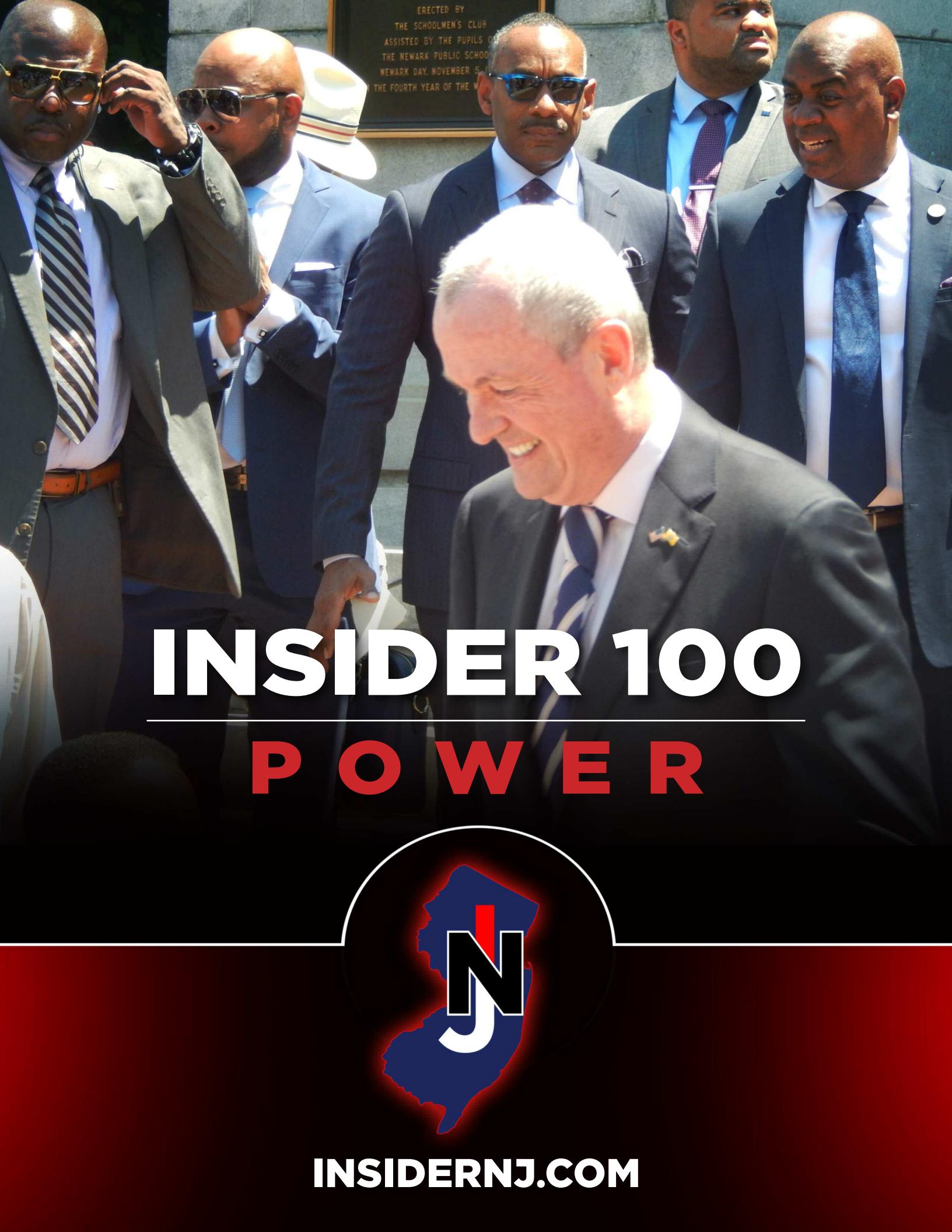


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# INSIDER 100

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## POWER



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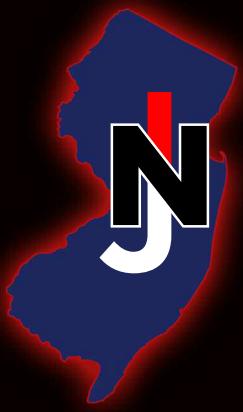
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# INSIDER NJ

*Message from the Editor*

## INSIDER 100 POWER



When U.S. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11) wrote a March letter to banker Saily Avelenda's boss, an avid donor to the venerable Congressman, and (in a personalized addition) noted her activities as a "ring leader" in the local progressive movement, he did more than simply reveal his own quasi-shaky hand hold on power – he gave birth to Avelenda's presence on the InsiderNJ 100 Power.

"It is a little scary that he would do that," the ex-senior vice president at Lakeland Bank told The Washington Post in the aftermath of NPR's initial report on the matter. "I think the whole point of this was to intimidate me and to intimidate the group."

Little nuggets like Avelenda and what she means to the progressive, anti-Trump movement will come to a head next year, when Frelinghuysen faces reelection. Will story lines like hers and others boost a Democratic nominee past the veteran in a gerrymandered, GOP district?

We'll see.

In the meantime, welcome to the InsiderNJ 100 Power, where we rank all the most muscular players in New Jersey politics across a broad spectrum of industries and disciplines. Just as the Frelinghuysen-Avelenda narrative highlighted a going political plotline, we looked for other themes and trends in the development of this year's list. An obvious big one includes the consequences of a gubernatorial election year – specifically the end of the Christie era and dawning of the era of Phil Murphy. The InsiderNJ 100 Power list also reflects a shift in the legislature from the leadership tenure of Speaker Vincent Prieto to his successor, presumably Assemblyman Craig Coughlin.

Invariably, there will be hurt feelings. We're serious. If you had any doubts about the lengths to which white males can feel publicly put upon, injured and victimized, just take a look at President Donald J. Trump's twitter feed or listen to one of his interviews.

Please understand that it is not our intention to make anyone feel bad. We just want to pinpoint power in as wide a range of areas as we can, including labor, lobbying, political consulting and strategizing, activism, writing, reporting and broadcasting, fundraising, party organizing, academia, and the maintenance of government. In order to do that, we inevitably trimmed some people in order to make way for others in the name of balance. Ultimately, we see the list as a conversation starter more than a cemented testament. Also, before you feel crestfallen about not making the list, please realize that we did not include elected officials, former governors or judges.

One last thing about the InsiderNJ 100 Power List and Year in Review.

We hope you have as much fun reading it and debating it as we had assembling it, a process we can't envision being any better, mostly because it keeps us inside NJ, one of the enduring delights of being InsiderNJ!

Max Pizarro

*Max Pizarro*

Editor, InsiderNJ

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**1****STEVE  
ADUBATO, SR.**

We reserved the top space this year for the leader of the Newark North Ward Democratic Party, the former public school teacher who forged real results out of his twin passions of education and politics. A significant player in every mayoral election going back to the late 1960s, Adubato is a master of political organizing and execution, building one of the most potent Democratic Party operations in the state. What sets Adubato apart from the others, however, is his unswerving dedication to people, specifically poor Newarkers. We live in a solipsistic age, where too many enter the political realm for self-aggrandizement and – it is shameful to say – the quest for personal riches. At his finest, Adubato – who now faces significant health issues in his later years – built schools for children and social service centers for the aged and infirm. He constantly sought in politics a way to build a better North Ward in his beloved home city of Newark. He was aggressive, he was in your face, he was loud, explosive and combative - but for too many in our preciously obnoxious state, that is where the stereotype of ugly New Jerseyan ends. Adubato was also well-read, erudite, a gregarious and expert communicator, a hardcore prole who scorned self-indulgence in his personal demeanor and effects and yet also a master of the theatrical, a philosopher prince in his own right, having built himself from humble beginnings and an early factory work experience that convinced him he wanted to pursue a lifelong education. He was a fearless fighter who stepped up in critical moments, such as the election of Ken Gibson, the city's first African American mayor. He played a vital role in the rise of Latinos in Newark politics too, and in the now historic 2006 mayoral election of future U.S. Senator Cory Booker. He was a brutally calculating opponent – and a pater familias, husband of the great Fran Adubato. Finally, and this is the most important thing about him, he cared – and just how much he cared showed in the exhaustive work he did. Lucky for us he chose politics.



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**PHIL MURPHY**

All the balloons have popped, the big flashy banners come down, the grins and winks all evaporated, and the soundbites plummeted into the dustbin of a mostly excruciatingly dreary campaign season; and now the former Goldman Sachs dude who served as U.S. Ambassador to Germany must actually govern the ungovernable state of New Jersey. He'll have to be Hercules. Certainly the state's politics contain considerable Sharks v. Jets fracture. The power center of South Jersey wields more influence than those northern chairs would like, even as they fight with one another and insist on prioritizing individual ego over party building. There's also fracture within fracture. Now that they've scraped the last dumpster fire vestiges of the Christie administration away with Kim Guadagno's loss, the Republicans too are salivating over Murphy's over-reach on tax hikes. Can Murphy withstand all these balkanized segments and actually unite New Jersey? Maybe. On paper, it's still the strongest governorship in the country, and Murphy will prove in the coming weeks just how strong as he assembles his cabinet. He proved a very good retail politician on the trail, with a friendly demeanor and – critically – a cut-throat political strategy. Now he has the football. On Election Day, he convincingly scored a double digit win to get to be governor-elect, showing promise of being able to unite – at the very least – what Assemblyman John Burzichelli refers to as "the adventure" of the Democratic Party.



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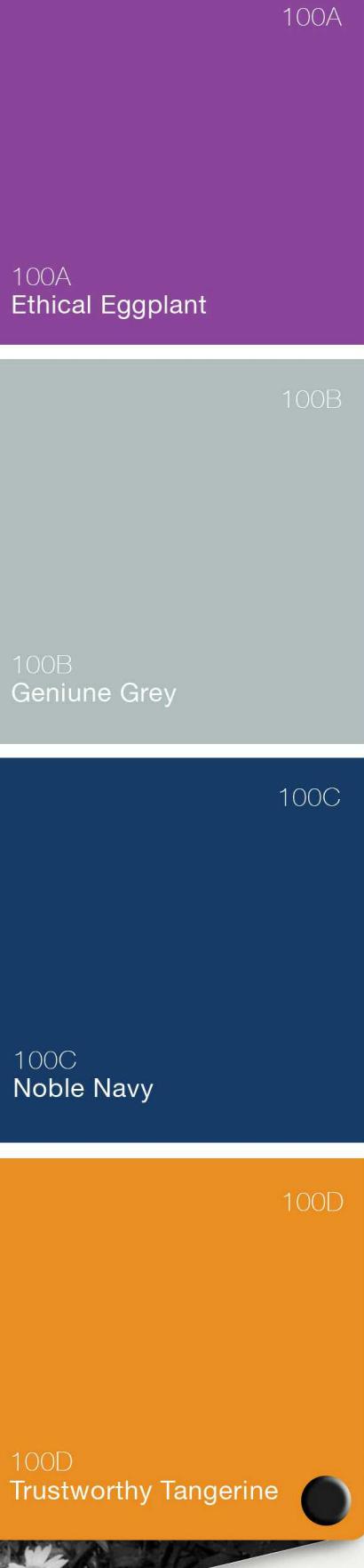
KEVIN  
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**3****GEORGE  
NORCROSS**

All right, we know what you're thinking. He should be number one, not number three. He's really never been this powerful. Eight years ago he controlled the assembly. Then he controlled the senate presidency. Now he controls the assembly and the senate. At one time just another foul-mouthed, white-haired and fancy dressing boss among a dozen other auditioning *Goodfellas* cast members, Norcross hung on amid the wreckage then-U.S. Attorney Chris Christie wrought on the Democratic Party to finally carve out the lone, last-standing raised platform among New Jersey's Democratic Power Pooh-bah elite. Not only does he command both houses of the legislature, having dealt with the off-the-reservation activities of Sheila Oliver and Essex by simply going around them to Vinny Prieto and Hudson, the meeting their recalcitrance by going around them to Craig Coughlin and Middlesex, but Norcross the insurance broker has also expanded his reach to include newspapers, Cooper Hospital, and a brother in the U.S. House of Representatives. What new political frontiers await him? A U.S. Senate seat for Donald? Will Murphy prove adversarial and have enough skill as governor to keep Norcross at bay, or will the South Jersey chief – deprived of a Christie-like chum in Drumthwacket – simply outflank the state's chief executive and put him in a box? There are three power positions in Trenton. Norcross essentially had two of them in Sweeney and Christie. Now he'll have two out of the three in Sweeney and Coughlin. If he wants, he can make the governor's life miserable. Christie dealt with that reality by yielding and empowering GN3. What Murphy does could make or break his tenure as governor.



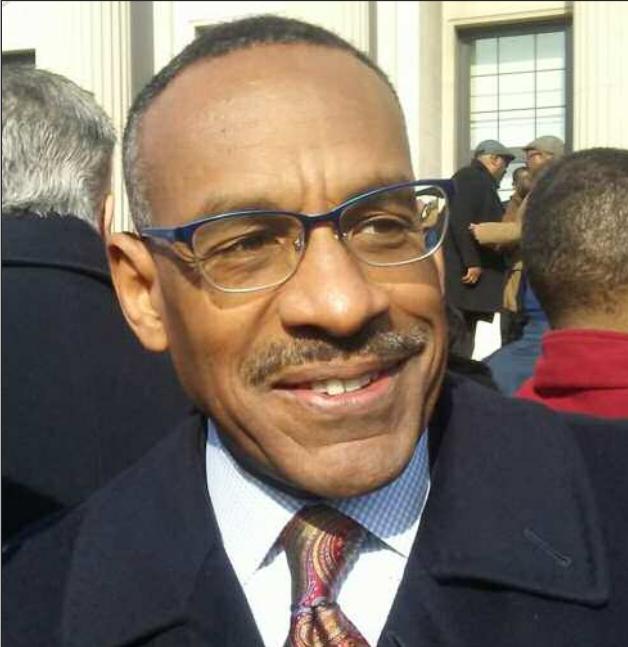
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## LEROY JONES

There will be those who laugh, of course, when Essex operatives try to make the case for Jones securing the lieutenant governorship for Sheila Oliver. There's a wing of the peanut gallery – and it goes back to when Dick Codey occupied the Senate throne – insistent on nothing less than the senate presidency for the county with the biggest population of registered Democrats. Because Christie reduced the role of LG to little more than rubber chicken circuit second banana, other counties delight in deriding the Essex LG consolation prize as little more than snow on the TV screen. But we'll see. Oliver and Jones together helped shape East Orange into a true political powerhouse, reinforced by Ted Green's walk-over victory in the mayoral election. Like McCabe, Jones can not only lay claim to a strong presence in the fledgling Murphy Administration, but command some heft now that Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin (D-29) prepares to become chair of the Assembly Budget Committee. Let it not be forgotten, too, that Jones stuck with the other three North County chairs to help coronate Murphy, which the governor-elect, with Essex County's own Brendan Gill and Oliver by his side, won't forget. And there's a U.S. Senate seat in play next year. Will Jones stick with the quad-county alliance as he did to make Murphy, or will he zigzag to the South and Middlesex as he did in the legislative leadership battle? We can hear the insiders now irritably chiming that Jones will simply go where Joe D. needs him to go, as the county executive is on the ballot next year and needs a strong Line A. But would Jones pick Donald Norcross for senate, for example, over North Jersey's Menendez, in the event that Menendez does not survive his corruption trial? That unknown factor simply augments Jones' power.

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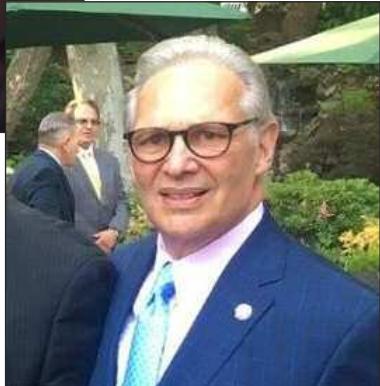
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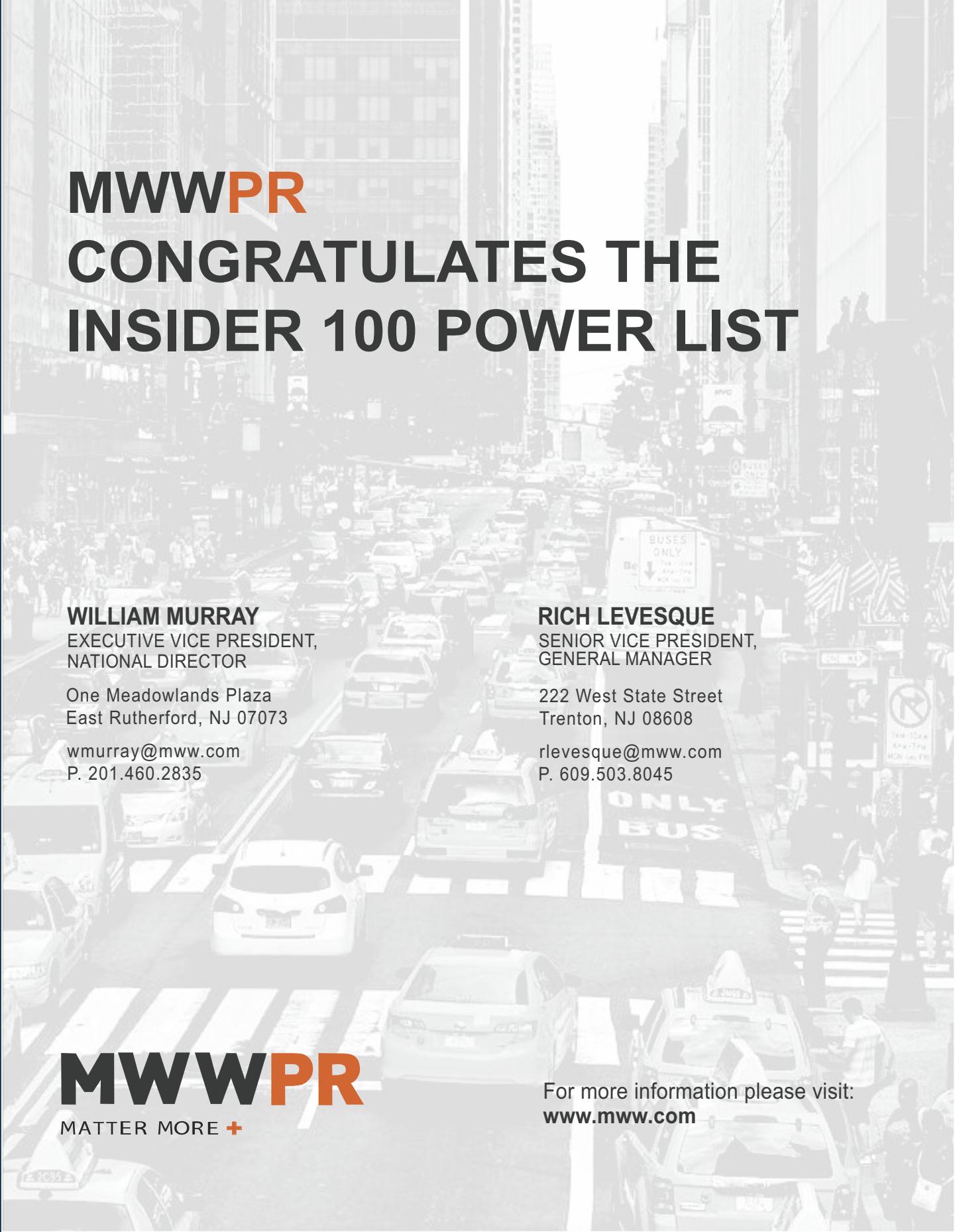
Shantè Palmer    Paul Crupi    Sabeen Masih    Briana Piserchia





## LOU STELLATO & JOHN CURRIE

They have some political potency as a duo. Throw in the chair of Hudson County (Vinny Prieto also holds elected office, so we left him off this list) and it's that much stronger. Add Leroy Jones and you've got a governor – or a senator. Sized up individually, Stellato didn't name the next governor, but he was one of the key members of the quad-county alliance that gave the edge to Murphy. He doesn't control a single senator, which is where he's weak, but give Stellato credit for seizing on the blunders of a Bridgegate-tarred and nationally overreaching Christie to take full control of county government and routing Republicans in what was once a coin toss general election county. As for Currie, the Democratic State Party Chairman stood by Barbara Buono when few others would in 2013, then led the North Jersey charge to put Murphy over the top for the 2017 nomination. Focused over the second half of the year more on a Passaic County clerkship than state party dynamics, and denied that crack at the job this year by Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3), Currie evidently wants more time on the clock as state party chairman. Will Murphy back him? Regardless of whether he continues in that capacity, as chair of Passaic and in league with Stellato, Prieto (and maybe Jones), Currie has already proved that he knows how to make a statewide statement, and that means something ahead of 2018 when a New Jersey senate seat is at stake.



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# 6

## KEVIN McCABE

He certainly has the look down, almost reenacting a younger version of Norcross right down to the tinted glass curbside roll-ups and secret castle dungeon-room meetings. It's so studied, you almost picture him wielding a cane with an ivory eagle carved pommel. But the bottom line is that he – like the all but forgotten statewide presence

of state Senator Nick Sacco (D-32) before him – kept his Middlesex coalition together to be able to deal-make and get Woodbridge ward Assemblyman Craig Coughlin the speakership. Not only did McCabe get his man onto the assembly throne, but he also has good relations with Murphy, so in essence he only has to trouble himself with two Bat Phones: Murphy's, and GN3's. He also, of course, has strong ties statewide to the Carpenters Union, and close relations with Senator-elect Joe Cyan, Senator-elect Troy Singleton (D-7) and Senator-elect Vin Gopal. Bottom line: after a wobbly early couple of years as chairman of the Middlesex Democratic Committee, the John Lynch-schooled McCabe muscled up in 2017, exceling at statewide, county and local politics. He was even able to remove a troublesome chairman in the person of Keith Hahn in Edison and then double down on his victory lap when ally Mayor Tom Lankey defeated Hahn in last week's local general election. He has also has the close-quarters expertise of top adviser Gary Taffet for any and all developing fistfights.

## TOP TEN COUNTY PARTY CHAIRS

1. **Leroy Jones:** Essex County Democratic Party
2. **Kevin McCabe:** Middle Democratic Party
3. **John Currie:** Passaic County Democratic Party
4. **George Gilmore:** Ocean County Republican Party
5. **Lou Stellato:** Bergen County Democratic Party
6. **Vincent Prieto:** Hudson County Democratic Party
7. **Shaun Golden:** Monmouth County Republican Party
8. **Bill Layton:** Burlington County Republican Party
9. **Keith Davis:** Atlantic County Republican Party
10. **Al Gaburo:** Somerset County Republican Party

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7

**PETER  
CAMMARANO**

The veteran Trenton insider, government affairs firm principal and former Codey Chief of Staff received the Marcus Aurelius tap on the shoulder from Murphy World and appears poised to accept a role as chief of staff for Governor-elect Murphy.

8

**MIKE ARON**

The dean of New Jersey political media, NJTV's chief political correspondent commands the most respect from both sides of the aisle. And he just keeps getting better with age. The still avid soccer player used to be more newshound than intellect. Now you keep waiting for the newshounds around him to hold their tongues so that Aron can have more speaking time. Then again, no one works harder than Aron in Trenton on the basics of news beat coverage. He's simply the whole package.



9

**TAMMY  
MURPHY**

Look, she was there, every step of the way. She was there at the debate, front and center, and she was even there on Labor Day going nose to nose with state Senator Jennifer Beck (R-11). You know the First Lady's going to play a big role in the administration. Her selection of policy wonk Stephanie Lagos for Chief of Staff indicates her intention of being a substantive player.



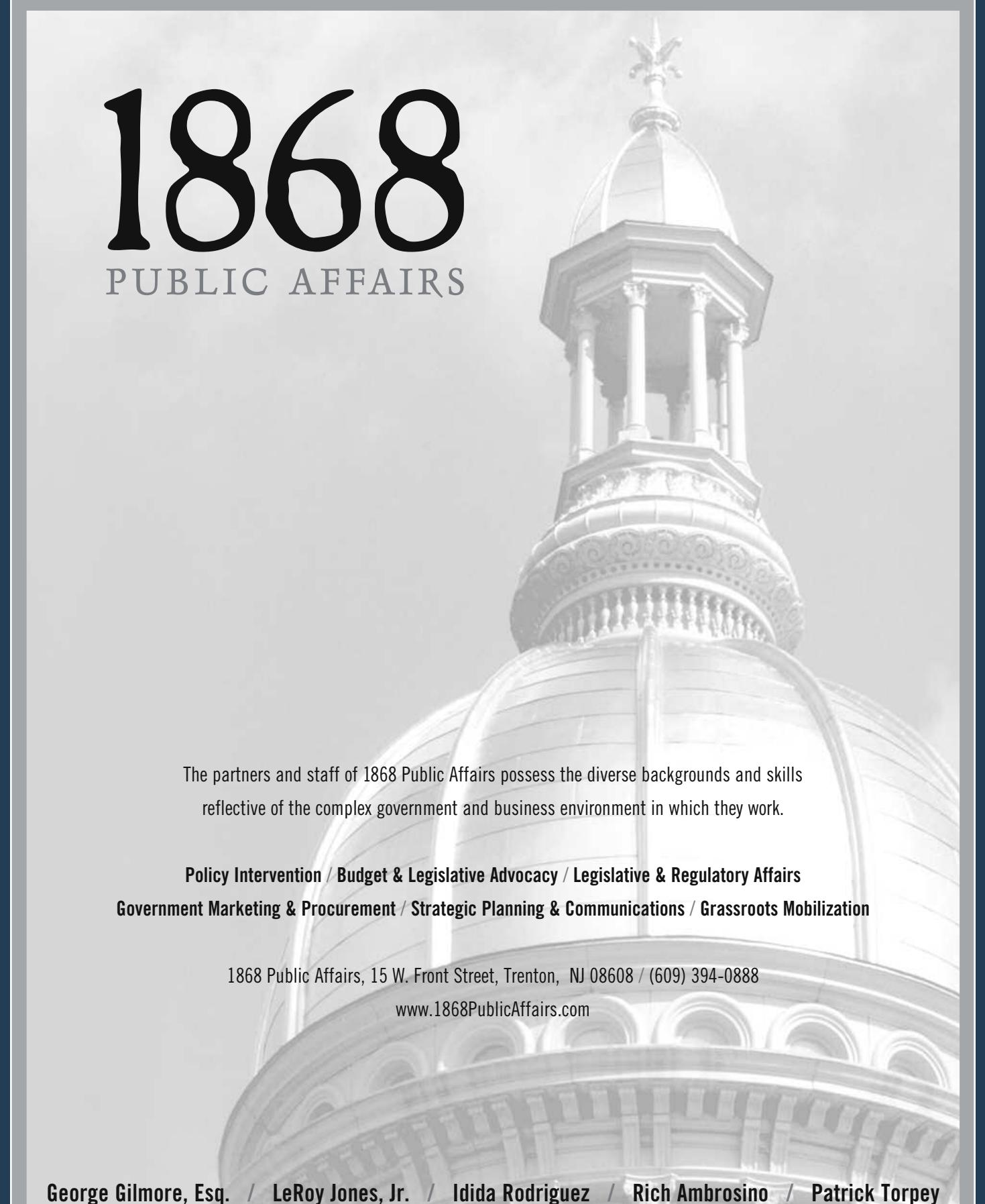
10

**BILL  
CASTNER**

The unmistakable Luke Skywalker-Darth Vader overtones of their Horizon Blue Cross-Blue Shield lightsaber duel during the shutdown provided a glimpse into how powerful and artful an obstacle former Norcross-tag along Castner can be out there on his own now post-Dagobah.

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11

BILL MULLEN

In a classic, public sector versus private sector unions clash this year in LD3, the Building Trades boss helped Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) crush the ill-advised, NJEA-aided uprising by Fran Grenier. With former ironworker Sweeney back in the command chair of the senate, Mullen basically has the keys to the Statehouse.



12

DALE FLORIO

The CEO of Princeton Public Affairs – a former long-serving chairman of the Somerset County Republican Party – beefed up this year with his hiring of talented Kevin O'Toole protégé Al Barlas, rounding out a staff sprinkled with stars from both parties, including Al Gaburo, Bill Pascrell III, Sonia Delgado and Kevin Hagan.



13

ESTHER  
SUAREZ

The glut of three Irish Americans in the most powerful positions of Trenton leadership (Murphy Governor, Sweeney Senate President, and Coughlin Speaker) almost requires Murphy to reach up to Hudson County to tap former judge and sitting Prosecutor Suarez to serve in the attorney-general's office.



14

JOHN  
BALLANTYNE

It was a very big year for the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters. Not only did Building Trades guy Sweeney land back on the throne of the state senate, but McCabe and Assemblyman Troy Singleton (both Carpenters professionals) respectively nailed down the speakership for Coughlin and a senate seat in LD7. The Carpenters PAC was one of the biggest contributors to Sweeney's rugged reelection bid.

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15

GEORGE  
HELMY

The intellectually stimulating and classy Helmy serves as the point man and lead dog organizer on all things Booker in the state of New Jersey. This is not your typical staffer, but a first-rate mind who doubles as a pure policy wonk.



16

KEVIN  
O'TOOLE

This is interesting. The long-serving Senator O'Toole upon retirement from elected office went immediately onto the power list in his new capacity as chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. A student of Steve Adubato, O'Toole for some time now has shown an overriding interest in playing the role of political boss, and will no doubt have the perfect perch as managing partner of the powerful O'Toole Scrivo Fernandez Weiner Van Lieu Law Firm.



17

PETER MURPHY

Once written off for dead after falling under the treads of a mail fraud indictment, the former chairman of the Passaic County Republican Party returned this year when his ward, Senator Kristin Corrado, outdueled Bergen County Republican Organization Chairman Paul DiGaetano to land the 40th Legislative District Senate seat. As sitting Passaic GOP Chairman John Traier – who backed DiGaetano over Corrado in the GOP Primary – totters toward political oblivion and the Bergen GOP appears mangled and balkanized, Murphy, who's allied with O'Toole, looks poised for a full-blown comeback.



18

PAT  
COLLIGAN

The President of the New Jersey Police Benevolent Association (PBA) never hesitated to belt Gov. Chris Christie in the mouth when he feared less than full state funding of police pensions and benefits, and people remember that combativeness. Now the PBA chief definitely has Murphy's ear, having endorsed the Governor-elect early, and keeping his members shorn through irritability in the ranks over Murphy's election of Sheila Oliver for LG.



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## THE 10 MOST POWERFUL MUNICIPAL CHAIRS

1. **Brian Stack:** *Union City Democratic Party*
2. **Leroy Jones:** *East Orange Democratic Party*
3. **Joe Cryan:** *Union Twp. Democratic Party*
4. **Brendan Gill:** *Montclair Democratic Party*
5. **Jon Bramnick:** *Westfield Republican Party*
6. **Peter Carton:** *Middletown Republican Party*
7. **Sammy Gonzalez:** *Newark North Ward Democratic Party*
8. **Adrian Mapp:** *Plainfield Democratic Party*
9. **Frank Pallone:** *Long Branch Democratic Party*
10. **Anthony Salters:** *Hillside Democratic Party*



# 19

**RAY POCINO**

The Vice President and Eastern Regional Manager of the Laborers' International Union of North America also serves as commissioner to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The presence of the laborers in Bayonne could be a game-changer next year. John Duthie and the Laborers provided critical ground game support on Election Day for Senator-elect Vin Gopal in LD11.



# 20

**MICHAEL MULLER**

In his quest to preserve and build on a party majority, the former head of the Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee (DACC) has put together one of the most impressive runs in Democratic Party history in the state. This year he survived a DACC spat to score impressive wins in LD2, LD11 and LD16.

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21

KEVIN HAGAN

The Dale Florio Princeton Public Affairs protégé who came up in McGreevy and later Sweeney World has established himself as one of the more savvy and muscular political operatives in the state. Witness Sweeney's ability to land back on the senate throne, a function of Norcross power dynamics certainly, but also of a smart mechanic like Hagan handling the lobbying front.



22

MIKE KEMPNER

Whenever the head of MWWPR has so much as a conversation with a rumored 2020 presidential contender, the world sits up and pays attention. Kempner proved a big dollar pooh-bah for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and has already sized up the likes of U.S. Senator Kamala Harris of California. Whoever the establishment Democrats and Clinton lovers line up behind in the end, be assured of this: Kempner will be there with a fat checkbook.



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24  
ABBE LOWELL

Having prevailed in the corruption trial of former U.S. Senator John Edwards, the lead dog defense attorney for U.S. Senator Bob Menendez came to New Jersey as one of the country's leading attorneys for cases of his kind. His team's toe to toe trial combustions with Judge William Walls provided an early courtroom glimpse into Lowell's aggressive style. He's also Jared Kushner's attorney.

## POLITICAL POWER ATTORNEYS

**Joe Hayden:** One of the best defense attorneys in New Jersey.

**Abbe Lowell:** Stood out this year because of his high profile. We peppered the list with several more powerful political attorneys, including **Angelo Genova** and **Bill Castner**. Here are several more obvious choices:

**Doug Steinhardt and Paul Fader:** Two of the principals at Florio Perrucci Steinhardt and Fader have legitimate political cred. The long-serving chairman of the Warren County GOP nearly scored the state party chairmanship in 2017 and may yet take the job.

**Mark Sheridan:** One of the GOP's most lethal courtroom surgeons.

**Al DeCotiis:** The godfather of one of the state's most powerful legal families.

**Philip Sellinger:** The Greenberg Traurig bigshot is a key Democratic Party fundraiser.

**John Azzarello:** Represented Paterson Mayor Jose "Joey" Torres at the mayor's corruption case hearing.

**Elardo Webster:** Partnered with John Inglesino, the politically savvy Webster remains close to Senator Booker.

**Ray Brown:** The veteran attorney serves as a member of the defense team for Senator Bob Menendez.

**Bill Harla:** The veteran DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick Cile and Giblin attorney is politically influential, especially in Democratic Party circles.

**Joel Shain:** The law partner of Somerset County Democratic Chair Peg Schaffer is a former mayor of Orange.

**Bill Northgrave:** The Hudson-based attorney is one of the state's premier municipal practitioners

**Jeff Chiesa:** The former Acting U.S. Senator (the equivalent of Chris Christie's Jiminy Cricket) helms the powerful Chiesa Shahinian and Giantomasini law firm.

**Raj Parikh:** The politically-connected attorney with Genova Burns routinely wades into political fights that end up in the courts.

**Danielle Alvarez Wolf:** The law partner of Raj Mukherji will be a significant player in the upcoming marijuana legalization battle.

# The Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters Congratulates our Carpenter Brothers and Sisters and all other individuals on Insider NJ's Power 100 List



**John Ballantyne: Executive Secretary-Treasurer**

**Lizette Delgado-Polanco: Political Director**

**Kevin McCabe: President, Carpenter Contractor Trust**

The Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters represents nearly 40,000 hardworking men and women in Delaware and New Jersey and portions of Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania. NRCC is one of the largest trade unions on the East Coast. The NRCC equips professional men and women carpenters with the skills, training and quality workmanship that are demanded in today's construction industry.

For more information on NRCC, please visit our website: [www.northeastcarpenters.org](http://www.northeastcarpenters.org);

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NortheastRegionalCouncilofCarpenters>;

Instagram: northeastcarpenters or Twitter: @NRCCarpenters.

Executive Secretary-Treasurer: John Ballantyne  
President/New Jersey Regional Manager: William Sproule  
91 Fieldcrest Avenue, Edison, NJ 08837  
(732) 417-9229  
[www.northeastcarpenters.org](http://www.northeastcarpenters.org)



# 25

CHARLES  
WOWKANECH

The president of the largest umbrella union organization in the State of New Jersey, Wowkanech guard dogs a million AFL-CIO members, and isn't beyond getting in the face of resistant lawmakers on the floor of the General Assembly when he wants to drive home a pro unions argument.



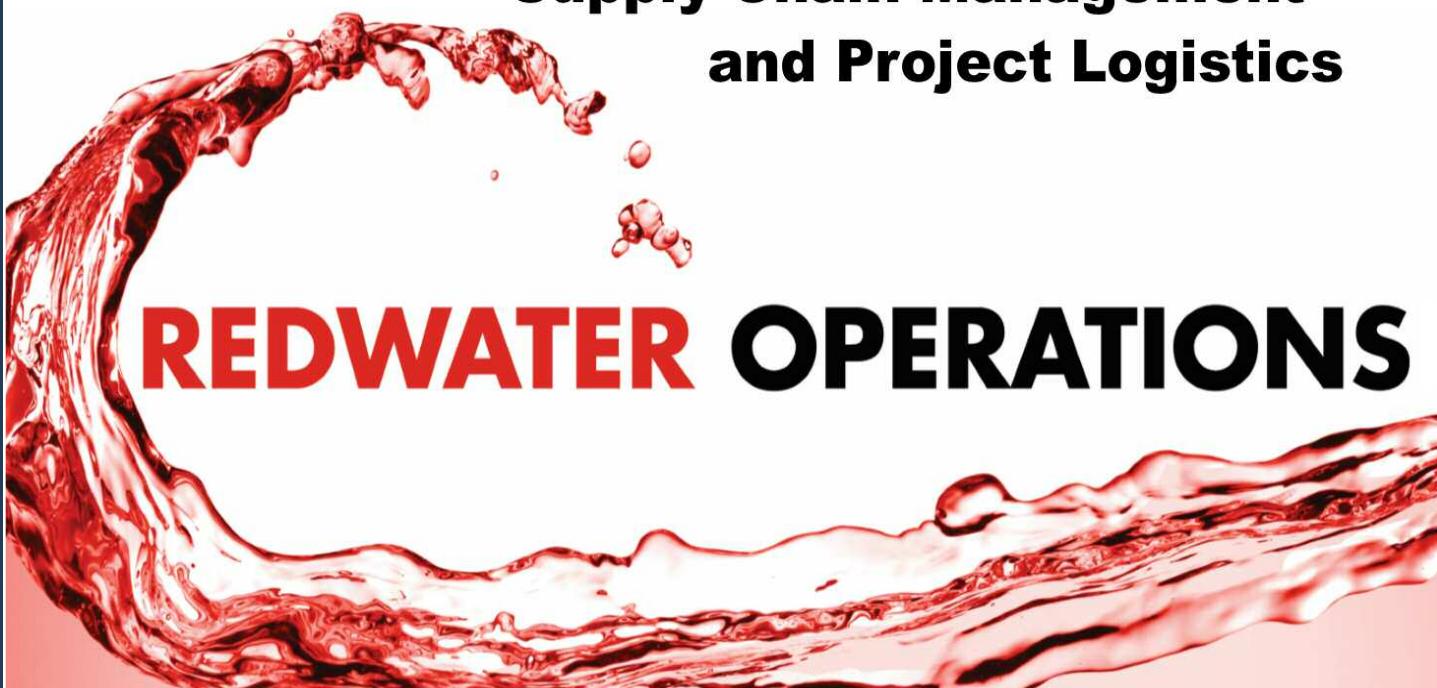
# 26

GREG  
LALEVEE

The Chairman of the Engineers Labor-Employee Cooperative started out as a crane operator and Local 825's first organizer, building himself into one of the most respected labor leaders in the state, and vice president of the powerful New Jersey Building Trades. He played big in LD11 and around the state in the GOP Primary and won.

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27

MATT PLATKIN

The Director of Policy for Phil Murphy cut his teeth at the Brookings Institution, where he specialized in advising members of Congress on economic policy. You might not immediately see him in a room, but he's the intellectual left under any elephant in the room. He's in line for a chief counsel job in a Murphy Administration.



28

EDDIE DONNELLY

The President of the New Jersey State Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association (NJFMBA) isn't afraid to turn the hoses on politicians when he fears the union's interests are in jeopardy. But like Colligan, where will he focus his ire now that Gov. Chris Christie is leaving office?



## TOP TEN POLICYMAKERS

1. **Mark Magyar:** *policy expert for Senate President Steve Sweeney.*
2. **Tom Kean, Sr.:** *former Governor of NJ.*
3. **Kevin Kelleher:** *Director of Research for the NJEA.*
4. **Louis Goetting:** *Budget and Policy Expert for Governor Christie.*
5. **Jennifer Taylor:** *Assembly Appropriations Committee Aide.*
6. **Gordon MacInnes:** *Head of NJ Policy Perspective.*
7. **Joe Doria:** *Former Speaker of the General Assembly.*
8. **David Sciarra:** *Executive Director of the Education Law Center.*
9. **Marc Pfeiffer:** *Senior Policy Fellow at Rutgers' Local Government Research Center.*
10. **Patrick Brennan:** *Senior Fiscal Analyst at New Jersey Office of Legislative Services.*

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Executive V.P. Marc Kovar**

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# 29

MAGGIE  
MORAN

Always a formidable presence and one of the best political tactical minds in the state, the Tommy Giblin-schooled insider will continue to be a player on the big ideas front, particularly when it comes to legalizing marijuana and gaming. Her team includes the Trenton-wired Laura Matos, Adam Steinberger and Chris Donnelly, all dogged pros in their own right.



# 30

MICHELLENE  
DAVIS

When Essex County and North Jersey Democrats seek a powerful fundraising presence, they turn to the Executive Vice President of Barnabas Health. She's also that reliable touch of class in a world of broken-down crumb-bums and bar stool face downs.



# 31

BOB MARINO

The CEO of Horizon showed some backbone – and the strategic foresight to assemble a strong political team – when he went head-to-head with Governor Christie and No. 3 on this list to halt the South Jersey/Drumthwacket raid of the nonprofit's surplus.



# 32

ANALILIA  
MEJIA

The Executive Director of Working Families is one of the most precision policy-minded people in the State of New Jersey – plus one of the gutsiest in-the-trenches labor leaders. She's also a good public speaker, bringing passion to any podium or street protest.

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# 33

TOM BRACKEN

There are few people in New Jersey politics (Dale Florio and Michael Aron come to mind) who radiate grounded gravitas like the President and CEO of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Going forward, he will be the point man from the business community to promote a strategic plan for a more affordable New Jersey, and undoubtedly the Jiminy Cricket check-and-balance on a liberal Murphy Administration.



# 34

MICHELE SIEKERKA

The Executive Director of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association does not mind routinely throwing a sharp elbow in defense of her home state's small business owner. Look for the wonky Siekerka to continue to defiantly resist Democratic Party efforts to implement a \$15 minimum wage.



# 35

MODIA BUTLER

He's grounded – but also national in scope now that his boss and political benefactor sports legitimate Seven League Boots as a potential 2020 presidential contender. Managing Director of power firm Mercury, Cory Booker's former chief of staff continues to maintain strong ties to the Newark North Ward Organization and powerful local boss North Ward Councilman Anibal Ramos.



# 36

KEVIN DRENNAN

The mainstay of the Senate Majority Office returned to the private sector this year to serve as the government point person in New Jersey for UnitedHealth. He remains close to the Senate President and an influential Hamilton-based full-fledged Democratic Party operative.



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# 37

HETTY  
ROSENSTEIN

The State Director of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) will put the warpaint on in all-weather if that's what it takes to land what she sees as a fair contract for public sector workers. After eight years with antagonist Christie, Rosenstein apparently has found a real ally in the public sector-friendly Murphy.



# 38

BILL LAYTON

The fearless Chairman of the Burlington County GOP remains one of the most bare-knuckle competitors in New Jersey politics, equally at home yanking the gloves off to fight with Republicans (Christie, when he needed to, then with Gilmore and the Guadagno Campaign), or Democrats (as he has proved critically in maintaining an edge in countywide contests). Now that his partner at CLB looks to be headed to the Murphy Administration, he can leap to the head of the lobbying pack. He did lose two freeholder seats this year in turbulent Trump weather.

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\*2015 study conducted by the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers





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## BEST LAWYERS

33 Practice Areas and  
56 Attorneys Listed, 2017

## SUPER LAWYERS AND SUPER LAWYERS RISING STARS

87 Attorneys Listed, 2017

## CHAMBERS USA GUIDE

10 Practice Areas and  
25 Attorneys Listed, 2017

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39

BRIGID  
HARRISON

The Montclair University Professor of Political Science and Law has emerged as that real-time go-to source for all things political in New Jersey. The published author and veteran academic presence is equally adept at the long form, book length treatment of any subject related to her discipline.

## TOP ACADEMICS AND POLLSTERS

1. **Patrick Murray:** *Monmouth University Pollster and Political Scientist.*
2. **Ben Dworkin:** *Director of the Institute for Public Policy at Rowan University in Glassboro.*
3. **Matt Hale:** *Associate Professor and MPA Program Chair for the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs at Seton Hall University.*
4. **Krista Jenkins:** *Professor of Political Science and Director of Fairleigh Dickinson University's Public Mind.*
5. **Junius Williams:** *Director of the Abbott Leadership Institute in Newark.*

**BILL MAER**

40

**KELLY  
STEWART MAER**

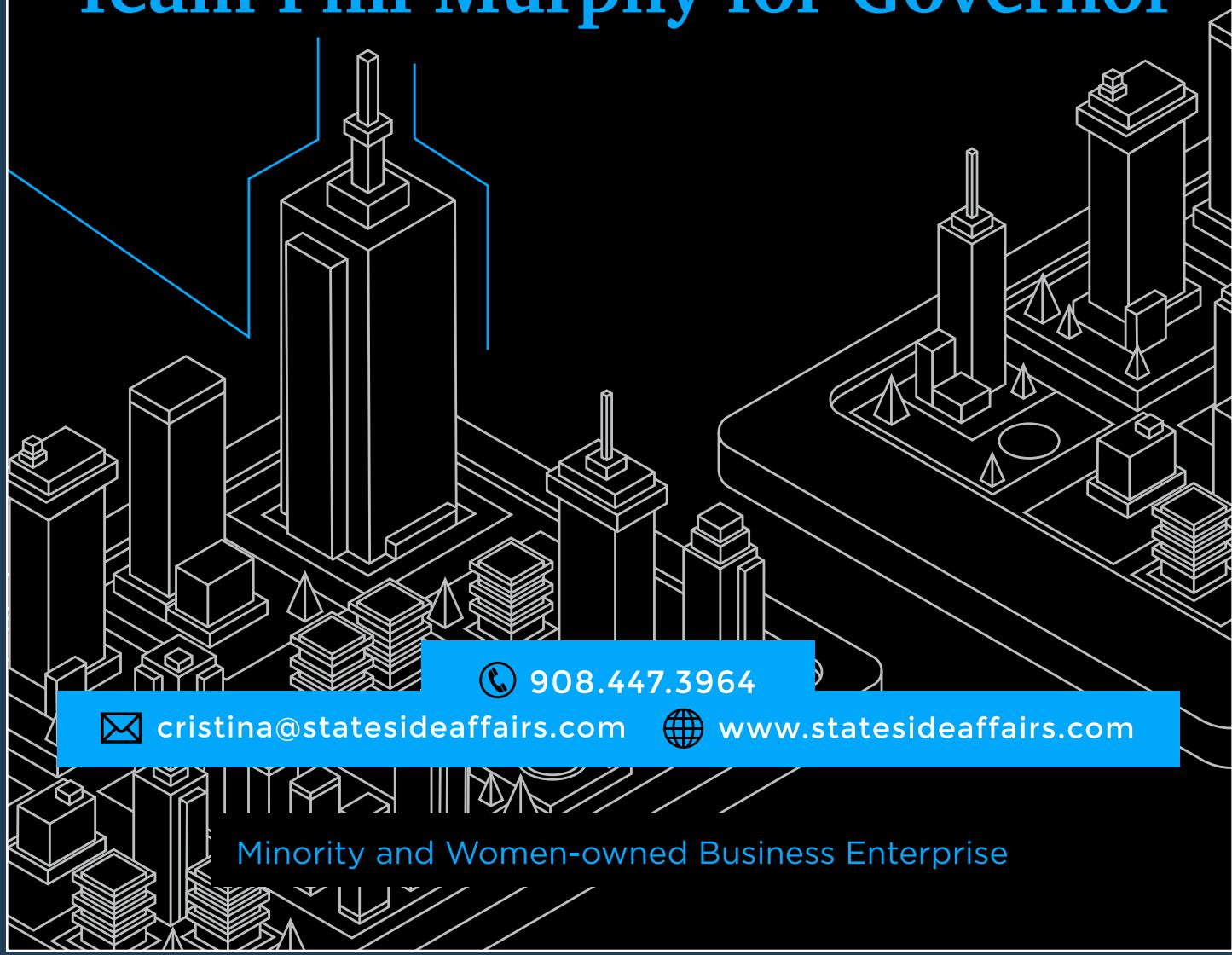
A true power couple, Bill Maer works as a partner at Public Strategies Impact with Republican player Roger Bodman; while Stewart Maer runs government affairs for Capital Health Systems.

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# Congratulations to Insider NJ's Top 100 Power List Honorees & Team Phil Murphy for Governor





41

VIN GOPAL

The Senator-elect in the 11th District became the story of the 2017 General Election season, demonstrating the payoff of years of party organizing in his native Monmouth County, and making history as the first South Asian American to snag a New Jersey Senate seat. The movie star-like Gopal radiates power in any room, in any part of the state, especially in the seaside LD11.



42

KEVIN BROWN

The original unreconstructed rebel, Brown – State Director of 32BJ SEIU – is a driven labor leader who champions issues – like better pay for airport workers – and sees them through to the end. Once Murphy takes office, Brown will press hard for \$15 minimum wage accountability from the administration.



43

PHIL ALAGIA

Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo's chief of staff – an expert on corrections issues – sat on the bridge during all the early wars, the numbers guy who helped propel Anibal Ramos into City Hall past Hector Corchado, and his own boss past Tom Giblin in their storied 2002 salvo for the billion-dollar patronage machine otherwise known as the county executive seat.



44

MARK ALBIEZ

No, they didn't get governor. But the chief of staff to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop may yet find himself co-captaining a statewide run if Fulop jumps into a 2018 bid for U.S. Senate. The Mark Wahlberg of New Jersey politics, Albiez looks like he'd be just as at home playing Mickey Ward in a movie as pondering the xs and os of fatherhood, or calmly doing a swan dive into the Deepwater Horizons political calculations of his Marine Corps-formed boss.



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## THE HUDSON COUNTY “A TEAM” OF POLITICAL ORGANIZING

Mark Albiez came out of Stack World to take the coveted job of Jersey City Mayoral COS. In that capacity, he always kept a leg in to his old Union City network and his political mentor. Senator/Mayor Brian P. Stack always put up big district and citywide (10K) numbers, but this year he and his team went into overdrive, dwarfing Stack's usual districtwide vote totals with a hair-raising showing of 20,000 votes.

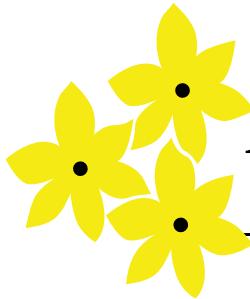
The members of that political team included:

Justin Mercado

Alajandro “Alex” Velazquez

Waleed Miqbel

Chris Albiez



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# 45

GEORGE  
GILMORE

Ranging the shoreline like Steppenwolf, the Ocean County GOP Chairman used this year's Republican Primary for Governor to put down an unruly insurrection by a handful of up and coming chairs in other counties. Unlike other practitioners of the game, the still-investigation-hounded Gilmore plays chess not just in his home county – but statewide.

## YOUNG OPERATIVE ON THE MOVE

### Marshall Spevak:

The vice chair of the Cherry Hill Democrats (and chief of staff to Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo) stood out this year as one of the state's best tempered up and comers. It helped that Mazzeo endured the twists and turns of LD2 and got reelected – and Spevak was one of his prime helpmates.



MIKE DUHAIME

# 46



MIKE SOLIMAN

The Founder/Principal and Managing Partner of Mercury may have found their respective poohbahs Chris Christie and Bob Menendez coming to a place of less than full strength. But they survived, together, to build a globally respected public affairs with New Jersey roots.



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47

**LIZETTE DELGADO  
POLANCO**

The Vice Chair of the Democratic State Committee can take you apart from several different angles. Most significantly, she's got that sturdy labor foundation under her going back to her days as political director of SEIU 32BJ. Now she's with the Carpenters, one of a powerful group of political minds that includes Mueller, Singleton and McCabe.



48

**JOE  
PARLAVECCHIO**

The longtime iconic leader of Newark's East Ward Democratic Party – a retired educator and contemporary of Assemblyman Ralph Caputo and former Mayor Sharpe James – notched a big win this year with the ascendency of his protégé, Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin. Watch for Pintor Marin to become budget chair as part of the deal to bump Coughlin up to speaker. Look, too, for the emergence of her districtwide minder, David Caetano, another Parlavecchio School farm hand, as a no-nonsense player in the halls of Trenton.



49

**STEVE  
WILSON**

U.S. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen's (R-11) chief of staff will prove himself in 2018, as he goes into antiaircraft mode, presumably against a Sea King Helicopter. Frelinghuysen hasn't hung around simply on the strength of his ancestors winning the Revolutionary War. The cozy-with power congressman leans heavily on the very cagey Wilson.



50

**SAILY  
AVELENDA**

The former senior vice president of a local bank became the face of activist power when U.S. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11) wrote an ethically questionable old boys club-style letter to her boss to alert him to Avelenda's "ring leader" activities in a progressive group. Alert to being targeted by Frelinghuysen, she resigned, and simultaneously galvanized not only the progressive movement in CD11, such as it is – but also those who cherish Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Assembly.

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# 51

SEAN  
KENNEDY

The head of the Orwellian-sounding New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow ended up being the fundraising ironman for Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) in the most expensive election in New Jersey State history. Kennedy's that Cuchulain-like figure you want come Armageddon, as Sweeney discovered this past November.



# 52

ADAM  
ALONSO

The North Jersey Democratic Party operative was an early dance party attendee in Murphy World, one of the more shadowy operatives to the rest of the world, who's essentially treated with awe internally. Always interfacing with gill on the inside of the Murphy machine, he's headed to the administration as a deputy chief of staff.



## KEY MURPHY WORLD PLAYERS AND VICTORY 2017 UP AND COMERS

Braxton Plummer, Adam Alonso, Dave Parano and Matt Platkin made this list from the universe of the Governor-elect. Other Key Murphy World Players and Victory 2017 Up and Comers:

Michael Delamater: Schooled in campaigns on the streets of Bloomfield, the proud CUA Cardinal served as Senior Advisor for Victory 2017. In a misfit toy land of very young and largely inexperienced Phil Murphy for Governor staffers, the steady-as-he-goes Delameter radiated a young sea captain in tough weather bearing, or even a Mexican War era Ulysses S. Grant-like presence. Maybe it was the beard. But dammit, it worked.

The campaign had at least one veteran hand to supplement the relatively unschooled staff: Lautenberg World Staffer turned Consultant and Media Bon vivant Jim McQueeney.

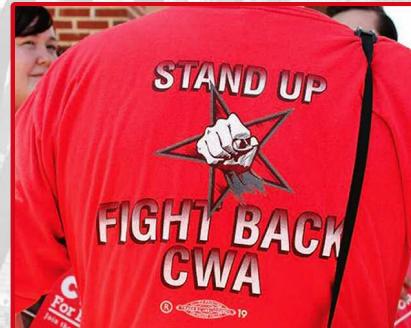
Dan Bryan: *Communications*  
Al Alvarez: *Latino Outreach*

Jenny Davis: *Deputy Campaign Manager*  
Derek Roseman: *Communications*

Stephanie Lagos: *Policy*  
Derrick Green: *Organizing*

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**HETTY ROSENSTEIN**  
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**DENNIS TRAINOR**  
DISTRICT 1 VICE PRESIDENT

**CWA**



# 53

AL GABURO

The Chairman of the Somerset County Republican Committee showed what it means to be a party chairman this year in his to the mattresses endorsement of Ciattarelli for Governor. Gaburo also sits on that team of Florio allies otherwise known as Princeton Public Affairs. He also fought a hard countywide campaign in the general and maintained full control of the freeholder board.



# 54

TAI COOPER

There are few people in New Jersey politics better equipped for all facets of the game than the director of Policy for the Ras Baraka Administration. Cooper had wanted an assembly seat, but it's just as well the independent-minded former Lautenberg staffer didn't get one, where the prime virtue would likely have been subservience.



# 55

JULIE DIAZ

32BJ SEIU Political Director Diaz has broken out as one of the state's most respected and trusted inside game political players. The proud daughter of a Dominican immigrant, Diaz was one of the state's earliest grassroots organizers of Obama's Presidential Campaign in NJ, a veteran of the Corzine Administration, COS to Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, and now the Latina leader of a legitimate worker's movement.

## ELEC'S HOME STRETCH SIZE-UP OF THE BIGGEST SUPER PACS PLAYING IN LD3: THE MOST EXPENSIVE LEGISLATIVE RACE EVER

1. Garden State Forward/NJEA\*: \$4,525,234 (assumes all reported TV and digital ad outlays went to 3rd District)
2. New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow: \$3,975,000
3. Candidate Spending: \$3,190,688
4. General Majority PAC: \$2,045,293
5. Carpenters Fund for Growth and Progress: \$1,250,500 Includes \$250,000 to General Majority
6. Better Education for Kids: \$357,347
7. NJ Coalition of Real Estate: \$296,400
8. Stronger Foundations Inc. \$129,420



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**56****HARRY HURLEY**

The conservative WPG Talk Radio Show Host loves politics and outshines most hosts with his uncanny ability to break news himself – not just opine on what other reporters write about first. He remains very influential in South Jersey political circles and is right now at the top of his game. He broke one of the bigger stories of the year when he reported on the 2018 retirement of U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-2).

**57****JEFF TITTEL**

The veteran Director of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club is damned effective at what he does. There is not a single issue impacting New Jersey's fragile environment that Tittel doesn't have a well-considered opinion on, and which he hasn't first issued a deep impact press release on – most of the time long before it reaches a situation red condition. He's the political advocate on the environment against whom all others should be judged. Originally from Hillside, he's also a politics junkie, going back to when he volunteered on the 1968 Eugene McCarthy Campaign.



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# 58

RALPH IZZO

President, Chairman and CEO of PSE&G, Izzo has stood at the summit of power (literally) for ten years. Author of 35 papers on magnetohydrodynamic modeling (for those of you in the political world who don't know what that is, we'll explain it over cocktails in Atlantic City), often called to Washington to testify on energy issues, the chairman of the board began his career as a research scientist at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory. In a word: bright.



# 59

ANGELO  
GENOVA

The Attorney for New Jersey's political stars (including U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell and Essex County Executive DiVincenzo), the Genova Burns heavyweight is the last guy you want to come face to face with across an imitation wood paneled docket on Judgement Day. Now with young star Raj Parikh on the team, Genova Burns continues to dominate. Keep an eye on him for AG.



# 60

SATISH POONDI

The Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer attorney played a key role in getting Shariq Ahmad installed as Democratic Party Chair of Edison. He was also a vital partner to Senator-elect Vin Gopal and helped raise money for that battleground candidacy. An emerging behind-the-scenes powerhouse in New Jersey politics with an accelerated rate of success in key contests, including the Hoboken Mayoral contest.



# 61

STEVE AYSCUE

It's been said before, that when South Jersey takes the field they do so wearing neat and clean uniforms with beautifully stenciled GN3 insignias on their sleeves, and Asycue (the longtime chief political consigliere to Norcross) calmly in the role of clubhouse manager. The group that looks like a bunch of unicycle riding misfits, all wearing a motley of different stripes and overcrowded with personalized buttons? That's North Jersey. Whenever there's a vote on the floor, Asycue can amuse himself with the image of the North tripping over its own feet while attempting to shag easy popups, while counting on a precision-machine performance from his own team.



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## HOT OPERATIVES

**Veteran range hands like Adam Silverstein and Chris Russell routinely stand out as two of the state's best party operatives.**

**Other HOT Operatives include:**

**Henry Sosa:** The princely Silk City operative will be a major player in the development of a campaign scheme to produce one of the following in 2018: the next Ward 2 councilman, the next high-vote-getting at-large councilperson, or the next mayor of the City of Paterson.

**Charles Williams:** Veteran Newark-area campaigns and elections expert. Close to Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver.

**Frank Luna:** The GOP operative is U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur's (R-3) man with a plan in Ocean County.

**Jason Solowsky:** Close to Mayor Steve Fulop. Helped the Unity Ticket to victory in the Newark School Board race. Will be intimately involved next year in Newark and Paterson.

**Jason Carty:** Firefighters GOTV expert from Burlington County. He's the guy who rises out of the swamp when you least expect him.

**Justin Shoham:** He left his job as chief of staff to Assemblyman Raj Mukerji to start his own firm called Enigma Consulting.

**Constantina Meis:** Vice President of the Young Democrats of America; ED at state Senator Bob Gordon's Office.

**Chris Hillman:** Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Tim Eustace (D-38).

**Bryan Walensky:** The Redwater Principal has a Paterson mayor's next year, which he probably won't be able to stay out of, and a top prospect client in Perth Mayor Wilda Diaz.

**Phil Swibinski:** The cool-headed Vision Media principal prevailed in a hardboiled local election in Hackensack.

**Amanda Woloshen Glass:** The Leonard Lance operative will be in full war paint mode next year. Team Lance received props for keeping the congressman right in the public eye while others ran and hid.

**Alicia D'Alessandro:** Director of Communications for Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco stands primed to help bulldoze the Paramus firefighter back into office next year.

**Matthew Frankel:** The Monclair communications pro and head of MDF Strategies honed his skills in the tech and entertainment industries – and on Capitol Hill – and has deep hooks in Newark.

**Thomas Pietrykoski:** Booker's communications guy goes back to Pascrell World as a wired-in pro.

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62

ANN TWOMEY

The Englewood-based President of Health Professionals and Allied Employees (HPAE) founded an organization in the 1970s that has grown to more than 13,000 members. One of the most important – and best run – labor organizations in the state.



63

DAVID CRUZ

If this were a list based strictly on irreverence, the NJTV political reporter would rank number one. This human battering ram simply does not give a damn. There are very few people in the political world who have a cellphone crammed with as many as ready numbers as Cruz, who relishes loud, combative public conversation the way some people crave long quiet walks in the park.



64

JAY LASSITER

Ah, Jay. Who doesn't love this guy? Just a New Jersey institution. The first blogger ever to nab a press pass (and get featured for it in the New York Times) offers an interesting political narrative under all the zaniness: results. As a member of the Garden State Equality movement he was at the forefront of the marriage equality debate and has long championed the legalization of marijuana, which with Murphy as Governor-elect, looks to be imminent. Don't forget too, Lassiter's extremely successful InsiderNJ column! He's the Oscar Wilde of New Jersey letters.

## ONE TO WATCH IN 2018

### Jason O'Donnell:

Leaving Kivvit where he holed up to regenerate after the loss with Mark Smith, the former Assemblyman has returned to the public eye for a run for mayor in his home city of Bayonne. Watch that contest. It will be as brutal a contest as we've seen in recent memory (or at least since 2014). O'Donnell served as Smith's chief of staff, when cop Jimmy Davis got the teachers behind him and turned them both out into the street. Now O'Donnell, a retired fire fighter, wants to turn the tables, train the high hoses on Davis, and scrub him utterly out of City Hall. Don't go anywhere during commercials. This one could end in a shocking early knockout.

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**FRANK GIANTOMASI****65****ARMEN SHAHINIAN****JEFF CHIESA**

The Principals of the super firm built on the smoldering ashes of the David Samson ruins have positioned CSG as one of the top legal teams in the state. Former state Attorney General Chiesa is also a former acting U.S. Senator.

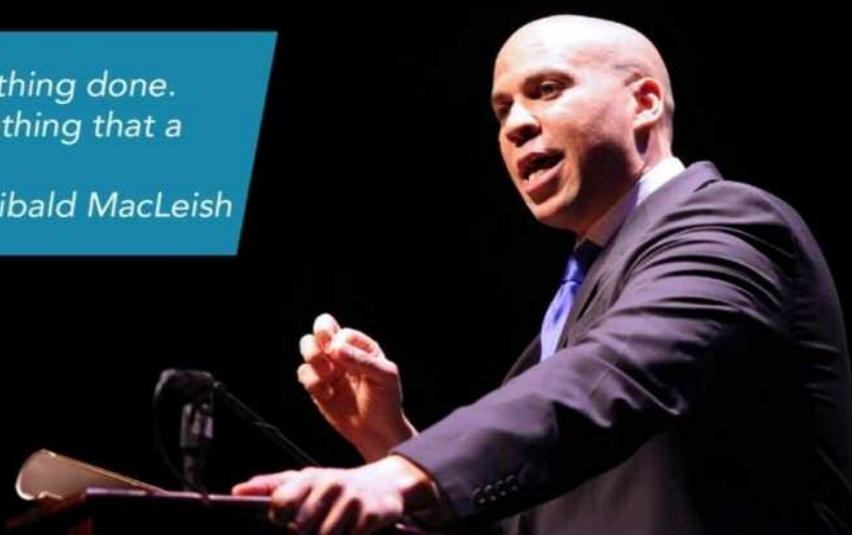
***Senator Booker congratulates Mo Butler,  
George Helmy and all those recognized on the  
2017 InsiderNJ Power List!***

"For Democracy is never a thing done.  
Democracy is always something that a  
nation must be doing."

- Archibald MacLeish

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**66**  
ED FARMER

A former Chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-9), the CEO and President of Millennium Strategies has a deeply grounded government knowledge base that puts him and his team in both Trenton and D.C. His team includes the always lethal South Bergen-based Bernadette McPherson, a former freeholder. Along with top gun Keith Furlong, Farmer ran the super PAC in support of Phil Murphy for Governor.



**67**  
PAT COUNCIL

Newark's head of Recreation possesses a deep reservoir of political support, and – critically – a strong relationship with Mayor Baraka. Look for Council to trampoline up the totem poll in the event of an administration shake-up as Baraka prepares to run for re-election in 2018.



**68**  
ADAM  
SILVERSTEIN

The Silver Strategies shark from Bergen County has close ties to Stellato and Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco. But it's particularly his forefront relationship with incumbent U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-5) – up for reelection this year in what will be a nationally watched contest – that will fall under real 2018 scrutiny.



**69**  
TODD  
MITCHELL

As many as ten Democrats have begun elbowing one another in an effort to get to the front of the pack for next year's general election contest against U.S. Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7). Count on the congressman's veteran chief of staff to jump at the chance to pick any one of them off as he protects his Central Jersey boss. He could also find himself tasked with guiding Lance through the irritating obstacle course of a Republican Primary if Lance refuses to go with President Donald J. Trump on key issues.



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**70****SEAN DARCY**

Where doesn't the Founder/CEO of Round World Consulting play? Without giving it too much thought, we associate him with successful movements in Watson Coleman, Cryan, Pallone and Pascrell worlds, even as next year he looks to pioneer into local Hudson politics with a mayoral run behind former Assemblyman Jason O'Donnell (D-31). Originally from Essex, now transplanted to Monmouth, a bonified political animal.

**71****CHRISTIAN FUSCARINO**

The Executive Director of Garden State Equality has proved a steady advocate, fundraising juggernaut and constant purveyor of political relevance in the best tradition of pioneering founder Steven Goldstein. Smart and effective. His organization's endorsement of Gopal in Asbury Park-centered LD11 this year proved key.

## MDF STRATEGIES

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# 72

MARIE BLISTAN

The political allies of the President of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) couldn't toss Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) out of office. Still, they showed they can't be messed around with and not raise hell in return. Sean Spiller, the teachers' union's political point guy, likewise proved a gnarly adversary for Sweeney – and pro-Blistan resistance leader.



# 73

BRAXTON  
PLUMMER

The Political Director of Murphy World, Plummer got his start with U.S. Senator Cory Booker when Booker served as mayor of Newark. Calm, cool, collected, he's in the prime of his political life right now, having jumped aboard the Murphy Train back when a lot of other operatives were still frantically faxing their resumes to either Fulop or Sweeney. He's in line for deputy chief of staff.

## TOP 12 RISING OPERATIVES

Among rising star operatives this year, Shariq Ahmad in Edison and Marshal Spevak in Cherry Hill stood out, but there were others. The top ten from 2017, as we saw it:

**Justin Braz:** Just 30, Braz – now a forward staffer with Phil Murphy – has already been through the wars, going back to when he worked for Cryan in that 2011 primary of all Democratic Primaries; and – critically – as chief of staff to Budget Chairman Assemblyman Gary Schaer (D-36). A whole generation of young up and coming staffers are already learning some of the licks and riffs from the walking Encyclopedia of Braz.

**Robert Field:** Speechwriter to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, Fulop Campaign Field Director, Statewide Democratic operative.

**Gary LaSpisa:** The former aide to Tony Bucco and former Director of Public Affairs for the New Jersey Food Council this year joined the public affairs team of the New Jersey Apartment Association (NJAA).

**Julie Peterson:** Field Director for U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur Brianna Earle: Senior Associate at Kivvit, Victory 2017 Operations Director.

**Brittany Wheeler:** Somerset GOP Operative; Served as Political Director for Jack Ciattarelli for Governor.

**Dan Smith:** The ubiquitous steady hand for Assemblyman Craig Coughlin.

**Amit Jani:** District Representative at U.S. House of Representatives; Works on Team Murphy.

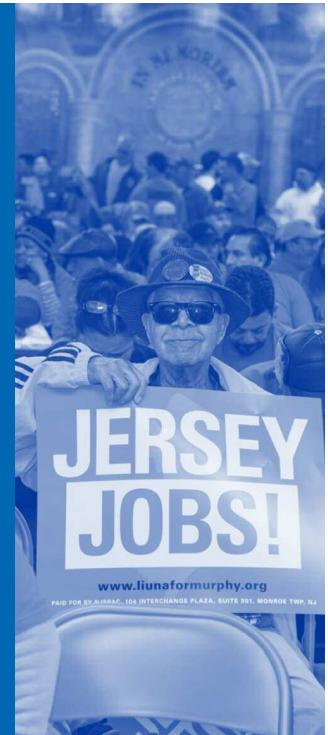
**Hannah Peterson:** Communications for Mayor Steven Fulop.

**Axel Owen:** Campaign Manager for Vin Gopal's LD11 victory.

**Jerrell Blakeley:** Campaign Organizer at NJ Work Environment Council, Advocate for Healthy Schools Now and improved urban education.

**Theo Siggelakis:** The Mercer-based operative and former Assemblyman Benson staffer is making moves up and down the state as he builds his fundraising consulting firm.

**Sam Weinstein:** So many people who turned into power players started as drivers in this business. Yankees fan Weinstein was the wheel man during the primary season for Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-16).



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74

LAURIE  
MCCABE

The wife of Middlesex County Democratic Committee Chairman – a policy nerd from the office of healthcare precision machine state Senator Joe Vitale (D-19) – could be headed for an assembly majority leadership position. If she stays where she is now, she'll wield just as much power in the legislative office that gave birth to Speaker-elect Craig Coughlin.



75

SHARIQ  
AHMAD

Truly one of the most book-smart individuals in New Jersey politics, the Rutgers Presidential Scholar also worked for Menendez, and serves as chief of staff to Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak (D-19). 2017 marked the biggest year of his fledgling political career, as he displaced Keith Hahn to win (by one vote) the chairmanship of the Edison Democratic Committee. That's a big and potentially very powerful chairmanship of the biggest town in one of the state's most politically important counties.



76

LARRY HAMM

No idea or issue passes impacting urban populations and/or social justice without the once over – and usually vigorous advocacy - from the legendary leader of the People's Organization for Progress. Watch him in 2018 as Black Ministers look to make a statement in the Essex County Executive's contest.



77

PEG  
SCHAFFER

No one pushes her around, which is a big plus in this business. The Somerset County Democratic Chair, a principal at her own law firm of Schain Schaffer and Rafanello, snagged a clerk last week when her candidate, Steve Peter, deposed veteran Republican Brett Radi. Overseeing a county where there is visible Trump backlash and that went for Obama, Clinton and Murphy, Schaffer also stands to play a major role in the section of the candidate who will oppose U.S. Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7).

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78

SHELLEY  
BRINDLE

A former HBO executive, the Mayor-elect of Westfield last week became the first Democrat elected in the Union County town since 1998, and the town's first woman chief executive. That unto itself might not make such a big impression, but Union is home to the Christie Brain Trust, including Mike DuHaime and Bill Palatucci, and Republican Legislative Leaders Tom Kean, Jr. and Jon Bramnick. Her shocking upset win over the sitting Republican mayor and NJ GOP establishment proved people power push back against a Republican Party now not just trying to shake off Christie, but branded by Donald J. Trump.



79

BILL CARUSO

The savvy Archer Greiner lobbyist has the Statehouse street cred to fall back on in rough political weather, in addition to that useful connection to LG in-waiting Sheila Oliver (he once served as executive director for the Assembly Majority Office when Oliver was speaker). He's also unpredictable – in the best sense. Just when you think he can't get any more South Jersey, he surfaces at some seemingly small-bore Bergen function and turns the event from bore-snore to scintillating conversation piece.

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Congratulations to All on the  
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# 80

DAVE PARANO

The Director of Murphy for Governor's Field Program goes back to Weinberg World as a nuts and bolts campaigns operative. He was also one of the all stars who got Bill Pascrell reelected in 2012. But this year was Parano's statewide career exclamation point as Murphy owned the finish line.



# 81

STEVE  
ADUBATO, JR.

The Host of NJTV's State of Affairs – Achilles to Steve Sr.'s Zeus – actually has the brains to accompany those agonizing growing pains that constituted life in the household of the ultimate power player, number one on this list.

## TOP EIGHT MOST LIKELY PEOPLE TO BE ON THIS LIST NEXT YEAR

The Insider 100 Power Rankings do not include elected officials, so the following people did not appear this year. But look for them on 2018's list, when several of them may no longer hold public office.

**Brendan Gill:** If the Murphy Campaign Manager gives up his Essex County Freeholder seat to focus fulltime on his own public affairs/consulting firm, look for Gill to vault onto next year's version of this list.

**Joe Kyrillos:** The retiring Republican state senator from Middletown could go to a Murphy Administration – he's close to the Democratic nominee for Governor.

**Herb Conaway:** The Democratic Assemblyman from Burlington County would have to be considered a short-list contender for Health and Human Services.

**Shavonda Sumter:** Denied the lieutenant governor position that Murphy awarded to Sheila Oliver, the 35th District Assemblywoman could refashion herself as a member of the Murphy Administration.

**Andre Sayegh:** He's at a crossroads, of sorts, and the Ward 6 Paterson Councilman could go to the Assembly, in the event that Sumter gives up her 35th District seat. He could also emerge as mayor from a 2018 citywide hoedown. But don't rule out a move by Sayegh to the Murphy Administration, either. He's close to Gill, and was an early backer of the Governor-elect.

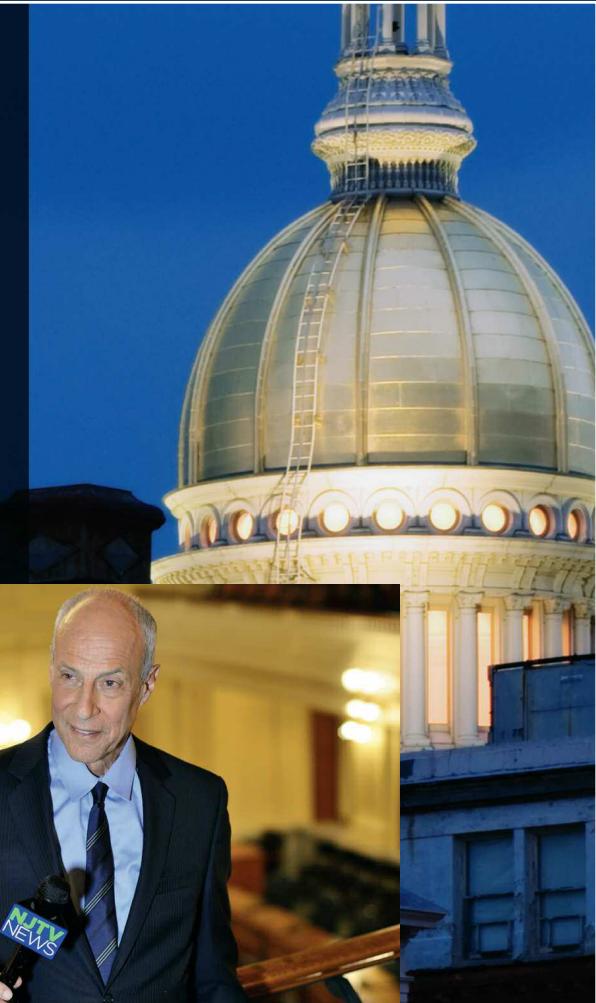
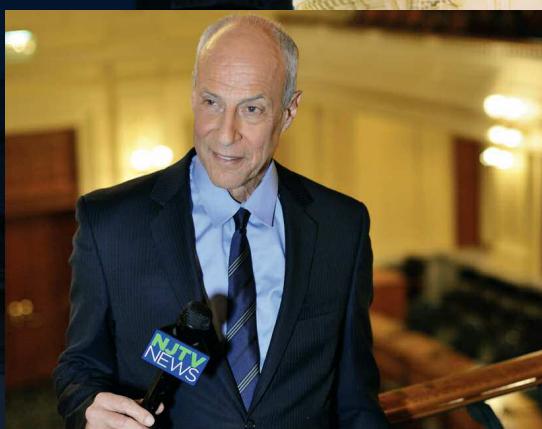
**John Wisniewski:** He's retiring from the Legislature this year, but don't look for the public sector attorney and powerful chairman of the Assembly Transportation Committee to slink away. He won over 100,000 votes in the Democratic Primary, and as with Jim Johnson, those votes belong to Wiz.

**Bob Gordon:** The stately senator from the 38th District has Murphy Administration written all over him.

**Ray Lesniak:** At first thought to have purchased a one-way ticket to the South of France, the retiring senator from Union County is actually said to prefer life as New Jersey's most famous resident Francophile. He plans to start his own social justice institute and may even try to hang around with a party chairmanship.

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**82****RONALD  
SLAUGHTER**

The Reverend Pastor of Saint James AME Church in Newark has undertaken a very politically active role especially on the complex subject of how the board oversees Essex County Community College. He could be a critical figure next year in countywide elections.

**83****CARDINAL  
TOBIN**

Tasked with the Samson-like burden of holding up a damaged but still-standing religious edifice, His Eminence Joseph William Cardinal Tobin proved a stout ally for Senator Bob Menendez on the streets of Newark on opposition to President Trump's immigration order, and in defense of Union City grandfather Catalino Guerrero.

**TRISH ZITA****84****JEANINE LARUE**

Two members of that dynamic public affairs team otherwise known as Kaufman Zita, Zita and LaRue have more experience between the two of them the rest of Trenton combined.



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85

AL ABDEL-AZIZ

On the strength of his 2016 Ward 6 bid, the co-chair of the Paterson Democratic Party remains in contention to either play for a vacant assembly seat (if Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter goes to the Murphy Administration), or, if Ward 6 Councilman Andre Sayegh goes to the assembly or to the Murphy Administration, win at last the Ward 6 seat. An excellent organizer and motivator and still just in his early 30s, educator Abdel-aziz is the most obvious political leader of South Paterson's Palestinian Americans.



86

CHRIS RUSSELL

They didn't win, but Russell (and his partner the late great Rick Rosenberg) ran one of the more memorable Republican Primary campaigns as the twin engines of Ciattrelli for Governor 2017. Guadagno defeated Ciattarelli to score the GOP nomination, but along the way the inimitable Russell showed his usual creativity and moxie to complement Ciattarelli's skill as a candidate. He also advises another potential statewide candidate: U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-3)



87

BRAD LAWRENCE



STEVE DEMICCO

Having helmed the 2005 Corzine for Governor Campaign prior to the 2017 Murphy for Governor Campaign, the dynamic duo can once again coinhabit the throne of political messaging for super-rich out of town neophytes looking to run the state of New Jersey. They were the brains behind Murphy's successful messaging campaign, and while their strategy may have not helped down ballot hopefuls like Vin Gopal in the competitive LD11, Murphy practically sailed through the Democratic Primary and general elections.

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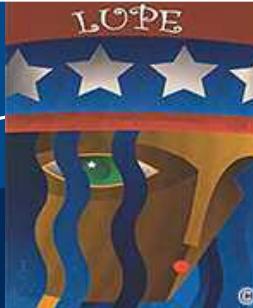
  
Harry Hurley,  
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Congratulations to the 2017 The Insider 100: Power publication recipients

## TOP TEN NJ SOUTH ASIAN POLITICAL PLAYERS:

1. **Vin Gopal:** LD11 Senator-elect, former Monmouth Dem chairman, and fundraising machine
2. **Assemblyman Raj Mukherji:** Assemblyman from LD33, lawyer, former lobbyist
3. **Ravi Bhalla:** Hoboken Mayor-elect and lawyer
4. **Upendra Chivukula:** Former LD17 Assemblyman, Congressional candidate in both CD7 and CD12, BPU Commissioner
5. **Shariq Ahmad:** Chairman of the Edison Democrats, former Menendez staffer, COS to Assemblyman Karabinchak
6. **Raj Parikh:** Legal Counsel to Phil Murphy, partner at Genova and Burns
7. **Satish Pooni:** Head of the Indian Business Association and Democratic minder
8. **Assad Akhter:** Paterson-based Freeholder and deputy COS to Pascrell
9. **Robert Field:** Aide to Mayor Fulop and Democratic operative with strong relationships all over New Jersey
10. **Amit Jani:** Former Pallone staffer and Coordinated Campaign operative



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# 88

**JEFF BRINDLE**

The last, lone literate, singularly intelligent and mature and adult man in New Jersey (well, there are a handful of others, including Aron and Bracken) continues to serve as Executive Director of the state Elections Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC). He's in a powerful position right now, with the ELEC case against DiVincenzo potentially producing a real factor in next year's countywide election.

## INSIDER NJ GM PETE ONEGLIA'S TOP THREE FUNNIEST MOMENTS IN POLITICS

1. On Sen. Girgenti's last day in Trenton in January 2011, I had parked (for some reason) in a private garage instead of the Statehouse, which was closed for the night when I went back to leave at 11pm. Trenton was a ghost town, my phone was dead and charger in the car, so I went back to the Statehouse (still open yet empty) and into the Senator's hideaway office (which I rationalized was still his until noon the next day) and attempted to get a few hours of sleep until the garage opened up. That didn't happen, though I did scare the living daylights out of a night-time custodian.

2. At the Governor's Christmas party in 2014, I stepped outside for some air and saw one of the cars – parked on the lawn – was stuck in the mud. I went over to help the guys trying to move it, and eventually we got it unstuck. Turns out it was then Congressman-elect Tom MacArthur's car. I sent him a Facebook message sometime later that I'd never forget that story. His response? "Your shoes probably won't forget either." (prologue: I ditched the shoes shortly afterwards).

3. Taking a very late train home from Hoboken one night, I succumbed to exhaustion and fell asleep about two stops before my own stop, and woke up at the end of the line – somewhere in Orange County, NY well after 2am. With no more trains running, and everyone I knew either asleep or ignoring my calls/texts, as my cell battery slowly drained to red, I finally found an open taxi company to drive me across the border back home to NJ. I think I woke up at the same time that Asm. Garcia was waiting on his doorstep so we could dash down to Trenton for a 10am ATU meeting. We totally missed the meeting and he was none too happy. Pretty sure on the ride home I stopped and bought him ice cream, which lifted his spirits.



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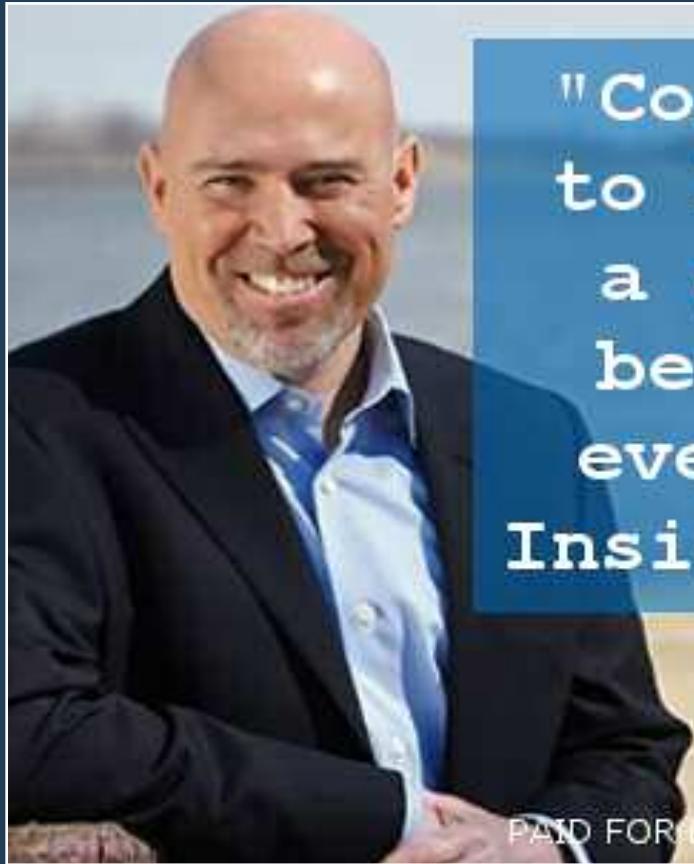
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*Dear Joe,  
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supporters both near and far,  
thank you for 30 years of  
honorable service to the people  
of Monmouth County and the  
entire State of New Jersey.*



**GENE MULROY****89****GERRY GIBBS**

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best wishes to  
everyone on the  
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**90****RAHAMAN  
MOHAMMED**

An appointed Deputy Mayor of the City of Newark, the former SEIU labor leader commands respect on the streets, especially in his home of the South Ward. Very close to Mayor Baraka.

**91****MIKIE  
SHERRILL**

The former prosecutor and former Navy helicopter pilot got off the ground early this year with strong fundraising numbers to give the pretenders pause, scare away any contenders, and put herself in a very good position to fight for dominance in the Democratic Party as she seeks a general election showdown with Frelinghuysen.



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92

BOB  
TORRICELLI

After reluctantly leaving office back in 2002, the former U.S. Senator went out and made a ton of money in real estate. Now he's back, with the same hyperactive foreign policy chops and bacon in a frying pan political mind, in search of a statewide seat and with \$20 million to spend on an election. The truly senatorial looking-Crocker Jarmin-white haired version of himself offers the additional curveball of presenting a kind of Italianate George Norcross III persona to northern audiences. Win or lose, he comes closest to creating the effect of being a walking GN3 doppelganger.



93

BILL  
PASCRELL III

Wired into Florio-Hagan-Gaburo World at Princeton Public Affairs, "Billy the Third" (son of the Congressman) commands one of the deepest and most respected knowledge bases in the areas of gaming and casino gambling. He's also very sharp-elbowed and a relentless advocate once he gets onto something, not to mention a campaigns and elections beast (don't forget his dad's 2012 Democratic Primary). With a citywide election next year in Paterson, let's see if he jumps in and plays in what figures to be a circus-like environment.

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## STILL SHARP

### Former Elected Officials who remain in top form as either advisers, wise men or party poohbahs:

**Patrick Kennedy:** As politicians mostly give up on oratory as a connecting point with a social media-infested, zero attention span-zonked and frankly BS-detecting electorate, the former Congressman from Rhode Island delivered what amounted to the second most impassioned speech in the State of New Jersey (after Ras Baraka's reelection kickoff address), and maybe one of only two such speeches in a state nearly wholly given over to intolerance for establishment toadies and long winded pols. A recovering drug user with a real cause, Kennedy speaks from the heart, and sprinkles his remarks with just enough political anecdotes to keep politics junkies engaged.

**Steve Lonegan:** His seemingly unending foray into upstart movement conservative runs against power structures in both parties brings to mind Allen Ginsberg's "Ok, Neal, ethereal spirit." But as baffling a self-satirizing satori as his 2018 run against Gottheimer may appear (and he still hasn't gotten through a primary with John McCann, and maybe others), this may be the time Lonegan finally squiggles through. But make no mistake based on the way he detonated Scott Garrett, the brilliant Gottheimer is a very tough out.

**Upendra Chivukula:** Seldom valued in New Jersey politics, intelligence nonetheless has a way of recurring in the activities of a handful of long-suffering New Jerseyans, among them former Assemblyman Chivukula, now a board member on the Board of Public Utilities (BPU). Author of a much-praised book on how wealth is created titled The 3rd Way (along with Veny W. Musum), Chivukula remains one of those bright gems in the swamp of New Jersey politics.

**Bernie Kenny:** The former LD33 Senator from Hoboken, a Democrat, played a behind the scenes role in the campaign of Mayoral candidate Jen Giattino.

**Joe Doria:** The Democratic former Speaker of the General Assembly (and former Mayor of Bayonne) mentors a whole new generation of students at St. Peters University.

**Bob Martin:** An address to the business community in September by the former Morris County Republican Senator, a Republican, had the entire Chamber of Commerce and Business and Industry Association audience on high alert.

**Nick Asselta:** The former LD1 GOP Senator serves as Director of Finance at Triangle Manufacturing Company, Inc.

**Guy Gregg:** The former Republican leader of the Assembly works with Michael Murphy at Impact NJ and regularly serves as a television commentator.

**Bill Schluter:** The former Republican state Senator, a Republican, is one of the state's leading experts in the area of government ethics.

**Bernadette McPherson:** The former Bergen County Freeholder remains engaged in Democratic Party politics in her hometown of Rutherford, and as a member of the team at Millenium Strategies.

**James McGreevey:** The Jersey City-based former Democratic Governor is one of the state's leading experts on prisoner reentry.

**Tom Kean, Sr.:** The former Republican Governor remains the model of gravitas – and political shrewdness – for members of both parties.

**Scott Rudder:** The former Burlington County Assemblyman from LD8 serves as VP and Partner at Burton Trent Public Affairs.

**Hector Corchado:** The former Newark North Ward Councilman, now serves on the Board of the NJ Cannabusiness Association.

**Joan Quigley:** The President of North Hudson Community Action and Jersey Journal columnist is a former Assemblywoman from Jersey City.

**Carmelo Garcia:** A former Assemblyman from Hoboken, Garcia is a deputy mayor of Newark.

**Gordon MacInnes:** The head of New Jersey Policy Perspective is a former state senator.

**John Lynch:** The former Senate President remains active behind the scenes in Middlesex County.

**Sharpe James:** They say a way-too-long speech he gave this year upstairs at the Robert Treat Hotel left people with their heads in their hands, embarrassed and chagrined over the former Newark Mayor's inability to get hip to the times. Earth to Sharpe: people are into themselves now, not haggard Taj Mahal-lookalikes in love with themselves. Still, the ageless sweatshirt-wearing, bicycle in City Hall-riding hotshot has some juice in the South Ward, including a tough guy, Army veteran son on the City Council and a firm ally in Central Ward Councilwoman Gayle Chaneyfield Jenkins, who's likely to run for mayor next year.



94

IDIDA  
RODRIGUEZ

The Paterson native remains the godmother of the young Latina powerhouses, some of whom also occupy this list. Close to Senator Nellie Pou (D-35) and the business partner of Essex County Democratic Chairman Jones at 1868 Public Affairs.



95

MICHAEL  
MURPHY

The step son of the late Governor Richard Hughes (and brother of Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes), the very politically connected Murphy heads up Impact NJ. A former candidate for governor (1997), Murph has an easy going charm, erudition, and almost southern gentility that set him apart from the usual grift that populates the political world.



## TOP LATINA OPERATIVES

**Arlene Quinones-Perez:**

*Chair of the Hunterdon County Democratic Committee*

**Patricia Campos-Medina:**

*Top-notch academic and organizer*

**Cristina Pinzon:**

*Founder and CEO of Stateside Affairs*

**Wendy Martinez:**

*Reliable 1868 Range Hand*

**Iris M. Delgado:**

*Served as Director of Victory 2017, the coordinated campaign between Murphy for Governor and the New Jersey Democratic State Committee*

**Briana Earle:**

*The Kivvit hotshot was everywhere on the Phil Murphy Campaign support trail*

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## JAY LASSITER'S POWER COUPLES LIST

**Gail & Bob Gordon:** She's a GOP lawyer/fundraiser, he's LD38 Senator.

**Valerie Huttle & Frank Huttle:** She's an LD37 Assemblywoman, he's Mayor of Englewood.

**Jeannette Hoffman & Joshua Henne:** She's a GOP communications pro with Marathon, he runs Democratic communications firm White Horse Strategies.

**Alixon Collazos & Brendan Gill:** She manages BGill Group, he's an Essex County freeholder and managed Murphy's successful guv campaign.

**Michelle Jaker & Ed Oatman:** She directs government affairs at Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield, he's Senator Scutari's COS.

**Ksenia Lebedeva & Hank Lyon:** She chairs the Somerset County Young Republicans, he's a Morris freeholder.

**Kari Osmond & Julia Fahl:** She runs Congresswoman Coleman's district office, she's a Planned Parenthood fundraiser.

**Kelly Stewart Maer & Bill Maer:** She directs government affairs at Capital Health Systems and the NJ Dems treasurer, he's a NJPSI senior partner.

**Maggie Moran & Matt Doherty:** She's Kivvit's managing director, he's the mayor of Belmar.

**Missy & Gerry Balmir:** She's a Menendez senior advisor, he's a Hudson freeholder.

**Andrea Katz & Marshall Spevak:** She's an Assembly Dems lawyer, he's Assemblyman Mazzeo's COS and President of the NJ Young Dems.

**Liz Mahn & Brandon McKoy:** She's a research associate for the Senate Majority office, he's a policy wonk at New Jersey Policy Perspective.

**Christina Zuk & Vin Gopal:** She's a rising lobbyist at Princeton Public Affairs, he's LD11 Senator-elect.

**Laura Matos & Sean Darcy:** She's Kivvit's General Manager, he heads up Round World Strategies.

**Lynn Haynes-Sabath & AJ Sabath:** They own Advocacy and Management Group, a bluechip lobbying firm.

**Rosalie Efthim & Joey Novick:** She's the long-serving matriarch of Blue Jersey, he serves on the ACLU board.

**Victoria & Vinny Napolitano:** She was the youngest Moorestown mayor, he served as Gov. Christie as director of constituencies.

**Stephanie Lagos & Roy Cho:** She's incoming COS to Tammy Murphy, he ran for Congress in CD5 in '14, now in the entertainment biz.

# ELEC CONGRATULATES ALL THOSE NAMED TO THE INSIDER POWER 100



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96

JAMES GEE

U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman's (D-12) chief of staff has kept his boss in a holding pattern for the most part. But don't forget the now federally grooved in Gee's state government experience – in addition to his deep Trenton political roots.



97

RAY FERRAIOLI

The North Jersey land-roving barracuda with close ties to Essex County Democratic Party players has carefully crafted and implemented a moving and operating all-the-time template against which the top tier operators on this list judge the lesser work of many another man.

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## TOP TEN ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

1. U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur
2. Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-16)
3. Senator Jennifer Beck (R-11)
4. Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21)
5. Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21)
6. Senator-elect Chris Brown (R-2)
7. Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden
8. Hamilton Mayor Kelly Yaede
9. Senator Mike Doherty (R-23)
10. Councilwoman Jen Giattino



98

DAVID  
PASCRELL

The twin son of U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell heads up government affairs for the powerful Gibbons Law Firm, and is very close friends with Brendan Gill, whose already practically chief-of-staff to Governor-elect Phil Murphy.



99

ERICA  
JEDYNAK

The New Jersey Director for Americans for Prosperity commands a strong position on the rightward side of the debate in a 2018 Republican Primary. Those incumbents who don't back President Donald J. Trump's budget could find themselves up against AFP-championed challengers under the statewide organizing leadership of Jedynak.

## A GLANCE UNDER THE DECK OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER WITH ESSEX COUNTY'S OWN POLITICAL VIRGIL: TOM BARRETT

Born in Jersey City, the grandson of an Irish immigrant bricklayer, Tom Barrett grew up in Kearny, the son of NY Herald Tribune Bureau Chief Thomas P. Barrett, a reader of Homer and Virgil in the original Greek and Roman, patriot and lover of all things Irish, who insisted on an education for his six children.

A graduate of Villanova University, Barrett picked politics, and would go on to forge one of the most storied records as a Democratic Party operative in Essex, prompting Newark North Ward Party Leader Steve Adubato, Sr. to once tell him, "You and I are the smartest guys in this game because we both know not to run for office."

The following is a reflection by Barrett – as told to InsiderNJ – on some of the contests he participated in over the past 40 years, a period of time defined by the changing of New Jersey from a battleground nationally to a blue state in the era of Bill Clinton, a condition reflected at its heart by the performance of Barrett's beloved Essex County.

**1978:** The race for Essex County Executive: A tussle between John Cryan, Don Payne and Peter Shapiro. Barrett worked for Sheriff Cryan, father of Senator-elect Joe Cryan. Cryan lost to Shapiro by a shave.

**1979:** Barrett worked as the media consultant for Cryan's reelection campaign.

**1985:** The Tilt with the Adubatos. "We started off as foes and ended up as friends," Barrett recalled of his face-off with the powerful Newark North Ward Leader. "I was the general consultant for John V. Kelly, who was the president of Nutley Savings and Loan. He won an assembly seat in 1981, then lost it in 1983 to Steve Adubato, Jr." Barrett moved his political offices from Newark to Nutley to focus on the Kelly Campaign. Tom Kean was running for reelection that year and had coattails. Kelly defeated Adubato.

**1986:** Barrett worked with Tony Carrino to snag a council seat from Fran Adubato.

**1986:** Expecting to have the backing of the Essex County Democratic Party Chairman Ray Durkin, Jerry Greco prepared to run against incumbent Essex County Executive Peter Shapiro. He left the party in the lurch when he backed out at the last minute. Durkin wanted to thrash Greco, but Barrett advised him to show the would-be candidate some mercy. "That's the first time I ever thought Tom Barrett had a heart," Durkin later cracked. Shapiro won the Democratic Primary, then backed Stephen Edelstein for chair as an alternative to Durkin. The incumbent chairman beat him, and promptly engineered what Barrett remembers as a "Six-month Primary Campaign" in the general election, with Republican Nick Amato backed by the Democratic Party establishment. Amato defeated Shapiro. Barrett served as Amato's press secretary.

# CONGRATULATIONS

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ON THIS YEAR'S

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## A GLANCE UNDER THE DECK OF THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER WITH ESSEX COUNTY'S OWN POLITICAL VIRGIL: TOM BARRETT

*(Continued)*

**1988:** Ran future Essex County Democratic Chairman Leroy Jones' successful freeholder campaign against a bat-wielding Joe Clark. "The New York Times told me, 'your opposition is on the cover of Time Magazine, are you concerned? I told them I'm not concerned at all because so is the Ayatollah Khomeini." In his subsequent career as an assemblyman, Jones aggressively took on the issue of racial profiling.

**1990:** Helped secure a Council seat for Marie Villani, the last white woman elected to the Newark City Council.

**1997:** Barrett worked for Senator Ronald Rice and helped defend the senator (along with Assemblyman Tom Giblin) against the party powers.

**2000:** He helped Joanne Cocchiola, who was elected Township Commissioner at first and went on to be Nutley's first woman Mayor 2 terms later. Barrett said he made a tactical decision to embrace the opposition's main attack line: her father, relying on a classic photo of her standing with father's hand on her shoulder.

**2002:** The County Executive's Race. Joe DiVincenzo outdueled Tom Giblin, 40 years Barrett's friend. They lost, but Barrett reaffirmed the friendship of a lifetime. "I'll tell you how deep it is with Tommy. When the Herald-Tribune folded, my father was out of work with six kids in Catholic school. A truck pulled up in front of the house with enough food in it for six months. The truck was from Local 68 – the Operating Engineers." That's Giblin's local.

**2005:** He helped fellow Democrat Linda Lordi Cavanaugh snag a freeholder seat in a Republican district.

**2009:** He helped current Morristown Mayor Tim Dougherty, who bested incumbent Don Crisitello and dealt a blow to a right-leaning demagogue.



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# 100

MICKEY QUINN

Has this guy been great, or what? The Roy White-like chief of staff to Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald (D-6) has a deceptively relaxed stance that could at any moment turn a clutch base hit or game-changing bunt. Too many people in the business substitute displays of emotion for passion, jags of unhinged lunatic profanity for don't "f" with me battle frenzy, while Quinn simply operates with Kung Fu-like quietly lethal effectiveness.



# 101

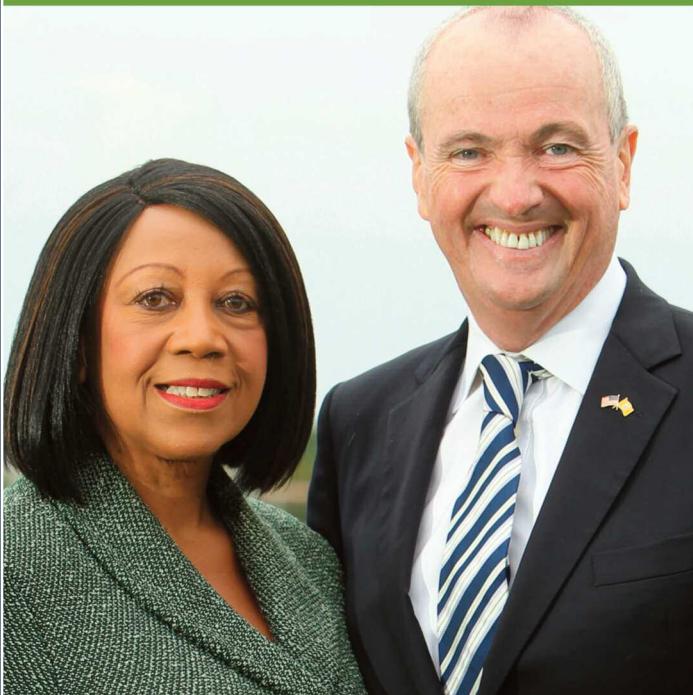
JIM JOHNSON

He's more of a Montclair mystery man post June Primary than before, which makes the former Assistant Attorney General more dangerous than ever before. Sources say he's unlikely to oppose Essex County Executive DiVincenzo – but he did manage to corral over 100,000 votes off the line in his doomed gubernatorial bid. Those are his votes, and he knows it, too, as he continues an exceedingly mild-mannered victory lap around the state to gauge the passion level of his progressive followers. Might he resurface for a 2018 senate bid? A corporate attorney, he's got the money. We'll see.

\*Honorable Mention

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is to contribute in some way  
to making things better."

*– Robert F. Kennedy*



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*– Phil Murphy  
& Sheila Oliver*

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## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PUBLISHER

We would like to take a moment to thank our readers, friends, supporters, and most of all our publisher, **John Graham**, whose leadership sparked the creation and ongoing development of InsiderNJ. At the outset, John had a vision for a fair bipartisan political news resource for NJ, and in our short history here it has been our privilege and honor to work with this gracious and fine fighting spirit. InsiderNJ exists because of John's decision to invest in it, and his insistence throughout the website's existence on those high standards outlined in our mission statement. We thank you, John, for this resource – the visionary byproduct of your goodwill, integrity, and abiding love and dedication to politics.

## THE ZWICKER MAN

Few gave Andrew Zwicker a chance to win reelection this year, let alone his running mate Roy Freiman. But Zwicker and Freiman both won in a tough general election cycle, powered in part by a strong team that included Campaign Manager Austin Lyle, COS Joe Forte, and the double duo of Michael Muller and Mickey Quinn, in addition to strong county Democratic Party support from Middlesex County Chair Kevin McCabe, Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes, and Somerset County Democratic Chair Peg Schaffer and Vice Chair Zenon Christodoulou.

The logo for CLB Partners features the letters "CLB" in a large, dark blue serif font, followed by a vertical red line, and the word "PARTNERS" in a smaller, grey sans-serif font.

## Congratulations To All The Honorees On The 2017 Insider 100: Power List

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