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CONGRATULATES ROGER BODMAN
ON HIS SIXTH CONSECUTIVE POWER LIST SELECTION
Welcome to the PolitickerNJ 2015 Power List, where once again we soothe the fragile egos, lost souls and high school tough guy acts run amok masquerading as grounded, psychologically balanced leaders.

Each year as we compose this list we consider those personalities whose work puts them at the vanguard of power in this much maligned and misunderstood state, and what emerges is a narrative of the shifting centers of power.

Let’s start with a few important observations.

Gov. Chris Christie’s quixotic 2016 presidential campaign has diminished his power in his home state. As a consequence, we don’t see on this list as many Christie kitchen cabinet types as we have in years past. Many of the operatives around the governor have made their mark and moved on as New Jersey careens toward the 2017 gubernatorial contest. Having said that, it’s still New Jersey, home on paper to the strongest governor in the country; and it’s still Christie, who as much as his opponents want to believe he’ll be a toothless tiger when he returns to New Jersey, knows how to wield power as a weapon better than nearly all of his home state rivals.

So you’ll still see handfuls of Christie loyalists, albeit dropped on this year’s power list.

The developing 2016 presidential race re-engages several key power players, including Democratic State Party Chairman John Currie; and the emerging 2017 contest puts those central Democratic Party figures in Essex and Bergen counties on stronger footing.

Readers will note the zoom up on the list of Phil Murphy, the former U.S. Ambassador to Germany and a Goldman Sachs boss who wants to be governor. Murphy this year defined himself as a retail politician to be reckoned with while simultaneously using his millions to get his face up on television – even during Monday Night Football. By comparison, the other candidates appear to be middle class “on a good day.”

But Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop remains the frontrunner in the view of most Democratic Party insiders by virtue of his regional position as a strong northern mayor with good access to those party allies who can give him the line in critical counties. And don’t forget Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3), another 2017 gubernatorial hopeful for the Democrats who this year demonstrated a flexing of power when he overrode the governor’s veto on a much-debated gun bill.

Finally, a word about 2015’s campaigns and elections as a power measurement.

The first time in 16 years that the assembly topped the ticket in a general election, Nov. 3rd gave us little comparative fodder in the way of reducing or augmenting anyone’s power. But the election did notably prove that South Jersey Democrats remain strong, the Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman Lou Stellato is here to stay, and the Republicans have to regroup if they want to compete convincingly statewide in the post Christie era.

Max Pizarro
Editor, PolitickerNJ

Editor’s Note
Everyday, the healthcare workers of 1199SEIU care for our seniors and advocate for quality care, compassionate staffing levels, and good jobs in New Jersey’s nursing homes.

Milly Silva
Executive Vice President

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1. Michael Aron  
*Chief Political Correspondent, NJTV News*

The Statehouse Press Corps brings to mind the image of two dozen cats in various postures of agony as they dig in their nails to a peaked roof while sliding in vain to certain doom. Amid such unrest, the one constant is the dean of the New Jersey Press Corps, Aron, who stays — through cancer, bypass surgery and anything else thrown at him — at the apex of his trade: the face of New Jersey public television for over three decades. The most institutionally knowledgeable political reporter in the state, Aron stays great because he works hard at his craft every day. He’s the guy at the Statehouse most likely to get down on all fours to get the best camera angle on a breaking story. Part of his effectiveness stems from his innate sense of fairness. Aron has the ability to build sources on all sides of an issue and maintain emotional distance from his subjects. He’s the best we’ve got.

2. Paul Fishman  
*U.S. Attorney for New Jersey*

As long as New Jersey’s top lawman remains in quiet, fact-gathering mode around the circumstances of Bridgegate and the United Airlines scandal he will continue to keep all of New Jersey’s political classes in a state of unknowing, expectation, and/or jittery agitation.

3. George Norcross  
*South Jersey Democratic Leader/CEO Cooper Hospital*

The party pit boss maintains the single largest unified front of legislators in the State of New Jersey, which means that Democrats and Republicans have to go through him and his empire to get anything accomplished. As the 2017 gubernatorial contest develops next year, Norcross will advance the interests of his old pal, Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3).
Salutes PolitickerNJ’s POWER 100 LIST

CONGRATULATIONS TO PPAG TEAM MEMBERS ON THE POWER LIST

DALE FLORIO  BILL PASCRELL III  AL GABURO  KEVIN HAGAN
4. Leroy Jones  
**Essex County Democratic Party Chairman**

Consider this: If Sweeney has South Jersey on lockdown, Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop – arguably - has Hudson, Bergen and Passaic in his corner, and Union and Middlesex counties are jump ball territory in the 2017 gubernatorial sweepstakes, the mighty Essex will essentially hand the governorship – or at least the Democratic nomination - to whomever it awards the line. That puts the elegant and mysterious Jones – who doubles as a principal at government affairs firm 1868, at the center of power-play decision-making in the state of New Jersey.

5. Lou Stellato  
**Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman**

When Stellato assisted James Tedesco into the county executive’s chair in 2014 and protected his Democratic majority in 2015, he put on full display power amassed in his home county as a consequence of years of political building. The former mayor of Lyndhurst who once took a college course in politics from the late Hubert Humphrey, Stellato employs relentless old school tactics. He’s a little like the Bill Pascrell of county party-building. In a world of BlackBerry fixation and email and text message contact, the chairman insists on eyeball to eyeball hand-shaking. Any Democrat who wants to be governor will have to go through Stellato.

6. John Currie  
**Democratic State Party Chairman**

Currie heads into his reelection bid next year looking strong. As chairman of the Passaic County Democratic Committee in addition to his statewide duties, his participation in the Northern Quad County Alliance could pit him against South Jersey. But the classy Currie has engendered goodwill statewide, reinforced in October by a very successful fall gala that netted the party organization $200,000.
Congratulations to Angelo J. Genova, Chairman for making the list At the intersection of law, government and business.

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Congratulations to Angelo J. Genova, Chairman for making the list

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7. **Michael Kempner**  
*Founder, President and CEO, MWWPR*

Leader of the biggest public relations firm in the state of New Jersey and veteran leader of “The Group,” which backed Hillary Clinton in 2008, Kempner is once again serving as the fundraising point person for 2016 presidential candidate Clinton, her Garden State go-to guy.

---

8. **Bill Palatucci**  
*Special Counsel to Gibbons, PC and Chris Christie Confidant*

As Christie’s campaign for president sputtered under the weights of bombastic outsider Donald Trump, an establishment-grounded Jeb Bush, and his own unwelcome Bridgegate narrative, the Republican governor’s universe of influence appeared to shrink drastically. But Christie is still the elected governor of New Jersey, home to the most powerful governorship in the country, and Palatucci is his trusted ally. When Christie returns fulltime to Trenton, he will count on his longtime trusted adviser for help in designing the endgame of his time in elected office.
10. Jennifer Borg  
*Vice President and General Counsel, North Jersey Media Group*

As much of what classically constituted the media in New Jersey fell apart over the course of the last ten years, the Bergen Record has maintained a level of quality and readability – and consequently political influence - in addition to being the go-to source for news about Bridgegate. From a politics coverage standpoint, the Pulitzer Prize-winning work of reporter Shawn Boburg and incisive columns of veteran Charlie Stile stand with the best work in the state.

9. Bill Mullen  
*President of the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council*

The veteran labor leader holds together 15 trades organizations defined by intra-labor rivalry. Vis-a-vis the top three, Mullen’s a little like the warlord in Akira Kurosawa’s classic movie *Ran* who must harness the ambitions and cross purposes of three strong sons, in Mullen’s case the Laborers, Carpenters and Operating Engineers.

11. Mo Butler  
*Chief-of-Staff, U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ)*

Butler built government ties for years at the local level in Newark when he was then-Mayor Booker’s very hands-on chief of staff. Making the transition statewide, he capitalized on those ties and extended them to become a highly regarded political player.
PolitickerNJ.com

POWER LIST 2015

12. George Gilmore
Ocean County Republican Chairman
The GOP establishment will line up behind a single 2017 gubernatorial candidate and whether that person is Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21) or State Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21), Gilmore – who controls the largest number of Republican votes in the party’s biggest county – will be in the command position.

13. Mike DuHaime
Partner, Mercury
Few expect 2016 to work out for Christie, but who else among the top political strategists in New Jersey can lay claim to having run two national-sized campaigns, while also maintaining strong statewide ties?

Senator Cory Booker congratulates Mo Butler and all those recognized on the PolitickerNJ 2015 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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U.S. Senator for New Jersey & New Millennium PAC

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14. Ray Pocino

Vice President and Eastern Regional Manager, LIUNA (Laborers International Union of North America)

Head of a 550,000-strong outfit, Pocino and the Laborers will play a significant role in any campaign, particularly statewide. Remember, Christie used a set-piece of LIUNA’s endorsement to smother Barbara Buono’s challenge early in 2013.

15. Dale Florio

CEO, Princeton Public Affairs

The savvy former chairman of the Somerset County Republican Committee, Florio commands one of the biggest and best connected public affairs firms in the state of New Jersey.

16. Roger Bodman

Lobbyist, Public Strategies Impact

The veteran Republican with close ties to Christie heads up one of the most potent lobbying firms in the state, and has significant connective political tissue with the Republican Governor’s Association (RGA).
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17. **Bill Castner**  
*Chair, Government Affairs, Gibbons PC*

Powerhouse law firm Gibbons entrusts Castner to head its government affairs department, where the veteran attorney oversees all areas of the practice, including client relations, and staffing. Close to Norcross, Castner is one of the most lethal authorities on government and politics in the state.

18. **Jeff Chiesa**  
*Principal, Chiesa Shahinian and Giantomasi*

The former Attorney General and former acting U.S. Senator gave automatic credibility to a law firm badly chewed up by Bridgegate and the after effects of a damaged David Samson. It doesn’t hurt Chiesa – one of the closest people in public life to Christie – that his partner is the veteran Frank Giantomasi, formerly the personal counsel for Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo.

19. **Dan Robles**  
*Body Man, Governor Chris Christie*

Over many years of loyal service, Robles went from the shadowy figure who carries the governor’s coat to a guy who in many ways controls the governor. Trusted? One Trenton insider likened Robles’ ubiquitous presence to the security guard who marries the high profile model. “He is,” the source said, “everywhere.”

20. **Brigid Harrison**  
*Political Scientist, Montclair University*

There’s no one in academia closer to the politics scene than Harrison, the ultimate example of someone who can write books on the intricacies of the history of government – as Harrison has – then turn around and comment in real time on what’s happening at the State Capitol. A valuable New Jersey resource.
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21. John Degnan  
Chairman, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
A former state attorney general, Degnan began his job as the replacement for Bridgegate-embroiled David Samson with considerable Trenton support and goodwill.

22. Mary Pat Christie  
First Lady of New Jersey  
As the first family’s chief breadwinner who has also built considerable goodwill in the state as a classy public figure, Christie’s spouse makes a fine first lady for a new generation of New Jerseyans. She’s a key resource and decision maker in the lead-up to her husband’s presidential run.

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23. John Hoffman  
*Acting Attorney General for the State of New Jersey*

The successor to Jeff Chiesa, Hoffman has maintained a busy work rate in his role as the state's top lawyer. He controversially occupied the center of a debate this year when he ruled on a settlement for Exxon/Mobil that critics like veteran state Senator Ray Lesniak (D-20) criticized as too easy on the oil giant.

24. John Ballantyne  
*Assistant Executive Secretary Treasurer for the Carpenters*

With the Carpenters' promotion to the national level of Mike Capelli, veteran union leader Ballantyne took over this year as the leader of New Jersey's politically well-heeled labor organization. Ballantyne told PolitickerNJ that the Carpenters under his leadership will continue to be very politically engaged.

25. Heather Haddon  
*Reporter, Wall Street Journal*

The veteran Haddon has built her political reporting career in New Jersey around getting the inside story on Christieworld.

26. Tommy Bertoli  
*Democratic Party Operative*

The ultimate street operator built the grassroots political machinery that elevated Steven Fulop to mayor of Jersey City, and continues to develop those political connections that will enable the young urban mayor to undertake a statewide campaign for governor in 2017.
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27. Mark Albiez  
Chief of Staff to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop  
Schooled in Union City by Brian P. Stack, young lion Albiez is a master of Hudson County mechanical politics and the Jersey City mayor’s trusted inner circle confidant and director of operations.

28. Joe DeCotiis / Mike DeCotiis  
Attorneys, DeCotiis, FitzPatrick and Cole, LLP  
The powerhouse Teaneck-based law firm’s specialties include government and regulatory affairs. They’re close to Jersey City Mayor Fulop.

29. The Grahams  
Democratic Party Fundraisers  
The father (John) and sons (Ryan and Michael) team have strong political ties to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop and around the state, including tentacles into Republican Morris County. The elder Graham is arguably the closest person in the state to Hillary Clinton.
30. Phil Murphy  
**Former U.S. Ambassador to Germany**  
Laying the groundwork for a 2017 gubernatorial run, Democrat Murphy has spent the last year aggressively but amiably inserting himself into vital county committee political conversations statewide. Regardless of whether or not he becomes the nominee, Murphy through his combination of donations and effervescent on-the-ground presence has made himself a legitimate party player.

31. Mark Magyar  
**Policy and Communications Director, Office of Steve Sweeney**  
The wonkish Magyar – a former award-winning Asbury Park Press reporter - joined Sweeney’s staff in 2014 and immediately began putting a finer policy point on the work of the senate president.
32. Maggie Moran
Managing Partner of Kivvit
One of the state’s master political craftspeople, Moran will play a key role in New Jersey for Hillary Clinton in 2016. She’s also wired into Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) and other Trenton-based issues, where she continues to wield influence.

33. Phil Alagia
Chief-of-Staff to Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo
Going forward, the Machiavellian, intellectually curious Alagia will reassert himself as a significant force in the Democratic Party, irritatingly ironic to those still steamed by DiVincenzo’s endorsement 2013 of Republican Christie but a natural consequence of the powerful executive’s position within the state’s most Democratic county.

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34. Sean Kennedy
President and Founder, New Jerseyans for a Better Tomorrow
The former senior adviser to Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) now runs the 527 super PAC for Sweeney, a likely 2017 candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor.

35. Steve DeMicco / Brad Lawrence
Political Consultants, Message and Media
Working hard on the ads front and attempting to boost their client’s name ID and party viability, the veteran Democratic operatives back Murphy as the former U.S. Ambassador to Germany revs up his gubernatorial operations ahead of 2017.
36. **Thomas Scrivo**  
*Chief Counsel to Governor Chris Christie*

An experienced trial lawyer and trusted former advisor to clients in the public and private sectors, Scrivo, who joined Christie’s staff this year, has routinely been recognized as one of New Jersey’s top 100 lawyers with an agile legal mind. Respected.

37. **Hetty Rosenstein**  
*State Director, Communications Workers of America*

As one of the state’s most politically active and astute labor leaders, Rosenstein will play a critical role in the developing 2017 contest among Democrats to succeed Christie.
38. Trish Mueller
Political Director, Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters and Partner, Cammarano, Layton & Bombardieri Partners LLC

The 2008 general election state director for Barack Obama, Mueller serves as the right hand of Ballantyne. The politically savvy Mueller helps organize 30,000 carpenters across New Jersey and New York.

39. Steve Adubato
Host, NJ Capitol Report, NJTV

The coolly self-possessed Adubato, locally grounded in his home county of Essex - is the closest thing the state has to a TV personality who dives deeply not just into issues but - even more importantly – ideas.

40. Wendell Steinhauer
President of the New Jersey Education Association

The head of New Jersey’s biggest and most powerful union for public school employees (over 200,000 members), Steinhauer played a big role in support of Assembly Democrats running in 2015.
Congratulates
Chairman John Currie
Vice-Chair Lizette Delgado Polanco
Political Director Jennifer Holdsworth

and Congratulations to all of our history making Democratic winners this year

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Assemblyman Joseph Daniels
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Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, Jr.
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Assemblyman John Wisniewski

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Assemblywoman Joseph Lagana

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Camden County Freeholders: Jeffrey L. NASH, Susan SHIN ANGULO, William F. MOEN, JR, Jonathan L. YOUNG, SR
Surrogate Michelle GENTEK-MAYER Sherriff Gilbert L. "Whip" WILSON
Cumberland County Freeholder: Joseph Derella and James F. Quinn
Essex County Sherriff Armando Fontoura Clerk Christopher Durkin
Gloucester County Freeholders: Robert Damminger, Joe Chila, Jim Jefferson Sherriff Carmel Morina
Hudson County Executive Thomas DeGise
Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes Clerk Paula Sollami Covello Freeholders Samuel Frisby, Ann Cannon, Pasquale "Pat" Colavita
Middlesex County Freeholders: Ronald Rios and H. James Polos Clerk Elaine Flynn
Passaic County Freeholders: Cassandra Lazzara, Hector Lora, John Bartlett
Salem County Surrogate Nicki A. Burke
Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi Freeholders Alexander Mirabella, Bruce H. Bergen, Mohamed S. Jalloh

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41. Pat Colligan  
**President of the New Jersey Police Benevolent Association**

Only the gutsy Colligan dared buttonhole President Barack Obama when the prez landed in Camden and told him he was being misled to believe “PR spin” that the Camden County Metro Police Department is a success in battling violent crime that besets the waterfront south state city.

42. Analilia Mejia  
**Director, New Jersey Working Families**

Whether in the streets or on TV, the ubiquitous advocate continues to make the case that Christie protects the wealthy with corporate tax loop holes at the expense of fully funding the public pension plan.

43. Kevin Drennan  
**Chief-of-Staff to Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3)**

The veteran Trenton insider – a former wrestler always prepared to grapple in the backrooms- stands at the legislative center of every major policy decision in the New Jersey Statehouse.

44. Tom Bracken  
**President and CEO of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce**

If the business of New Jersey is politics, Bracken at least musters sufficient gravitas to make a counter-argument. The chamber executive is also one of the leading voices on transportation funding and chairs Forward NJ.
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45. Eric Shuffler
Lobbyist, River Crossing Strategy Group
With former partner Jamie Fox expected to rejoin the team after a news headline-scarred stint as the commissioner of the Department of Transportation, look for River Crossing to reassert its Trenton power share.

46. Greg Laleve
Business Manager, Operating Engineers Local 825
The comer, Lavellee represents 6,500 heavy equipment operators in New Jersey and the lower counties of New York, and that’s what his endorsement of candidates brought to elections last year: heavy equipment. He aggressively cut checks, playing on both sides and landing on the winning team of Democrat James Tedesco in the Bergen County Executive’s contest and with Republican U.S. Rep. Tom MacArthur in CD3. Lalevee’s increased power derives in part from the collision between Laborers and Carpenters. Their rivalry gives the opportunistic operating engineers a chance to tie break.
47. **Kevin Hagan**  
*Princeton Public Affairs Group*

Consummate Trenton insider Hagan – a rising star at the firm - has statewide political ties and an allegiance to Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-3) in the lead up to 2017.

48. **Donald Scarinci**  
*Attorney, Scarinci Hollenbeck*

The veteran operator has the law contract in West New York, remains close to childhood chum U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), and now has close ties to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, whom he’s already endorsed to succeed Christie in the governor’s office.

49. **Gail Gordon**  
*GOP fundraiser*

The Republican wife of state senator Bob Gordon (D-38) is a top flight fundraising ally of Governor Christie and the NJGOP.
50. Adam Silverstein
Bergen County-based Democratic Party Operative
Master message-maker Silverstein has close ties to Bergen County Democratic Committee Chairman Stellato and Bergen Freeholders Tracy Zur and Steve Tanelli.

51. Middy Baraka
Chief-of-Staff, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka
Despite real financial challenges and a city council resistant to many of his initiatives, Mayor Baraka – with his brother never far from nibbling at his ear - used the bully pulpit well this year to bring attention to those issues of concern to the Barakas.
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- Product Liability
- Real Estate & Land Use
- Tax, Trusts & Estates

For more information about our firm, visit www.archerlaw.com.

Congratulations to all of the individuals named to PolitickerNJ’s Power List

52. Glenn Paulsen
Chair, Regulatory and Governmental Affairs Department, Capehart and Scatchard
The Trenton insider has deep political resources as the former chairman of the Burlington County Republican Committee.

53. Christine Sloan
Reporter, CBS News
The veteran sharp-elbowed Sloan has spent more time than any other TV news reporter in New Jersey’s northern cities, aggressively ferreting out political news nuggets.
54. Bill Layton

Burlington County Republican Chairman, and Partner in the government relations firm Cammarano Layton and Bombardieri

As chairman of the BurlCo GOP, Layton had one of the biggest wins of his career this year as his candidates cleared the decks of two incumbent Democratic freeholders, removing the danger of having the opposition party take over the freeholder board in a 2016 presidential election year.

55. Adam Kaufman / Trish Zita

Principals, Kaufman Zita

Schooled by Assembly Speaker Joe Doria, Kaufman and Zita have carved out one of the most successful lobbying firms in the state.

56. Charles Wowkanech

NJ President, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

The veteran labor movement leader wields control over a million-member strong organization, the statewide collecting point for outfits as diverse as the building trades and public sector union locals.
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Congratulations the 2015 Power List Honorees

57. Larry Weitzner
CEO, Jamestown Associates

If you want to run a hard-hitting Republican campaign in New Jersey – or elsewhere – the presence of Jamestown in your corner lends your candidacy instant authenticity.

58. Idida Rodriguez
Principal with 1868 Public Affairs

The strategically powerful Rodriguez from Passaic County is a business partner of Leroy Jones and close political confidant of Paterson Mayor Jose “Joey” Torres.
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59. Bill Pascrell III  
Lobbyist, Princeton Public Affairs  
A casinos and gaming expert, Pascrell will play a big role in the year ahead as New Jersey shapes a ballot question concerning whether voters want a North Jersey-based casino.

60. Angelo Genova  
Senior Partner, Co-Founder and Chairman, Genova Burns  
Many insiders regard Genova as the best campaigns and elections lawyer in the state of New Jersey.

61. Mike Muller  
Executive Director, Democratic Assembly Campaign Committee  
The Michelangelo of New Jersey media consultation from Totten Communications remains the Democrats’ most lethal campaign time operative, turning supposed non-events like this year’s LD38 contest into opposition research paydirt.

62. James Gee  
Chief-of-Staff, U.S. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12)  
As a veteran of Trenton Statehouse politics with deep ties to the City of Trenton, Gee last year made the transition as a member of Watson Coleman’s tight inner circle to the federal level and national politics.
Since 1903, the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) has represented the interests of construction craft laborers both inside and outside the workplace. To us, political engagement means making use of our collective voice in the democratic process. We advocate for the rights of our members as well as workers everywhere. Our industry partners are very important to us which is why we work collaboratively with our employers and other industry professionals on issues of mutual concern.

Each day close to 25,000 safe, skilled, and productive workers head to their place of employment with a LIUNA membership card in their pocket. More than a common card, our members are bound together by the shared principles of justice, honor, and strength. We live those values everyday.
63. Milly Silva
Executive Vice President SEIU Local 1199
The 2013 Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor, Silva is on SEIU’s frontline effort to organize those healthcare workers who labor in for-profit care centers.

64. Chris Russell
Republican Political Consultant
Schooled in Burlington County, honed over the years in Congressional District 3, the impeccable Russell has expanded his reach statewide as the Republicans’ most reliable election-time strategist.

65. Robert Sommer
Democratic Consultant
The press savvy veteran political operative has close ties to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop and deep resources in the Democratic Party.
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66. Ed Deutsch
Attorney, McElroy Deutsch Mulvaney and Carpenter
In command of one of the largest law firms in the state, the Morris County lawyer and chairman of the Board of Directors of Somerset Hills Bank, Deutsch chaired Christie’s Department of Banking and Insurance transition subcommittee.

67. Steve Ayscue
South Jersey Democratic Party Operative
Close to Norcross and armed with an intricate understanding of South Jersey and Trenton politics, Ayscue is today one of the most veteran players of the New Jersey politics game.

68. Bill Maer
Lobbyist, Public Strategies Impact
Schooled in the furnaces of U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, the veteran player has good Democratic Party contacts, especially in Essex, Bergen and Passaic counties.

69. Ann Twomey
Founder and President, Health Professionals Allied Employees
The pioneering head of New Jersey’s organized nurses union. This year the legendary labor leader bulked up her political street cred – full disclosure – by signing on to run a regular column on PolitickerNJ.
Best Wishes!

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70. Marcia Marley
President of BlueWaveNJ and Succeed2gether

The leader of two non-profit organizations based in Montclair, Marley raises money, has a huge membership in Bluewave to deploy for field, is a DNC member and has every gubernatorial candidate chirping in her ear.

71. Chris Paladino
President of New Brunswick Development Corp

He has played a major role in transforming the Middlesex County city in the last 15 years, and now he’s lending some expertise to help Atlantic City given his experience at rough transitions.
72. Assad Akhter
Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell
Akhter’s political octopus arms enable him to be constantly familiar with federal issues while scouring the local landscape. An expert on the always elusive Paterson, his boss’ hometown.

73. Mark Sheridan
Attorney, Patton Boggs
The longtime GOP player – dangerous for the opposition any courtroom - knows which levers to pull in a pinch to make things happen.

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74. Nick Menas  
Executive Vice President, Amaya Gaming  
The Republican has close ties to Christie, powerful Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson, Christie confidant Sen. Joe Kyrillos, and the BurlCo GOP, and has emerged as a strong party fundraiser from South Jersey.

75. Tai Cooper  
Policy Director for Newark Mayor Ras Baraka  
Schooled in the office of the late U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg, the veteran operative with deep contacts at all levels of government provides a substantive focal point for the mayor’s City Hall agenda.

76. Jeannine LaRue  
Government Affairs Specialist, Kaufmann Zita  
The well connected and respected LaRue of Mercer County had back-to-back wins last year in the CD12 Democratic Primary (Bonnie Watson Coleman) and the Trenton Mayor’s Race (Eric Jackson). She is a close confidant of both Mercer-based players.

77. Jeff Tittel  
Director, Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter  
All right, so he can be a little loquacious sometimes as he roams the hallways of the Statehouse. Bottom line Tittel knows New Jersey environmental issues better than anyone, and is more aggressive and detail-oriented in his advocacy. Annoying to anyone trying to rush through a committee hearing as he occupies a chair to testify, Tittel has made a mark in Trenton as a true public servant.
The partners and staff of 1868 Public Affairs possess the diverse backgrounds and skills reflective of the complex government and business environment in which they work.

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LeRoy Jones, Jr. / George Gilmore, Esq. / Idida Rodriguez / Rich Ambrosino / Patrick Torpey
78. Keith Furlong  
*Passaic-based Democratic Party Operative*

The chief political confidant of Chairman Currie is an old school operative who gets his hands dirty when he works campaigns, but is also capable of urbanity at party cocktail functions.

79. Lizette Delgado-Polanco  
*Vice Chair of the Democratic State Committee*

Currie’s egalitarian leadership style boosts people around him, including the busy Delgado-Polanco.

80. Michael Murphy / Guy Gregg  
*Impact New Jersey*

A former gubernatorial candidate, Murphy is the son of a governor, brother of powerful Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes and one of the most insightful people in Trenton about New Jersey politics. Gregg is a Marine Corps veteran and former Republican Conference Leader from the 24th District.

81. Joey Muniz  
*Hudson County Political Operative*

A dedicated creature of Sacco World, the North Bergenite has consolidated organizational power as the trusted adviser of Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto (D-32), Secaucus.
82. Steven Goldstein
Founder of Garden State Equality
The ebullient activist is the only person on this list who was played by Steve Carell in a Hollywood movie about the New Jersey marriage equality movement called Freeheld.

83. Harry Hurley
Radio Talk Show Host, Hurley in the Morning
In addition to providing a robust forum for politics in South Jersey, Hurley routinely breaks news.

Congratulations to
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& the 2015 Power List on another successful year!

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.,
Essex County Executive

County of Essex
New Jersey

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for Essex County Executive, Inc.
84. Adam Geller
Pollster, National Research
Anchored at the Jersey Shore, the campaign-seasoned Geller has deep connections to Christieworld and to veteran state Senator Joe Kyrillos (R-13).

85. Mike Soliman
Managing Director, Mercury
A senior adviser to Menendez whose presence at North Jersey Democratic events means Menendez is in the room, Soliman also has close advisory ties to Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop.
86. Sean Darcy/Laura Matos

Founder and Principal of Round World Consulting/Principal at Kivvit NJ

Close to Democratic State Party Chairman John Currie and U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell going back to when he worked for Pascrell’s successful 2012 Democratic Primary campaign, Darcy has emerged on the New Jersey scene as a top political consultant. His partner in crime, Matos, served on staff with three New Jersey Governors in positions ranging from Deputy Director of Scheduling to Director of Operations before partnering with Moran.

87. David Cruz

Reporter, NJTV

Big, and with an aggressive questioning style, only Cruz among Statehouse reporters has the physical character to convincingly engage in a sumo wrestling match with Governor Chris Christie if it ever got to that point.

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88. Larry Hamm  
Organizer, People’s Organization for Progress  
The consummate unreconstructed rebel, Newark native Hamm has been on bullhorn duty going back to his days as an undergraduate at Princeton University. After surviving an auto wreck, he hit his stride this year with numerous well-attended protest events, including an anti-police brutality rally in July.

89. Rahaman Muhammad  
Political Confidant of Newark Mayor Baraka  
The former SEIU leader and political activist now occupies Baraka’s inner circle as one of the most powerful City Hall players in Newark politics.

90. Samantha Maltzman  
Democratic Party Fundraiser  
With ties to Hillary Clinton and Cory Booker, the veteran player organizes the rooms for all the big money events.

91. Kevin Brown/Julie Diaz  
SEIU 32BJ  
32BJ played hard in Newark to help propel Ras Baraka to victory in the 2014 mayor’s race. With the veteran Diaz on board as state political director, SEIU is a key organizer of property service and airport workers.
92. Bill Caruso  
*Lobbyist, Archer Greiner*  
The former right arm of Speaker Sheila Oliver and former confidence man of U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews, Caruso now has viable political ties to both North and South Jersey as the ultimate insider government relations operative.

93. Elnardo Webster  
*Attorney, Inglesino, Webster, Wyciskala and Taylor*  
The longtime confidant of U.S. Senator Cory Booker continues to wield considerable influence with the possible 2016 candidate for vice president.
94. Vin Gopal  
Chairman, Monmouth County Democratic Committee Chairman  
A rising star in his party, Gopal has little raw chairman’s power in his home county, where Republicans own the freeholder board. But the charismatic chair has worked as hard as anyone in the state developing alliances statewide and has deep roots in the Indian American community, one of the largest growing demographics in the state.

95. Junius Williams  
Director, Abbott Institute at Rutgers University Newark  
One of the most eclectically accomplished New Jerseyans on the contemporary streetscape, the attorney, author (his “Unfinished Agenda Urban Politics in the Era of Black Power” is a must-read), and former president of the NBA took charge this year of the 350th anniversary of the city of Newark.
96. Jen Holdsworth  
Democratic State Political Director  
A protégé of former Bergen County Freeholder Bernadette McPherson, the classy Holdsworth ran the coordinated campaign for Democrats, which helped Booker garner a 14-point Election Day victory last year. She’ll play a more important role than ever in 2016 as presidential politics rev up in the Garden State and Holdsworth serves as a key Currie point person for the Clinton Campaign.

97. Michellene Davis  
Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Barnabas Health  
The trusted advisor to Barnabas Health Head Barry Ostrowsky, Davis is a talented consensus builder and vigorous behind-the-scenes Democratic Party fundraiser who will most certainly be at the top of the list for a vital future cabinet post.

Senator Cory Booker congratulates Mo Butler and all those recognized on the PolitickerNJ 2015 Power List!

“For Democracy is never a thing done. Democracy is always something that a nation must be doing.”
- Archibald MacLeish
98. Al Gaburo
Chairman Somerset County Republican Committee; Lobbyist, Princeton Public Affairs

Following the retirement from the chairmanship of Dale Florio, Gaburo stepped convincingly into the role of county leader in Somerset, vital GOP stomping grounds. Now and for the foreseeable future, Gaburo will be a player in all statewide Republican decisions.

99. Kenneth Darryl Ray Clayton
Reverend Pastor, St. Luke’s Baptist Church

Working at ground zero of the 4th Ward in his home city of Paterson, Clayton is an avid and influential political force. Close to Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter (D-35), who was married at St. Luke’s.

100. Arlene Quinones Perez
Attorney, DeCotiis, FitzPatrick and Cole

The chair of the Hunterdon County Democratic Committee has clout as the city attorney in Perth Amboy, and as a veteran player statewide, especially in North Jersey, where she is close to Jersey City Mayor Fulop and Assemblyman Raj Mukherji (D-33).

101. Rhoda Chodosh
Republican Diehard

The inveterate Monmouth County GOP socialite has her camera at the ready for every party function, routinely accomplishing in hundreds of grip and grin shots what PolitickerNJ cannot. Make politicians actually look good.
“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”

-Winston Churchill

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Bruce V. Jon Bon

It’s a question worthy of King Solomon, or you’d have thought so to see the look of agony pass over the furrowed features of Jon Corzine in 2009 when NJN moderator Jim Hooker gave the nod for a question about whether the incumbent governor preferred Bruce Springsteen or Jon Bon Jovi.

Half the studio audience cringed in darkness while the other half stifled or barely stifled guffaws, both Democrats and Republicans alert to Corzine’s deep ties and personal friendship with Bon Jovi while aware of Springsteen’s domination. Having to answer hurt Corzine, but The Boss, after all, had written Born to Run and numerous other undeniable rock and roll anthems, Born in the USA among them, and when it came down to it — sold more records than Jon Bon, so the Democratic governor — mortified — politically announced his preference for Springsteen.

Then the moderator turned to Christie, who at the podium grinned like a homerun slugger watching the slow mo approach of an underhanded ball that gets away from the pitcher.

“Bruce,” Christie gloated, his (even then) long documented fever for Springsteen power chords bubbling over in uncontainable mirth, without any fear of causing discomfort to Bon Jovi, a Democratic Party fundraising animal while corralling the naturally bigger Springsteen constituency. The point in favor of the GOP challenger was unmistakable.

But now, six long years later, the rabid rock and roll adolescent inside the man has been forced to weather the cutting of the umbilical cord, detaching himself finally from the mystique of his hero while simultaneously acknowledging the good guy factor with Jon Bon.

This was hard for Christie, who amid the onslaught of Bridgegate headlines had to endure a bandana and jeans iconic Springsteen going on Jimmy Fallon to double down in a brutal theater piece on at least one stinging op-ed he had written condemning Christie’s public pen-ben over hauls. The governor insisted he and the telecaster outlaw from Rumson were “still friends.” But later, the guv found himself uncomfortably acknowledging that the rocker for whom he had shrunk his enormous ego countless times into oversized stadiums and concert halls, reducing himself to just another faceless grooving fan in darkness, was, in fact, not a friend.

“Bruce, I know,” Christie told Fox News personality Sean Hannity. “Jon, I’m friends with, … [Springsteen] He’s not all that fond of me either. I mean, politically, I’m not his cup of tea.”

But Bon Jovi and Christie now get along famously, a friendship triggered by the governor’s cooperation in signing legislation to protect drug users from prosecution in cases of medical emergency.

“Today is a great day,” the rocker said in 2013 — a gubernatorial election year — when the governor signed the so-called Good Samaritan bill. “I hope the governor’s actions will cause other states to step up and follow in his footsteps.”

“His [Bon Jovi’s] presence today attracted a lot more people than mine, so I suspect we have gone a long way toward getting the word out today,” the governor gushed.

Once cocksure and eager to prop up rock and roll beast Bruce at the expense of a big-haired teeny-bopping liberal like Bon Jovi, Christie now found his proximity to New Jersey’s two most powerful and politically active rock stars rearranged.

What if someone asked him that 2009 debate question now? Might the master of “telling it like it is” wade into the nuances enumerated above, or simply confess to a longtime buried preference for unsung Weehawken native Pia Zardora?
Those who do not know the plans of competitors cannot prepare alliances.
Those who do not know the lay of the land cannot maneuver their forces.
Those who do not use local guides cannot take advantage of the ground.

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DeVito, Snooki and the Pig Crate Power Struggle

Ah, New Jersey. F. Scott Fitzgerald had New York, boats against the current and the green light; and we have New Jersey, the legacy of Peter Benchley, and red light cameras, or NJ and no red light cameras, courtesy of Assemblyman Declan O’Scanlan.

But I can’t leave you, Jersey. I love you and devote myself to you, even if you reward my loyalty with Danny DeVito threatening Chris Christie if the governor doesn’t veto pig crates; and a near boardwalk brawl between Christie and reality TV star Snooki.

Out of nowhere, Jersey Shore native DeVito, who played the Penguin in the original Batman movie series, tried to bear trap Christie with pig crates, while Snooki, punched out once on an episode of the intellectually stimulating Jersey Shore, endured a nose-to-nose moment with the governor that left her confessing fear of New Jersey’s chief executive. She, incidentally, sounds like a prime contender for the Republican Assembly caucus.

In any event, neither DeVito nor Snooki appeared to make much of an impact on the governor, who didn’t veto pig crates as he attempts to cuddle up to Iowa Republican Primary voters; and didn’t give a tax break to the producers of Snooki’s show, unconvinced of their efforts to enhance NJ’s seaside image. Both celebs would appear to require the counsel of someone with greater, more veteran political chops to help advance their respective agendas.

Where’s Uncle Floyd when you need him? That reminds us of the one oversight on this year’s Power List. It should include Floyd.

See you next year!
CONGRATULATIONS
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2015
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