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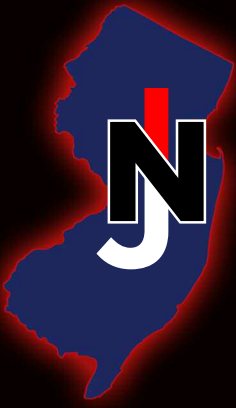


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THE SHAPE OF INFLUENCE

Even in the worst circumstances in our impaired system of government, campaigns and elections condition power, and so you will find in the pages that follow a significant demonstration of augmented or diminished influence based on what happened on November 5th.



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As much as Trenton insiders attempt to insulate themselves from the turbulence of democracy, even the core of the establishment feels the jarring currents of what goes on out there on the streets and in the voting booths where reside the wills of regular people.

This 2019 Insider Power list blends both worlds: the players behind the castle walls and those trying to get inside, trying to give voice or expression to some political will at present under-considered, or to some injustice unresolved.

This year we focused considerable attention on legislative races, where establishment Democrats sought to build on an assembly supermajority by carrying anti-Donald J. Trump attitudes from the 2018 federal election year into districtwide wins in newfound territory. But there were several deeper things happening on the ground as campaigns collided. The party in the majority faced the challenge from the beginning of trying to hold onto seats in the 1st Legislative district, which Trump won, a dynamic at odds with other districts where they hoped to galvanize anti-Trump sentiments with anti-Trump candidates and perhaps establish wider frontiers to mitigate a southern loss – or get lucky and win everywhere. They had the obvious challenge of a sitting governor in their own party whose messaging – and more – clashed with their own.

Election night results underscored the intraparty ongoing fight, deeper than just ideology, roiled by an ongoing investigation by Murphy’s attorney general (and reportedly the FBI) into Economic Development Authority (EDA) tax credits benefiting business interests close to South Jersey power broker George Norcross III. Republicans happily used divisions in the New Jersey

Democratic Party to their advantage, running against proudly progressive Governor Phil Murphy in key battleground districts, protecting terrain from Dem incursions, and reclaiming turf in the pre-Jeff Van Drew Republican 1st District. That LD1 result – coupled with what happened in LD8 and the ongoing unresolved EDA situation – likely weakened the influence of the south. That said, no incumbent Democrat in a battleground district going forward is running into the arms of the governor, and – within reason – will depend on Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) or Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19) for general election protection.

In addition to Republican Senator-elect Mike Testa's 27K-24K victory over incumbent Democratic Senator Bob Andrzejczak in LD1, the marquee race of the season, Democrats backed by Governor Murphy just barely took over Somerset County, by under 1K votes. Those latter results bore out Trump's unpopularity in Central Jersey, and outdistanced Republican efforts to highlight Murphy's shortcomings, which proved effective down south. But throughout the state, including even Trump-hating Somerset, any Democrat running solely on anti-Trump sentiment found a hard check on mere unbridled anger: namely the demands of locally-grounded interests, always alert to the short-end scam.

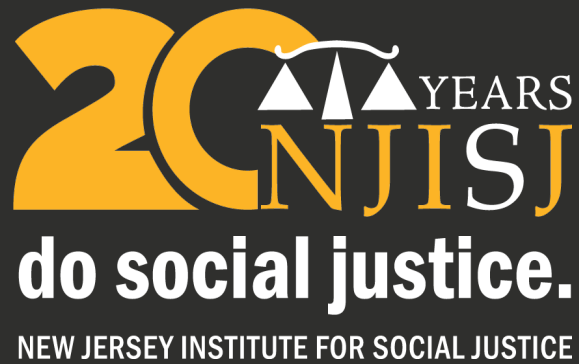
We will see the degree to which the 2019 general elections changed the direction of party power, as the end of the cycle intensified a rivalry between Essex County Democratic Chairman Leroy Jones and Passaic County Democratic Chairman John Currie, both of whom had designs on the state party chairmanship, with an eye to protecting or weakening a very Trenton-wobbly governor, whose power probably hangs on the EDA investigation. At the heart of it, the party leaders seek the exertion of slightly separate strands of establishment party power on the 2021 redistricting process, and greater backroom leverage to influence the precise shape of popular influence inherent in future legislative elections.

Max Pizarro

Max Pizarro

Editor, InsiderNJ





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ALAN STEINBERG'S 2019 CAMPAIGN WINNERS

Major Winner of Election Night: Chris Russell – The Essex County Democratic Committee The wunderkind of New Jersey politics, once again Chris Russell proved that he is the top GOP political consultant in New Jersey. He was the chief strategist in the decisive upset GOP victories in the First and Eighth Legislative Districts, despite being vastly outspent by the Democrats. On the local side, he scored two significant victories in Old Bridge and Parsippany. Can Chris bring home a winning NJGOP gubernatorial candidate with Jack Ciattarelli in 2021?

Major Upset Winners: Jon Bramnick and Nancy Munoz – Virtually every pundit, including myself, had predicted that Jon Bramnick and Nancy Munoz would lose. My exact quote: “Bramnick and Munoz have served with distinction in the Assembly, but in 2019, they have been hit with the perfect storm.” What doesn’t kill you in politics makes you stronger, and the fact that that Bramnick and Munoz survived the perfect storm substantially boosts Bramnick’s stature as Assembly Republican Leader and Munoz’s eminence on health care issues.

The Muhammad Ali Award: Mike Testa, Jr. – Howard Cosell once said that every sports writer tends to fall in love with a fighter. He fell in love with Floyd Patterson and Muhammad Ali. That happens with political writers, too, and that’s what happened with me regarding Mike Testa, Jr.

Before entering the ring with Sonny Liston on February 25, 1964, Muhammad Ali, then Cassius Clay, said to Howard Cosell, “I’m going to shock the world tonight!” Yesterday afternoon, I received a text message from Mike Testa saying, “I predict we will shock the world!” He sure did shock the New Jersey political world, carrying his Assembly running mates Erik Simonsen and Antwan McClellan in victory across the finish line with him. At long last, South Jersey Republicans have a charismatic leader in Mike Testa. He is only 43, and a decade from now, look for his name to be mentioned as a gubernatorial candidate.

Major Non-Candidate Winner of the Night: Tom Kean, Jr. – As Senate Republican Leader, Kean played a major role in the victory of the NJGOP’s most prominent other junior, Mike Testa, Jr. Furthermore, his 2020 Congressional opponent, incumbent Democrat Tom Malinowski was badly rebuffed in his campaign efforts to oust Bramnick-Munoz in LD 21 and Bucco-Bergen in LD 25. The Congressional fundraising efforts of Kean, Jr. should skyrocket in the aftermath of election night.

Assembly GOP All-Star Winners: Ryan Peters and Jean Stanfield – In the wake of their Eighth District Assembly upset victory over the armies of George Norcross and Steve Sweeney, Ryan Peters and Jean Stanfield are stars in the Trenton firmament.

Look for Peters to take on Democratic GOP – expatriate Dawn Adieggo for the District Senate seat in 2021. As for Stanfield, at a time when the NJGOP brand among women is toxic, she is manna from heaven for the Republicans – a woman with an outstanding record of public service who is not damaged with the Trump brand and who can be successful with GOP outreach to South Jersey women who have not irrevocably rejected the Republican brand.

Winner of the Pole Position for the 2021 Republican Gubernatorial Primary: Jack Ciattarelli – Wherever there was a significant legislative or municipal race in 2019, Jack was there. He is a born campaigner (and golfer in the Ike GOP tradition), and he was the most sought-after guest speaker for GOP campaigns throughout the state. He now has a solid grass roots network and continues to have the front runner status.

Surprise Winner Selection: Phil Murphy – The conventional wisdom on State Street, Trenton, for the most part, defines Phil Murphy as neither an election day winner nor a loser I depart from this conventional wisdom, as I often do, and I assess Murphy as an election day winner, for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, due to the Norcross-Sweeney defeats, Murphy no longer faces the possibility of a credible primary election opposition.

Second, the midterm Democratic net loss of the one Senate and two Assembly seats is absolutely minimal by historical standards. The norm for the midterm Assembly loss for the party in control of the Governor's Office is much higher, often in double digits.

Third, the Democratic victories in the Somerset County freeholder and sheriff races extend the Democratic control in what was once a deep red Republican county.

Alan J. Steinberg served as Regional Administrator of Region 2 EPA during the administration of former President George W. Bush and as Executive Director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission.



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1. LEROY JONES AND JOHN CURRIE



To the extent that the Essex County Democratic Chairman and Passaic County Democratic Committee Chairman might have shared power, their party could have maintained a stronger statewide position, properly reflective of the voter registration advantages enjoyed by North Jersey Democrats. Divided, the two party chairs set the scene – slowly, incrementally, even improbably – for Republicans to gain an edge. If Currie, the sitting Democratic State Party Chairman, derives his power from a local base, his close association with Governor Phil Murphy and a continuing alliance with Bergen and Hudson counties, Jones occupies a uniquely powerful position as overseer of the county with the largest number of Democrats and with strong ties within the Democratic Party establishment. Always at the risk of northern fracture, neither can occupy the chairmanship of the Democratic Party statewide without either enabling the other to have a share of the prize – or existing with the threat of the other and his allies jockeying for the upper-hand. While the glamorous responsibility of leading the party delegation to Milwaukee offers a visible sign of the governor’s favor on a national stage, the real power lies in the hands of that individual who picks members to sit on the 2021 redistricting commission. Together, Jones and Currie form the core of the so-called north county quad that in 2017 awarded Murphy the governorship, and the only two members left of that four-county alliance. Murphy still needs them both – and their networks - to survive politically. As long as the governor occupies the leftward, progressive reaches of his party, and as long as the establishment carves out an agenda separate from his political designs, those lawmaker occupants of battleground legislative and congressional districts will crave a map that insulates them from the hazards of too close an association with the governor, a task that will presumably fall to Jones, even as Currie prioritizes the task of watching the governor’s back. Together, in a power-sharing arrangement, both of them might have protected the built-in population dominance of the north. But at war, as they are, they unleash all the capacities of the rest of the state’s political forces, Jones specifically giving voice to South Jersey, Middlesex and Union, among others (12 total); and Currie building on his core with emergent Somerset and Morris (nine total). Together, they might have occupied this spot for the foreseeable future, but divided, one of them – or even conceivably neither – will remain standing, as they and their associates try to maintain the edge in a party ever threatening to cave in on itself, drunk with the national-sized missteps of President Donald J. Trump.



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Kevin McCabe

While Murphy and Norcross have engaged in a raucous statewide pushing and shoving match, Middlesex County Democratic Committee Chairman McCabe has remained perched on the shoulder of Speaker Craig Coughlin (D-19), who most obviously stands to gain from the political bloodletting. McCabe has labored to forge a connection with Essex and to create a perception of independence from South Jersey, but his own Building Trades connectivity to the Carpenters makes it hard not to glimpse the shoulders of Sweeney and company upon McCabe's political landscape. Coughlin, moreover, ascended to the speakership as part of the deal that retained Sweeney as senate president. If South Jersey continues to weaken, McCabe's test will ultimately be to prove continuing power as part of a recalibrated power-sharing arrangement, separate from reliance on the south. That is the continuing case he and his lieutenants will make for the state chairmanship going to Jones, as part of a newly emergent alliance that does not totally hinge on the deal-making prowess of South Jersey. Yet even as they trumpet their own political strategic designs, their moves just happen to simultaneously benefit the South. Coincidence?

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PAUL JULIANO

The retirement of respected Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman Lou Stellato created an opening for Juliano, an early exemplar of a party leader whose multiple and varied political relationships give him the advantage of independence from anyone's exclusive camp. In his first big move as chairman, Juliano's announcement of support for Currie as chairman showed his interest in preserving the quad (or at least three-quarters of the quad) as envisioned by his predecessor, who prioritized not only Murphy's gubernatorial candidacy but the political friendship of his childhood football pal Currie. More than that, though, the endorsement set up the possibility of another power shift in the state, situating Bergen in an opposing camp from Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) and the continuing domination by South Jersey. The Bergen play signifies a recognition that one of its own elected officials, rising star state Senator Joe Lagana (D-38) chief among them, sits not far removed from the throne of legislative power. If politics is picking sides, Juliano picked one that will, depending on the outcome of the state party chair's race, either propel Bergen forward, set it back, or – conceivably – reassert the county as a somewhat politically ungovernable beast. Mild political weather this year belies a 2020 sandstorm, as Juliano will have on his plate the task of helping U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-5) to a third term.



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**4****AMY DEGISE**

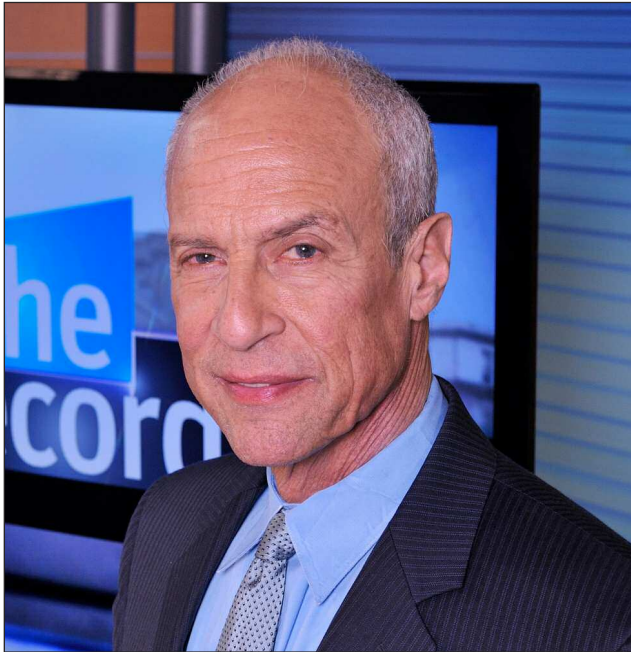
The Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO) chair threw in early with Governor Murphy and in that vein continues to back Currie for state chairman out of respect for Murphy. On the national stage, the inheritor of the countywide seat of power that made Frank Hague a kingmaker of presidents, including FDR, it will be interesting to see where DeGise will make the case for taking the county if and when Cory Booker drops out of the presidential contest. InsiderNJ columnist Al Sullivan wrote earlier this year that Elizabeth Warren is her own personal preference, while her father, the rather Joe Biden-like Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise, prefers, well, Biden. Although Hudson this year did not weather any defining countywide battle the way it did in 2018, last year's county chair's fight relates in a critical way to this year's state chair's battle. DeGise hammered her opponent by reminding committee members of his support for former Republican Governor Chris Christie, which is what DeGise's choice for state party chair will do in his bid to outduel Jones. It's a thorny undertaking. If Jones' ally Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo backed Christie's reelection, so too did state Senator Brian P. Stack, as DeGise reminded people last year. The fact that Stack now stands with Hudson in support of Currie perhaps weakens their case against Jones/DiVincenzo.



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- Intersex Surgical Autonomy
- Restore Benefits to Discharged LGBTQ Veterans
- Amend Law Against Discrimination for Health Programs & Activities



MIKE ARON

The undisputed dean of New Jersey political reporting – host of “Reporters Roundtable” and “On the Record” – has fashioned a legendary career out of the swamps and dead ends of an otherwise fairly dismal and dreadful landscape. At a time when the culture prizes illiteracy and sensationalized headlines over thought, and daily diminishes its humanity with a willing embrace of the most mean-spirited, selfish and dumbed-down politics, Aron is that enduring elegant and educated Zen master, whose very probing and persistently curious presence suggests that maybe things are going to be ok, after all. If we all once thought television was supposed to be the slickest and most superficial medium, Aron is like Rutger Hauer at the end of the original Blade Runner, where the most depth, the most resounding chord of human contact – reveals itself in maybe the most unlikely place. Here’s hoping that all those treasured moments will no time soon be lost, “like tears in rain.”

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PATRICK MURRAY

The Monmouth University Institute pollster has accomplished the rare feat of being able to transcend New Jersey with polls more detailed

and penetrating than most others, while simultaneously maintaining high neighborly visibility in his home state and remaining engaged in the issues and politics here. For the third time in as many years, Murray's polling institute received an A-plus rating from FiveThirtyEight. In a year that gave us that appalling Stockton University Poll, which showed Bob Andrzejczak ahead of Mike Testa by 14 points in October, a few weeks before Testa won by six and a half points, we cannot underestimate the importance of Murray.

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TAMMY MURPHY

You have to believe she signed up for something better than a roomful of bused-in party members arranged to look like obedient power players. One

could make the case that the First Lady of the State of New Jersey wields more power than any other nonelected official. But it all depends on how exactly the best friend of the state's powerful chief executive chooses to advise her husband. Is she telling him to dig in and run for reelection in 2021, or to evacuate New Jersey for a post in a Democratic administration in 2020? Sources say short of secretary of state, Murphy likely signs on for another tour of duty, but again, when told she would play the leading female role in an epic drama opposite her husband, did the first lady envision an ugly retread of the 1960s television drama *Rat Patrol*? The unfortunate war metaphor is fitting, given the condition of the party right now. Supposedly highly political and more naturally talented than her husband, the First Lady perhaps revels in the task of trying to strategically sort through the aftermath of an upended chess board. It's hard to imagine her happy with this level of mayhem, but again, if she's able to secure the Murphys' war footing, and she and her husband gut through the attacks and counterattacks and rearrange the structure of power in this state, maybe she still believes there's an Ellen Louise Axson Wilson-sized political payoff out there.



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GURBIR GREWAL

The Attorney General for the State of New Jersey arguably holds in his hands the fate of those main EDA scandal perpetrators, whose prosecution could dramatically shake up New Jersey's

political dynamic. But it's more than that, as the former Bergen County Prosecutor routinely distinguishes himself from the bland and bumbling performances flanking him in much of the rest of the Murphy Administration.



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**GEORGE NORCROSS**

Following revelations about how tax incentives benefited the business interests of South Jersey Democratic Party Power Broker Norcross, the boss slipped several substantial notches on the food chain this year, an embattled condition exacerbated by Norcross' General Majority PAC (funded in part by the boss's personal contributions) having a bad year. Not only did South Jersey Democrats lose a senate seat in LD1, where an ugly, racist mail piece release by the PAC wretchedly backfired, but the organization failed to make gains in LD8. Worse, LD1 and LD8 are connected. South Jersey flipped the sitting Republican senator in LD8 in anticipation of losing its own senator in LD1. But Democrats' losing there makes it unlikely that Senator Dawn Addiego (D-8) – or her sup-planted successor if she doesn't run, which she likely won't – can win in 2021, short of a major re-districting drive. Republican Senator-elect Michael Testa's win in LD1, amped by high performance in his hometown of Vineland, makes it difficult to rearrange the map to hurt him, putting that much more pressure on LD8. The trouble is, South Jersey seems to be running out of towns, and buttressing an Addiego replacement means weakening another ally. So short of winding up someone else north of the Mason-Dixon line (and that's a real possibility; look for future wars for territory in counties controlled by Currie allies), the universe appears to be shrinking down there. The worst of it is probably not over and the worst of it – the EDA mess – inhibiting those non-South Jerseyans who aren't already in deep, from rushing to cut a deal with the South without very sober knowledge of the possible consequences.

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JEFF PILLETS AND NANCY SOLOMON



With their series of ProPublica-WNYC stories outlining the process by which South Jersey power brokers used tax incentives for their own benefits under the guise of helping Camden, the two reporters proved the value of investment in political journalism.

Congratulations to Insider NJ's 2019 Power List Honorees!



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11 WILLIAM MCSWAIN



If Norcross is the single most powerful South Jersey party boss in a state run by bosses, one could make the case that the Philadelphia-based U.S. Attorney overseeing the federal tax incentive investigation right now is among the most powerful men in New Jersey politics. A Harvard-educated former U.S. Marine scout-sniper platoon commander, McSwain was a partner at Drinker Biddle Reath before President Donald J. Trump appointed him U.S. Attorney.



12 PEG SCHAFFER



The chair of the Somerset County Democratic Committee had the breakout year of her long career, building on Democratic Party advantages in the Trump era to seize control of the Freeholder Board with Melonie Marano's victory over incumbent GOP Freeholder Pat Walsh. She simultaneously played a savvy game on the statewide stage. In exchange for getting \$100,000 toward her countywide Democrats' coffers from the governor's network, Schaffer jumped into the middle of the state party chair's fight at the side of Murphy's chief political ally Currie. As vice chair, the veteran attorney has proved an active and forceful ally for Currie. Wins by Schaffer allies Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker and Roy Freiman signify 2021 trouble in LD16 for state Senator Kip Bateman (R-16) and greater opportunity for the chair to build countywide power.



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FRED SNOWFLACK'S MORRIS COUNTY "DIRTY DOZEN"

The following is a grouping in no particular order of some of the Morris County politicians/personalities who made news this year and likely will do so again in the future.

JAMES GANNON – The Morris County sheriff just won reelection by the largest margin of any countywide Republican candidate. Sheriffs often are popular by definition – it must be the historic name – but Gannon's popularity seems genuine. Some Republicans want him to challenge Mikie Sherrill, but he has resisted all overtures. At least as of now.

HEATHER DARLING – First she ran for freeholder and won; two years later she ran for surrogate and won. Clearly, the lawyer from Roxbury strikes a chord with voters. It's worth noting that she had to withstand over-the-top personal attacks to win last June's primary for surrogate.

ALAN ZAKIN – The lawyer/political consultant has been around the county Republican scene for a long time, helping candidates win elections and often representing them in court when things go awry, as he is now doing with Tom Mastrangelo. Speaking of which ...

TOM MASTRANGELO – A divisive figure in Morris County politics. He has many detractors, many of whom refrain from stating their grievances publicly. Yet, repeated election wins – including one this year – suggest the freeholder must be doing something right in the eyes of voters.

JOHN INGLESINO – A well-traveled municipal attorney and former mayor and freeholder, his services often are requested by local officials when trouble is on the horizon.

ANTHONY M. BUCCO – Ascended to the Senate after the death of his father. Clearly earning political respect himself, no fellow Republican dared challenge his selection as the new senator in District 25 at a GOP convention. He also managed to win election to an office he will not accept - a pretty neat trick indeed.

MICHAEL SORIANO – The Democrat is mayor of Parsippany, Morris County's largest town. That in itself is worth something, although the path ahead may be rocky – Dems failed to take control of the council in this year's election, as some expected.

TIM DOUGHERTY – He is the mayor of the county seat and probably its most notable locale. Over the last decade, Morristown has seen new residencies, new bars/restaurants and more are on the way. The mayor certainly deserves credit for a lot of that.

JOE PENNACCHIO – He is now the county’s senior Republican senator in Trenton. He also is co-chair of the Trump reelection campaign in New Jersey, which depending on your view, is either a desirable or dubious assignment.

MIKIE SHERRILL AND TOM MALINOWSKI – Sure, they’re different people, but no list would be complete without the first Democrats in years to represent Morris County in Washington.

CAROLYN BLACKMAN – After an emotionally-charged and acrimonious campaign, she is now the mayor-elect of Dover. That’s the good news for her. The challenge is governing a community that is not as affluent as the county itself and one that may still be politically divided.

CHRIS CHRISTIE – Sure, the former governor is hardly visible these days in Morris County affairs. But he is a former governor living in the county and you know that if he chose to speak publicly about county Republican politics, people probably would listen.



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13 DOUG STEINHARDT



In addition to his statewide duties as Chairman of the Republican State Committee, the Warren GOP chair continues to stimulate discussion about his 2021 prospects as a Republican candidate for governor to take on incumbent Murphy. Following a strong 2019 election night, Steinhardt might now be the frontrunner. Not only did he rack a win in the state’s single special election for senate, he held off Democrats’ attempts at incursion in other key areas, and could gleefully observe the potential to further fracture Democrats between an out-of-touch governor and lawmakers terrified of getting lumped in the Murphy tax bracket without Murphy money. 2019 titillated 2021 opportunity. He has fights in his own party, and still must suffer the consequences of Donald Trump’s unpopularity in much of New Jersey, but based on what happened on Nov. 5th, the state party chairman could definitely claim ascendant powers.



14 BILL CASTNER



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

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15 JIM WALDEN



Counsel for the Governor's Task Force on Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) tax incentives, Walden of Walden Macht and Haran LLP comes from the U.S. Department of Justice, where he built a distinguished career of mafia and RICO Act prosecutions. Now he's the most feared man in Trenton, whose bigfoot New Yorker attitude has unbalanced Jersey bosses used to pushing around their own.



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16 CRAIG CARPENITO



Aside from his takedown of Atlantic City Mayor Frank Gilliam, and Hoboken power broker Frank “Pupie” Raia, U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Carpenito has mostly been lowkey on the political corruption front since he took over from Paul Fishman. That doesn’t mean he isn’t swimming around, lying in wait. A late in the year mistrial in the hate crime case of Bordentown Police Chief resulted in Carpenito announcing a retrial of the case.



17 MIKE TESTA



In the most impressive performance of the year, the GOP senator-elect in LD1 knocked off war hero Democrat Senator Bob Andrzejczak to give Republicans another South Jersey senator alongside Chris Brown from Atlantic County. Amid Trump agony statewide, Trump 2020 Co-NJ Campaign Chair Testa’s victory reflected strong LD1 support for the embattled president. But Testa’s win was much more. It was, in fact, a textbook example of how to run for office. The candidate built on a strong family name, a personal history of success in his hometown of Vineland, a record of civic engagement, political work developed as chair of the Cumberland County GOP, a hyperactive willingness to engage local issues, social media sophistication, conventional media outreach, message-discipline in his denunciation of Murphy, and something rarely observed in New Jersey politics: fearlessness. Going up against a legitimate war hero, Testa was unafraid to remain focused on repeatedly counterattacking the Camden-based Democratic machine that tried and failed to destroy the reputation of himself and his running mates, most vociferously denouncing a racist mailer targeting Assemblyman-elect Antwan McClellan. Trump was supposed to be the nativist, race-baiting albatross in New Jersey, but in a display of all-politics-is-local judo, Testa and McClellan (and Assemblyman Erik Simonsen) flipped an entire arrogant organization on its back and stood tall within the Republican Party – on their own terms.



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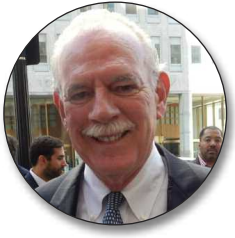
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TOM BARRETT'S ESSEX COUNTY "NOTABLE" LIST

You likely won't see them on the Insider 100 Power List (which, by the way, does not include elected officials, judges or former governors). But whether those on the list below be a public office holder or a seasoned and valued behind-the-scenes operative, their stagecraft, dedication and often times unrecognized yet instrumental advice enables many of the ranking 100 to get there in the first place. *So, here's a salute to just some of those in Essex County who make it all work.*

Claire Anderson – Director/Constituent Affairs for Assemblyman John McKeon

Al Anthony – Mayor of Livingston

Sheena Collum – 1st woman, 2nd youngest elected South Orange President

Jay Coltre – Seasoned political operative/Roseland Democratic Municipal Chairman

Dave Caetano – Chief of Staff/Assembly Budget Chair Eliana Pintor Marin

Dean Dafis – Maplewood Township Councilman

Rashawn Davis – Member Civilian Police Review Board, Newark

Bob Dombrowski – Fairfield resident, Old school operative, aide to Freeholder Brendan Gill

Ted Giblin – Verona Township Councilman

Sammy Gonzalez – Newark's North Ward Democratic Chairman

Casim E. Gomez, Jr. – Staffer for U.S. Senator Bob Menendez

Michael & Ryan Graham – Associate Publishers for Insider NJ

Jill Hirsch – District Director, U.S. Congressman Mikie Sherrill

Lavita E. Johnson – Former Police Officer, Ass't Manager, Mayor Baraka, Newark

Kaylon Jones – Experience and agility. Employed by the City of East Orange

Matt Krayton & Henry deKoninck – Partners, Essex-based public affairs firm Publicities

Michael McGlynn – Union Local 68 business agent, Fairfield GOP councilman

Erin O'Gara-Meier – District Office Director/State Senator Richard J. Codey

Hanna Mori, Esq. – State Director, U.S. Senator Cory Booker

Annette Romano – Respected Democratic Chairwoman/Millburn/Short Hills

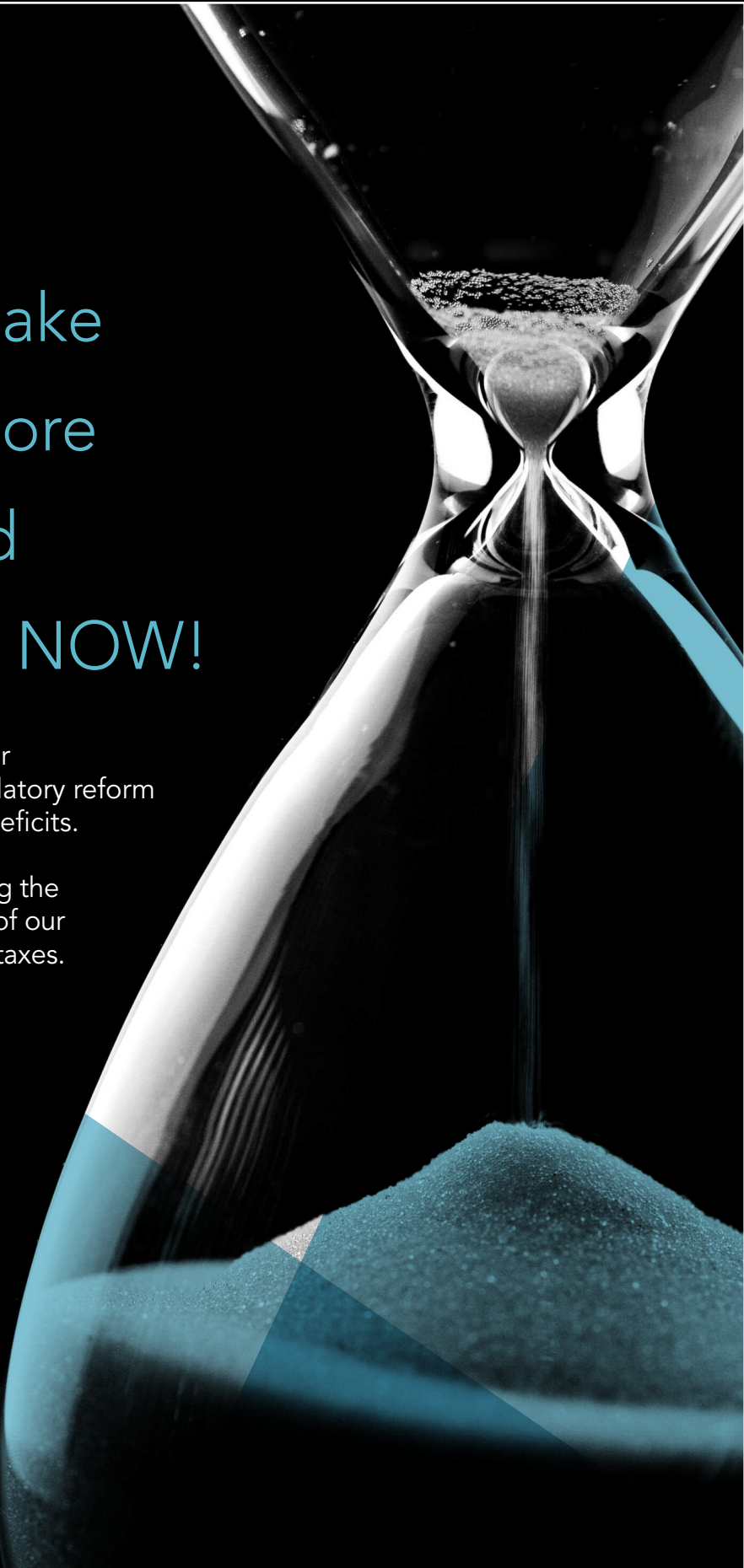
Robert (Bob) Russo – Indefatigable Montclair Councilman/Montclair St. University Adjunct

Patricia Sebold – Livingston Dean of the Democratic Municipal Chairs, Essex County Freeholder

Mary M. Theroux – Chief of Staff to Assemblywoman Jasey

Andrew Trenk – Constituent Services to Assemblyman McKeon

Tony Vauss – Widely praised Mayor of Irvington



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- NJBIA looks forward to seeing the promised recommendations of our policymakers to avoid future taxes.
- Be part of the conversation. Register for our **Annual Public Policy Forum, *Igniting Innovation***, on December 6. <https://njbja.org/ppf2019>

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18 BILL MULLEN



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



19 DALE FLORIO



The President and CEO of Princeton Public Affairs, Florio possesses a calm, in-control and results-driven demeanor, which makes him stand out as a leader in a state so often conditioned by hyperactivity – and little progress. He and his successor – Somerset County Republican Chairman Al Gaburo – who also works at the firm – didn't have a good night in Somerset this year, but Florio and his team, Gaburo among them, wield tremendous, relationships-based power in Trenton. Watch this team as they undertake a more aggressive effort on behalf of former Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-16), already a 2021 candidate for governor.



20 PAT COLLIGAN



Members of the New Jersey State Police Benevolent Association (NJSPBA) this year elected Colligan and Marc Kovar to another three-year term respectively as president and vice president. The labor leader slate ran unopposed. As usual, he was everywhere, and significantly with Somerset County Sheriff-elect Darrin Russo on the Sunday before election – and on election night.

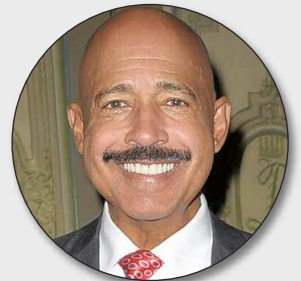
21 EDDIE DONNELLY



The President of the NJ FMBA this year received enough votes to become the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees that will manage the Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS). Under the new structure, the Board of Trustees, made up of a majority the pension's stakeholders, firefighters and police officers who rely on the pension they've invested in over the course of their careers, will be responsible for managing the fund.



22 TED WELLS



The hiring of storied litigation attorney Wells of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP proved critical for the Murphy administration, which notched a win behind Wells' courtroom take down of the so-called Dream Team when a judge ruled in favor of releasing the NJEDA Tax Incentive report.



23 FRANK HOLMAN



When long-serving Ocean County Republican Committee Chairman George Gilmore stepped aside amid indictment entanglements, Holman, an accountant and former mayor of Jackson, occupied the throne in New Jersey Republicans' most important county. Most significantly, the GOP still controls the freeholder board in Ocean, but 2020 will be a key test for Holman, as the CD3 contest presents him with an opportunity to find some company for U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4), the lone Republican in the New Jersey congressional delegation.

**N.J. insurance bill
sounds good
but it will harm
consumers,
commissioners from 2
Southern states warn**

**Op-Ed: Insurance Scammers
Will Be the Winners If This
Fair-Conduct Bill Is Enacted**

**Insurance costs will
soar under pending bills**

'Bad faith' bill endangers NJ insurance market

**'Bad faith' insurance bill will yield
costly, frivolous lawsuits**



New Jersey cannot afford to go backwards.

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24 KEVIN DRENNAN



Executive Director of the New Jersey Senate Democrats, Drennan serves as chief of Senate President Sweeney’s formidable senate shop. This has, to date, brought out the neophyte qualities of the Murphy Administration team as the two sides continue to clash. For the second straight year, Drennan and company hamstrung Murphy’s attempts to sell a millionaire’s tax. Drennan also excelled in 2019 as a key campaign ally fastened to the successful candidacy of Hamilton Mayor-elect Jeff Martin.



25 GEORGE HELMY

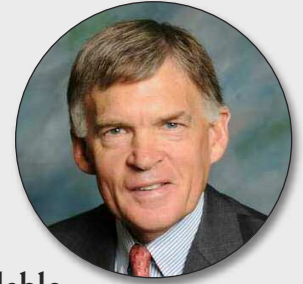


Chief of Staff to Governor Murphy, the very hands-on Booker-honed insider demonstrated an early eagerness to interface with grisly Trenton types, even – or maybe especially – those whom his predecessor never bothered to call back, trying to leverage relationships as a way of getting on track an administration otherwise badly mauled by feeble relationship-building. It’s been hard, likely worsened now by competing political strategies and messaging that lawmakers – particularly those battleground occupants and Sweeney allies – blame on Murphy. The massive, unresolved divide between Currie and Jones doesn’t help matters either, as Helmy tries to gingerly handle the more warlike people in his own camp for the sake of preserving those ever-fragile relationships in the legislature.

THE STATE'S TOP TEN COUNTY CHAIRS - AT THIS MOMENT IN TIME

- 1. Leroy Jones:** The Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman has amassed the support of chairs from 12 counties, compared to 9 for rival John Currie, in his quest to serve as Democratic State Party Chair in defiance of Governor Phil Murphy.
- 2. Kevin McCabe:** The Middlesex County Democratic Committee Chairman possesses control of his sprawling county, the speakership with Craig Coughlin, and is a critical political mover behind Leroy Jones (above) for state party chair.
- 3. Amy DeGise:** The Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO) Chair forms a plurality of Democrats.
- 4. Mike Testa:** The Cumberland County Republican Chairman and his team ran the best, most exhilarating campaign of the season, directly taking on both halves of the Democratic establishment that runs the state.
- 5. Paul Juliano:** In his first big move as chair of the Bergen County Democratic Committee, Juliano declared his choice for state party chair at a breakfast prior to Election Day. Given how busted up the party is, his decision to throw in with Currie inevitably irritated people in his own county.
- 6. John Currie:** In the middle of a showdown with Jones in which he is not favored to win, the Passaic County Democratic Committee Chairman wants to hold on to the state party chairmanship, the post he has occupied since 2013.
- 7. Peg Schaffer:** The Somerset County Democratic Committee Chair took control of her home county on Nov. 5th when Democrats took 3-2 control of the Freeholder Board. She's also fighting for the governor to have his choice of state party chair as Currie's Vice chair of the state party.
- 8. Nick Scutari:** The long-serving chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee simultaneously serves as chair of the Union County Democratic Committee. His ongoing fights there with state senator Joe Cryan and Linden Mayor Derek Armstead diminish his effectiveness as chair.
- 9. Frank Holman:** Overseer of the state's most Republican county, the Ocean County Republican Committee Chairman started the job this year as the highly respected successor to tattered former Chair George Gilmore.
- 10. Jim Beach:** Chair of the Senate state Government, Wagering, Tourism and Historic Preservation Committee, the South Jersey-based state Senator chairs the Camden County Democratic Committee.

26 TOM BRACKEN



President of the NJ Chamber of Commerce, Bracken (along with Siekerka) remains the state's leading business advocate, and proponent of a stronger state economy through implementation of the Chamber's Plan for an Affordable New Jersey. He ate a loss on the minimum wage fight. But based on Tuesday's election, where voters pushed back hard against "Murphy Democrats" and nearly shocked them in several districts, including 2, and a little in 11, and even 38, Bracken has more runway to make his case against the governor's economic designs.



27 MICHELE SIEKERKA



Routine critic of Governor Phil Murphy, the President and CEO of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association champions what she calls an economic plan seen through the lens of regional competitiveness and affordability. "New Jersey's taxes are exorbitant and, even in a time of a strong economy, there is still the call for more tax increases," Siekerka said this fall. "NJBIA continues to encourage reforms to reduce the overall cost of our public employee pension and benefit cost liabilities. Without these reforms, more burdens will be placed on taxpayers and the future of essential state services will be put at risk." A leading voice on workforce development, she always has boots on the ground.

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28 HETTY ROSENSTEIN



A key ally of Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey Director of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and her fellow red-shirted allies occupied a forward position of resistance all year long to Senate President Steve Sweeney's (D-3) Path to Progress, which Rosenstein says unfairly shifts the cost of healthcare onto state workers. She made a key pro-labor (anti-Norcross) statement this year in LD8. She's also the kind of fearless ally Murphy and his allies may have to lean on heavily to pep talk wobbly committee members in the Currie-Jones war.



29 SUE ALTMAN



Having once slapped around Governor Chris Christie in public, educator and public schools advocate Altman this year took over from Analilia Mejia as executive director of New Jersey Working Families and began aggressively targeting the South Jersey-spearheaded Economic Development Authority (EDA) tax incentives. A key ally of Governor Phil Murphy, she could emerge as a future candidate for Congress, especially if circumstances significantly soften U.S. Rep. Donald Norcross (D-1).



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AL SULLIVAN'S HOBOKEN REFLECTIONS ON LOCAL POWER 2019

RAVI BHALLA remains the most powerful figure in Hoboken, even though he failed to win a voting majority on the city council. His ability to raise money will make him a formidable foe in the 2021 election.

MICHAEL DEFUSCO survived an onslaught of political mudslinging in his reelection to council. He is the leading contender to take on Bhalla in the mayoral election.

MICHAEL RUSSO could run for mayor, but most likely won't. He and his father have long been the scapegoats for reformer claims of old school politics and alleged corruption. While Russo can get numbers in his ward, he has yet to prove he can mount a city wide campaign.

RUBIN RAMOS was robbed in 2013 by a third ticket splitting the vote and allowing Dawn Zimmer to win without a clear majority of the total vote cast. Things could be different in 2021 with the restoration of the runoff election. You can bet Ramos is thinking hard on this one.

After having run and lost for mayor in 2017, **JEN GIATTINO** has to be rethinking any move to run again in 2021. Her reelection this year puts her in a good position to support one of the other potential candidates and curry favor with a newly elected mayor if successful.

The conviction of FRANK RAIA on voter fraud left a mark on the election, signaling the end of an era in which anything goes in Hoboken.

The massive increase in population in Hoboken is changing the voter base. This will mean elections in the future won't be based on newcomer vs born and raised, but may well reflect values that are being brought in from elsewhere in the state, school needs park development, and other issues. This may result in a new brain trust replacing the behind the scene power brokers of the past. Yet oddly enough some older reformers such as Tony Soares have come out with new revised visions for the future, rejecting the old concepts of development is always bad, in favor of smart growth.

PHIL COHEN'S election to the city council will like give him the role of lead administration spokesperson for Mayor Ravi Bhalla. Cohen tends to speak is mind and could match Michael DeFusco in debates. Expect meetings to be even longer than they have been. People should bring their sleeping bags.

With the council split nearly in half, whoever can get the fifth vote will become king maker. In the past, Michael Russo has played that role. But now anybody can. But critics are claiming being the fifth vote is not enough to propel someone into becoming mayor. But you can expect everybody on the council to lend a hand at being the fifth vote – sort of like being the squeaky wheel.



TEN LESSONS FROM THE 2019 CAMPAIGN TRAIL

1. Don't simply run against Donald Trump or Phil Murphy.
2. Don't run a national race – or entertain national questions – if you're running to get to Trenton.
3. Remember to always keep it about the people you're running to represent.
4. Be sure to have specific local, county or district issues on which to run.
5. Believe in your own story and tell it to augment your issues.
6. Don't rely merely on your own story.
7. Talk about taxes not mattering only if you're looking to trip up someone in your own party.
8. Don't be pro-union if your candidacy pits you against a powerful segment of labor.
9. Don't allow dark money PACs backing you to be racist and then play dumb.
10. Don't underestimate the power of ping pong (or a seesaw) to bring out campaign killer instincts.

30 KEVIN HAGAN

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



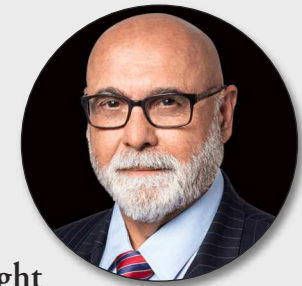
31 SKIP CIMINO

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



32 ANGELO GENOVA

They tell a story in the hinterlands about not wanting to get caught in town with the sun going down. The same story applies here, only this variation changes the scene to a courtroom, where you don’t want to be caught on the opposing side of power attorney Genova with the judge’s gavel dropping. The best election law expert in the state.



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33 JEFF TITTEL

No one in the state surpasses the political and environmental expertise of the executive director of the NJ Sierra Club, who also oversees an impressive daily output of press releases with strong, well-informed positions on issues pertaining to New Jersey’s precious natural resources. Going back to his support for Gene McCarthy, the politically savvy Tittel enjoys the rumble of politics, thrills getting into local battles, and is unafraid to routinely oppose the Murphy administration. Political stumbles by rival enviro leaders only enhance Tittel’s standing.



34 RAY GREAVES

Head of the Amalgamated Transit Union as Murphy tried to find funding to rebuild NJ Transit in the aftermath of the Christie nightmare, Greaves brings a Bayonne-schooled, waterfront tough guy attitude to Murphy’s inner circle of key political allies come budget time. He’s one of a core of labor guys intent on the governor’s success.



35 MARIE BLISTAN

After failing to take him out in 2017, the President of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), Blistan appears to be pragmatically working on improving relations with Senate President Sweeney, in a nod to the mechanical political superiority of the office of the senate president – and the haplessness of the Murphy Administration.



36 MICHAEL CRITCHLEY

When George Norcross assembled a crack squad of attorneys to protect himself amid an uptick of sulfurous stories about the state EDA tax incentives, he started with veteran defense attorney Critchley, who was coming off his handling of the Katie Brennan/Al Alvarez case, along with fellow storied attorney Joe Hayden.



37 ANALILIA MEJIA

The talented, gutsy and policy-grounded Elizabeth-based former executive director of Working Families went national this year to take on the job of political director for the presidential campaign of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT). One of New Jersey's few legitimate stars.



38 RONALD CHEN

Dean and Co-Dean of the Law School (and the predecessor School of Law – Newark) from 2013 to 2018 and a former New Jersey Public Advocate, Chen emerged in 2019 as chair of the Governor's Task Force on EDA Tax Incentives.





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39 MELONIE MARANO

In one of the marquee races of the year, the former mayor of Green Brook Twp. became a Central Jersey change-agent when she defeated incumbent Republican Pat Walsh in her bid for a freeholder seat in her home county of Somerset. Marano's victory (by 856 votes at last tally) shifted the freeholder board – under Republican control since the Johnson Administration – to 3-2 control by Democrats.



40 MATT DOHERTY AND MAGGIE MORAN

The consummate seaside power couple, veteran Democratic Party operative Moran (who cut her teeth as a disciple of Assemblyman Tom Giblin) runs public affairs strategy firm Kivvit. Doherty (formerly the mayor of Belmar) serves as the Murphy-appointed executive director of the Casino Reinvestment Authority.

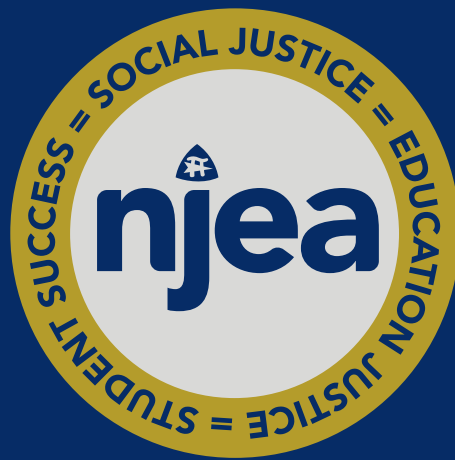


41 AMIR KHAN

The Camden-based progressive activist threw himself on the frontline at Sue Altman's side in the ongoing waterfront war between Murphy's allies and the South Jersey establishment run by real estate developer/powerbroker Norcross. A strong and street smart presence, Khan has the deep local political ties Altman requires to work the wharf.



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Secretary-Treasurer



Steve Swetsky, Executive Director



FRED SNOWFLACK'S 2019 MORRIS COUNTY MOMENTS

Here are some of the moments and events that helped define 2019 in Morris County politics.

Mikie Sherrill holds January town hall meeting in Parsippany – This may seem ho-hum, but it really isn't. It was Rodney Frelinghuysen's refusal to hold public meetings that initially galvanized opposition against him – opposition that led to a Democratic win in 2018. This was an early sign Sherrill would act differently. And she's followed up with numerous public events since.

Dover Mayor James Dodd runs as an independent – Long a Democrat, this move officially broke Dodd's ties to the Morris County Democratic Committee and propelled Carolyn Blackman to a narrow victory in November.

An especially nasty Morris County Republican primary – Where do we start? How about the fact that a candidate running for surrogate brought up the fact there were allegedly topless photos of her opponent on the Internet? And then, there was the freeholder race. The votes have been counted, but the dispute among Tom Mastrangelo, who won, and the trio who challenged him has moved to the courtroom.

The death of Anthony R. Bucco – The long-time local official and legislator was a Morris County political fixture for about 40 years. His passing is still impacting county Republicans.

Tom Mastrangelo's phone message – Not much more needs to be said.

Where's the candidate? – At the moment, Republicans have no official, announced candidate against Mikie Sherrill in the 11th District. That will obviously change, but when?

Whatever happened to Rodney? – After representing the county in various capacities for about four decades, former Congressman Frelinghuysen has perplexed and annoyed some Morris Republicans by essentially dropping out of public sight.

Republicans hold state Assembly seats – Democrats were well-financed and started campaigning early, but in the end, the GOP held their seats in Districts 25 and 26, providing some good news for a party facing two challenges - internal division and Donald Trump's impact on moderate, suburban voters.

42 LARRY HAMM



Founder of the Essex County-based People’s Organization for Progress (POP), Hamm has proved a strong, uncompromising ally for Governor Phil Murphy come budget time and – more critically – in the development of progressive street allies supportive of the Democratic Governor’s progressive agenda. He’s also the chair of the Bernie Sanders for President campaign in New Jersey. Having made it the core of his life’s work, Hamm – in a world where would-be successors don’t fully often understand the true concept of sacrifice – really has no equal in the world of New Jersey political activism.



43 STEFFIE BARTLEY



The senior pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Elizabeth and Director of NAN Newark Tech World, this year accepted the appointment by the Rev. Al Sharpton to the office of Interim Northeast Regional Director of National Action Network (NAN), the organization Sharpton founded in 1991.



44 GREG LALEVEE



The shrivel-up of the Construction Workers in New Jersey put that much more emphasis on the political movements of the business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 825.

45 JANET CAICEDO

Political power starts with the person of real courage who stands up to power, and in this case it's the Colombian immigrant sister of a forklift operator "perma-temp" worker who died on the job in August in a Kearny warehouse. Putting herself on the front line of undocumented workers seeking better lives for themselves and their families, Janet Caicedo in October went to the warehouse where her brother, Edilberto Caicedo, died and made the following statement: "We are here to demand that the State of New Jersey investigate temp agency hiring practices. We demand laws that protect the rights of temp workers. And we demand that CVS and American Eagle cut ties with T.I. Logistics." It was a statement from the heart of a power that starts on the street, a sister's undeniable pain changed to righteous political rage.



46 JEAN STANFIELD

The top vote-getter in the 8th Legislative District, former Burlington County Sheriff Stanfield shone as a late GOP replacement for doomed Assemblyman Joe Howarth, and proved the GOP still has a pulse in BurlCo. But more than that, the retired top cop – amid so much anti-government furor – proved the real value of having a veteran presence on the Republican LD8 ticket. Had Howarth stuck around, Republicans might have lost. It was top vote-getter Stanfield – a throwback in the best sense of the word with her lawyerly seriousness, relatable grandmotherly gentility, but most of all a strong and longstanding work record, who carried the GOP to a roughly 1,000-vote victory in a district specifically targeted by South Jersey Democrats and the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee (DACC). Remember this. The broadest dimensions of solipsism and unexamined living in the modern world and specifically the era and example of Donald Trump have convinced a lot of people with little experience that they can just jump into politics with little training. Forget party or ideology for a moment. Stanfield is a pro, and not only on the government side. Proving political survival skills, she retired countywide to zero in on Republican legislative turf in dire need of defense, in advance of Republicans losing the sheriff's race.



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47 CRAIG GUY

Chief of Staff to Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise, Guy is one of the most politically astute people in the state of New Jersey, and a real old-fashioned born ward heeler who can put soldiers in key positions when it counts. He remains integral to the success of HCDO Chair Amy DeGise. He remains key to the success of HCDO Chair Amy DeGise. Young people – yes, that means you, millennials on your phones – pay to attention to this man. He’s old school – in the best sense.



48 ESTHER SUAREZ

Her office’s integrity called into question by Katie Brennan, the Hudson County Prosecutor was vindicated when the Chris Christie-appointed Middlesex County Prosecutor independently investigated the Brennan-Alvarez case and reached the same conclusions as Suarez’s investigators.



49 MIKE MULLER

It wasn’t the result they wanted this year. The loss of just two assembly people deprived Democrats of their 54-member supermajority. But Dems still revel in a more than formidable 52-28 seat majority in the Assembly, in part owing to the helmsman of the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee (DACC). One could argue that DACC misplayed in LD8, LD21 and LD25 and should have spent more time trying to play defense to put up stronger numbers in LD2 – and maybe LD11 – in advance of 2021. But in their ongoing rundown with the governor, with redistricting still to come, and with Trump-friendly LD1 looking tenuous from the beginning, DACC wanted (at the very least) to secure a super majority and didn’t get there.



50 MARCIA MARLEY



The Montclair-based President of BlueWaveNJ leads one of the state's most potent progressive groups, which helped elect U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-11), and will be integral to the congresswoman's reelection efforts and the continuing development of Democratic Party expansion points west.

BREAKOUT OPERATIVES OF 2019

REPUBLICAN Chris Corsini

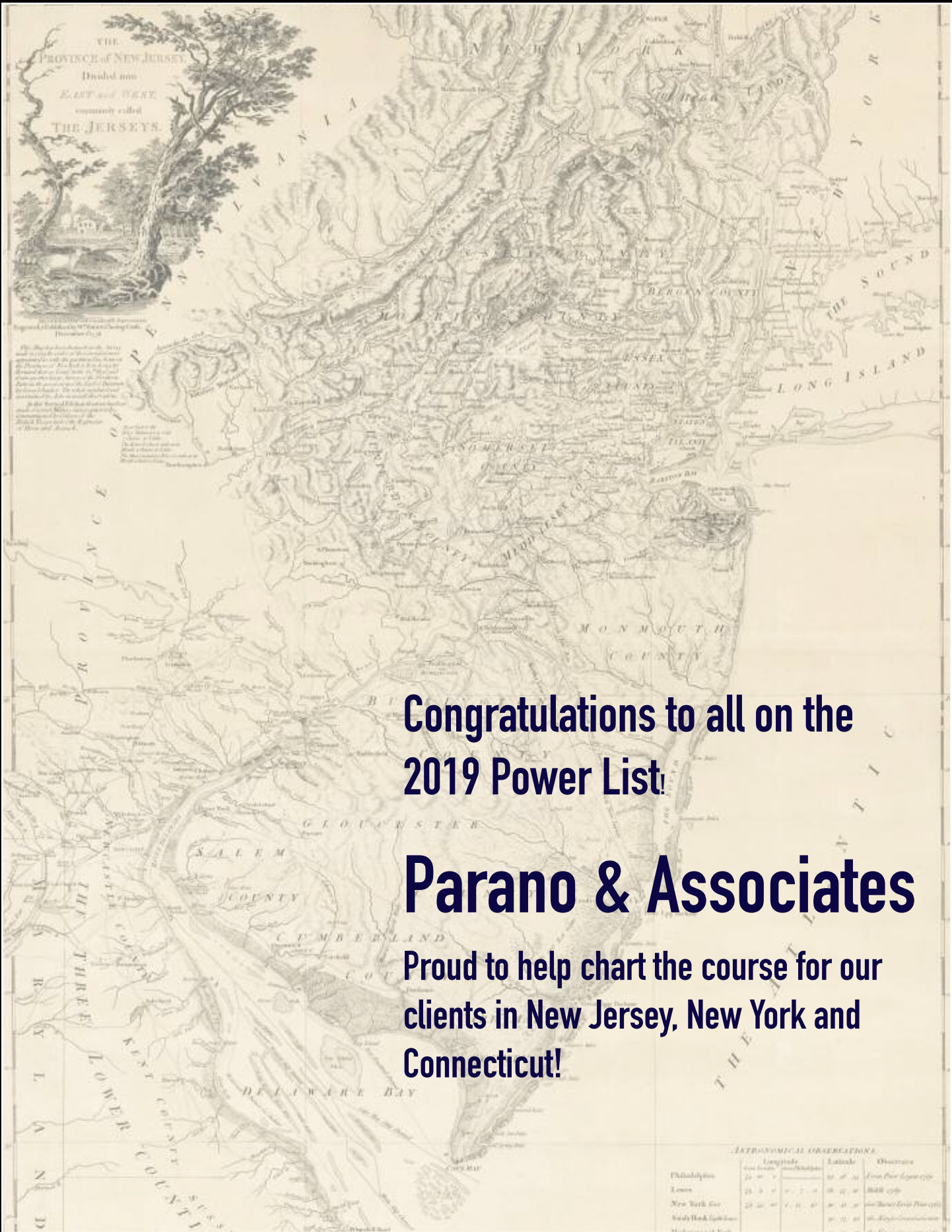


The Savo Schalk Gillespie O'Grodnick and Fisher attorney proved a critical local campaign manager and consigliere to Bridgewater Mayor-elect Matt Moench over the course of a long year, which included a particularly bruising Republican Primary and a general election which Republicans lost countywide. After defeating Republican incumbent Mayor Dan Hayes in the primary, Moench beat Democrat Jeffrey Brookner by a 6,380 to 4,411 margin.

DEMOCRAT Axel Owen



The Campaign Manager for Assemblymen Andrew Zwicker and Roy Freiman in LD16 - a veteran of the Democratic State Committee - helped score a 26K and 25K win for his clients over Republican challengers Mark Caliguire and Christine Madrid, who posted totals of 22K and 21K respectively in a district that was solid Republican as recently as 2013.



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clients in New Jersey, New York and
Connecticut!**

FIVE BEST CAMPAIGNS OF THE YEAR

1. MIKE TESTA, ANTWAN MCCLELLAN AND ERIK SIMONSEN

The three Republicans from the 1st Legislative District together demonstrated a full tilt, team-first winning campaign effort to flip the district previously controlled by South Jersey Democrats.

2. MATT MOENCH FOR BRIDGEWATER MAYOR

Born and raised in Bridgewater, the family man and attorney – a longtime GOP stalwart – ran an aggressive campaign for mayor this year, which proved eye-catching in both the primary and general elections. Also deserving credit: Moench's running mates Michael Kirsh and Tim Ring.

3. JEFF MARTIN FOR HAMILTON MAYOR

The former Joe Roberts staffer proved his mettle in the vineyards with his convincing local victory over Republican Mayor Kelly Yaede.

4. JEAN STANFIELD AND RYAN PETERS

The pair of Republicans weren't supposed to survive the Democrats' LD8 onslaught, but incumbent Assemblyman Peters found the perfect running mate in retired Burlington County Sheriff Stanfield, the top vote-getter in one of the toughest campaigns of the season.

5. DARRIN RUSSO AND MELONIE MARANO

The Democratic challengers in Somerset County respectively won the sheriff's and freeholder races. Marano's victory in the latter contest made history, as Democrats took control of Somerset for the first time since the 1960's.

51 NOREEN GIBLIN

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



52 CHRISTIAN FUSCARINO

The executive director of Garden State Equality professionalized the outfit to make it indisputably the premier LGBTQ rights advocacy organization in New Jersey.



53 DAVID CRUZ

The NJTV anchor and reporter has one of the most agile political minds in New Jersey, sharpened on the beat in Hudson and Essex counties. As much a dog-eared old newspaper guy as he is a radio and TV reporter, Cruz is one of the last of a truly irreplaceable breed of public servants devoted to telling it like it is, and a perfect complement to the bookwormy Aron.





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54 KEVIN O'TOOLE



Chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, O'Toole remains one of the most politically savvy GOP brains in the state. The former 40th District Senator continues to play a role in Trenton politics through connections to his successor state Senator Kristin Corrado (R-40) and Senator Joe Lagana (D-38). Also very close to Senate President Sweeney and Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo.



55 BRANDON MCKOY



President and chief executive of the progressive New Jersey Policy Perspective, McCoy was one of Governor Murphy's top allies in the statewide debate over a millionaire's tax. He's the face – and mind – of the young progressive generation.



56 BOB AND GAIL GORDON



Former Bergen senator Gordon now serves as a Murphy-appointed commissioner at the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), while Gail Gordon is a politically-connected attorney at Florio Perruci Steinhardt and Cappelli.

57 HARRY HURLEY



Host of "Hurley in the Morning" radio program & Sr. Programming Consultant WPG Talk Radio 95.5 & 1450, Hurley breaks more stories than anyone in South Jersey, making him so much more valuable and important than the ideology-before-anything-else news personality types that populate television and radio.



58 BRIGID HARRISON



The Professor of Political Science at Montclair University remains – along with Murray – the best go-to resource for New Jersey politics, possessing a real knack for contextualizing what’s happening in real time with considerable institutional knowledge.



59 CRAIG CALLAWAY



The implosion of Atlantic City Mayor Frank Gilliam again reasserted the power of the chair of the local Democratic Party, under whose auspices Marty Small ascended to the throne of gambling mecca government as Gilliam’s replacement. He proved his value again, too, in a very tight LD2 contest, which Democrats ultimately pulled out on the strength of VBM performance, Callaway’s longtime specialty in Atlantic City.

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60 JACK CIATTARELLI



The only declared Republican candidate in the 2020 race for Governor, Ciattarelli is one of the only ideas-based statewide candidates in New Jersey politics, and will face a tough challenge in his fight to secure the GOP nomination (likely from Steinhardt and Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden), let alone get over the Democrats' one million registration advantage.



61 KRISTA JENKINS



Professor of Political Science at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Jenkins oversees the university's highly regarded PublicMind poll, and is a much sought-after TV analysis of New Jersey politics.



62 PHIL ALAGIA



The chief-of-staff to Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo assumed a leading role on the financing front in helping the City of Newark shovel out of a lead contamination crisis. Integral to the advancement of the political interests of Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman Leroy Jones, Alagia joined other members of the EDA Board in defying Governor Murphy's call for them to resign amid the ongoing EDA scandal.

63 JETHRO JAMES



No one proved a more animated people-power advocate through the ongoing lead contamination crisis than the pastor of Newark's Paradise Baptist Church, who has also been a strident opponent of marijuana legalization.



64 BRITTANY O'NEILL



A protégé of veteran Emily Everson at the senate Republican Office under the auspices of Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21), O'Neill had the best year of her political career as the campaign manager for the LD1 Republican ticket of Mike Testa, Antwan McClellan and Erik Simonsen. Her excellent, always graceful under pressure work produced a full-time job. She will be the chief of staff for the LD1 Republicans-elect.

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2019 BATTLEGROUND RESULTS BY THE NUMBERS

LD1

R: Mike Testa, Jr. 27,163 (53.5%) Erik Simonsen 26,544 (27.2%) Antwan McClellan 25,521 (26.1%)
D: Bob Andrzejczak 23,636 (46.5%) R. Bruce Land 23,098 (23.6%) Matthew Milam 22,555 (23.1%)

LD2

Vincent Mazzeo 23,140 (23.14%) John Armato 21,825 (21.8%)
R: Phil Guenther 20,886 (20.8%) John Risley 20,885 (20.8%)

LD1

R: Mike Testa, Jr. 27,163 (53.5%) Erik Simonsen 26,544 (27.2%) Antwan McClellan 25,521 (26.1%)
D: Bob Andrzejczak 23,636 (46.5%) R. Bruce Land 23,098 (23.6%) Matthew Milam 22,555 (23.1%)

LD8

R: Jean Stanfield 24,310 (25.4%) Ryan Peters 24,168 (25.3%)
D: Gina LaPlaca 23,141 (24.2%) Mark Natale 22,364 (23.4%)

LD11

D: Joann Downey 22,482 (26.6%) Eric Houghtaling 22,415 (26.5%)
R: Michael Amoroso 20,171 (23.8%) Matthew Woolley 19,525 (23.1%)

LD16

D: Andrew Zwicker 26,280 (27.9%) Roy Freiman 25,077 (26.6%)
R: Mark Caliguire 21,606 (22.9%) Christine Madrid 21,387 (22.7%)

LD21

R: Jon Bramnick 28,787 (25.3%) Nancy Munoz 28,079 (25.7%)
D: Lisa Mandelblatt 25,452 (23.3%) Stacey Gunderman 24,865 (22.7%)

LD25

R: Anthony Bucco 26,848 (27.2%) Brian Bergen 25,552 (25.9%)
D: Lisa Bhimani 23,505 (23.8%) Darcy Draeger 22,850 (23.1%)

LD38

D: Lisa Swain 19,887 (27.2%) P. Christopher Tully 19,571 (26.8%)
R: Christopher DiPiazza 16,872 (23.1%) Michael Kazmir 16,724 (22.9%)

LD39

R: Holly Schepisi 27,125 (28.5%) Robert Auth 25,494 (26.8%)
D: John Birkner 21,434 (22.6%) Gerald Falotico 20,989 (22.1%)



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65 CHRIS RUSSELL



Critically involved in the Republican Party’s single pick-up election, the principal at Checkmate Strategies had a good night based on LD1 Senator-elect Testa’s victory. Democrats imploding means Russell will be able to sit higher in the saddle heading into 2021, which at this rate could develop into a real statewide race. At the very least, Republicans will be falling all over one another to get a crack at Murphy, which will keep Russell busy.



66 IDIDA RODRIGUEZ



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



67 ZENON CHRISTODOULOU



Vice chair of the Somerset County Democratic Committee, Christodoulou – a PhD in economics and owner and operator of his family’s business – along with Schaffer ascended to the mountaintop of countywide politics this year as Democrats took control of the freeholder board. A real relationships-builder and fundraising juggernaut, Christodoulou has close, cross-the-aisle ties statewide.

68 JOE AND MIKE DECOTIIS

Joe and Mike DeCotiis run one of the state's most powerful and politically connected law firms in New Jersey. Since its inception in 1986, the partners at DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin continue to have a profound understanding of state government, making them a political powerhouse in the Garden State.



69 KEVIN BROWN

The Vice President and NJ State Director of 32BJ SEIU has had an impressive run of labor advocacy, including oversight of a master contract for over half of all workers at Newark Liberty International Airport, which puts the workers on track to receive \$19.00/hour by 2023. Also on the frontline of a fight to unionize subcontract workers at the airport, Brown could take some credit too for New Jersey advancing a path to a \$15 minimum wage.



70 ALLISON MURPHY

The pragmatic chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew (D-2), Murphy will face one of the biggest tests of her political career next year as she attempts to get the South Jersey congressman reelected to a second term. The team's first order of business will be to secure allies in the Democratic Party to prevent irritation over the congressman's vote against impeachment from getting out of control and threatening to do damage even before the beginning of the 2020 general election.





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71

MICHAEL SOLIMAN, MIKE DUHAIME AND MO BUTLER



The New Jersey guys at Mercury each continues to try to respectively represent the interests of Chris Christie, Bob Menendez and Cory Booker. Butler had the most publicly taxing year of the year of the trio as he attempted to build Booker into a first-tier presidential candidate.



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72 TRISH ZITA AND JEANNINE FRISBY LARUE

A one-two punch combination at Kaufman Zita, Zita and LaRue are two of the most policy-grounded people in the state of New Jersey.



73 JOE DEMARCO

The former business administrator in Bayonne took the reins of the Somerset Democrats' countywide campaign to nudge Freeholder-elect Melonie Marano and Sheriff-elect Darrin Russo across the finish line. Marano's "knife's edge" – to borrow a Murphyism – 856-vote victory over incumbent Republican Freeholder Pat Walsh put Democrats in 3-2 charge of the freeholder board ahead of a 2020 election where – with Trump at the top of the GOP ticket - they are expected to sweep. Others integral to the win included Executive Director James Corti, and former Executive Director Nathan Rudy.



74 GENE MULROY AND GERRY GIBBS

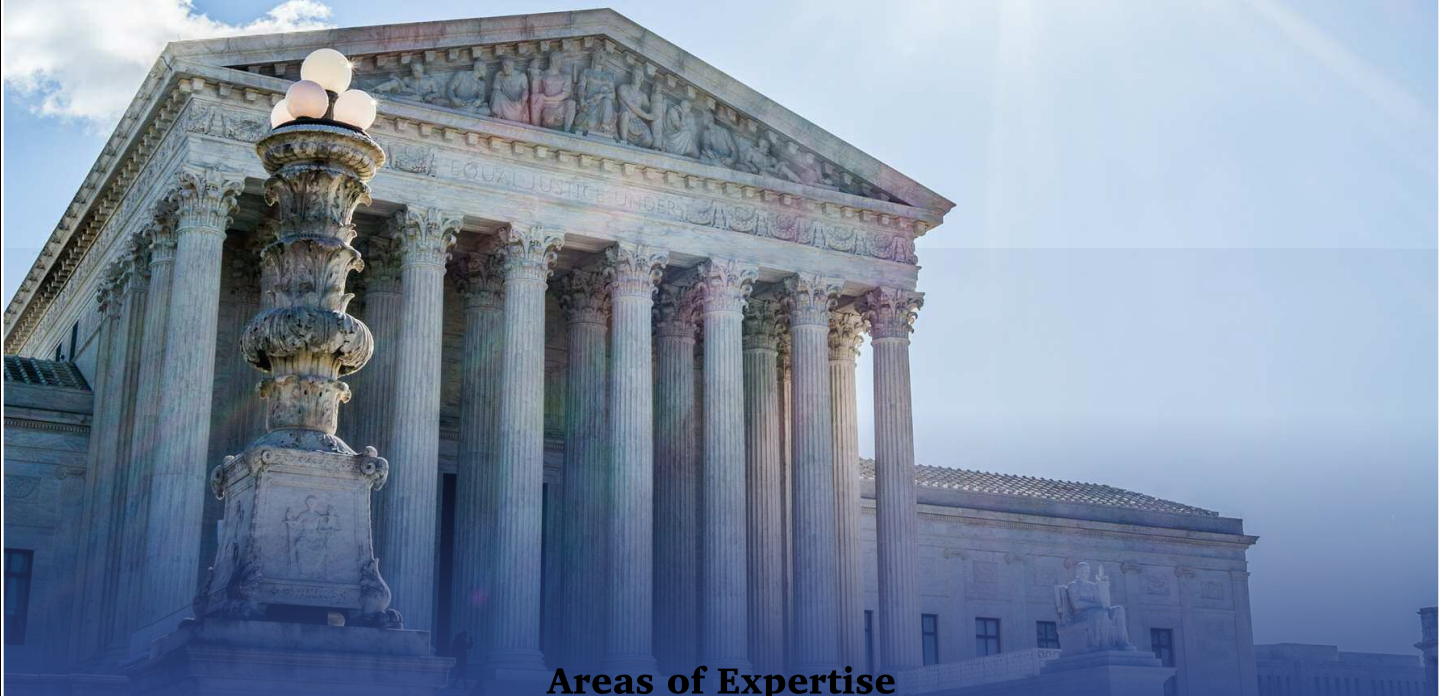
The pair of public affairs specialists go back to back in the halls of Trenton at Capitol Impact Group.



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CRITICAL PLAYERS IN THE CHAIR'S FIGHT

JOHN CURRIE

The Passaic County Democratic Committee Chairman and sitting Democratic State Committee Chair – The chairman closest to Governor Phil Murphy and Murphy's personal choice to continue to fulfill the role of state party chair, Currie is ready to extend the battle for the chairmanship into a campaign wherein both sides will have to hustle for all 98 state committee votes, despite the appearance early of an edge for Jones, who claims the support of 12 counties to Currie's nine.

LEROY JONES

The Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman and challenger to Currie for the chairmanship of the party – He claims to have the votes and wants to create an atmosphere of inevitability now ahead of a convention to end the contest without closer examination – or bloodletting. Since his declaration of a challenge to Currie, he has enlisted former chairs Tom Giblin and Joe Cryan to call for an end to a protracted contest in the name of Jones already having a majority of votes. But Currie and company say the contest is still fluid.

BRENDAN GILL

The chief political strategist for Governor Phil Murphy – If Jones v. Currie gets bloody, Gill will have to confront the possibility of getting tossed off the line next year when the Essex County Freeholder President runs for reelection. So far, at least, in spite of the political risk, Gill has put his head down in defense of Currie and the right of the governor to pick the state party chair. Already a business competitor of Jones (the Essex chair runs 1869 Public affairs while the freeholder helms the BGill Group), how far does Gill want to put himself (and the 2021-eyeballing governor, for that matter) on Jones' bad side? Maybe Gill's play to protect his relationship with Currie will produce a bigger personal payoff than Jones, if Gill – no proof of it now – ever has in mind a move to succeed his old boss, U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-9) as congressman.

PHIL MURPHY

The Governor of New Jersey – When he landed the gig he did so as an outsider who, like Jon Corzine before him, had little knowledge of the players and appetites intrinsic to New Jersey politics. The former Goldman Sachs guy possessed a genteel view of the process, seeing the exercise of running for governor as a 21-county episode of Henry James’ *The Bostonians*, set in New Jersey. Now he’s in a dogfight, as he tries to prevent something unprecedented from occurring: the denial by the Democratic Party of the sitting Democratic governor’s right to choose his own state party chairman. It’s not hard to see why the establishment is upset. Murphy composed a task force to examine the use of \$1.1 billion in tax credits benefiting the business network of the biggest party boss in the state. But Norcross’ candidate for the job tells you it’s about “party unity.”

GEORGE NORCROSS

South Jersey Democratic Party Power Broker – This has nothing to do with George, the party leaders behind him insist. It’s about the fact that Currie dissed Speaker Craig Coughlin. It’s about respect. It’s about an honest to goodness independent play for power by Middlesex County, which sees Essex as a means to an end. This has absolutely nothing to do with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) tax incentives and the protective, insulating network of lobbyists, lawmakers and board and authority commissioners to ensure the ongoing, properly regulated flow of taxpayer dollars. It’s about unity.

BILL PASCRELL

Ninth District Congressman – When the Passaic County Freeholder Board tossed his son out as county counsel, Pascrell blamed Currie, and seldom showed up at his side in the days following, and only reluctantly appeared with him come campaign come crunch time. In an attempt to project inevitability around their candidate for state party chair, Jones’ allies have leaned on party warhorses like Senator Joe Cryan and Assemblyman Tom Giblin to urge a Currie tap out in the name of “party unity.” Will Pascrell – described by Senator Cory Booker as “a pugilistic” presence, put on the war paint for fellow Patersonian Currie, or, with the countywide woes of his son still an open wound – see an opportunity to call for a ceasefire in the name of “unity”?

PAUL JULIANO

Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman – When the Passaic County Freeholder Board tossed his son out as county counsel, Pascrell blamed Currie, and seldom showed up at his side in the days following, and only reluctantly appeared with him come campaign come crunch time. In an attempt to project inevitability around their candidate for state party chair, Jones’ allies have leaned on party warhorses like Senator Joe Cryan and Assemblyman Tom Giblin to urge a Currie tap out in the name of “party unity.” Will Pascrell – described by Senator Cory Booker as “a pugilistic” presence, put on the war paint for fellow Patersonian Currie, or, with the countywide woes of his son still an open wound – see an opportunity to call for a ceasefire in the name of “unity”?

CHRIS CHRISTIE

The former Governor of New Jersey – In his first reaction to Jones’ announcement of a challenge to Currie, Governor Murphy described the handiwork of “Christie enablers,” a reference to that wing of the Democratic Party that not only put up little resistance to his Republican predecessor (a former U.S. attorney) but reveled in symbiosis. If the fight for state party chair continues, watch for more of the same from the Currie campaign, which will employ a messaging strategy not dissimilar from Amy DeGise’s successful 2018 campaign for chairmanship of the Hudson County Democratic Organization (HCDO). In her play for Democratic Committee votes, teacher by trade DeGise consistently tied her rival to Republican Christie, who overhauled teachers’ pensions and benefits with the thumbs-up assistance of Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) and his allies.



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75

BILL AND DAVID PASCRELL



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



76

JENNIFER HOLDSWORTH



A MWWPR political strategist, the former NJDSC ED gained a national edge this year as chief fundraiser for Mayor Pete Buttigieg's 2020 presidential campaign. Ahead of next year's Iowa caucuses, Holdsworth has her candidate in a good position early, leading the Democratic field in the Hawkeye State, according to a November 16th CNN Poll.



77

RAY FERRAIOLI



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

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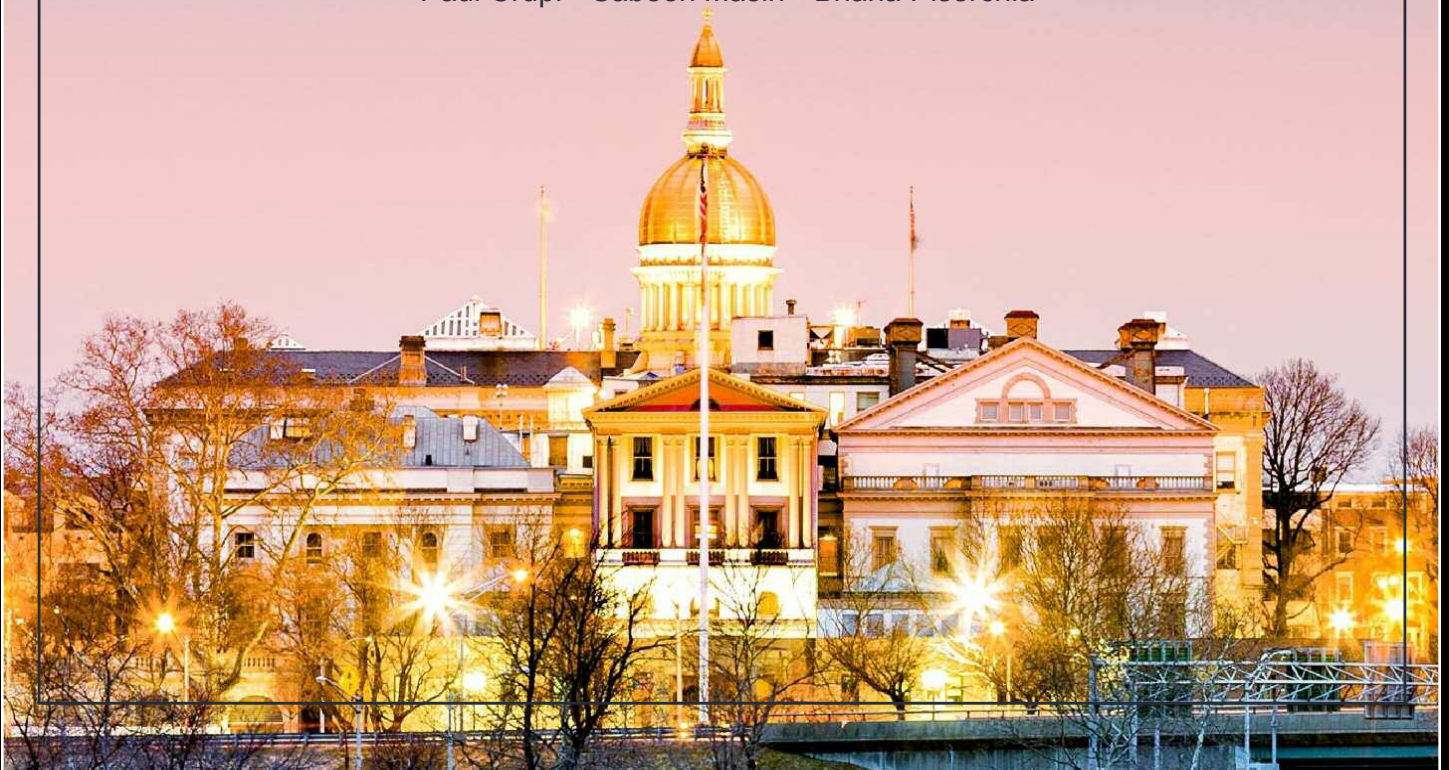


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Paul Crupi * Sabeen Masih * Briana Piserchia



78 AMIRI “MIDDY” BARAKA

Chief of staff to his brother, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, “Middy” has the enormous challenge of getting Brick City back on track and out of the crisis of a lead contamination crisis.



79 LAURA MATOS AND SEAN DARCY

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



80 TAI COOPER

Promoted this year to the senior leadership team at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority serving as vice president for policy and communications, the veteran Cooper will prove critical to the long-term restricting of the scandal-hobbled entity. She also supplies competent chops to a woefully deficient administration.



**81 BILL MAER AND
KELLY STEWART MAER**

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



82 THERESA WINEGAR

Executive Director of the NJ Republican State Committee, Winegar stands to become the next chair of the Republican Party when Steinhardt becomes a full-time 2021 candidate for governor.



1868

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JAY LASSITER'S 2019 POWER COUPLES

MARY CAMPBELL CRUZ & PRIMO CRUZ

A top lieutenant for Congressman Donald Norcross, Mary Campbell Cruz made a name for herself in the aughts by cleverly and strategically getting blue candidates elected on predominately red terrain. Mary was the architect *and* conductor for Congressman John Adler's winning field operation back in 2008. It was one of the most electric campaigns in New Jersey political history. When Mary wed Primo Cruz, lawyer/politico extraordinaire and current city attorney for Lambertville, they became an instant power couple whose sphere of influence extends beyond their home base in Burlington County.

SARAH MIELKE HUCH & BEAU WILLIAM HUCH

Sarah Mielke Huch is NJ's Deputy Attorney General in the Gangs and Organized Crime Bureau *so let's be honest don't cross her*. Her husband Beau William is the affable chief of staff for Senator Declan O'Scanlon and one of the loudest voices for moderation in the State House. The Monmouth-based duo just had their first baby a few months ago, their finest collaboration to date.

JENNA MELLOR & LOUIS DI PAOLO

Th co-fonder of the NJ Harm reduction Coalition, Jenna is probably NJ's most committed needle exchange expert doing the gritty, often thankless work of protecting IV drug users from funky, costly blood-borne cooties like HIV and hepatitis. Jenna's partner Louis is the communications director for the New Jersey Policy Perspective, a left-leaning, social justice-driven think tank. He's also a former councilman for Dumont, Bergen County, population 18k. With an eye on the next generation, Jenna and Louis co-chair the National Leaders Council – NJ recruitment committee which is how they fell in love.

They're not NLC's first love match and they surely won't be the last!

STEPHANIE LAGOS & JUSTIN BRAZ

Justin is deputy chief of staff in Gov Murphy's administration and his portfolio includes legislative affairs among other things. A Peace Corps alum, Stephanie is NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy's chief of staff helping devise and implement an agenda that includes decreasing infant mortality rates in NJ. Recently engaged, Stephanie and Justin's upcoming wedding will be a who's who of NJ political power, past *and* present! Originally from North Jersey, they now reside in Bordentown, Burlington County.

KAY ELIZABETH LICAUDI & MATTHEW McDERMOTT

Kay and Matthew are two of the most experienced, well-respected lobbyists in New Jersey. Kay runs her own shop, Hoboken Strategy Group, a government affairs and PR firm and Matthew is Senior VP at Kaufman Zita, the bluechip firm on State Street. They live in Hoboken, Hudson County.

TESKA FLOWERS-FRISBY & SAM FRISBY

Sam Frisby is the longtime freeholder in Mercer County, population 375k. Teska's a community activist, fundraiser, and advocate for sensible gun policy with Moms Demand Action. Teska also works to provide and expand athletic opportunities for kids in Trenton. They're the son and daughter-in-law of Jeannine LaRue, matriarch and conscience of NJ's Democratic Party which makes Sam & Teska bona fide political royalty!

DR. KHYATI JOSHI & JOHN BARTLETT

John is the Freeholder Director in Passaic County, population 515k and Khyati is a widely respected academic of considerable renown who also co-founded the NJ Dem State Committee's South Asian Caucus. Recently Khyati was a presenter at the Governor's Diwali celebration at Drumthwacket. This pair landed on my radar screen 2005-ish as vocal, high-profile straight allies for LGBT equality.

RACHEL HOLLAND & KEVIN DRENNAN

Kevin is the executive director of the NJ Senate and a close advisor and confidant to NJ Senate President Steve Sweeney. Rachel is a prodigious fundraiser for the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital and a versatile, well-respected political and logistics pro. She was recently tapped to lead Mayor-elect Jeff Martin's transition team in Hamilton, Mercer County where Rachel and Kevin currently reside.

LAURA BROADWELL RICCARDI & ANTHONY "AJ" RICCARDI

AJ's a councilman in Stanhope NJ, a quaint township population 3,500 located on lovely Lake Musconetcong in Sussex County. He's also one of two Democrat state committee member from Sussex. Laura runs the Sussex Co Young Dems, providing a blue oasis for the next generation in a very red county. Their September wedding makes Laura & AJ the newest newlyweds on this year's list.



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UYEN “WINN” KHUONG & DAN JANOWSKI

This Madison, NJ-based pair created Post-it Posse an innovative GOTV tool. They also had the largest VBM operation in the 2018 midterms. This August, Uyen and Dan worked with the Division of Elections and the State Legislature for the Vote By Mail (VBM) fix in the summer emergency session that prevented about 160,000 VBM voters from being dropped from the voter database. Uyen is also the founder and director of Action Together New Jersey, a progressive, grassroots group of 18k+.

HEATHER TAYLOR & DAVID BANDER

After a long stint working at NJ Citizen Action, the good government watchdog, Heather Taylor took her many considerable talents to the Dow Jones News Fund which promotes journalism careers in the digital age. Her husband David is a councilman for Plainsboro Township, population 23k, in Middlesex County.

FELISHA REYES-MORTON & BRYAN MORTON

If you follow her on Twitter, you'll discover that Camden City councilwoman-elect Felisha Reyes-Morton is fiercely loyal to, among other things, her hometown of Camden. She's also on the advisory board of LUPE PAC, a political action committee for increased Latina representation. Her husband Bryan is founder and director for Parents for Great Camden Schools which advocates alternatives to the traditional public school model. They get bonus points for coaching Little League in North Camden in their spare time.

ERICA & JEREMY JEDYNAK

Jeremy's the long-serving, at-large councilman from Rockaway Township in Morris County. Previously, he did a long stint in the Chris Christie administration.

After years working at Americans for Prosperity to, among other things, get the government out of our bong, Erica now directs employment initiatives at Stand Together where she fights to eliminate barriers and to level the playing field for small-time entrepreneurs.

CATHLEEN LEWIS & PAUL PENNA

Cathleen is a councilwoman for Lawrence, NJ, population 35k, located in Mercer County. She has advocated for progressive approaches to sustainability and infrastructure in four different gubernatorial administrations. Paul's a well-respected political consultant and former ED of the NJ Democratic State Committee.

CELESTE & JODI ARGENTINO-FIORE

A power couple from Montclair comprised of two leading LGBT family lawyers, Jodi and Celeste tower above their peers with queer-friendly family law expertise that's unmatched in the state of NJ. The pair married in 2016, 3 years after marriage equality became the law of the land. Jodi and Celeste are the LGBT icing on this year's cake!

83 RUDY GARCIA



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



84 DAVE PARANO



The CEO of Parano and Associates put together one of the most impressive win runs in recent New Jersey political history, including the election of Phil Murphy in 2017, and the election of Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh in 2018. He had a less animated 2019 election night, but remains the key GOTV guy for Governor Murphy.



85 ERICA DAUGHTREY



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

86 LOUIS RAINONE



Managing partner at Rainone Coughlin Minchello, the veteran attorney obviously has the advantage of Speaker Craig Coughlin as his law partner, in addition to the surging political heft of his home county of Middlesex. Rainone serves as Municipal Attorney to Mayors in Marlboro, Atlantic Highlands and Long Branch and the firm also does work in Red Bank, Eatontown, Brick and Matawan. He is also current Town Attorney for Franklin and Rahway. He served 17 years as a law partner to the late Speaker Allan Karcher and as a legislative aide to the late Senator Rich Van Wagner. Fellow partner David Minchello is Corporation Counsel in Plainfield, town attorney in Scotch Plains and General Counsel to the Union County Improvement Authority. He is a key player for the Union County Democrats and represented Chairman Nick Scutari in his recent County Chair's election.



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87 MARY NOONAN



The veteran chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4) is in position to make sure her boss, the last-standing Republican Congressman in New Jersey, staves off a 2020 challenge. They're in a unique position, Smith and his team of survivors, as they look to form a Central Jersey foundation to rebuild what remains of the Republican Party, with glimmering signs of life in 2019.



88 MICKEY QUINN



Like his colleague and saddle mate Muller, the accomplished Deputy Executive Director of the New Jersey General Assembly Office had a strong year overall on the front lines of the legislative wars.



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89 AMIT JANI

The Hudson County operative this year ascended to become the American Pacific Islander director for Joe Biden's presidential campaign, a position that puts him at ground zero of 2020 national politics.



90 ARLENE QUINONES PEREZ

The Hunterdon County Democratic Committee chair in 2019 made full partner at the powerful and politically influential DeCotiis Law Firm and began inching into the statewide power conversation as her party prepares to more keenly assess those qualities it wants in a state party chairman.



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Congratulations to the honorees of the Insider NJ Power 100



TOP SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS IN NEW JERSEY POLITICAL HISTORY

BY JOHN VAN VLIET

April 17, 1702 – New Jersey is united. The proprietary colonies of West Jersey and East Jersey, fraught with political and legal turmoil, surrender their rights of governance to Queen Anne. The Queen unites the colonies into one colony, New Jersey, and appoints her controversial cousin, Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, to serve as the first governor for New Jersey as well as governor of New York.

June 19, 1776 – Overthrow of Royal Government. Congress orders the arrest of Royal Governor William Franklin, carried out by NJ Militia Colonel Heard. Franklin, the son of Benjamin Franklin, was governor since his appointment in 1762. He governed well but unfortunately found himself on the “wrong side”. He was imprisoned in CT and eventually released, aiding loyalists from British-occupied NYC until the end of the war. He died in England in 1813.

July 2, 1776 – First state constitution adopted. With heavily divided loyalties within NJ and a near state of panic, the State Constitution was hammered together and ratified within a week. This constitution granted female and black suffrage to those who had certain property prerequisites. The constitution declared it would be null and void in the event of reconciliation with Great Britain and the return of British rule. This first constitution, written and ratified with such haste, served the state for 68 years.

June 30, 1783 – Princeton is the national capital. The Continental Congress moves itself from Philadelphia to Nassau Hall in Princeton, New Jersey, following a mutiny of the Pennsylvania Continental Line. For just over four months, Princeton would serve as the de facto capital of the United States of America.

November 22, 1791 – Paterson is founded as America’s first planned industrial city. Named after Governor William Paterson, Alexander Hamilton played a role in the establishment of a city via the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures. The idea was to harness the power of the Great Falls and build an industrial hub for the new nation. The city’s original plans were laid out by Washington DC architect Pierre L’Enfant. In true New Jersey style, the planning went over-budget and was fraught with organizational difficulties.

July 11, 1804 – Weehawken Kills Hamiltons. New Jersey held the dubious honor as the new republic’s cradle for miscarried justice with respect to high-profile, politically motivated murders. In a bitterly partisan era, Federalists Philip Hamilton and his father, former Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, were killed in politically motivated duels against Democratic-Republican lawyer Samuel Eaker and Vice President Aaron Burr in 1801 and 1804 respectively. Neither Eaker nor Burr went to trial.

February 21, 1861 – Abraham Lincoln addresses NJ Legislature. Despite voting for Democrat Stephen Douglas in 1860, the governor invited President-elect Lincoln to come to Trenton and speak to the Senate and the Assembly. Hostile Democrats unsuccessfully advanced demeaning resolutions against him prior to his arrival, but many were later impressed by Lincoln’s eloquent prose.



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September 19, 1881 – Death of President James Garfield. President Garfield, a former Civil War general, was shot in DC by Charles Guiteau. Guiteau was a possibly psychopathic man and ardent supporter of the “Stalwart” faction of the GOP, of which VP Chester A. Arthur was a member, who had unsuccessfully lobbied to be consul to Paris. Garfield was moved by train from hot, humid DC to Elberon in Long Branch, NJ. It was there that the president, who at times seemed to rally, finally passed in a long and painful death. Arthur succeeded him and broke with the Stalwarts.

November 21, 1899 – Death of Vice President Garret Hobart. Hobart, a New Jersey Republican out of Paterson, rose through the NJ legislature and became Vice President to William McKinley. As VP, Hobart was one of the most active, and used his politeness and charm to help the president advance his agenda. When he predeceased McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt took his place—assuming the presidency himself following McKinley’s 1901 assassination.

March 4, 1913 – Inauguration of Woodrow Wilson. A one-time governor of New Jersey, the first Democrat after a series of five Republican executives, he was almost immediately destined for the White House. The Princeton professor’s administration advanced Progressivist policies including the introduction of the income tax and Federal Reserve. In 1918, he led the US to victory in WW1.



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August 27, 1932 – Hague rallies for FDR. Jersey City Mayor Frank Hague, arguably one of the most powerful (and corrupt) Democrat bosses in state history, struck a deal with candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt to turn out huge crowds for him if he launched his campaign in NJ. Hague delivered beyond expectation and became President FDR’s NJ #1 point-man, bringing in millions for New Deal projects, all under the Jersey City mayor’s eye.

September 10, 1947 – Current Constitution adopted. The 3rd NJ State Constitution greatly empowered the Governor, making the NJ governor’s office one of the most institutionally powerful executives in the country when new veto powers were granted and scores of separate institutions were consolidated under that office’s purview.

August 24-27, 1964 – Atlantic City hosts Democratic National Convention. The Atlantic City Convention Hall hosted the convention which saw the nomination of acting-President Lyndon Baines Johnson for President and Sen. Hubert Humphrey for Vice President. The convention was shaken by the “Mississippi Controversy” where divided Mississippi regular Democrats and anti-segregationist Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party member delegates clashed over state policies in the electoral process that excluded African-Americans. The MFDP delegates were required to pledge their support of the party’s choice of LBJ and Humphreys, with many walking out.



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March 21, 1966 – NJ Constitutional Convention changes apportionment. After the Supreme Court ruled against NJ’s method for electing state senators by county lines rather than by population, the Constitutional Convention changed the system from 21 senators, for the counties, to 40, for districts, across county lines.

November 15, 2004 – Resignation of Gov. McGreevey – With an administration under a cloud of scandal, Governor Jim McGreevey stunned the nation, if not the NJ political establishment, when he came out as openly gay in the summer of 2004 and submitted his resignation.

June 25, 2009 – Implementation of Lt. Governorship. – The resignations of Governors Whitman and McGreevey evaluated their respective senate presidents to the dual-posts of acting-governor as well. Law-makers felt it prudent to create the LG post, signed into law by Gov. Corzine. It is the only other statewide elected position aside from the governor. The first to hold that office was Kim Guadagno, followed by current LG Sheila Oliver.



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91 SONIA DELGADO



The Princeton Public Affairs pro is one of the state's premier experts on healthcare policy.



92 PATRICIA CAMPOS-MEDINA



Based in Hunterdon, the top-notch academic with real world organizing experience is an expert in Hispanic Affairs and a key influencer within the Governor Phil Murphy political orbit. The Bernie Sanders for prez Vice Chair has personally undertaken an aggressive, in-your-face role as one of the state's leading advocates for driver's licenses for undocumented workers.

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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93 BILL CARUSO

Former executive director of the Assembly Majority Office during the Speaker Sheila Oliver years, Caruso is now a top attorney at Archer Law, who remains engaged as a lobbyist and political news commentator.



94 RASHEIDA SMITH

A trusted ally of Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman Leroy Jones, Smith will occupy a critical position within the party if and when Jones make the leap to helm the statewide organization, or if he remains in place as the continuing simultaneous chair of Essex and East Orange.



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95 AL KOMJATHY AND EILEEN KEAN

The veteran lobbyists represent clients that include Amazon and Anheuser-Busch and have stellar reputations in Trenton – Komjathy wields influence in his home county of Hunterdon and beyond.



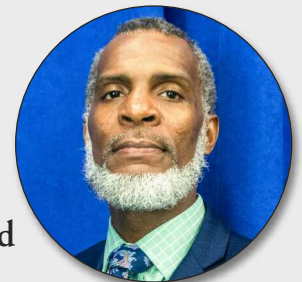
96 RUPA MOTWANI

It's hard to argue with success, and while Democrats failed to knock off LD21 incumbent Republicans, Motwani – chair of the Westfield Democratic Committee – has been giving the GOP fits in her hometown going back to when Shelley Brindle upset the establishment with her 2017 mayoral win.



97 KAREEM ADEEM

In crisis mode as the city confronts lead contamination in its drinking water supply lines, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka appointed Department of Water and Sewer Utilities Deputy Director Adeem as the head of the department on a temporary basis.



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JERSEY REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLES

BY JOHN VAN VLIET

There were scores of battles – some large, many small – fought in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. These did not strictly pit Washington’s often haphazard Continentals against professional Redcoats and Hessian allies, however. While New Jersey raised 4 Continental regiments, 6 provincial units were also raised, loyal to King George, and many local militias fought for the crown as well. New Jersey was, in the broader context, also grounds of a civil war, pitting Americans against fellow Americans. So many engagements were fought in the state because of its position between the British stronghold in NYC and the Continental Congress’s seat in Philadelphia, that NJ has been given the unofficial title of “Crossroads of the Revolution”. While it is impossible to do justice to these historic events in such a small space, the following are some critically important military moments in New Jersey during the struggle for independence.

FALL AND RETREAT FROM FORT LEE – November 20, 1776. British Victory. With the successful British capture of New York after the Battle of Long Island, Washington and the remains of his forces withdrew to Ft. Washington in northern Manhattan. Driven from there, Washington and his men escaped across the Hudson. General Lord Cornwallis, in pursuit, ascended the steep palisades to ambush and capture Washington once and for all. The British were detected, however, and Ft. Lee, commanded by General Nathanael Greene, was rapidly evacuated. With 2,000 soldiers, Washington retreated to Teaneck and crossed the Hackensack at New Bridge Landing, withdrawing all the way across the Delaware River.

BATTLE OF TRENTON – December 26, 1776. Rebel Victory. General George Washington won his first major victory of the American Revolution. With his Continental Army on the verge of disintegration, starving, and freezing in the cold, an audacious gamble on a Christmas march took them over the Delaware River and surprised the Hessian garrison in the town of Trenton. The battle claimed very few lives, but the Hessians surrendered. The victory sent a resounding message of hope for the cause of independence which had been on the verge of fading out entirely.



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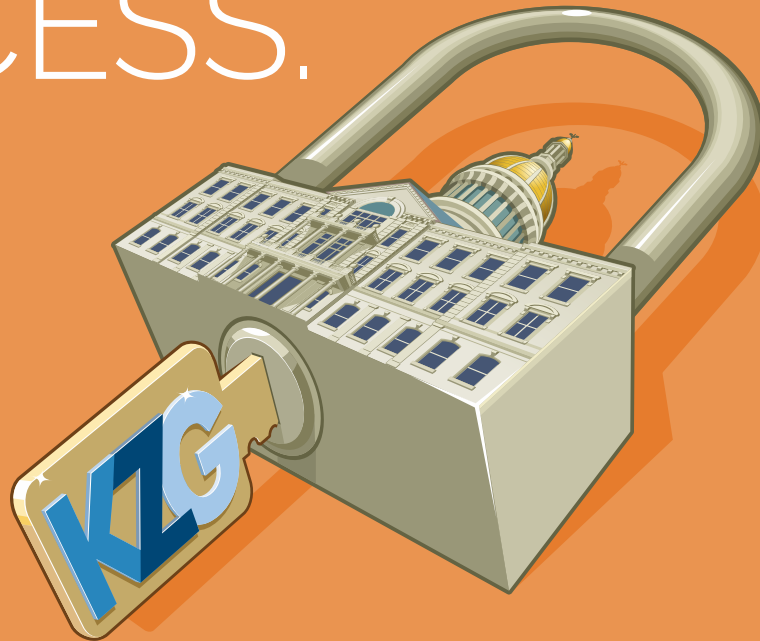
BATTLE OF PRINCETON – January 3, 1777. Rebel Victory. Following Washington's victory at Trenton, he returned to Pennsylvania and then made another strike into New Jersey while anticipating a British counter-attack. General Lord Charles Cornwallis left a garrison of men in Princeton under Lt. Col. Charles Mawhood's command and Washington's forces put up defenses outside of Trenton. On January 2, after being slowed by skirmishers, Cornwallis unsuccessfully attacked the rebel positions and decided to wait. That night, Washington withdrew and escaped Cornwallis, striking at Princeton the next day. American General Mercer was killed in action against Mawhood's British and his forces began to falter. Militiamen also began to crumble until Washington reinforced them and restored their confidence. The British were dispersed, with some re-joining Cornwallis, and others surrendering at Nassau Hall. Washington, flush with his victories, moved to encamp in Morristown for the winter. The British presence in NJ was now mostly confined to New Brunswick.

BATTLE OF SHORT HILLS – June 26, 1777. British Victory. Fought between Metuchen and Scotch Plains, Continental General William Alexander, known as Lord Stirling, confronted a numerically superior force of British and Hessian soldiers led by General Sir William Howe. Washington had taken refuge in the Watchung Mountains and decided to march out while Stirling's regiments followed the British. The forces clashed when Howe moved to intercept Washington. The British forces were divided under Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Vaughan. Lord Stirling, despite dogged resistance, could not stop the overwhelming crown forces, enacting a fighting retreat to Westfield. The summer heat had taken its toll on the British, however, and Howe stopped. The delay allowed Washington to withdraw to a more secure position and the rebel cause remained unbroken.

BATTLE OF MONMOUTH – June 28, 1778. Draw. The British invasion of Pennsylvania had gone successfully, resulting in the capture of Philadelphia by Howe. With the entry of the French into the war, however, the British decided to leave the city and head for New York. With the British crossing New Jersey, Washington decamped from Valley Forge and followed, desiring to attack, although many of his generals thought a head-on battle would be ill-advised. The British were going towards Sandy Hook to meet the Royal Navy and Washington did not want to suffer the moral defeat of allowing them to cross New Jersey with impunity. He sent General Charles Lee to attack, but his assault was beaten back by Sir Henry Clinton's crack troops. Confusion set in the ranks and Lee ordered a retreat, prompting an angry Washington to countermand the order and rally the men (thrashing Lee in the process). The army re-stabilized and Clinton's attacks failed to dislodge the Americans. An artillery exchange between the two sides began to take a toll on the armies, the brunt being suffered by the British grenadiers. Both armies fought in wool uniforms and the intense heat and dehydration ultimately claimed more lives than the combat itself. Clinton decided there was little value in continuing the fruitless fight and withdrew to Sandy Hook as originally planned, under the cover of night, without further trouble.

THE BATTLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE PARTY CHAIRMANSHIP – Nov. 12, 2019. Unknown. Essex County Democratic Committee Chairman Leroy Jones declared war on Democratic State Committee Chairman John Currie. While neither Revolutionary, nor a shooting skirmish, the battle will impact NJ's political future.

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AL SULLIVAN'S HUDSON COUNTY POWER LIST

1. U.S. SEN. ROBERT MENENDEZ – Anyone living who doesn't know who the real political boss is in Hudson County, hasn't been living here long. Although his visibility has varied from year to year, Robert Menendez has been the king pin of Hudson County politics for decades, rarely challenged, but ruthless against his enemies when he is. Few who have openly opposed him have survived. Even those who do not swear undying loyalty to him will express lip service to him to keep the peace. A survivor of corruption charges that ended up in a mistrial, Menendez has emerged more powerful than in the past. He has a long memory when it comes to political slights and subscribes to the Shakespeare recipe for revenge as a dish best served cold.

2. STATE SEN. AND NORTH BERGEN MAYOR NICHOLAS SACCO – Although a potent force in North Bergen since the mid-1980s, Nicholas Sacco began building in countywide political machine in the early 1990s when he successfully pulled a primary coup against old guard Democrats to become a state Senator. Politically wounded during the 2015 mayor contest when his rival Larry Wainstein came dangerously close into narrowing the vote gap, Sacco also lost ground among statewide Democrats last year led to a realignment of power from North Jersey to South Jersey. This was evident when Assemblyman Vincent Prieto (a strong Sacco ally) cased to be speaker. But Sacco more than made up for these when he successfully helped Amy DeGise beat Brian Stack for chairmanship of the Hudson County Democratic Organization, and then trounced Wainstein in the 2019 municipal election, dispelling rumors of an imminent retirement. This may well be bad news for Anthony Vainieri, Joe Muniz and Hugo Cabrera who are seen as the three princes in waiting, and who will have to wait a little longer to ascend to the Sacco throne.

3. STATE SEN. AND UNION CITY MAYOR BRIAN STACK – Always seen as a political maverick, Brian Stack rarely oversteps himself, and has generally stayed on the right side of Menendez. Like Sacco, Stack's power in the county and the state is based on his ability to churn out 10,000 votes for an election. But unlike Sacco, his machine is based largely on his personal popularity – partly generated by the 30,000 turkeys his civic association distributes around the holidays. His failure to win chairmanship of the Democratic Party would have humiliated a lesser man, Stack not only has taken the loss in stride, but has actually managed to make peace with his political enemies unlike former West New York Mayor Felix Rogue who was driven out of office, and possibly Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla against whose candidates the HCDO worked in the last election. Stack's ability to seduce governors with his powerful get-out-the-vote operation has kept him one step ahead in the political game inside and outside Hudson County.

4. JERSEY CITY MAYOR STEVEN FULOP – In some ways, Steven Fulop is the Harry Potter of Hudson County politics, the man who managed to offend Menendez and still (for the moment) survive. In fact, Fulop has at times run afoul of many powerful political leaders – including former Gov. Christopher Christie, for a time, Gov. Phil Murphy, not to mention close relatives of President Donald Trump. Yet, without even Harry Potter’s tell-tale scar to show for the fight, Fulop is still standing. Fulop’s powerful political machine made a shambles of his competition in the 2017 municipal election, and then did the same to Airbnb in the most recent fight over short-term rental regulations. While this machine was unable to save his ally, Sudhan Thomas in the last school board election, the victory against Airbnb may have reinvigorated his state and maybe even national political ambitions, and almost guarantees reelection in 2021 – barring the appearance of a heavyweight challenger.

5. AMY DEGISE – Becoming the first woman chair in the history of the Hudson County Democratic Organization might be enough to qualify Amy DeGise as a rising star in local politics, if not for the fact she beat Brian Stack to achieve it, proving that she can swim in the same shark tank with the best of the boys. The daughter of County Executive Tom DeGise, Amy DeGise proved also that she inherited more than just her father’s last name and has become a savvy political operative in Hudson County. Many people see her as the future of the Democratic Party, someone who can stitch together various generations that might otherwise come into conflict and divide the party. Some predict that she will eventually seek public office as council member, mayor or perhaps even eventually take her father’s place as county executive.



CONGRATULATIONS

to Everyone Recognized on the InsiderNJ 2019 Power List!



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6. HUDSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE TOM DEGISE – Buoyed by his successful primary and general election victories this year after a political coup attempted to unseat him last year, Tom DeGise becomes a key figure in keeping the future peace among Democrats ahead of what is expected to be a tumultuous presidential primary in 2020. Although local Democrats may feel pressure from Menendez to support Cory Booker, the reality is that local Democrats are divided among a number of candidates and could face a similar split that the county faced in 2008. Tom DeGise represents the Old Guard in Hudson County, and so has a number of key people working with him such as Craig Guy, who help keep the political machine oiled and running. Tom DeGise’s will reprise a role he has played out over nearly two decades in trying to keep various parts of the party from splintering.

7. EAST NEWARK MAYOR DINA GRILLO – As mayor of the county’s smallest municipality, Dina Grillo hardly qualifies as a political heavyweight in the same way Sacco or Stack might. Yet her primary victory and later election in the general election appears to have followed the same footsteps as Amy DeGise, pulling together progressives in her community to bring her small town into the 21st Century. Grillo fills the shoes of Joseph Smith, who until his retirement, was the longest serving mayor in Hudson County. With Dawn Zimmer’s decision two years ago not to run for reelection in Hoboken, Grillo becomes the only woman mayor in a very politically masculine county.



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8. FREEHOLDER ANTHONY VAINIERI – With his being named chair of the Hudson County Board of Freeholders for the third year in a row, Anthony Vainieri follows in the footsteps of one-time powerful West New York Freeholder and former mayor Sal Vega. Vainieri, who many see as the future mayor of North Bergen, not only controls the county’s purse strings, but the patronage mill which as well includes county schools, jail and sheriff’s department. He is a huge Sacco ally.

9. HOBOKEN MAYOR RAVI BHALLA – An important political ally of Brian Stack, Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla ran into a brick wall in the latest municipal election. Although he successfully managed to win an additional vote on the city council, he failed to win a majority, and could not unseat four of his staunchest political critics: Michael DeFusco, Tiffanie Fisher, Ruben Ramos and Jen Giattino.

This will set the stage for the 2021 election in which one or more of these contenders will take on Bhalla for mayor. Thanks for former Mayor Dawn Zimmer eliminating runoff elections, Bhalla was able to win his seat in 2017 with less than 50 percent of the vote. But his opponents helped broker a referendum to restore runoffs which means Bhalla will have to work hard to get reelected, unless he can find a golden parachute to higher office.



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on being named one of InsiderNJ's Most Powerful New Jerseyans. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients and thanks to Max Pizarro and Pete Oneglia for keeping the citizens of New Jersey well informed.



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10. STATE SEN. SANDRA CUNNINGHAM – The big question for many is whether or not Sandra Cunningham can be lured into running against Fulop for mayor in 2021. Her influence in Southern Jersey City has grown as she has become a champion for civil liberties, especially when it regards second change for ex-offenders. The widow of one of the most popular mayors in recent memory – Glenn Cunningham – Sandra Cunningham pretty much as a safe seat for life, and connections to state powerbrokers such as Stephen Sweeney that give her significant clout.

11. FREEHOLDER BILL O'DEA – One of the most powerful players on the Westside of Jersey City, Bill O'Dea is a firm ally of Fulop, and guaranteed to retain his freeholder seat for a long as he wants it. O'Dea has in the past wanted to become mayor and would have likely taken the challenge had Fulop run successfully to become governor. O'Dea was also rumored to become county executive if Stack and Fulop had successfully unseated Tom DeGise. O'Dea's expertise in redevelopment, however, gives him a seat at the redevelopment table as the Jersey City's westside rises out of the ashes of its former industrial past.

12. JERSEY CITY SCHOOL TRUSTEE MARILYN ROMAN – While she said she is not interested in becoming School Board president, Marilyn Roman will play a key role in the direction of the county's largest school district – especially in the naming of a new schools superintendent and dealing with the financial mess created by cuts in state aid. Never shy, Roman has Fulop's ear and the support of the teachers' union.

13. REP. ALBIO SIRES – One-time speaker of the state Assembly and a powerful former mayor of West New York, Albio Sires is one of the most talked about political figures in Hudson County – if only because so many people are plotting to unseat him as congressman. A staunch ally of Menendez, Sires' fate is not in hands of rumor mongers – and his ties to Weehawken Mayor Richard Turner, Guttenberg Mayor Wayne Zitt, West New York Mayor Gabe Rodriguez and a host of south-eastern Bergen County politicians give Sires a powerful base, and immense local influence.

14. LEFRAK AND MACK CALI – Enraged by what they claim is an unfair payroll tax imposed by Jersey City to make up for lost state aid, these two developers leaped into the political fray helping to fund a PAC backing a ticket for school board. This led to one of the most expensively fought board of education elections in recent memory and could well be a sign of the future since the effort was not entirely unsuccessful.

15. VISION MEDIA – Successful in the reelection of Sacco in North Bergen, four Hoboken candidates for council, a special election victory in Bayonne, Vision Media flexed its muscles again this year, even after the baton has passed from founder Paul Swibinski to his son, Phil Swibinski. The firm also worked the reelection effort of County Executive DeGise.

16. CRAIG GUY – Once referred to as one of the Blues Brothers of Hudson County, Craig Guy remains the brains behind the county Democratic machine. Until the untimely death of his political Blues Brother Harold Demellier, Guy was part of one of the best campaign tag teams. While not always successful – as the 2013 loss of Jersey City Mayor Jeremiah Healy to upstart councilman Steven Fulop, the duo made things interesting. Guy generally also acts as MC for a number of HCDO events.

17. KEARNY MAYOR AL SANTOS – As clerk of the Hudson County Board of Freeholders and Mayor of Kearny, Al Santos has the ability to stir up the political pot. But in the past, he was remained largely a quiet, team player, until this year. Using his clout, Santos has pushed to close landfill in Kearny, and get his town to benefit from development that has been taking place in communities nearby.

18. JOE DEMARCO – Former city manager in Bayonne, DeMarco has been called by his opponents “The Darth Vader of Development.” The brother of Michael DeMarco – executive director of Mack Cali – Joe DeMarco has used his experience expand the lucrative Hudson County gold coast into Bayonne. “This town was dying until we brought development in,” said DeMarco political ally Bayonne Councilman Juan Perez. Bayonne is currently seeing an expansion of development rivalling the waterfront in Jersey City and other towns.

19. BERNARD KENNY – Former state Assemblyman from Hoboken, Bernard Kenny has reinvented himself in the recent municipal elections in Hoboken, backing candidates largely opposed to Mayor Ravi Bhalla. The one-time strategist behind former Hoboken Mayor Dave Roberts and others, Kenny lost influence with the rise of reformer Mayor Dawn Zimmer.

20. EUGENE MCKNIGHT – A key political ally of Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, Eugene McKnight has been in the middle of several conflicts in Jersey City – including being blamed for the firing of former Gov. Jim McGreevey as head of the city’s jobs programs. But McKnight continues to be a presence on the county level, whereas some of Fulop’s former allies such as Tom Bertoli have faded from the scene.





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98 KEITH DAVIS



Don't underestimate the GOP's ability to play in LD2 was a key message coming out of Atlantic County on election night, one that Atlantic County Republican Committee Chairman Davis was more than happy to advance. As his party looks to capitalize on movement in South Jersey, Davis will prove a critical player in the developing competitive CD2 election in 2020, just like his neighboring GOP county chairman to southward, Marcus Karavan in Cape May.



99 JOE ANDL



Democrats lost the closely-watched LD8 contest, which mostly impacted the larger fortifications of South Jersey power. But the Burlington County Democratic Chairman – close to state Senator Troy Singleton (D-7) – could celebrate a countywide sweep on Election Night (including Tony Basantis' victory in the sheriff's race) and now a 5-0 takeover of the Burlington County Freeholder Board.



100 WYATT EARP



The longtime labor-grounded chair of the Ocean County Democratic Committee played a critical swing role in the standoff for party power otherwise known as the Democratic State Committee battle between Currie and Jones. Murphy allies thought they had Earp in their camp, and were stung when he issued a statement in support of Currie rival Jones. His power in a state party committee rundown may hinge on how well he can control his own committee people.