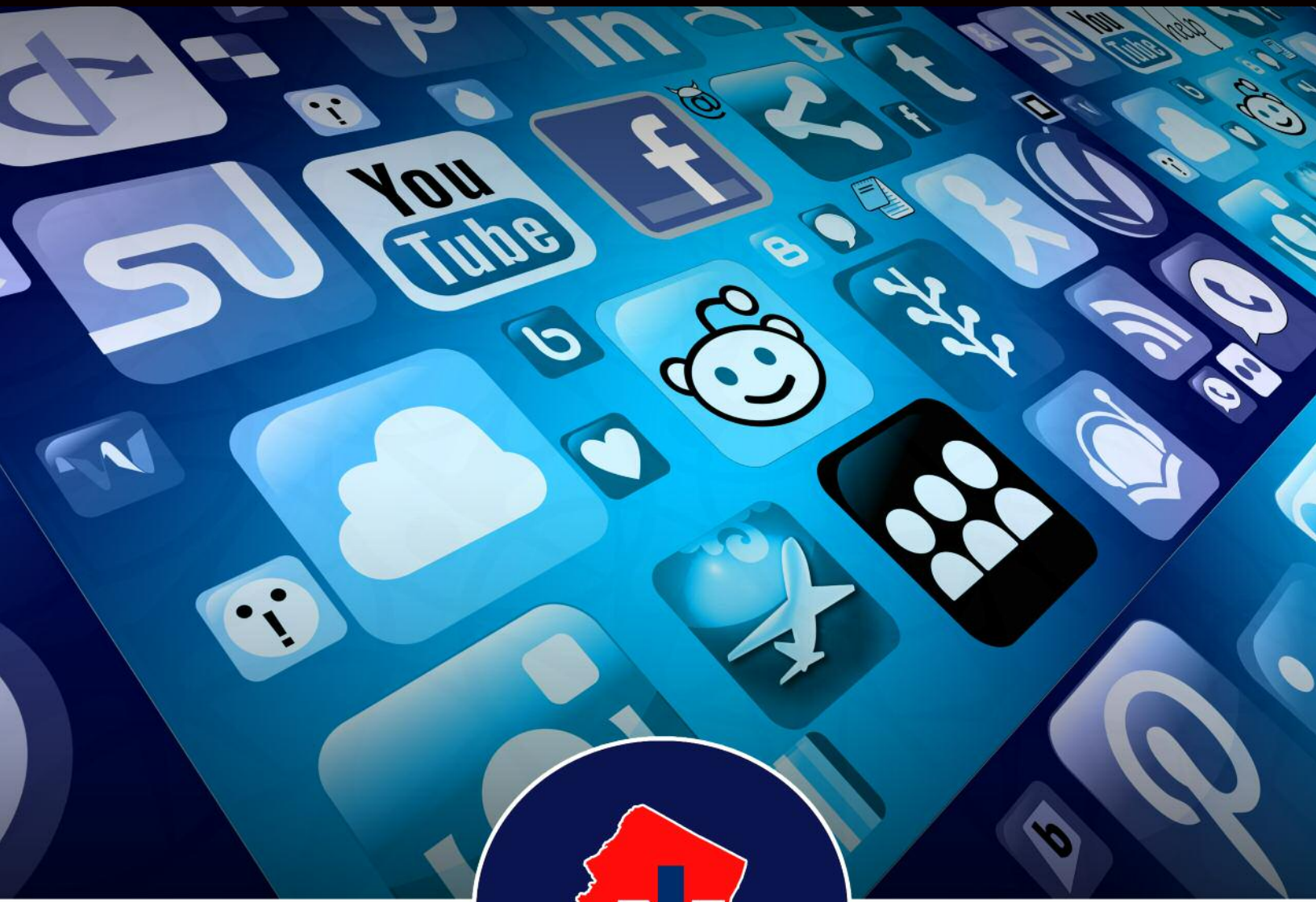


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THE 2018 INSIDER 100:

# **MEDIA POWER**



# INSIDER NJ

*Message from the Editor*

## 2018 MEDIA POWER

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important to democracy,  
it is democracy.”*  
--Walter Cronkite

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# 1. MIKE ARON, NJTV



The undisputed dean of New Jersey political reporting and NJTV chief political correspondent, and maybe New Jersey's lone gem, mensch Aron has the biggest treasure trove of institutional knowledge in the state. He has been everywhere and done everything in this business, including writing and publishing books, getting yelled at by then-President Bill Clinton, reporting live from outside the home of an on-the-lam Nick Bissell, breaking political news live nightly and hosting his weekly television shows: *On the Record* and *Reporters Roundtable*. He so obviously loves it, the depth of his passion for the work nutshelled in one recurring Aron quote: "If you're a reporter, New Jersey never lets you down."

# 2

**CHARLIE STILE,**  
*Bergen Record*



There may be other political columnists with wider reach, but none has the depth of the Bergen Record's Stile. He's the fine wine of political column writing, arguably the most determined purveyor of a higher level of discourse: both political and literary. But then, wasn't it George Orwell who said all political problems are grammatical? So many others have flamed out of the contest while the charming Stile continues to tear around the track. The sentences are so well constructed, and the ideas so germane and pragmatically packaged, his scorn for unabashed partisanship borne out by a style of critique that could only be described as realpolitik. Stile actually accomplishes the Herculean task of elevating something that may otherwise – but for Aron – very well be un-elevatable: New Jersey politics itself.

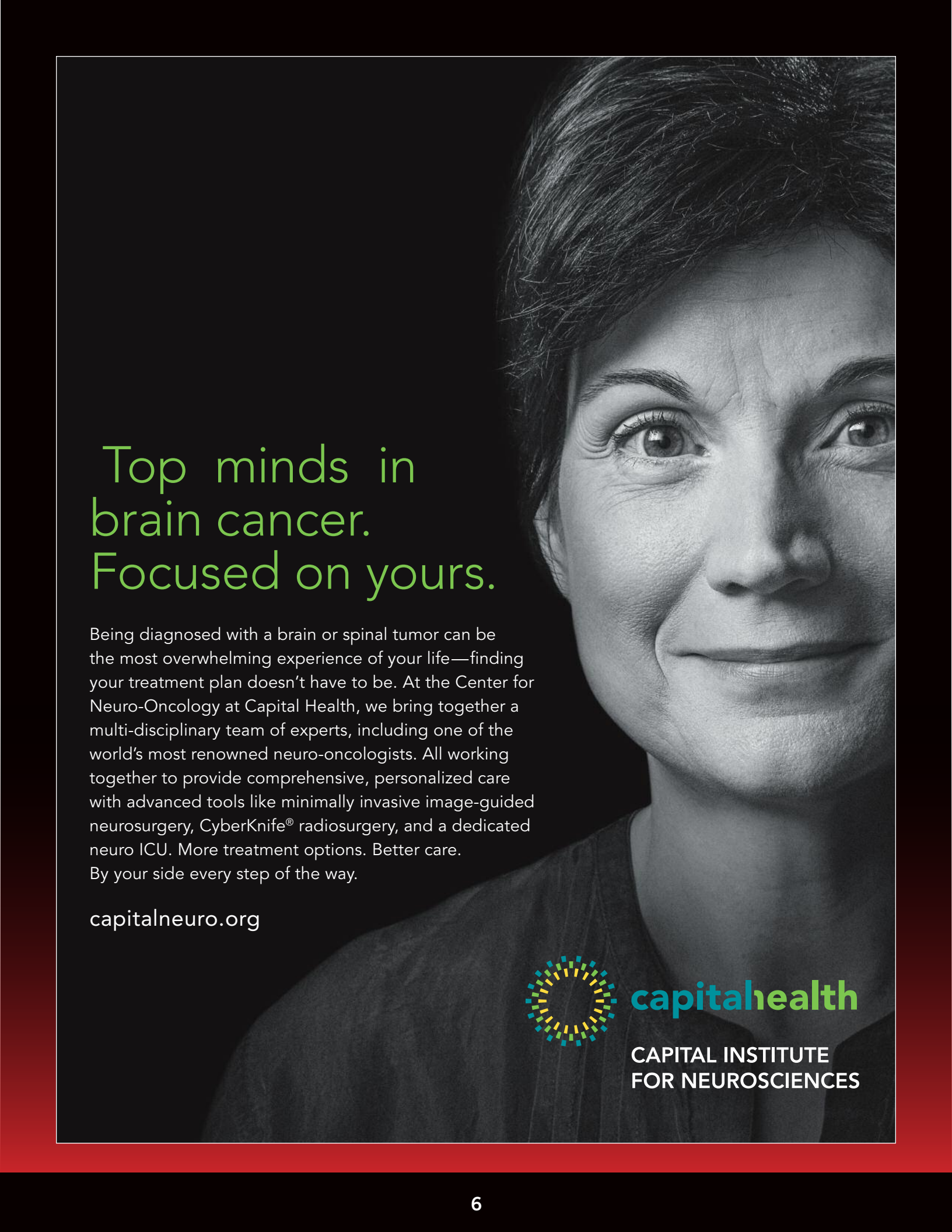


# 3

**MATT FRIEDMAN,**  
*Politico NJ*



The peerless Friedman really doesn't write about something unless it's politically important. In a way, the ten-year veteran's shaping into the most easily recognizable heir to Aron: superior political intellect, no-nonsense, just-the-facts prose style, television or radio-ready insightfulness, and a considerable resume, including tours of duty with the website previously known as PolitickerNJ, the Star-Ledger and now as the political anchor leg to Politico NJ. Author of the must-read Playbook. And he's still just a pup in his 30s.



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# 4

**JOHN MOONEY,**  
*NJ Spotlight*



The textbook case of an intractable intellect refusing to get chewed up in hackland, the former Star-Ledger scribe co-founded NJ Spotlight, hammering the not-for-profit website into easily the most (maybe lone?) substantive destination. The key to Mooney's success? He doggedly writes about policy, and shuns the dumb subjects that form the backbone of most political media.

# 5

**JOHN REITMEYER,**  
*NJ Spotlight*



You can talk to people around the Statehouse and if there's a single respected resource on state budgetary matters, anyone in the know will immediately identify that person as Reitmeyer, the former Bergen Record brain turned online animal. The Clark Kentish Reitmeyer also possesses something else you don't generally find in most pure-blooded nerds. Under a mild-mannered and gentlemanly demeanor, he disguises the very sharp elbows of an unapologetic hockey jock.



# 6

**RYAN HUTCHINS,**  
*Politico NJ*



The lead dog supervising reporter at Politico NJ cut his teeth at the Star Ledger before signing on with Politico NJ, where he and Friedman provide a strong one-two punch. An elegant written word reporter, Hutchins also excels as an fierce and uncompromising inquisitor in political gaggles. If you're a politician with a sweaty hand in the cookie jar, you don't want to see Hutchins trooping up the hall with a recording device.

# 7

**MIKE KELLY,**  
*Bergen Record*



Distinguished author and prose stylist Kelly really is as close as the state has left to the pure beat reporter, the kind of guy who sports a fedora and sits at the end of a long, poorly lit bar scratching notes on a notepad. This is the real deal. This is the guy with a conscience and an intellect, a sleuthing and crusading dedication and a generally fearless Irish, Conor McGregor-like disposition under the civilized-looking package. His dispatches are for North Jersey what his colleague Stile is to the Statehouse.



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# 8

**DAVID CRUZ**



The horror is having to tweedle-dum-and-dee them in one entry, but they are dogged equals. The NJTV political news correspondents have muscled their way into contention as two of the most sporting reporters in politics. In a word: aggressive. If you're a politician, don't let them catch you napping or sticking your foot in your mouth. They'll be on top of you like a pair of hungry hounds – with rolling cameras in tow.

# 9

**TOM MORAN,**  
*Star-Ledger*



A veteran presence, the Essex County-based Moran writes political columns and editorials for the state's paper of record. He has a following among progressives who appreciate his willingness to jump onto the frontlines of political debates, and at least weekly writes a column that generally everyone in the state who cares about politics must read.



# 10

**JONATHAN SALANT,**  
*NJ Advance Media*



Salant is NJ.com's go-to for DC political coverage: like Herb Jackson at the Record, Salant can take a national story and bring it back to home and give it a Jersey-focus.

# 11

**JONATHAN DIENST,**  
*NBC 4*



The stuffed and mounted head of Paterson Mayor Jose "Joey" Torres forms the basis of NBC reporter Diest's political contribution to New Jersey's political coverage, the result of his investigative news series about Silk City corruption.

**12** **TOM MARTELLO**  
*Star-Ledger*

The veteran Star-Ledger editor anchors the Statehouse Bureau. A veteran with veteran's chops, like Moran he spans the void back to a more literate newspaper time.



**13** **PAUL MULSHINE,**  
*Star-Ledger*

The conservative Star-Ledger columnist brings to mind that line from Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*: "All right, you get the hell out of here," when someone complains that bullfighting is boring. Like bullfighting, Mulshine's columns gore – but never bore.



**14** **BRENT JOHNSON,**  
*NJ Advance Media*

Solid. Reputable. Trusted. Battle-tested. The Star-Ledger's Johnson has hung around long enough to become one the paper of record's go-to political resources. He's meat and potatoes personified.



**15** **DUSTIN RACIOPPI,**  
*Bergen Record*

The Bergen Record reporter does the job with a touch of elegance. Impatient with pretenders and non-fact-based nebulae that fronts as New Jersey's intellectual capital, Racioppi is a genuine throw-back, the kind of guy who will one day take the reins of Mike Kelly's buckboard.





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# 16

**BRIAN THOMPSON,**  
*NBC 4*



The NBC News 4 vet still snags the big stories, and will forever live in the annals of New Jersey politics as that extraordinary inquisitor during the 2004 U.S. Senate contest.

# 17

**STEVE ADUBATO, JR.,**  
*NJTV*



Now with an Emmy nomination, the master communicator, and author of *Leadership* will undoubtedly have even more media heft. Watch one of Adubato's shows. To listen to him speak the language is almost akin to enjoying a Miles Davis record when what you seek is a smooth instrument that doesn't trip itself up on the squeaks, bumpy passages or false notes that routinely bedevil lesser horn players.



# 18

**HERB JACKSON,**  
*Bergen Record*



The agile veteran Bergen Record columnist and correspondent owns the federal beat in D.C. among New Jersey reporters. He's the gold standard.

# 19

**HARRY HURLEY,**  
*WPG*



You like breaking news out of Atlantic City and South Jersey? Then you be familiar with the well-connected, well-sourced, and popular Hurley, who breaks most (or at least many) of the dock-front political stories – and has a must-read column with *Shore News Today*.



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# 20

**MICHAEL HILL**



# 21

**MATT ARCO,**  
*NJ Advance Media*



A dedicated student of the game, Star-Ledger political reporter Arco got his start at PolitickerNJ before taking the Friedman career path to the Ledger. He specializes in covering Governor Chris Christie, and will presumably carry on as a Drumthwacket-centric beat reporter.



# 22

**LEVON PUTNEY,**  
*WCBS News Radio 880*



# 23

**KEVIN RIORDAN,**  
*Philadelphia Inquirer*



Riordan has been in the journalism game since the Byrne administration and has a wealth of institutional and historic knowledge, and is a must-read columnist for South Jersey – and beyond.





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**24**

**COLLEEN O'DEA,**  
*NJ Spotlight*



**25**

**BRENDA FLANAGAN,**  
*NJTV*



Top notch pro covers Statehouse and street politics for NJTV. Tenacious? Flanagan's the kind of reporter who shows up in a driving, state-debilitating snowstorm to tackle a disguised politician on the tarmac of Newark Airport before he can get out of town on that flight to Miami.



**26**

**ANDREW SEIDMAN,**  
*Philadelphia Inquirer*



Previously covering the Statehouse, Seidman widened his focus on politics to hone in on that most-important figure in Jersey politics the power broker.

**27**

**ERIC SCOTT,**  
*NJ 101.5*



The voice of 101.5 FM sounds like the radio equivalent of every leading man who ever made a movie in the 1940s and 1950s. He's the Robert Taylor of New Jersey media: strong, protective, solid, stolid and trustworthy.



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# 28

**DAVID MATTHAU,**  
*NJ 101.5*

The 101.5 FM reporter has an inimitable style. Take a listen to that broadcast. There's something very distinctive about the way he signs off on every broadcast.



# 29

**JILL COLVIN,**  
*AP*



# 30

**MIKE SHAPIRO,**  
*TAP into*

As founding editor, the businessman/attorney spent ten years building the TAP into network of hyper-local news sites the into one of New Jersey's most trusted sources for local news.



# 31

**TOM BERGERON**



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**32**

**MATT KATZ,**  
*WNYC*



The author of the definitive boom about Chris Christie, "American Governor", commands one of the most sought-after platforms for all things New Jersey politics. Don't ever underestimate him or be thrown by the boy next door routine. This is the guy who wraps a chummy arm around you at the bar. Next thing you know you hear that charming radio voice calming telling the world how you're finished.

**33**

**BILL SPADEA,**  
*NJ 101.5 and  
Chasing New Jersey*



A politician turned political journalist, workaholic Spadea has made himself an immovable radio force with his daily morning broadcast, reinforced by his evening TV alter ego as ring leader of MY9's Chasing. To his credit, Marine Corps vet (and, to this point, anyway, Trump-loving) Spadea chews voraciously into issues and champions causes, using his bully pulpit on the right much the way Moran uses his on the left.



**34**

**JULIE BRIGGS,**  
*WMTR*



The class act hosts "Your New Jersey Connection" and "Ask the Expert" on WMTR.

**35**

**JOHN DEROSIER,**  
*Press of Atlantic City*







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**36**

**SP SULLIVAN ,**  
*NJ Advance Media*

You never know when he's going to pop up, but when he does, it's like the camo covered special ops guy suddenly on the scene.



**37**

**BRIANNA VANNOZI,**  
*NJTV*

The veteran NJTV reporter is a New Jersey star. Look, you could make the case for putting her in the top ten, the top five. She may yet absolutely inherit the mantle of Aron, which would be better than Barry Bonds taking the career home runs record from Henry Aaron. She's a great (and fair) reporter.



**38**

**JONATHAN TAMARI,**  
*Philadelphia Inquirer*

The Philadelphia Inquirer reporter is equally capable of producing deep dive content on federal as state issues.

A details-oriented, precision-driven professional, Tamari is also one of the best writers of politics in the business.



**39**

**PHIL GREGORY,**  
*WBGO*

It's the typical combination. Mild-mannered – and lethal.



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Assistant Executive Director





**40**

**TERRENCE  
MACDONALD,**  
*Jersey Journal*

In an era of shriveled-up local news coverage, the Jersey Journal reporter is that rare bird who actually aggressively seems to relish the City Hall beat. He's been invaluable as that front-line source in New Jersey's most populous city.



**41**

**NICK ACOCELLA,**  
*Politifax*

The founding editor of Politifax and host of NJTV's Pasta and Politics endures as one of the great characters in New Jersey politics. He's the media mensch from Hoboken whose ring must be kissed by any out-of-towner who sets forth to examine politics in Hudson.



**42**

**JOHN HEINIS,**  
*Hudson County View*

If politics is a contact sport in New Jersey, or a bloody sport, as Kim Guadagno once said, then the founding editor of Hudson County View comes well prepared. He's a competitive jujitsu fighter, and that expertise translates into his hard-hitting pieces.



**43**

**L.A. PARKER,**  
*The Trentonian*

The veteran Trentonian reporter/columnist routinely breaks Trenton politics-centric political stories.



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**MARC KOVAR**  
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**44**

**MICHAEL SYMONS,**  
*NJ 101.5*

The Statehouse veteran cut his teeth at Gannett prior to moving over to 101.5 FM as a can't miss play caller.



**45**

**DAVID LEVINSKY,**  
*Burlington County Times*

The Burlington County Times reporter is the go-to media source for politicos in BurlCo.



**46**

**MARY ALICE WILLIAMS,**  
*NJTV*

Consummate pro Williams serves as the nightly news anchor at NJTV.



**47**

**BOB HENNELLY**

The veteran reporter, a Paterson native, comes equipped with that pepper-immune nose for investigative news they can't teach in journalism school. One of the best, he now freelances for – among others – InsiderNJ, where we are thrilled to have him.





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**48**

**MATT ROONEY,**  
*Save Jersey*

The founding editor of Save Jersey has carved out a space for himself as the state's go-to GOP commentator and opinion-crafter.



**49**

**ART GALLAGHER,**  
*More Monmouth Musings*

Only editor Gallagher has persevered to shape his longstanding Republican blog, More Monmouth Musings, into must read material for anyone interested in the local dynamics of shoreline politics.



**50**

**LARRY MENDTE**

The sharp host of Jersey Matters.



**51**

**ALAN STEINBERG**

A veteran of the Bush Administration, the InsiderNJ columnist now offers center-right perspectives, and routinely appears on TV as a political prognosticator.

