former Assemblyman Tim Eustace. David is currently Pete Buttigieg's main man in New Jersey. The longer Mayor Pete stays in the race, the most likely David will end up state director for Pete's campaign for president. David is also vice chair of NJDSC's LGBT Caucus.



88 DON GUARDIAN

He's gay, white, and a Republican. But that didn't stop Atlantic City voters from choosing Don Guardian as their mayor in 2013. It was a stunning upset, one of the biggest in recent New Jersey political history. His reward: the unenviable task of stabilizing a city in economic free-fall.



Don Guardian stopped the bleeding in Atlantic City and he still doesn't get enough credit for that. He only had one term as mayor before getting rolled in the general election by a guy who, we know now, is a criminal. That criminal just pleaded guilty to wire fraud.

But Don's reputation as an ethical, happy warrior endures. He's now the business administrator for Tom's River, one of the most rapidly growing towns in the state.

**New Jersey's LGBT community
lost some very special people this past year.**

We honor them here:



BABS

Every so often, life gives you the chance to get it right the first time, to say your piece before it's too late. That was last year when Babs Siperstein topped the inaugural InsiderNJ OUT100 Power List. Babs passed shortly afterwards and the void still hurts.

When we reached out to Senator Cory Booker last year to invite him to write Bab's tribute, his office replied YES almost immediately.

"Babs is a leader, a trailblazer, and a role model for an entire generation of New Jerseyans. If you don't know her, you probably know someone touched in some way by her tireless activism. It's an honor to know her, to work with her, and to call her my friend,"
Senator Booker said, echoing the sentiments of all who knew her.

Everyone on this list stands on Bab's shoulders.

89 **JOE SIMONETTA**



Joe recently became senior partner at Public Strategies Impact, a bluechip government affairs firm in Trenton. An expert on public policy and legislation, Joe has worked in political advocacy and association management for nearly 40 years.

He's well-regarded and widely respected as he navigates the halls of power in Trenton and in Washington.



90 **JESS ALAIMO**



In addition to organizing the last two Asbury Park Women's Conventions with great success, Jess Alaimo also drives the debate from her perch at the venerable *TriCity News* where she pens the always witty Rainbow Room column.



91 **IAN MOSLEY**
A tribute by Lauren Albrecht

Camden County's Ian Mosely is a unique addition to this list-one of very few openly-LGBTQ New Jersey Democratic State Committeepersons, a motivated and engaged member of many communities, an all-around congenial guy, and always an asset to our team.

Being Lindenwold's Democratic Municipal Vice Chair might keep an ordinary person busy enough, but Ian still finds the time to deliver meals to seniors, be an integral part of his faith-based community, and mentor children in need. Keep an eye out for Ian, you'll be hearing much more from him in the future!

**New Jersey's LGBT community
lost some very special people this past year.**

We honor them here:



SALENA

Salena Carroll Lesniak cemented herself into LGBT history when she hosted the first gay wedding in New Jersey history in her home back in 2015. Her untimely passing this past summer left us bereft with grief and for many who knew her, we're still trying to figure out how someone so young and vibrant could be snatched away so unexpectedly. It made no sense. It still makes no sense.

Salena graduated from Union Catholic High School in 1994 and Montclair State University with a degree in Political Science. She followed her passion for politics, worked on a number of campaigns and eventually moved to Linden and where she found herself working for Assemblyman and later Senator Joe Suliga.

She became the special assistant to the Union County Manager and then spent fifteen years as the Bureau Chief for the Office of Domestic Preparedness for Union County's Office of Emergency Management. Salena loved "her guys", as she called them, and enjoyed every day she got to interact with public safety officials and law enforcement officers from all over the state. Salena's work directly resulted in the county and state securing millions in grant dollars and making this community a safer place to live.

92 ALISHA DE LORENZO



Alisha De Lorenzo is Garden State Equality’s new interim deputy director. She’ll be higher on the list next year when she’s had time to put her imprimatur on GSE’s efforts. She’s off to a blistering start. GSE raised over \$100,000 at their annual equality walk the weekend before this went to press.



93 JAYSON SCOTT



First of all have you seen his dance moves? Jayson Scott, who was recently honored by the NAACP for his civil rights work, is executive director of the Ours Institute, a group he founded to improve LGBT education and advocacy in Southern New Jersey. For his efforts, Jason was awarded the 2019 Youth Hero Award from the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund.



94 REBEKAH BRUESEHOFF

One of the youngest lobbyists in Trenton history, 12-year-old Rebekah Bruesehoff’s compelling, persuasive testimony helped to pass the Babs Siperstein Law, making NJ one of the most trans-affirming states in America. When Rebekah and her mom addressed 31,000 people at the 2018 Youth Gathering of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, she had to pause frequently to take in the sustained applause.

“Transgender kids are just like other kids. We need to be loved and supported” she told the massive audience. And it really is that simple. Go watch her testimony and be amazed.

**New Jersey's LGBT community
lost some very special people this past year.**

We honor them here:



GARFIELD

A generation ago, Garfield DeMarco was chairman of the Burlington County GOP. In those days on Garfield's watch, BurlCo's GOP was virtually unbeatable. Joanne Schwartz is BurlCo's County Clerk, a democrat who formed an unlikely bond with the erstwhile, deeply closeted Garfield De Marco.

Joanne wrote this tribute to her friend:

My friend Garfield, what an odd duo we made!! I am a diehard Democrat with a diehard Republican buddy. Over the years we'd meet for lunch or just talk on the phone. Sometimes about politics. I always knew he was trying to get me to say something I shouldn't say and vice versa. It was kind of a game we played, each knowing what the other was up to. But then we'd get serious and he'd tell me how hard it was in the old days and even now, being an out, gay, Republican politician.

He was such a charmer and a devilish one at that. But his life was always shadowed by the elephant in the room, his sexuality and the toll it took on his life.

When Garfield was in hospice and the end was near, I got to spend some time with him. His face lit up when I entered his room and he flashed that special smile of his. It was hard for him to talk so we just held hands. When I got up to leave, I kissed his forehead and that was our final farewell. And for me a searing and enduring memory of my friend, Garfield.

I miss him so very much.

95 CJ GRIFFIN



The VP of ACLU NJ’s board of directors, CJ Griffin is director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center enabling her firm Pashman Stein to provide pro bono counsel on impact litigation and appellate advocacy.

Always a stickler for government transparency, CJ is an OPRA virtuoso in her spare time.

CJ openly identifies as nonbinary/genderqueer, and works to ensure we all have the right to define ourselves.



96 LOUISE WALPIN & MARSHA SHAPIRO



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



97 ELAINE HELMS



Elaine founded the Reaching Adolescents in Need (RAIN) Foundation in East Orange after noticing the high rate of prostitution among homeless LGBT kids who basically engaged in so- called "survival sex" out of desperation. It's hard, gritty work and Elaine Helms is there in the trenches lifting up our most vulnerable youth and helping their reach their vast potential.

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98 JEN FLUHARTY



The longtime Monmouth County rabble-rouser is the chief nemesis to Republican Congressman Chris Smith, NJ's 2nd or 3rd most notorious homophobe.



99 JIM MCGREEVEY



He's New Jersey's 52nd Governor and so Jim McGreevy always has a place on any list of influential LGBTs in NJ politics. His tireless work to combat drug and prison recidivism and to protect those ensnared by opiates deserves our respect and admiration.

We found a former US Senator to ratify our notion.

"The best measure of any man, however, isn't what he did to advance himself or his cause in the light of day. There's no shortage of heroes on that scale." Senator Bob Torricelli said of McGreevy. "The rarest quality is what a person chooses to do when the glare of the lights subside and there's no reward but assisting others. Jim McGreevy's truth on this scale is as our greatest former Governor."



100 OUR DEAD FRIENDS



We're holding this final spot as a tribute to all those brilliant, beautiful, talented dead queers who perished from AIDS. It's worth taking a moment to reflect on our government's feeble response to AIDS, the existential crisis that forced the LGBT community to organize and find its political mojo. That was a silver lining. But this list would look very differently without a deadly plague that decimated our community barely a generation ago.