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IN NEW JERSEY, if you’ve seen one campaign for governor, then you’ve seen one campaign for governor.

I have watched twelve governor’s races since I began following New Jersey politics. Some have been uninspiring blowouts that lacked drama. Others were more exhilarating, like the 1981 nail-biter that took 27 days before we knew the winner. There’s nothing better than a Jersey gubernatorial campaign, especially when the race is competitive, and the political environment is unpredictable. The one that we just watched between Phil Murphy and Jack Ciattarelli was among the best races of the last half-century. 2021 was the kind of election some people will be talking about 50 years from now.

The pandemic has had a profound influence on politics in New Jersey. As it did in 2020, COVID-19 played an undeniable outsized role in the recent campaigns for governor, the legislature, and for county and local office. As an issue, Covid changed the way some voters view politicians. More importantly, it changed who votes and with what intensity. That caused pollsters and pundits – me included – to be surprised when the people of New Jersey spoke on Election Day. It’s no longer as much about Richard Nixon Silent Majority as it is, at least in a state with one million more Democrats than Republicans, about an energized and loud minority that turned out to vote in 2021 with outsized intensity.

The defeat of Senate President Steve Sweeney, the retirement of Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, and changes to the Republican leadership in both houses of the legislature will realign politics in New Jersey, short and long term. New faces in leadership, like Nicholas Scutari, Teresa Ruiz, Steve Oroho and John DiMaio, will change the direction of the state.

So will unexpected newcomers like Ed Durr, whose victory over Sweeney was a national news story. New Jersey’s modern-day founding fathers debated the virtue of off-year state elections when they rewrote the State Constitution in 1947. Delegates from both parties came down on the side of electing the governor and the legislature on state issues, mostly unencumbered by what’s happening in Washington. That’s no longer the case. Races for governor and the legislature are now nationalized. We saw that in 2017 after Donald Trump took office, and again this year as many New Jersey voters reacted to the first year of Joe Biden’s presidency.

New Jersey voters, once fiercely independent, vote for a particular party with greater enthusiasm than ever before. Also no longer the case is a ten-year legislative map. As a result of Covid-related delays of the 2020 U.S. Census, the 2021 elections were fought on the 2011 map. The next map will go into effect in 2023. The new congressional map actually creates less competitive races, not more. There have never been more ways to vote than there are today. Vote-by-mail has taken off. For the first time, polling places were open for ten days before the election, including nights and weekends. It will take some time for voters to grow comfortable with that. Old-fashioned newspapers continue to be on the decline. Their stories and editorials lack the relevance of the old days. With increased frequency, candidates are able to take their message direct to the voters.

Direct-to-consumer politics likely saved Phil Murphy’s governorship. The Murphy Pool House Strategy put him on the map, warts and all. For a negligible amount of money, the governor’s team installed a virtual TV studio in the pool house of Murphy’s home that helped the governor speak directly to New Jerseyans through national television and radio appearances. His job approval ratings and support for his handling of the pandemic soared as a result, and that wasn’t something he was able to do through TV ads promoting his agenda. It also boosted the passion of those who disagreed with Murphy. That was part of Ciattarelli’s secret sauce. New Jerseyans were fortunate in 2021. While some people will disagree, I viewed Murphy and Ciattarelli as good and decent men who had simply had incredibly different views on how the state ought to be governed. That’s what campaigns are for. My job was to present their divergent opinions to the voters objectively and allow them to reach their own conclusions. My wish for 2022 is that more people in the media will take that position. The New Jersey Globe was launched in early 2018, weeks before Murphy took office, and we just finished our fourth campaign cycle. I’m proud of what our team has accomplished. Our readership continues to skyrocket. In 2021, we broke just about every major political news story. People look to the New Jersey Globe to know what’s happening in the state, and we take that responsibility seriously.

This year, the New Jersey Globe joined with the Rebovich Institute of New Jersey Politics at Rider University and Project Ready to sponsor a debate between the two candidates for lieutenant governor, Sheila Oliver and Diane Allen. This was one of the three mandatory debates in the governor’s race awarded by the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission. As a relatively new media organization, that was a big deal for us. Beating out other applicants, like Gannett, indicates a recognition that in 2021, people are getting their local news in an untraditional way. Debates are important and we were honored to host debates in competitive races for State Senate in the 37th district primary and in the 2nd and 3rd districts for the general election.

We are especially grateful for the chance to work closely with Micah Rasmussen, the Rebovich Institute’s director, on most of these debates, and to Rider University for their extended cooperation. The New Jersey Globe Power Hour on Talk Radio 77 WABC every Saturday gives us an opportunity to speak with A-list guests about what’s happening in New Jersey. Both Murphy and Ciattarelli made numerous appearances. So did the legislative leaders from both houses and both parties. Both U.S. Senators and 11 of 12 members of the New Jersey House delegation have appeared on the show. If you’re not around on Saturday, you can listen to the podcast version on Apple, Google, Spotify, or on the New Jersey Globe website.

2021 marked some changes for us. It was sad to see Nikita Biryukov depart in July after 39 months and over 5,000 stories under his byline. His successor, Joey Fox, who wrote part of this Year in Review, is an exceptional talent with an incredible ability to understand New Jersey politics. I think he could be the next Steve Kornacki. We continue to be blessed by the presence of Kevin Sanders, who makes sure that all our trains run on time, and by the insightful weekly columns by Kevin J. O’Toole.

On behalf of the New Jersey Globe Team, we hope that all of you will enjoy good health and happiness as we transition into 2022.

David Wildstein
Editor, New Jersey Globe
WHO HAD THE BEST gubernatorial campaign of 2021: the man who drastically overperformed expectations, or the man who actually won the damn thing?

Jack Ciattarelli began the year languishing in relative obscurity, fighting a seemingly impossible battle against a popular governor in a blue state. But even as polls, pundits, and a certain online news website repeatedly doubted his chances, the former assemblyman nearly pulled it off, overperforming Donald Trump by a whopping 14 points and falling just short of a massive upset.

Yet it’s Phil Murphy who will be sitting in the governor’s chair next year – with Democratic legislative majorities and a more cooperative Senate President to boot – while Ciattarelli will still be stuck holding town halls and meet-and-greets, trying to convince voters to pull the lever for him next time around. And so, the title of best gubernatorial campaign has to go to both. Ciattarelli and Murphy each defied the odds in different ways, and both can be proud of their performance – though only one of them will be doing so from elected office.

For Murphy, it was something of a wonder that he was seen as a heavy favorite at all. The early years of his governorship were defined by infighting with Democrats in the legislature, low name recognition statewide, and the prospect of a primary challenger come 2021.

What’s more, a curse loomed over Team Murphy’s head: No Democratic governor had won re-election since Brendan Byrne in 1977, a political lifetime ago. Especially daunting was the example of 2009, when a Goldman Sachs-executive-turned-governor lost to a North Jersey moderate in a Democratic midterm.

But Covid and 2020 changed the game. Murphy’s name recognition and approval ratings skyrocketed, and his relationship with legislative leaders improved.
so much that he was able to get progressive wish list items like a millionaire’s tax and stringent gun control through the legislature. He sailed through the primary, and general election polls showed him holding something between a modest and a dominant lead over Ciattarelli. Murphy’s hand was so strong, in fact, that it not only looked like he would buck the curse of the Democratic incumbent; it seemed nearly impossible that he wouldn’t break the curse.

And, ultimately, break it he did. Murphy’s aggressive campaign, paired with the many prominent surrogates his team brought to New Jersey, delivered him the most votes any candidate has received for governor since Gov. Jim Florio’s 24-point landslide in 1989. Murphy now gets to head into his second term with no re-election jitters or curses hanging over his head, and – in a strange twist of fate – with no Senate President Steve Sweeney to block his progressive goals.

Of course, that only tells one side of the story. Murphy won, but his three-point victory was far from the mandate he wanted. The Murphy camp might blame that disappointing total on a number of things outside their control – President Joe Biden’s low approval ratings, inflation, the unending misery of Covid – but one man is more responsible for the result than anyone else: Jack Ciattarelli.

At first glance, the Ciattarelli campaign didn’t seem to make much sense. Ciattarelli had a well-earned reputation as a moderate during his time in the legislature, and yet as a gubernatorial candidate he repeatedly made unambiguous gestures to the right wing, railing against Murphy’s Covid policies and engaging in culture war spats over immigration, gay rights, and “critical race theory.”

Even as he was making such overtures, however, Ciattarelli also didn’t leave his moderate history in the dust. At the second gubernatorial debate, he surprisingly announced that he thought Roe v. Wade should be codified in state law, and the overriding focus of his campaign was the kitchen-table issue of taxes.

Outside observers, perplexed by the two Ciattarelli’s, said that his more conservative stances would probably make him unelectable; the Murphy camp tried to spin it by asking if Ciattarelli was running for governor of Texas.

But Ciattarelli had the last laugh, turning an often double-digit polling deficit into a three-point loss that spooked Murphy and made pollsters recant their inaccurate projections. The needle that seemed impossible for Ciattarelli to thread – convincing moderates that he was one of them while simultaneously getting Trumpers to turn out in droves – was threaded near-perfectly.

That careful balance was how Ciattarelli managed to sweep South Jersey and win Democratic redoubts like Atlantic County while also dramatically improving on Donald Trump’s showing in suburban North Jersey, both of which helped Republicans gain a net seven seats in the legislature.

Also critical was Ciattarelli’s fundraising, which never quite matched Murphy’s but was nevertheless quite sturdy. Faced with a barrage of outside spending on Murphy’s behalf, Ciattarelli’s ability to advertise on the air and on billboards helped him stay competitive. And even if he didn’t actually win the election, Ciattarelli clearly won the messaging battle; in the days after the election, nobody was talking about how Murphy had won, but instead about how well Ciattarelli had done despite the cards stacked against him. By the time Ciattarelli conceded and Murphy’s second term came into view, the national media had moved on.

It’s perhaps a cop-out to declare that the victorious candidate and the candidate he beat should have to share the title of Best Campaign. Shouldn’t the winner get it? Or, given that the winner underperformed predictions, shouldn’t his opponent?

But campaigns aren’t just about one thing. They’re about results, and messaging, and strategies, and expectations, and everything else that leads up to one crucial day in November. After the most competitive and exciting statewide election New Jersey has seen since 2009, both Phil Murphy and Jack Ciattarelli should feel satisfied with the past and optimistic about the future.
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LeRoy Jones, Jr. / Al Harris / Idida Rodriguez / Dan Smith / Patrick Torpey
UPSET OF THE CENTURY

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME shockers in legislative races over the years, but never like what happened in New Jersey’s 3rd district, where the most powerful legislative leader in state history lost his seat to a truck driver who barely raised and spent any money.

Republican Edward Durr, an unabashedly conservative truck driver for the Raymour & Flanagan furniture store chain, was at his Swedesboro home on election night. He’ll be the first to say that he didn’t expect to go to sleep a giant slayer. But through the evening, he maintained a lead against the President of the New Jersey State Senate, Steve Sweeney.

Once the dust settled – Sweeney didn’t concede for eight days, although closest allies admitted immediately that he had lost – Durr had won by 2,199 votes. Sweeney won Gloucester County by 513 votes, but lost Salem by 2,663 and Cumberland by 49. Republicans also ousted two Democratic assemblymen and elected Beth Sawyer and Bethanne McCarthy-Patrick instead.

While Sweeney lost his district by three points, Gov. Phil Murphy lost it by 15. Sweeney losing his own seat because Murphy was disliked in the 3rd district is enormously ironic. He had beaten a 28-year incumbent in 2001 and when the New Jersey Education Association dropped $5 million in a bid to unseat him in 2017, he won what’s considered to be the most expensive state legislative race in U.S. history. But Sweeney didn’t think he had a problem this time around – nobody did – and he spent more time crisscrossing New Jersey plotting a run for governor in 2025 than he did talking to his own constituents. That proved to be a fatal calculation.

The loss of the New Jersey Senate President, the scion of a powerful South Jersey political machine, to a truck driver with no money became a national news story. That meant TV news cameras on Durr’s modest front lawn and a congratulatory call from former President Donald Trump. It also meant some post-election opposition research revealing some social media posts that caused more alarm among journalists than it did among the people of a district where you can see Pennsylvania and Delaware at the same time.

Durr acknowledges that he’s a neophyte. Indeed, he’s embraced it. He handled the social media hullabaloo like a seasoned pro, owning what he said and meeting with Muslim leaders to set things right. His secret sauce appears to be his authenticity. Durr doesn’t take office until January 11, but he’s already become a cult figure with among a segment of the New Jersey Republican Party.

It’s not clear what the 3rd district will look like after redistricting – Sweeney remains on the mapmaking panel, but Republicans aren’t in a position to give him a deal at Durr’s expense – but there is an expectation that South Jersey Democrats will spend heavily in a bid to deny the incoming Republican senator a second term. If Durr continues his current trajectory, speaking like a South Jersey guy in Trenton, Democrats might not be able to stop him.
YOU CAN ASSOCIATE the number 7 with a plethora of things: Mickey Mantle’s uniform number, a sometimes lucky roll at the craps table, or the number of state senators included in the realm of County Democratic Chairman Kevin McCabe.

McCabe ended 2021 in a significantly stronger position than he started. He stared down Somerset County Democrats and South Jersey to make sure Andrew Zwicker got the 16th district State Senate seat. In New Jersey, Senate seats are gold.

He set aside the pick of the Edison Democrats of embattled mayoral candidate Mahesh Bhagia and awarded the organization line to Sam Joshi. Then McCabe quickly lined up endorsements from major party leaders across the state. More importantly, he made sure Joshi won competitive primary and general elections. Don’t let the size of Joshi’s victory fool you. Neither campaign was easy.

Earlier this year, McCabe made sure his candidate for State Assembly won a special election convention. In doing so, Sterley Stanley became the first Asian American to represent Middlesex County in the New Jersey Legislature. He also shepherded the election of the first Latina to serve as Middlesex County Surrogate, and a Black woman to fill a county commissioner vacancy caused by the untimely passing of Kenneth Armwood. Democrats held the Monroe mayoralty in a competitive race.

McCabe has seen his closest allies flourish: Gary Taffet serves on the commission that will remap the state’s 40 legislative districts; Iris Delgado played a pivotal role on the Congressional Redistricting Commission; and Middlesex County’s Craig Coughlin will begin his fifth year as Assembly Speaker in January and has become a formidable player in Trenton. On top of that McCabe has carved influential relationships with Gov. Phil Murphy, Democratic State Chairman LeRoy Jones, Jr., and the incoming Senate President, Nicholas Scutari.

Ultimately, the strength of a leader is measured by the ability to win elections – both inside a political bubble and those decided by real voters. It is Kevin McCabe’s ability to win, even under difficult circumstances, that earns him the designation as the New Jersey Globe Politician of the Year.
WINNERS OF THE YEAR: PHIL AND TAMMY MURPHY

IT’S A HELL OF A THING getting elected Governor of New Jersey, and to win a second term as a Democrat is something that hasn’t happened in 44 years. Whether you like Phil Murphy or you don’t – and one thing Election Day revealed is that there’s no shortage of New Jerseyans who didn’t want him to be a two-termer --- he has now won the greatest prize New Jersey has to offer, eight years in office.

Murphy still has a lot on his plate as New Jersey continues to deal with the ups and downs of a tragic global pandemic that has resulted in the deaths of more than 26,000 residents of the state. He’s vowed to continue his push for more gun safety laws and to pass the Reproductive Freedom Act. He’s moving forward on his clean energy initiatives. Over the next four years, he’ll have an opportunity to reshape the New Jersey Supreme Court and will have filled five of the seven seats on the state’s top court by the time he leaves office, if the Senate confirms his picks.

He’ll need to advocate for his agenda without the assistance of Senate President Steve Sweeney, who lost re-election to his 3rd district seat in November.

Unencumbered with the need to face New Jersey voters again – Murphy, in particular, is likely relieved that the State Constitution gave him both extraordinary power and term limits – Murphy is preparing to play on a national stage as the chairman of the National Governors Association and then as the first two-term chairman of Democratic Governors Association in 2023. Since the primary responsibility of the DGA chair is to raise money, the governor’s return to the post will likely add to the portfolio of his fundraiser-in-chief, First Lady Tammy Murphy.

Like the last three two-term governors, there is inside-the-bubble speculation that Phil and Tammy Murphy are eyeing the White House. Murphy won’t acknowledge that, of course, and he’ll be frozen out anyway if Joe Biden seeks a second term. National pundits will say that Murphy has an extraordinarily limited path to the presidency and that Democrats won’t nominate a white male who earned his millions at Goldman Sachs. But the only sure thing in presidential politics these days is that only the uncertain becomes reality.
WINNER OF THE YEAR

RUNNERS UP

TWO REPUBLICANS FLIPPED Senate seats: Edward Durr, who unseated Senate President Steve Sweeney in the 3rd district, and Assemblywoman Jean Stanfield, who ousted party switcher Dawn Addiego in the 8th. Vince Polistina held the 2nd district Senate seat for the GOP in the state’s most competitive district, and Democrat Andrew Zwicker flipped the open 16th district Senate. Democrat Vin Gopal won a second term in the Senate in a district that unseated two Democratic Assembly members. Republicans Holly Schepisi and Jon Bramnick won their first general elections for the Senate.

Noteworthy: Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver was re-elected to a second term in a ticket with Gov. Phil Murphy. That earns her a place on the short list of Democratic gubernatorial candidates in 2025. So is Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, who was re-elected to a third term in a landslide on November 2. Nicholas Scutari will be the new Senate President and Craig Coughlin gets a third term as Assembly Speaker.
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WHEN THE NEW YORK YANKEES won five consecutive World Championships between 1949 and 1953, fans became so accustomed to winning that they were shocked when the Cleveland Indians won the pennant in 1954. Like the Yankees, George E. Norcross III had a great run, but 2021 was the year his streak came to an end. While he could have endured losses by Vince Mazzeo and Dawn Addiego in State Senate races, the defeat of Senate President Steve Sweeney in his own legislative district presented an indisputable loss to one of the most powerful political leaders New Jersey has have seen.

This was Norcross’ worst year since 1990, his second year as Camden County Democratic Chairman, when favorite son Gov. Jim Florio’s $2.8 billion tax increase cost him his majority on the Board of Freeholders. Democrats lost two Assembly seats in the 2nd district and two in the 3rd. Addiego, whom Norcross had poached from the GOP in early 2019, lost her seat. Democrats lost two freeholders in Cumberland, two in Gloucester, and the Gloucester County Sheriff. There have been some warning signs that South Jersey was getting a little redder: Democrats lost an Atlantic County Senate seat in 2017 (but gained an Assembly seat), and a Senate seat and Assembly seats in the Cumberland-Cape May district in 2019. In 2020, the Democratic machine lost their first primary in decades when Amy Kennedy won a House primary to take on South Jersey Democrat-turned-Republican Jeff Van Drew.

The greatest obstacle for Norcross this year was that his secret weapon – money – didn’t seem to matter. His candidates outspent their Republican opponents, only to lose.

Without Sweeney running the Senate, Norcross’ reach in Trenton is diminished. He still sits at the table, but he’ll have to wrestle others to sit at the head. And he’ll need to do it from Florida, where he registered to vote in 2020 – not that there’s anything wrong with that.
Dawn Addiego has spent the last 28 years in public office, as an Evesham councilwoman, Burlington County freeholder, assemblywoman and since 2010, as a state senator. She’d won each of her elections as a Republican. After winning her last race in 2017 with just 52%, watching Burlington finally fall to the Democrats, and concerned about the effect of Donald Trump, Addiego thought her best chance to keep her seat was as a Democrat, so she switched parties in January 2019. That turned out to be a miscalculation. She lost to her former running mate, Jean Stanfield. As a Republican, Addiego would have won.
CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR

STEVE KUSH

AT 55, REPUBLICAN political consultant Steve Kush is either a late bloomer or the guy folks ought to have been listening to all along. Either way, he had a phenomenal 2021 because he figured out the electorate.

Kush was the man behind the nationally-watched upset victory of Edward R. Durr, a truck driver with a limited budget who ousted the most powerful legislative leader in New Jersey history, Senate President Steve Sweeney. He helped flip two State Assembly seats in a district that hasn’t elected a Republican since 1989, with Beth Sawyer and Bethanne McCarthy-Patrick headed to Trenton.

Most importantly for Kush, Republicans have been resuscitated in Gloucester County. Under his direction, the GOP beat five-term Sheriff Carmel Morina and elected the county’s first Black Sheriff, Jonathan Sammons. Republicans Chris Konawel and Nick DeSilvio ousted two incumbent county commissioners. Kush has been saying for years that Gloucester County was heading toward a party realignment and his belief was validated on November 2.

The longtime GOP strategist didn’t necessarily think he could beat Sweeney or John Burzichelli, but he saw a roadmap in his head and anticipated how poorly Gov. Phil Murphy would do in Kush’s part of New Jersey.

Now, Kush is armed with a state senator who listens to him—and who is building a statewide, cult-like following among conservatives. He’s also preparing to fight for control of the Gloucester County Board of Commissioners and to flip the County Clerk post in 2022.

Steve Kush is suddenly in demand, and for good reason.
CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR RUNNERS-UP

NO DEMOCRAT HAS WON a statewide race in this century without Steve DeMicco and Brad Lawrence, who worked on Phil Murphy’s successful re-election campaign.

Chris Russell nearly broke DeMicco and Lawrence’s winning streak as Jack Ciattarelli’s top strategist for the last six years. Russell also adds several new state legislators to his stable of clients, including State Sen.-elect Jean Stanfield.

Adam Silverstein played a key role in keeping Bergen County blue and helping Gordon Johnson win a State Senate seat.
THERE IS SOMETHING VERY special about the two campaign managers, both New Jerseyans, who faced off in the 2021 race for Governor of New Jersey, Mollie Binotto and Eric Arpert. As far as talent goes, both are considered the crème of the crop of their parties. Their skills, judgment and moral compasses are impeccable. They were the right choices for this campaign.

Politics is full of Monday morning quarterbacks who think running campaigns is easy and think they could do a better job. Make no mistake: Phil Murphy vs. Jack Ciattarelli was a historically significant campaign where both sides had to meticulously and gently thread dozens of needles every day. Murphy won. Ciattarelli almost did and he’s now the presumed front runner for 2025. Binotto managed Mikie Sherrill’s first race for Congress in 2018, the one that forced Rodney Frelinghuysen into retirement and then flipped a House seat the GOP had held for 34 years. She returned to run Murphy’s campaign after a stint at Emily’s List.

A protégé of legendary Burlington GOP boss Glenn Paulsen, Arpert worked for Jon Runyan, Sean Kean and the RNC before a break for law school. Chris Russell, Ciattarelli’s longtime consultant, recruited Arpert, who started 21 months before Election Day.

Binotto ran a huge organization that interfaced with Murphy’s official side staff and First Lady Tammy Murphy and faced challenges of dominant party leaders whose own sense of local politics needed to be addressed. She did that. Arpert assembled a leaner operation that made the most out of an imbalance of resources. He ran the campaign he wanted to run, and it almost worked.

Both were realists at every step, dealing directly with the situation in front of them and not with the situation they might have preferred. Binotto and Arpert deftly addressed frequently changing political landscapes. Binotto became the first woman to manage a successful gubernatorial campaign in New Jersey, and the first woman campaign manager to win a statewide since Susan Thomases ran Bill Bradley’s 1978 U.S. Senate race. Both campaign managers have an instinctive understanding of the electorate and have incredibly bright futures ahead of them.
There was no shortage of superstars in a truly great election cycle. The future has no limits for Jackie Burns, a former Mikie Sherrill staffer who served as deputy campaign manager for Phil Murphy’s re-election campaign. Jerrell Harvey, who served as senior communications advisor to the Murphy campaign, is now the communications director for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul’s campaign. Kasey Dearden is coming off his third consecutive winning cycle as a New Jersey Republican, which is rather extraordinary; he managed Jean Stanfield’s Senate campaign and the Assembly races of Michael Torrisi and Brandon Umba. Joe Berg, a former detective and PBA union leader, ran the 2nd district races for State Sen. Vince Polistina and Assembly candidates Don Guardian and Claire Swift. Dan Scharfenberger was the executive director of the Senate Republican Majority campaign committee that won key races in the 2nd, 3rd and 8th districts; he’s now running Tom Kean’s campaign for Congress.

• Nicholas Poche, Southern Regional Political Director, Ciattarelli for Governor
• Christian Duffy, Regional Political Director, Murphy for Governor
• Shelly Bell, Regional Political Director, Murphy for Governor
• Maria Paglieri, NJ Forward
• Shea Seif, NJ Forward
• Ryan Flanagan, NJ Forward
• Vanesa Knox, NJ Forward
FOLLOWING THE DEATH of Gerald Cardinale, who had represented the 39th district in the State Senate for more than 39 years, two State Assembly members faced off for the Senate seat. The campaign was complicated. Holly Schepisi had been seeking the Senate seat at the time of Cardinale’s passing; Bob Auth entered the race with the endorsement of Cardinale’s widow. He dropped out a week later and said he’d seek re-election to the Assembly, but hours later got back in. Schepisi won a March special election convention by just 8 votes, 111 to 103.

A few weeks later, Republicans held a second special election convention to fill Schepisi’s vacant Assembly seat. The winner, by just 9 votes, was DeAnne DeFuccio, an Upper Saddle River councilwoman who had initially entered the race as a running mate for Cardinale and Auth. She defeated Saddle River Councilman John Azzariti, who has Schepisi’s support.

DeFuccio comes with a political pedigree: her grandfather, the late William F. Kelly, was elected to the State Senate in 1957 at a time when each county had just one senator. He sought the Democratic nomination for governor in 1969, finishing second in six-candidate field. Former Gov. Robert Meyner, seeking a comeback, defeated him by a 45%-23% margin.

A former Jersey City municipal court judge and Hudson County Sheriff, Kelly served in the Senate until his retirement in 1973. He served in Meyner’s cabinet as president of the New Jersey Civil Service Commission in the 1960s and was the Hudson County Democratic Chairman from 1971 to 1973.
“Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional.”

- Roger Crawford

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WORST TIEBREAKER EVER

JOHN E. WALLACE, JR.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN less awkward if former New Jersey Supreme Court Justice John E. Wallace Jr. had just belted out the “Yankee Bean” song from Seinfeld. Instead, the court-appointed tiebreaker on the Congressional Redistricting Commission said something that will forever taint his legacy and those of his successors: “I decided to vote for the Democratic map simply because in the last redistricting map, it was drawn by the Republicans.”

It’s almost as if his vote was predetermined, perhaps even a waste of time and money for everybody involved in the congressional redistricting process. It was bad optics for someone who works at a law firm where George Norcross’ personal attorney is a partner. It’s also not entirely clear if Republicans really won a map that left Democrats, at least for most of 2019, with 11 of 12 House seats.

While the map may or may not be a fair one – that’s not for us to decide – it’s clear that the tiebreaker role was not an ideal fit for the respected 79-year-old former jurist. Both parties say that Wallace severely lacked proficiency in New Jersey geography – he repeatedly had to be told where counties and municipalities are on the map – he had no institutional knowledge of politics outside his home region, and he had no discernable familiarity with technology.

The New Jersey Supreme Court bears some responsibility for Wallace, since they picked him. In fairness, the court was only given two candidates, but they never interviewed the Republican nominee, former Superior Court Judge Marina Corodemus. Perhaps in the future, the justices might want to make sure tiebreakers can at least demonstrate the same geographical competence that the state demands of fourth graders.

In the end, Wallace will be remembered for his unrealistic fairness doctrine that says congressional districts should be drawn based on which party won the last time. It’s hard to beat Larry Bartels, the 2001 legislative tiebreaker, but in that race, Wallace blew him away.
WINNERS AND LOSERS OF THE MAP

AS JOHN WALLACE SAID, it’s a Democratic map. But Nancy Pelosi won’t see it that way. In Joe Biden’s mid-term election, Republicans are well-positioned to flip the 7th district seat that Tom Malinowski won in 2018, with outgoing Senate Minority Leader Thomas H. Kean, Jr. as the Republican front runner. With Republicans just five seats shy of a majority, Democrats were anxious to keep what they had in New Jersey. Indeed, the instructions from Washington – which none of the New Jersey Democrats ever sought to follow – was to draw a map that take the Democratic House delegation to 11 seats.

Kean came within one percent of ousting Malinowski in 2020, and now a Democratic map has taken key towns, like Millburn, Dover, Union Township, Cranford, North Plainfield and Montgomery. Instead, he picks up the rest of Warren County and nine municipalities in Sussex.

Andy Kim substantially improved his chances, shedding all of his towns in heavily-Republican Ocean County and replacing them with parts of Mercer – including East Windsor and Lawrence – and western Monmouth County.

Josh Gottheimer doesn’t have to run in the GOP strongholds of Warren and Sussex counties; instead, he’ll use his $11 million war chest to seek votes in the blue fortresses of Englewood, Fort Lee, Leonia and the rest of Teaneck.

Mikie Sherrill also dropped her four Sussex towns and part of Wayne. Now she’ll campaign in the Democratic bastions of Dover, South Orange and Maplewood.

In shoring up their incumbents, Democrats abandoned their pipe dream of taking out Republican Jeff Van Drew, who won the seat as a Democrat in 2018 and then switched parties after his first year in Congress.

Christopher Smith, who now holds the record as the longest-serving congressman in New Jersey history, got a district that is more Republican than the very red seat he’s currently holding. That’s a far cry from 1980s, when he had to run in places like Trenton and Pennsauken.
DEMOCRATS SAT SHIVA for Steve Sweeney until about 5 AM on Wednesday, November 3, when the period of mourning concluded and the campaign for Senate President began in earnest. By early Friday morning, Nicholas Scutari had secured the votes he needed to succeed Sweeney.

During his eighteen years in the Senate, Scutari has developed a reputation of getting along with both of New Jersey’s Democratic parties. Those skills were honed as the longtime Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, where he shepherded judicial nominees and other appointments at the behest of his colleagues.

He had the backing of Kevin McCabe’s sizable Senate votes – make no mistake, when it comes to the Senate, size definitely matters – and of the South Jersey delegation that was still four votes despite losses in the 2021 election. Scutari also scored support in Hudson – Brian P. Stack will take his place as Judiciary chairman next year and Nicholas Sacco signed off on his ascension – and Bergen. He had the backing of former Gov. Richard Codey, who’d been largely ostracized during Sweeney’s 12 years in leadership.

Now Scutari, who woke up on Election Day with no expectation of anything for himself, is about to become the second most-powerful elected official in state government. That would have made his political godfather, the late John Gregorio, extremely proud.
IT’S BEEN A LONG TIME since Republicans have changed their legislative leadership. Tom Kean, Jr. will leave Trenton in January to focus on his congressional run; he’s been the minority leader of the New Jersey State Senate for fourteen years. Jon Bramnick, the Assembly Minority Leader for ten years, was elected to Kean’s Senate seat.

Succeeding Kean as Senate Minority Leader is Steve Oroho, a well-liked Sussex County Republican who was just re-elected to his fifth term in the Senate. He secured a majority of his caucus votes the week before the election, leading to the withdrawal of his two opponents, Bob Singer and Joe Pennacchio.

For John DiMaio, the road to minority leader was more complicated. On October 15, Nancy Muñoz had secured the votes to become minority leader after forging a coalition with DiMaio. That also caused Ned Thomson to drop his bid for the post; DiMaio and Thomson were on an email statement to GOP legislators announcing the new leadership team headed by Muñoz.

But Muñoz’s deal fell apart when conservatives, including pro-life leaders, Second Amendment advocates, and medical freedom activists stepped in and said her moderate voting record made her an unacceptable candidate. They applied enough pressure to cause her coalition to fold.

Instead, Assembly Republicans held something that often gets lost in the wheeling and dealing of insider politics: an election. DiMaio defeated Muñoz by two votes, 18-16. The votes of the six new Assembly members that flipped Democratic seats this year were evenly split between the two candidates.

Oroho and DiMaio are ideologically to the right of Kean and Bramnick.

In the Assembly, Republicans are expected to become visibly more partisan during Gov. Phil Murphy’s second term, similar to the direction Newt Gingrich took the U.S. House of Representatives in order to end 38 years of a Democratic majority.

Speaker Craig Coughlin got a taste of how that will look in December when a large group of Republican lawmakers strongly protested a new statehouse policy that required them to show proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test.
WORST CAMPAIGN
OF THE YEAR

CLUELESS LEWIS Spears got crushed by Steve Fulop in the Jersey City mayoral race. There was something off about this guy: he didn’t recall the details of a property he purchased with 5% down in 2010 – his first home – but he never lived there and never made a mortgage payment on a shady deal connected to a man indicted in a multimillion mortgage fraud scheme. Spears purchased the home at 782 Grand Street from Garvin’s firm, Merchantman LLC, in March 2010 for $265,000, but after making a $4,800 down payment, he never made any mortgage payments. By the time Bank of America foreclosed on his property, Spears owed them $414,527 – including unpaid property taxes and liens against the property for code violations. He said a friend told him about the property, but he couldn’t remember the friend’s name.
NOTEWORTHY CAMPAIGNS OF 2020

- Assemblyman Bob Auth
- Assemblyman-elect Christian Barranco
- State Senator-elect Jon Bramnick
- Camden Mayor Vic Carstarphen
- Gloucester County Commissioner-elect Chris Konawel
- Monroe Mayor Steve Dalina
- Assemblywoman DeAnne DeFuccio
- Gloucester County Commissioner-elect Nick DeSilvio
- Brick Mayor John Ducey
- State Senator-elect Ed Durr
- Assemblywoman-elect Kim Eulner
- Assemblywoman-elect Vicky Flynn
- Assemblyman Roy Freiman
- Mercer County Commissioner Sam Frisby
- Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop
- Jersey City Councilman-elect Frank “Educational” Gilmore
- Atlantic County Clerk-elect Joe Giraldo
- State Senator Vin Gopal
- Assemblyman-elect Don Guardian
- Assemblywoman-elect Shaima Haider
- Bergen County Clerk John Hogan
- Assemblywoman-elect Sadaf Jaffer
- State Senator-elect Gordon Johnson
- Edison Mayor-elect Sam Joshi
- Collingswood Commissioner Rob Lewandowski
- Collingswood Mayor Jim Maley
- Assemblywoman-elect Michele Matsikoudis
- Assemblywoman-elect Bethanne McCarthy-Patrick
- Parsippany Councilman-elect Justin Musella
- Mercer County Commissioner-elect Kristin McLaughlin
- State Senator Declan O’Scanlon
- Assemblywoman-elect Ellen Park
- Atlantic County Commissioner Andrew Parker III
- Assemblywoman-elect Marilyn Piperno
- State Senator Vince Polistina
- Collingswood Commissioner Morgan Robinson
- Cumberland County Commissioner-elect Antonio Romero
- Gloucester County Sheriff-elect Jonathan Sammons
- Assemblywoman-elect Beth Sawyer
- Assemblyman Gerald Scharfenberger
- State Senator Holly Schepisi
- Bordentown Mayor Jennifer Sciortino
- Cumberland County Commissioner-elect Joseph Sileo
- Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr.
- Jersey City Councilman James Solomon
- State Senator-elect Jean Stanfield
- Mercer County Commissioner-elect Terrance Stokes
- Assemblywoman-elect Claire Swift
- Assemblyman-elect Michael Torrissi, Jr.
- Assemblyman-elect Brandon Umba
- Hillside Mayor Dahlia Vertreese
- Assemblyman Jay Webber
- State Senator-elect Andrew Zwicker
NOTEWORTHY CAMPAIGNS OF 2020
DEMOCRATS CELEBRATED the arrival of Brooklynne Roulette Mosely as the director of the state party coordinated campaign aimed at winning a second term for Gov. Phil Murphy. Instead, they regretted her hiring and were left wondering how previous employers in Texas and Kansas even came to recommend her – unless their plan to was to sabotage New Jersey. Mosely, Democrats admit, was a walking disaster who left votes on the table for a Democratic governor who wound up without many to spare. Murphy was fortunate that Mosely’s poor performance at the ground game of New Jersey politics was buttressed by a number of superstars on the campaign team – and party leaders – who just worked around her.

In a move that left political veterans scratching their heads, Mosely encouraged a group of mostly children without much experience to unionize, suggested an affiliation with the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), and helped to formulate some of the demands made by the union members. That came despite what appeared to be a fair salary and benefits they agreed to before their hiring. As a result, the Democratic State Committee agreed to keep the young field staffers on the payroll until the new year to compensate them for long hours during the campaign. Still, there were some members of Team Mosely who had the day off on the Monday before Election Day after working a long weekend. The members of the Children’s Union all ended their very brief stay in New Jersey with union cards, but without recommendations for their next gig.
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THERE WERE A LOT OF comings and goings in New Jersey this year, even as Gov. Phil Murphy was seeking re-election.

There were no tears shed inside and outside the governor’s office when embattled Commissioner of Corrections Marcus Hicks was finally shown the door in June, after scathing independent report detailed allegations of beatings and sexual abuses at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women that occurred on Hicks’ watch. Lawmakers from both parties had called for his resignation – some wanted to impeach him. He became a political liability for Murphy, and privately, Murphy backers though Hicks should have resigned months earlier than he did.

Gurbir Grewal resigned as Attorney General of New Jersey in July to take a top staff post at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. There were few tears shed for him either. Grewal was increasingly viewed as a self-promotor within the Murphy administration, and he was out whether the governor won re-election or not. He was replaced by the more likeable Andrew Bruck, who became the state’s first gay attorney general.

As per his agreement, John Currie left his post as Democratic State Chairman in June and was replaced by LeRoy Jones, Jr. Jones became an integral player in Gov. Phil Murphy’s re-election campaign.

President Joe Biden plucked Commissioner of Human Services Carole Johnson from Murphy’s cabinet to join the White House COVID-19 Response Team. Sarah Adelman has filled the post on an acting basis since January and Murphy has not yet nominated Johnson’s successor. Murphy also lost senior counsel Justin Dewes, who is now the deputy associate White House Counsel.

Jared Maples resigned as New Jersey’s Homeland Security and Preparedness director in May to become the chief security officer for the National Hockey League. His replacement, on an acting basis, is Laurie Doran.

At the start of the year, Catherine McCabe retired as the state’s Commissioner of Environmental Protection. She was replaced by Shawn LaTourette.

But the beleaguered chief administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission, Sue Fulton, is still there. Biden nominated her to serve as an Assistant U.S. Secretary of Defense in April, but apparently the U.S. Senate doesn’t want her. She’s still not been confirmed.
THERE’S REALLY NO excuse for a 27-year incumbent to lose a party convention unless they take their eye off the ball and no longer enjoy personal relationships with county committee members. That’s what happened to Ann Cannon, who was denied the support of the Mercer County Democratic organization in her bid for a 10th term as a county commissioner. She lost to political newcomer Terrance Stokes on the third ballot at the Mercer Democratic Convention last Mercer is so solidly blue that Cannon had not really needed to campaign since winning for the first time in 1994.

Cannon’s defeat stood in contrast to another incumbent, Samuel Frisby, who won a first ballot victory. He’ll be joined on the Board of Commissioners by Hopewell Township Committeewoman and former mayor Kristin McLaughlin, who also won a first-ballot win. Longtime incumbent Pat Colavita is retiring.
DEPARTING AT THE TOP OF HER GAME

ENDING A FOUR-YEAR stretch where Republicans regained its footing as the majority party, Salem County GOP Chair Linda DuBois announced her immediate retirement in December. She leaves her party with a 4-1 majority on the Board of Commissioners. Under DuBois’ leadership, Republicans won majority control of the Salem County Board of Commissioners in 2018 and held on to the County Clerk’s office after a competitive race in 2019. Republicans carried Salem in the 2018 and 2020 U.S. Senate races, both times against incumbent Democrats. In 2021, Republicans swept all three seats in the 3rd legislative district, with Edward Durr ousting Sweeney and Beth Sawyer and McCarthy Patrick unseated two Democratic assemblymen. Republicans won 23 of 30 municipal races in Salem County this year.
CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE NEW JERSEY GLOBE
ON A SUCCESSFUL 2021

Operating Engineers build our region’s transportation, energy, and water infrastructure, and ELEC 825 puts them to work.
Michael Soliman is New Jersey’s version of Joe Kane. He learned politics from U.S. Senator Bob Menendez, who made him his state director and entrusted him to run his last two re-election campaigns. Once Rep. Albio Sires decided to retire, Senator Menendez tasked Soliman with assembling a congressional campaign for his son, Robert J. Menendez. In less than a week – the week before Christmas -- without even announcing his candidacy, Rob Menendez was able to lock in party support for his 2022 campaign. Gov. Phil Murphy, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, incoming Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop and Elizabeth Mayor Christian Bollwage endorsed Menendez for Congress. So did Brian Stack, Nick Sacco and the other nine Hudson mayors. Menendez still needs to get through the Democratic primary, but Soliman set up the fight.

Kane learned about Massachusetts politics from his uncle, Patrick J. Kennedy, known as P.J., a saloon keeper who relished his role as a Boston Democratic ward boss more than his stints in both houses of the state legislature. He later learned even more from P.J. Kennedy’s machatunim, John F. Fitzgerald, known as Honey Fitz, a former Boston mayor and congressmen he once helped defeat. Kane became the top political advisor to his first cousin, Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy. When Joe Kennedy’s son, Jack, ran for Congress in 1946, Kane was put in charge of the campaign. Of JFK’s first run, Kane used to say, “I set up the fight.”

Photo: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library
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THE JERK

THERE ARE A LOT of do’s and don’ts in politics. Claiming you were hacked when offensive social media posts surface hardly every works. Pretending that you’ve never heard of Josef Mengele because it wasn’t on the curriculum from your Jewish Studies class at college is a sure-fire loser. So it’s no surprise that Republican Steve Martin lost his bid for mayor of Monroe after his own Facebook history was suddenly discovered. One of his posts had a photo of a train being loaded with Jews headed to Nazi death camps. “Why gun control?” Martin’s meme asked. “Because armed people will NOT willingly load themselves into railroad boxcars.” Martin was so bad that his own brother campaigned against him.

BEST DIGITAL AD OF THE YEAR

THE JERSEY CITY RUNOFF election was a big bust for local burlesque performer Lillian Bustle, who spent her own money on digital ads asking voters to defeat incumbent city councilman Rich Boggiano in Ward C. Boggiano won a third term by a 17-point margin after being forced into a runoff with Kevin Bing.

Image: @LillianBustle via Twitter
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Marketing & Crisis Communications
Association Management
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR SENATOR IS?

POOR ACTING COMMISSIONER of Education Angelica Allen-McMillan. She was just one day away from Senate confirmation – she actually made it to the agenda – when news that she had moved from Montclair to Cedar Grove derailed her. Allen-McMillan had cleared the toughest hurdle of all – sign off from Essex County’s four Democratic senators – only to learn that Cedar Grove is represented by a Republican, State Sen. Kristin Corrado (R-Totowa). Since Cedar Grove is in her district, Corrado has senatorial courtesy over nominees from that township. Allen-McMillan didn’t know who her senator was, and by the time she called Corrado, she’d blown her opportunity. Funny as it seems, the New Jersey Department of Education tells school districts to teach fourth graders the name of their state senator.
The Road to a New Republican Party might be paved through Gloucester County, where Democrats will suddenly face a control election next year after the GOP won two county commissioner seats in 2021. Republicans won the Sheriff post this year and the County Clerk is up in 2022. That pits Gloucester County Republican Chair Jacci Vigilante against the outgoing Senate President Steve Sweeney, a former Gloucester freeholder director who is going to fight to protect his base. If Republicans win, Vigilante could become the first woman to serve as a GOP boss in New Jersey.

Control of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners will also be up in 2022, giving State Sen. Michael Testa, Jr., who is also the Republican county chairman, a chance to take over county government.

While Gloucester and Cumberland might seem like small potatoes to other parts of the state, countywide elections there might be crucial to the future of the state’s political ecosystem. If Democrats lose Gloucester and Cumberland, it will create a solid red wall of courthouse control in most of South Jersey: Ocean, Atlantic, Cape May, and Salem are already Republican and in no real danger of flipping. That would relegate the South Jersey Democratic machine to really just Cumberland County, unless they exercise their eminent domain over Democrats in Burlington.

That could be a game changer for the South, and for Sweeney and George Norcross, so the races in Gloucester and Cumberland have statewide significance.
NEW JERSEY CAN BE a very rough state, but something special happened after the lieutenant governor debate: they two candidates hugged each other. Sheila Oliver and Diane Allen demonstrated that debates can be civil and substantive and that candidates can run against each other but still remain friends.
**Senator Dawn Addiego**  
Defeated for re-election 8th District  
Dawn Addiego switched parties in January 2019 after spending twelve years as a Republican senator and assemblywoman. After winning a narrow 52% in 2017, Addiego thought she saw the handwriting on the wall and viewed the Democratic Party as the best vehicle to hold a legislative seat she first won in 2007. This turned out to be a miscalculation. She received 49% against Republican Jean Stanfield in a race she would likely have held as a Republican.

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**Assemblyman John Armato**  
Defeated for re-election 2nd District  
There won’t be a third term for the 73-year-old Atlantic County Democrat, who lost his seat in what became a Republican year in South Jersey. John Armato became the 8th incumbent to lose re-election in the state’s most historically competitive legislative district over the last 50 years.

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**Senator Christopher Bateman**  
Did not seek re-election 16th District  
The retirement of Kip Bateman signals the end of an era. His departure will mark the first time since 1905 that Somerset County Republicans will find themselves without a State Senate seat. It also means the end of a two-generation clan of Batemans that began when the senator’s late father, Raymond H. Bateman, won a 1958 special election for the State Assembly. Ray Bateman went to the State Senate in 1967, served as Senate President in 1970 and 1971, and was the GOP nominee for Governor in 1977. His son, Kip, won a Branchburg Township Committee seat in 1982, at age 25, served a mayor in 1986, and to the Somerset County Board of Freeholders in 1987. He spent fourteen years on the State Assembly and the next fourteen in the State Senate. Bateman's retirement at age 64 came in an increasingly Democratic district that was the only place in New Jersey where Democrats flipped a seat this year.

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**Senator Christopher Brown**  
Did not seek re-election (Resigned) 2nd District  
Decorated Gulf War veteran Chris Brown spent was a popular two-term Republican assemblyman when he flipped the Atlantic County Senate seat in 2017 following the death of Democrat James Whelan. He announced earlier this year that he wouldn’t seek re-election to a second term and left the Senate in July to take a job with the Murphy administration managing the state’s bid to boost Atlantic City's economic comeback. Republican Vincent Polistina won the open seat, representing the first time Atlantic County general election voters elected successive Republican senators since 1940 when Thomas Taggert left the Senate to become mayor of Atlantic City and replaced by fellow Republican Frank (Hap) Farley.
ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN BURZICHELLI  
Defeated for re-election 3rd District

John Burzichelli was the guy who sparked a Gloucester County political revolt in 1999 that led to Steve Sweeney’s election as mayor. As the Democratic Assembly candidate in the 3rd district against Speaker Jack Collins, Burzichelli loudly complained about a non-aggression pact between the longtime Democratic senator, Ray Zane, and Collins. That led Democrats to pull party support from Zane, who switched parties after 28 years in the Senate and narrowly lost to Sweeney. Burzichelli ran for Assembly in 2001 on Sweeney’s ticket and won. Some think he’ll challenge Ed Durr for Senate in 2023.

ASSEMBLYMAN NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI  
Did not seek re-election 31st District

For the 31st district legislative seat set aside for Bayonne, there is just one vote. His name is Jimmy Davis, and as mayor, Democrats respected a tradition that allowed him to make the selection. After backing Chiaravalloti three times, Davis mysteriously pulled his support. Hudson Democrats backed up Davis’ unwritten prerogative to name Bayonne’s representative in the legislature and replaced him with a political unknow, William B. Sampson IV, a 33-year-old crane operator and member of the International Longshoremen’s Union. For the last two years, Chiaravalloti had been the Assembly Majority Whip and a key member of Speaker Craig Coughlin’s leadership team. Absent the organization line, Chiaravalloti declined to seek re-election. Some think it’s only a matter of time before he mounts a comeback.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BETTYLOU DECROCE  
Defeated for re-election 26th District

One of the major upsets of the year occurred in March when BettyLou DeCroce lost the Morris County GOP convention to Christian Barranco by 9 votes. Among Morris Republicans, the DeCroce name is a genuine brand: her late husband spent nearly 40 years as a freeholder, county chairman, assemblyman before he died in a statehouse bathroom after the final session of the legislature in January 2012. She won his seat five times before losing the Republican primary to Barranco by 551 votes. DeCroce was as much a casualty of a bad relationship with her colleague, Jay Webber, who helped engineer Barranco’s win.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SERENA DIMASO  
Defeated for re-election 13th District

Monmouth County Republicans declined to support Serena DiMaso for a third term in the State Assembly after she ran afoul of the county chairman, Shaun Golden. She lost the GOP convention to Holmdel neighbor Vicki Flynn, the school board president, 145 to 87. DiMaso ran off-the-line in the June primary and lost by 2,059 votes. There’s little chance that DiMaso is read to give up politics, so a return to public life in some form is likely.
ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOANN DOWNEY  
Defeated for re-election 11th District  
  
The daughter of a New Jersey State Trooper, Joann Downey served as a deputy state attorney general when Democrats picked her to run an uphill race for State Assembly in the Monmouth County-based 11th district. Republicans had won the two seats by more than 8,000 votes two years earlier, but an unpopular Republican governor, Chris Christie, helped her eke out a 253-vote upset against a well-liked incumbent, Mary Pat Angelini. She coasted to re-election wins in 2017 and 2019 and became chair of the Assembly Human Services Committee. With Gov. Phil Murphy losing the 11th, Downey found herself on the losing end of 2021. She lost by 347 votes.

ASSEMBLYMAN JAMEL HOLLEY  
Defeated for State Senate 20th District  
  
After nearly seven years as an assemblyman, and after achieving considerable notoriety as a pre-Covid anti-vaxxer, Jamel Holley mounted an off-the-line challenge for State Senate against the incumbent, Joe Cryan, in a Union County-based district. Most Democratic insiders, including State Sen. Nichola Scutari, Gov. Phil Murphy, and a plethora of labor unions backed Cryan, and Holley received just 34% of the vote in the Democratic primary.

ASSEMBLYMAN ERIC Houghtaling  
Defeated for re-election 11th District  
  
Eric Houghtaling wasn’t expected to win when he ran for the State Assembly in 2015, but Gov. Chris Christie had political woes in his second mid-term election. A former Neptune mayor and IBEW Local 400 official, he unseated two Republican assemblywomen rom Monmouth County. In that race, he finished 243 votes ahead of his running mate, Joann Downey. In his bid for re-election this year, Houghtaling came in fourth, 275 votes behind Downey. At age 67, a political comeback as a Democrat in Monmouth County might be difficult.

SENATE MINORITY LEADER THOMAS KEAN, JR.  
Did not seek re-election 21st District  
  
Tom Kean took the pass less traveled, giving up a safe State Senate seat with no guarantees for the future to focus on winning his dream job: member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He is seeking the Republican nomination to take on two-term Rep. Tom Malinowski in the 2022 mid-terms. This is rematch of the 2020 campaign that put Kean within one percent of ousting Malinowski. The 53-year-old Kean will end a 20-year run in the New Jersey Legislature that included 14 years as minority leader. No one in state history has held the same leadership post for a longer stretch. If Kean unseats Malinowski, he’ll become the first member of his family to serve in Congress since his grandfather gave up his seat after 20 years in 1958.
**Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo**
Defeated for State Senate 2nd District

Democrat Vince Mazzeo was elected to the Assembly in 2013 after unseating a Republican incumbent by just 40 votes out of more than 52,000 cast. After eight years, he thought he was giving up a safe Assembly seat for a pretty good shot at an open Senate seat – had Chris Brown not retired, his intention was to seek re-election to the Assembly – but wound up getting caught in a bad year for South Jersey Democrats. Instead, one of Mazzeo’s predecessors, former Assemblyman Vince Polistina, beat him 52%-48%.

**Assemblyman Ryan Peters**
Did not seek re-election 8th District

In a state where legislators rarely retire, 39-year-old Ryan Peters is an anomaly. The Burlington County Republican, a rising star in state politics, announced early this year that he was eschewing a third term in the New Jersey State Assembly because he’d rather spend his time coaching sports teams for his three young children than play the rubber chicken circuit. Peters, an Annapolis graduate, served as a Navy SEAL commander and still serves in the reserve unit. He was also notified that his reserve unit could be called up for a deployment this year. Instead, he played a key role in helping his 2019 running mate, Jean Stanfield, oust his former running mate, party switcher Dawn Addiego in the Senate race, and make sure two Republicans held the 8th district Assembly seats.

**Senate President Steve Sweeney**
Defeated for re-election 3rd District

The longest-serving Senate President in New Jersey history, Steve Sweeney won some tough Senate races over the last 20 years: his first one against Raymond Zane, a party-switching, 28-year incumbent in 2001; attempts by Senate Republicans (but not the Republican governor) to oust him in 2011 and 2013; and the most expensive legislative race in American history in 2017. As he sought his seventh term against a truck driver with no money making his third run for office in 2021, his focus was on picking up more South Jersey Senate seats – and on a 2025 run for governor. Instead, he suffered his only career electoral defeat, losing his own seat to Edward Durr by 2,199 votes. As this publication went to press, Sweeney has indicated his intent to seek the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in four years.

**Assemblyman Adam Taliaferro**
Defeated for re-election 3rd District

In politics, where compelling life stories help get people elected, Adam Taliaferro is the kind people make movies about. As a Penn State football player in 2000, Taliaferro suffered a spinal cord injury while tackling an Ohio State player that left him paralyzed from the neck down. Given just a 3% chance of every walking again, Taliaferro overcame the odds. He returned to college, earned a law degree, won a Gloucester County freeholder seat in 2011, and went to the State Assembly in 2017 after Celeste Riley left to become Cumberland County Clerk. But after two terms, the Republican success in South Jersey in November 2025 that led to the defeat of Senate President Steve Sweeney and Assembly Appropriations Committee Chairman John Burzichelli also took out Taliaferro.
ASSEMBLYWOMAN VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
Defeated for State Senate 37th District

During her sixteen years in the New Jersey State Assembly, Valerie Vainieri Huttle was a workhorse. She sponsored substantive, sometimes landmark legislation that made her a favorite with the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. When Loretta Weinberg, decided to retire this year, Vainieri Huttle thought she was the rightful heir. But her running mate, 10-term Assemblyman Gordon Johnson, also wanted the seat. With the organization line going to Johnson, Vainieri Huttle wound up walking away from the Assembly to get 28% in the Democratic Senate primary.

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER LORETTA WEINBERG
Did not seek re-election 37th District

Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, the liberal lion of the New Jersey Legislature and one of the most consequential men or women to ever serve in the New Jersey Legislature, decided to retire in 2021 after a political career that spanned six decades. At age 86, she’s leaving while still at the very top of her game as she closes a chapter in a storied political career. Weinberg took an interest in local politics as an advocate for more shade trees on Cedar Lane in her hometown of Teaneck and then worked on the campaign of a Democratic congressman. She served as clerk to the Bergen County Board of Freeholders, won a Teaneck Council seat in 1990, and a special election for the State Assembly in 1992. After fighting to win a race that was nearly stolen from her, Weinberg was elected to the State Senate in 2005. In 2009, she was nearly elected as the state’s first lieutenant governor in a ticket with Gov. Jon Corzine. After a decade, she holds the record as the longest-serving Senate Majority Leader in New Jersey history.

In a Republican-controlled lower house, Weinberg sponsored laws that required insurance companies to pay for 48-hour hospital stays for maternity patients and mandated that judges receive domestic violence training. Another early Weinberg law restricted the access to firearms for domestic abusers. In the 1990s, she took a leading statewide role in pushing for investigations into allegations of sexual harassment in politics and government – a fight she continues today.

After moving up to the Senate in 2005, Weinberg led the fight to allow same sex marriages – a battle that ultimately was defeated by the Senate but later granted by the courts. She sponsored laws that prohibited smoking in indoor public places, to strengthen New Jersey’s anti-bullying laws, and to appropriate funds for autism research. Weinberg authored a law that reduced the legal blood alcohol level for drunk drivers to .08%.

In 2014, Weinberg became the co-chair of the Legislative Select Committee on Investigation that sought to determine the cause of lane realignments at the George Washington Bridge. She was also at the forefront of advancing women in New Jersey politics. She co-chaired the bicameral Select Committee on Investigation that probed the Murphy administration’s hiring of Al Alvarez, who State Mortgage Finance and Housing Agency chief of staff Katie Brennan accused of sexual assault. Weinberg is spending her final days in the Senate fighting for tougher gun laws and the passage of the Reproductive Freedom Act.
LEADERS ACROSS NEW JERSEY stepped up to deliver millions of Covid vaccinations, but Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo stands out as the man who went big. He took over empty department stores with huge spaces, commandeered health care professionals as volunteers, and even provided entertainment. When the time came to vaccinate young children, DiVincenzo built out zoo and space-themed spaces to make them feel more comfortable.
WORST INTERNAL INVESTIGATION OF THE YEAR

The Star-Ledger editor likes to police the world, but not so much themselves. When editorial page editor Tom Moran was accused by two law enforcement officials of forcefully grabbing the arm of the Hudson County Prosecutor – something her spokesman described as “with such force that she could still feel it several minutes later” – Moran called her a liar. After Gov. Phil Murphy called for an independent investigation, the Star-Ledger conducted one – a poor man’s version of the Mastro Report -- that cleared Moran, seemingly within a few hours and after only interviewing their employee.
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PROGRESSIVE JASON KRYCHIW touted his work as a college level science lecturer in his Democratic primary campaign against State Sen. Joseph Cryan, but his supposed employer says he doesn’t work there. Krychiw told the New Jersey Globe that he taught a “Principles of Microbiology” class at Kean University two mornings a week, university records indicate that it’s been nearly four years since Krychiw worked or taught at Kean. But Krychiw steadfastly insisted he did work there. He couldn’t provide a pay stub or direct deposit receipt and was unable to name someone in the Kean science department who knew who he was. Two days later, he dropped out of the race after finally admitting that he had lied about his job. That caused the rest of his slate to drop out too. Since his name remained on the ballot, he still won 5% of the vote.
ONE-LINER OF THE YEAR

“WHEN THE OTHER SIDE starts calling you names, that says something. And [Murphy]’s been calling me a lot of names. But in 24 hours, I’ve got another name he can call me: governor-elect.” -Jack Ciattarelli

Photo: Kevin Sanders for the New Jersey Globe
The eleemosynary managing partners at the O’Toole Scrivo, Kevin O’Toole and Tom Scrivo, seem to have adopted the old-fashioned method of tithing as they aggressively make a charitable giving a cornerstone of their law firm, O’Toole and Scrivo provide funding for multiple food pantries and work with Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin to combat food insecurity. They paid for housing for a homeless man in Lakewood after a fire destroyed a tent he was living in – and then picked up the funeral costs for his wife. In December, they contributed to hurricane victims in Western Kentucky.

Humanitarians of the Year

Kevin O’Toole and Tom Scrivo
BY THE TIME Superior Court Judge Deborah Gramiccioni and her husband, Monmouth County Prosecutor Christopher Gramiccioni announced their resignations in April 2021, they had been plotting their exit to start up their own law firm for nearly a year. The new firm, Kingston Coventry, is named after the two streets where the gobblers grew up. Records show that they registered their firm’s new website on April 27, 2020, the year before they left their posts as a judge and prosecutor, respectively.
IF OUTGOING SENATE PRESIDENT Steve Sweeney moves forward on his bid for the Democratic nomination for Governor in 2025, he’ll need follow the playbook of another Democratic senate leader who lost his own re-election but then went on to win a statewide race. Robert B. Meyner had been the Senate Minority Leader and at 43 was already touted as a gubernatorial candidate when 37-year-old attorney Wayne Dumont unseated him in 1951 by 66 votes. Dumont, who would run three times for governor, became the first Republican senator from Warren County in 75 years. Meyner defeated a South Jersey congressman by 1,585 votes in the 1953 Democratic gubernatorial primary and then won the general election with 53%.
RESTAURANTEER OF THE YEAR
DUSTIN RACIOPPI

DUSTIN RACIOPPI spends his days as a statehouse reporter for The (Bergen) Record. Some nights and weekends, he moonlights as a bartender at Murphy’s Tavern, an old speakeasy and restaurant in Rumson that is owned by his wife. Occasionally the two jobs intersect. That’s when alarm bells go off about a potential conflict of interest. As a reporter, part of Racioppi’s job is to cover Gov. Phil Murphy (no relation to the namesake of the Racioppi family-run tavern) and the state’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, Racioppi frequently peppered Murphy with questions about the reopening of indoor restaurant dining, but never publicly disclosed that the governor’s decision to close eating establishments – including his own – has had a considerable effect on his family’s personal income. Now that Murphy restored indoor dining, Racioppi’s conflict is gone.

THE OATH BREAKER

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE, true to its name, generally tends to endorse candidates that it thinks will advance the interests of New Jersey’s police officers. So the union turned some heads in September when it endorsed 37th district Republican candidate Edward Durfee, a member of the anti-government militia group Oath Keepers, which played a role in the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol – an event which directly or indirectly led to the deaths of five police officers.

Upon learning of Durfee’s unsavory affiliations, the FOP quickly broke its oath and backed away from Durfee, who went on to lose the general election in a landslide.
“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.”
-Winston Churchill

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AFTER SERVING UNDER Republican Gov. Chris Christie for eight years and running for governor in her own right in 2017, former Lieutenant Gov. Kim Guadagno quietly changed her voter registration from Republican to independent this July. Unlike some other high-profile Republican defections, however, Guadagno’s departure doesn’t seem tied to former President Donald Trump or the rightward lurch of the national Republican Party. Instead, the switch was due to Guadagno’s feud with Monmouth GOP chair Shaun Golden – who dumped Guadagno ally Assemblywoman Serena DiMaso from the party line this year – and her distaste for Jack Ciattarelli, whom she defeated in the 2017 gubernatorial primary. Guadagno was also ousted from her job as head of a Jersey Shore food bank that hired her in 2019.

RUNNER UP Former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, meanwhile, hasn’t quite left the Republican Party – but if she does, she’s made it very clear who’s to blame. Joining a letter with 150 other Republicans and independents, Whitman threatened to form a new party if the current Republican Party doesn’t move past its enthusiasm for Trump and his attendant 2020 election conspiracies.
LOSER OF THE YEAR, OHIO CITIES EDITION

PASSAIC COUNTY SURROGATE Bernice Toledo’s year started poorly when she announced she wouldn’t seek re-election, following accusations that she had used her office to improperly grant the executorship of an estate to a political ally. It got worse in August, when criminal charges were brought against her by the state attorney general. And it hit rock-bottom in September, when a court order suspended her from performing judicial duties in her remaining months in office. Toledo will soon be replaced as surrogate by Zoila Cassanova, a Democrat who won competitive election last month; the next time Toledo appears in a New Jersey court, she’ll be a defendant, not a judge.

RUNNER UP

Joining the ticket of Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle, Tenafly Council President Lauren Kohn Dayton and Teaneck Councilwoman Gervonn Romney Rice had a shot at becoming one of the few off-the-line primary victories in recent New Jersey legislature history. The trio also would have been one of the state’s very few all-women delegations. But Kohn Dayton and Romney Rice ultimately couldn’t come close to Bergen Democrats endorsees (and now Assemblywomen-elect) Shama Haider and Ellen Park; Kohn Dayton only got 3,373 votes, good for 13% of the vote and last place.

RUNNER UP

500 years after Christopher Columbus died, the Italian explorer still managed to stir up trouble when he nearly managed to cancel Christmas in Randolph Township. The township’s school board voted in June to rename Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, causing an outcry; taking the criticism to heart, the board chose to abandon all holidays, referring to each one simply as a “day off.”

Columbus ultimately got the last laugh, though, when local and state politicians waded in to slam the school board for its war on Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Arbor Day. Relenting to the pressure, all holidays are now back on the calendar in Randolph.
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LOW EXPECTATIONS

NOT SINCE PATRICK PASCULLI graced the halls of the statehouse in the late 1970s and sponsored a bill on his first day to get state legislators free tolls on the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike has the bar been set quite so low for an assemblyman from Bayonne.

The new assemblyman will be William B. Sampson IV, a 33-year-old crane operator and member of the International Longshoremen’s Union.

He was the surprise pick by Mayor Jimmy Davis to replace three-term incumbent and onetime Davis ally Nicholas Chiaravalloti. Sampson had never voted in a Democratic primary and has a mother who answers his cell phone, so the expectations bar has been set low for his fledgling career in the legislature.

As long as he doesn’t oversleep and miss Assembly votes, he’ll do better than most people expect— but don’t expect to see him author any landmark legislation.
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CONFRONTED WITH A NEW mandate in the statehouse that would require them to provide proof of vaccination, show a recent negative Covid test, or take a rapid test, Assembly Republicans chose Option D: resist, rebel, and create pandemonium in the capitol. Some legislators decried the mandate as “tyranny,” while others compared the New Jersey statehouse to Russia or China. The performance brought the capitol to a standstill for hours, as the Assembly Republican caucus – camped out in the Assembly chambers in defiance of the mandate.
ASSEMBLY REPUBLICANS can perhaps be forgiven for not understanding precisely what the mandate would entail and how it would be enforced, since it’s changed at least five times. The location of where State Police officers would check vaccination or testing status has been particularly inconsistent: first at the statehouse’s entrances, then outside the Assembly and Senate chambers, then in the statehouse garage, and then back to the statehouse entrances once again. What’s more, on December 2 – the day when Assembly Republicans staged their revolt – state troopers seemed perplexed about how, exactly, to enforce the mandate on unwilling legislators. They ended up doing little to enforce it at all, and an investigation is now underway to determine what went wrong.

RECOGNIZING THAT a dispute of such import called for a quick and timely response, the judiciary set a court date to determine the fate of the mandate for the week of April 11, and conveniently declined to issue a stay in the meantime. Thanks to their efficient schedule, the capitol will only have to seethe in chaos and discord for a minimum of four more months.
Here's to a successful 2021 to all!

Also, a small announcement… It’s time for a change… Parano & Associates has had a tremendous run… but it’s always good to reinvent yourself Stay tuned in 2022 for a brand new company with the same bold vision!

Dave Parano
FOR A LITTLE WHILE last spring, it looked as through two former congressmen, both out of office for more than two decades, would face-off in a Republican primary for State Senate. Dick Zimmer was an assemblyman and state senator before winning a congressional seat in 1990; he left the House to run for the U.S. Senate in 1996 and Michael Pappas became the new congressman. Pappas was ousted by Democrat Rush Holt in 1998. Zimmer and Pappas both sought comebacks in 2000; Zimmer won the primary but lost to Holt by just 651 votes. In 2020, he was among a group of former Republican House members who endorsed Joe Biden for President. After declaring his candidacy for either Senate or Assembly in the 16th legislative district, Zimmer dropped out – his Biden endorsement made him unpalatable to GOP leaders, so no reboot of the Marfy and the Sheep TV ad – and Pappas became the Republican candidate. He lost to Democrat Andrew Zwicker by six points.
BREAKOUT STAR OF THE YEAR

AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER of Project Ready, 35-year-old Shennell McCloud has already built a name for herself as an advocate for empowering young people to take an active role in their communities and to vote in every election, big and small. But it was her performance as a panelist in the official Lieutenant Governor debate between Sheila Oliver and Diane Allen that provided McCloud with an ability to impress the people of New Jersey.
FOR THOSE WHO ARE ROOTING for a Star-Ledger comeback, the resignation of Kevin Whitmer as vice president of content and editor might not help, but it certainly couldn’t hurt. In its prime, the Star-Ledger was a truly outstanding newspaper. The editorial page during the Mort Pye era was consequential. It’s not anymore. The Star-Ledger reporting staff is a fraction of what it once was, print circulation is down more than 70%, and frankly, the quality of their work has been disappointing. Beat reporting has essentially disappeared. It’s not that their staff isn’t talented – many of them are – but the newspaper hasn’t quite figured out who they want to be at a time when people can get their news without them. They act as though they are still the Star-Ledger of the past.

Just like the newspapers like to assign blame to governors and mayors and other elected officials, after 13 years as the editor and decision-maker, Whitmer presided over the Star-Ledger during its period decline, so it’s only fair that readers get to hold him accountable for the ruination of a treasured newspaper. When Whitmer announced that he was “stepping away” from his job, he gave the impression that the decision was his own. But later, Whitmer was forced out after he failed to hit some financial goals set by his employer. He was under tremendous pressure to bring in revenue. And he was doing some funky stuff that was never fully disclosed: he made a deal with a major hospital where they essentially agreed to pay for a reporter who would then cover them. That’s a no-no in journalism. Whitmer also had a partnership with a cannabis industry association and then, I’m told, tried to kill a news story about allegations that the head of that group sexually harassed an employee to protect his revenue stream.

For more than a year, Whitmer made shameless plugs for more money. First, he asked for voluntary $10-a-month contributions. Then he put most of the best news stories behind a paywall and charged readers a subscription fee. Over and over, Whitmer begged readers for money in the interest of “saving local news.” But let’s be factual here: the Star-Ledger is owned by Advance Publications, which according to Forbes, is the 47th largest privately held company in the United States. They own Conde Nast, the Discovery Channel and lots more. They run their business from one of the nicest office buildings in the world, One World Trade Center.

In 2020, Advance put together an all-cash, $730 million deal to buy the Beijing-based Ironman group. They also invested $200 million in a company a mobile games space that allows you to play Wheel of Fortune on your phone. It’s not like the billionaires who own the Star-Ledger can’t afford to fund a better newspaper. They just choose not to. Whitmer declined comment.
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IN A STATE WHERE LIKE New Jersey, where if you’ve seen one judge then you’ve seen one judge, election lawyers frequently make a difference between winning and losing. John Carbone continues to be the Dean of New Jersey Election Law and represents the New Jersey County Clerks Association. In 2021, special recognition has been earned by Tim Howes, Matthew Moench, Raj Parikh, Angelo Genova, Bill Northgrave, Bill Tambussi, Mark Sheridan, Daniel Antonelli and Jarrid Kantor. They are the big league election lawyers you want in the trenches with you when shots are being fired.
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LAWSUIT ON THE LINE

THIS COULD BE A GAME CHANGER in New Jersey politics. A band of progressive candidates and the New Jersey Working Families Alliance are fighting to keep a suit to eliminate the use of organizational lines in ballot design in federal court. They argue a position on the party line lends candidates a measurable — and significant — advantage over off-the-line challengers, further charging that advantage forces candidates without such a position to associate with candidates they would otherwise ignore. Their filing argues that candidates who do not choose to bracket with others can be ineligible for the most preferential spot on the ballot. If they’re not running with a candidate in a pivot position — an office chosen by clerks during the ballot draw — they’ll never be placed in the first column.
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL Beau C. Wilson was benched in January after members of the Atlantic County Board of Elections suggested that he represented their position before a Superior Court Judge without ever seeking their permission. The matter was connected to a challenge of a county commissioner election where some voters received the wrong ballot. Eventually, the judge invalidated the election and forced a do-over.
DEFENDER OF HIS LINE

WHEN YOUR ORGANIZATION line faces a challenge from a legitimate candidate, all eyes are on the county chairman. So, when two sitting members of the New Jersey State Assembly decided to both decide to seek State Senate seat, a win for the organization is a huge deal. For Bergen County Democratic Chairman Paul Juliano, the race for Loretta Weinberg’s 37th district seat between Gordon Johnson and Valerie Vainieri Huttle was a must-win. Juliano called in every chit he had, from North to Central to South Jersey. He became personally involved in the race on a daily basis and withstood personal attacks by Vainieri Huttle and her supporters. The result was about as good as it could get for Juliano: Johnson won with 72% of the vote, carrying every municipality in the district and just about every voting district. For Juliano, Gordon Johnson’s win was the political equivalent of Bobby Thomson’s “Shot Heard Round the World.”
WESTFIELD VOTERS might have given Shelley Brindle a second term as mayor, but the shine is off the onetime rising star who is no longer being mentioned as a possible candidate for higher office. She faced criticism for using federal CARES Act grant money to buy 2,000 upscale canvas tote bags to help rescue Westfield’s downtown economy from the effects of COVID-19 in 2020, but they were never distributed and instead sat in a warehouse. The decision to use federal relief funds to buy tote bags came at a time when other municipalities were funding mental health programs for children, food pantries, rental assistance and homeless prevention. Brindle also took a campaign contribution from a developer the same day she voted to give him a lucrative two-decade tax abatement deal, and then returned it only after she found out the issue would become a news story. But perhaps the worst part of her character – one that could stop her from getting an appointment in Gov. Phil Murphy’s second term – is that some view her as a self-promoter. When U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg came to Westfield to boost Rep. Tom Malinowski, who will face a tough race for re-election next year, it became the Shelley Brindle Show as she plastered social media with photos she copped – with nary a mention of Malinowski.
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MELINDA CIATTARELLI showed some quintessential Jersey attitude and took no crap from King Penna, Hirsh Singh’s campaign advisor, who ambushed her at the NJ 101.5 studio while her husband, Republican gubernatorial candidate Jack Ciattarelli debate and launched attack on the candidate’s family. Ciattarelli was in a private room watching her husband debate Singh when Penna, accompanied by someone holding a camera, launched an attack on Jack Ciattarelli and their children. While Singh was being characterized in the debate as a 36-year-old Peter Pan-like character who still lived at home with his parents, Penna was questioning Melinda Ciattarelli about why their four adult children are still living at home. With grace and style, Ciattarelli completely dismantled Penna, calling him an imbecile and an arrogant asshole.
MORRISTOWN TAX appeal attorney Matthew O’Donnell allegedly committed additional crimes after he entered into a plea agreement with the New Jersey attorney general’s office on July 30, 2018, and while he was the state’s cooperating witness in five small fish political corruption sting operations. In a court appearance on Wednesday, O’Donnell admitted to tampering with public records “between on or about September 7, 2018 and on or about March 1, 2019” – after his initial plea agreement. While O’Donnell had initially agreed to seven-year state prison term, a revised plea agreement he signed on October 25, 2021, appears to have acknowledged more criminal acts beginning about five weeks after he signed his first plea — and eight months after he began cooperating with prosecutors. Despite that, it appears prosecutors offered O’Donnell a better deal that the one he got three years ago: three years in prison instead of seven. That could mean O’Donnell, caught continuing to violate laws while serving as the government’s key witness in the upcoming prosecutions of at least three former elected officials, might have stepped up his level cooperation – something that could lead to charges against additional current or former public officials or former candidates.
UNDERHANDED MOVE OF THE YEAR

KAREN KESSLER HAS finagled her way into a lot of places, like a seat on the panel that determines disciplinary actions for judge even though she advises law firms. Sometimes her potential conflicts appear so amazing that it’s hard to believe she gets away with it. As a public relations executive, Kessler represents the embattled women’s soccer team owned by Phil and Tammy Murphy, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. In the latter role, she organized the sponsorship of a gubernatorial debate between Murphy and Jack Ciattarelli – a role she probably should avoided since she works for the governor. The agreement between the two sides was clear: the Murphy and Ciattarelli campaigns were to get an equal number of tickets, with some seats allocated to the New Jersey PAC for guests and donors. Sneakily, some of those tickets were instead given to Murphy supporters, including Democratic elected officials in Essex County. Kessler, the PR guru, didn’t respond to requests for comment. Neither did New Jersey PAC.
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FORMER NEW JERSEY Gov. Chris Christie has been reinventing himself since high school, when a better player transferred from another school and snagged his starting position as the catcher for the baseball team. The latest self-serving flip-flop was a book called Republican Rescue, which represents the latest refabrication of Christie’s image by distancing himself from his five-year role as Donald Trump’s friend – it’s almost like he’s denying ever knowing the 45th President – and insisting that he’d built a better mouse trap for his party. Despite a national media blitzkrieg, the book was a massive publishing flop, selling a measly 2,289 copies the first week it appeared on the shelves. To put that in perspective, it’s like nearly everyone in Wenonah, New Jersey bought a copy, but literally nobody else.
Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

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UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

PROJECT VERITAS planted someone inside Phil Murphy’s campaign headquarters to surreptitiously record one of their staffers. Some media outlets were okay with running video emanating from hidden cameras – the New Jersey Globe chose not to – but the real issue here was that a woman was covertly lured into a parking garage after getting a call that her care had been hit. That’s a legitimate grievance and one that law enforcement might be looking into. The staffer, Wendy Martinez, was thrust into the limelight and her reputation unfairly impugned. Martinez remains a huge get for anyone seeking public office, and Project Veritas’ attacks have only strengthened her standing in the Democratic Party.

DREAM JOB

SOME PEOPLE DREAM of playing Major League Baseball – or as they get older, being the team’s general manager -- but it seems that Phil Sellinger always wanted to be the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey. That’s where Sellinger began his law career as a clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Anne Thompson and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney from 1981 to 1984. After a hugely successful career in private practice – he was the managing shareholder of Greenberg Traurig’s New Jersey office – the 67-year-old Sellinger is backing as the state’s top federal prosecutor. He was adept enough to get the backing of the state’s two United States Senators and the White House. Unlike some of his predecessors – Thorn Lord, for example – Sellinger has no other ambitions. He sailed through the Senate confirmation process.

Photo: Greenberg Traurig
NEW JERSEY'S ALMOST CENTENARIAN

THE VOTERS OF Tinton Falls re-elected 97-year-old Vito Perillo to a second term as mayor. He’ll be 101 the next time he’s up for re-election. The World War II veteran won 38%-34% in a field of four candidates.

BEST TV AD OF THE YEAR

THE WESTERN-THEMED AD, “Unbelievable” portrayed State Senate candidate Jon Bramnick as “The Fastest Return Call in Government” and features him as a quick-draw on picking up his cell phone and agreeing to help people solve problems with government. Bramnick drew on his experiences as a stand-up comedian – he was named New Jersey’s Funniest Lawyer – in a deadpan parody of a western. But Bramnick’s point is a serious one – that voters want their elected officials to be responsible and accessible. The ad was filmed at Wild West City in Sparta.

SHADOWY PERENNIAL CANDIDATE AND HER CONTROVERSIAL LIFE PARTNER

EVERY YEAR IS a bad year to be shadowy perennial candidate Lisa McCormick and her controversial life partner Jim Devine but 2021 might be their worst one yet. When McCormick sought the Democratic nomination for governor, she submitted nominating petitions that a judge found to be entirely fraudulent. She was tossed off the ballot, and the Secretary of State referred the matter to the attorney general’s office. Perhaps the worst part of the year for these horrid people – not including allegations of multiple zoning violations – is that another judge has permitted pitbull lawyer Raj Parikh to depose them on a lawsuit alleging deliberate sought to represent themselves as the official state party in a Roselle school board election.
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Senator Joseph M. Kyrillos, (Ret.)
IN DECEMBER 2021, judges finally got around to ordering a special election to break a November 2020 tie, putting South Toms River voters back at the polls in March 2022. Here’s what happened: the 2020 election for borough council in South Toms River, New Jersey resulted in a tie between Democrat George Rutzler and the Republican incumbent, Sandford Ross. They each received 772 votes. Then there was a recount and now the Democratic candidates was head by to votes, 772 to 770. Democrat went to court and challenged two of the mail-in ballots. They argued that the ballots shouldn’t be counted because the voters signed them in the wrong place. One of the voters is a man in his 90s, a World War II veteran. The other is a man in his 80s.

The instructions for vote-by-mail ballots can be a little confusing. You need to put the ballot in an inner envelope -- and sign it. Then you put that envelope into an outer envelope mail it. You don’t just put your ballot in an envelope and mail it. Election officials use the inner envelope to make sure that the signatures on the ballots match the ones they have on file. If the signatures match, they open the envelope and put the ballot in a pile to be counted. That’s one of the steps they use to prevent voter fraud. So the two men – they signed both the envelope and their ballots.

The Ocean County Board of Elections invalidated those ballots. They cited a law that says that you can’t put any markings on ballot that would be used to distinguish it. That was meant to preserve ballot secrecy. But a lawyer for the Republicans, Matt Moench, argued that because the voters made the markings themselves, he said, they shouldn’t be disqualified. The judge, a very haimish man named Arnold Goldman – he calls the two voters into court. Both of them testify that they misunderstood the instructions. Both of them said they had never used a vote-by-mail ballot before.

Goldman found their testimonies credible and said their signatures on the ballot were not for any nefarious purposes. Democrats appealed the ruling. In the meantime, Goldman allowed Rutzler, to be sworn in as a councilman in January. In May, the judge enters an order that there would be a special election pm June 29, 2021. Rutzler was ordered to vacate the seat he’d held for less than two months.

Then the Board of Elections comes in and challenges the special election. By a 3-1 vote, the Ocean County Board of Elections challenged the judge’s order. The two Democrats – were joined by Republican Israel Schenkolewski, a Lakewood rabbi who has served on the board for decades. In their appeal, the deputy state attorney general Dominic Giova argued that Judge Goldman erred by reinstating the ballots cast by the two men, saying the signed ballots ought to have nullified them. The appellate court decided to hear the challenge in June. It took them until December to decide. Now taxpayers must pay for a special election that would have been free n November 2021, had the judges been in any sort of rush.
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THE SHOE LEATHER MAN

HANDS DOWN, the best county committee race in the state was in West Orange Ward 4, District 15, where first-time candidate Justin Goldsman won the old-fashioned way: knocking on doors and making his case, one voter at a time, without any hint of entitlement. He defeated challenger Eric Stevenson with 76.8% of the vote in the June Democratic primary by working hard.

PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

AN OFFENSIVE, misogynistic, anti-Semitic caption that Asbury Park Press news photographer Gustavo Martinez Contreras added to his photo of an Orthodox Jewish nurse preparing to administer a COVID-19 vaccination that called her “a fucking hot nurse, a total JAP” led to his termination by Gannett. Only under intense criticism did editor Paul D’Ambrosio finally acknowledge the issue. The photographer later apologized.
RACHEL WAINER APTER was tapped to serve as an Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court on March 15, but the State Senate appears ready to adjourn the legislative session without acting on her nomination. The former ACLU staff attorney and clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has not yet received signoff from a home county senator, Republican Holly Schepisi. Still, Democratic senators haven’t exactly been clamoring for her confirmation and Gov. Phil Murphy has not put public pressure on the Senate to get her on the top court.

THE BIGGEST WTF story of the year comes out of New Jersey’s Capitol City, where Trentonian reporter Isaac Avilucea has carefully chronicled the life and times of Trenton’s embattled city clerk, James Conlon. Facing allegations of sexual harassment, the litigious Conlon claims one of his accusers threatened to “murder” him and that others conspired to help “dispose” of his body. He’s accused the Trentonian of being part of a conspiracy to get him, fought with Latino business leaders, and has gone after multiple elected officials publicly. He keeps saying his story hasn’t been told yet, but it’s possible Trenton has already seen enough.
IN MEMORIAM

In Memory of New Jerseyans who passed away in 2021, including victims of the coronavirus pandemic and Hurricane Ida.

A conservative stalwart who has served in the New Jersey Legislature longer than any other Republican in state history – from 1980 to 2021 – Gerry Cardinale died on February 20. He was 86 and had been campaigning for a 13th term in the State Senate at the time of his passing. Including his tenure as a Demarest school board member and mayor, and his two years as an assemblyman, Cardinale spent 54 years in public office. A dentist and real estate developer, Cardinale had run in GOP primaries for Governor in 1989 and U.S. Congress in 2002.

SENATOR S. GERALD CARDINALE
(1934-2021)

From his perch on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Cardinale had been a forceful watchdog over judicial appointments in New Jersey. In the Senate, Cardinale co-sponsored Joan’s Law and was the prime sponsor of Megan’s Law. He wrote a 2001 law that required parental consent before children took part in public school surveys. In 2002, the Senate passed his bill requiring parental rights for sex education, including a law that stressed abstinence in sex education.

Cardinale was the sponsor of legislation that allowed the involuntary commitment to outpatient treatment that helped families struggling with mental health issues. He pushed for a law helping small businesses and affinity groups obtain health insurance at favorable rates. He was a strong advocate of tort reform, and he wrote a tax fairness law that attracted stock brokers and money managers to relocate to New Jersey without oppressive tax regulations.
A Superior Court Judge who had represented Middlesex County in the New Jersey State Senate and General Assembly, Pete Barnes died on February 22. He was 64. Barnes had spent more than a decade on the Edison Township Council before winning a 2007 special election to replace his father as an assemblyman. Barnes was elected to the State Senate in 2013 and left the Senate in 2016 to become a judge. In October, the state designed a 660-acre area formerly known as Dismal Swamp as the Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve in recognition of a conservation project the late legislator had championed.

For a few years in the 1960s and 1970s, Jim Dugan was an extraordinarily powerful New Jersey Democrat who served as Bayonne Corporation Counsel, as a one-term assemblyman and two-term state senator from Hudson County, and as New Jersey Democratic State Chairman during Gov. Brendan Byrne’s first term. He defeated a 24-year legislator in the 1971 Democratic State Senate primary and served as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee from 1974 to 1978. Dugan died on December 12 at the age of 92.
Bayonne native Raymond J. Donovan, who ran one of the nation’s largest heavy construction companies before President Ronald Reagan nominated him as the U.S. Secretary of Labor after the 1980 election, died on June 2 at age 90. He initially sought to be ordained as a priest before leaving the seminary. He spent summers working as a laborer and became a partner in the Secaucus-based Schiavone Construction Company in 1957, running labor relations, finance and real estate.

Donovan was the co-chairman of the New Jersey Reagan campaign in 1980. He and Reagan met in 1977 — he was asked to raise $10,000 and he delivered $175,000 — and he became a major financial supporter of his bid for the Republican presidential nomination and for the campaign to unseat incumbent Jimmy Carter. It was Donovan’s idea that Reagan kick-off his general election campaign in Jersey City, using the Statue of Liberty as a backdrop while standing in Liberty State Park. Donovan also arranged for Reagan to make a campaign stop in Bayonne.

In 1985, Donovan resigned from the cabinet after the New York Attorney General accused Donovan and five other Schiavone executives of fraud and grand larceny, alleging that they defrauded the New York City Transit Authority during a subway line extension project.

An eight-month trial ended after jurors found Donovan not guilty after just one ballot, and after the verdict was read, most of the dozen jurors cheered and gave the former Labor Secretary a standing ovation.

“’It’s a cruel thing they did to me,’” Donovan said of Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola and his staff, adding a line that has become renowned in political circles: “Which office do I go to get my reputation back?”
A zealous advocate for the election of women to public office and a top Republican fundraiser on the national level, Candy Straight died on June 13. She was 73. Straight was a savvy investment banker and film producer with a long list of friends on both sides of the aisle. She spent nine years as a commissioner of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, including seven years as vice chair. She served on the board of the New Jersey Public Employees Retirement System and on the Rutgers University Board of Governors. In 2002, she was the GOP candidate for Essex County Executive.

A respected maverick Republican who was a dogged opponent of the death penalty, Chet Apy represented Monmouth County in the New Jersey State Assembly from 1968 to 1970 and again from 1972 to 1974. He was a casualty of legislative redistricting in 1969 and regained his seat in 1971. He did not seek re-election in 1973 and later served as a New Jersey Workers Compensation Court Judge. He began his career as a Little Silver councilman. Apy died on May 30 at age 89.
IN MEMORIAM

ASSEMBLYMAN
GEORGE C. RICHARDSON
(1931-2021)

Photo: Ace Alagna/Seton Hall University Library
Newark George Richardson was a civil rights leader who served four terms in the New Jersey State Assembly in the 1960s and 1970s. After winning election to the legislature in 1961, at age 30, Richardson helped pass a bill to curb segregated housing that forced people of color to live in ghettos and sponsored legislation that created a commission to study segregation in public schools, fought racially-biased zoning laws.

The launch of his political career came after a life of early turbulence. His mother died when he was 10, and he began looting factories, got into fights with white gangs, and was arrested and sent to the Essex Youth House twice. He lied about his age and enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 14 and returned to Newark at 17. A year later, he enlisted in the Air Force, where he was promoted to sergeant but was dishonorably discharged after he got caught stealing military property to fund a heroin addiction. But by the time he returned to Newark in the late 1950s, he had beaten his drug habit and turned his life around. In nine campaigns, his past had never become an issue or found out by journalists. After taking office in 1962, Richardson became the only Black member of the New Jersey Legislature. At one point in his first term, he publicly criticized state NAACP leaders for failing to provide strong support of his school segregation legislation.

He angered some top Democrats, including Newark Mayor Hugh Addonizio, when he led a move to create a civilian review board to examine allegations of police brutality in Newark. He also strongly criticized the newly-elected Democratic governor, Richard J. Hughes, for not embracing reforms to end racial biases in housing.

After one term in the Assembly, the 32-year-old Richardson, became a candidate for the Democratic Senate nomination after Essex Democrats decided not to support two-term State Sen Donal C. Fox for re-election. Fox had been openly feuding with Dennis F. Carey, the powerful Essex County Democratic Chairman. Fox and Richardson both appeared before the party screening committee — he said “being Carey’s puppet has no place in my political philosophy” — but Democrats gave the organization line to Assembly Speaker Elmer Matthews. Fox declined to challenge Matthews in the primary and Richardson decided to run for the Senate as an independent after Democrats refused to support him for re-election to the Assembly. He won 4% in the countywide election.

After leaving the legislature, Richardson worked aggressively to register Black voters in Newark and continue fighting Addonizio to establish a civilian police review board. His political standing had been enhanced earlier that year when he worked with local officials to seek calm in the community following the 1967 Newark riots. Richardson’s burgeoning political organization led Essex Democrats to support him for a State Assembly seat in 1967.

Re-elected to the Assembly in 1969 and 1971, Richardson challenged a veteran white congressman, Peter W. Rodino, in the 1972 Democratic primary after the 10th district was redrawn with a Black majority. He finished third in a four-candidate race with just 5%. Essex Democrats dropped him from the ticket in 1973.

Richardson, who also ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate and for Newark mayor and city councilman, devoted the remainder of his career to the nation’s war on drugs. He later moved to Harlem to work as a community organizer before he moved to Trenton a few years before his death on September 24 at age 90.
Nick Felice was a likeable and diligent lawmaker from Bergen County who served in the New Jersey State Assembly from 1982 to 2002. He passed away on August 24 at the age of 94. He won some national attention in 1983 for fielding calls from children since his new phone number was just one digit off from the Santa Claus hotline number. Felice obliged by taking calls from children until the phone number misprinted in some local newspapers was corrected. A former Fair Lawn mayor, he served as Assembly Speaker Pro-Tempore and as chairman of the Assembly Health Committee.

Bob Hollenbeck, a Bergen County Democrat who served six terms in the New Jersey State Assembly in the 1970s and 1980s, died on September 5. He was 89. A former Carlstadt councilman was the sponsor of the New Jersey Homestead Act, the state Water Supply Master Plan and a law that permitted right turns at red lights, Hollenbeck was swept into office in the 1973 Democratic Watergate wave election and lost his seat in Republican Gov. Tom Kean’s landslide re-election in 1985.
Harry McEnroe’s first campaign was in an uphill race against then-Assembly Majority Leader Thomas Kean in 1971. He later went to the Essex County Board of Freeholders before beginning a 16-year stint as an assemblyman in 1979. McEnroe was an expert on recycling and solid waste issues and chaired the Essex County Solid Waste Advisory Council. He ran for Congress in 1992 and after losing the Essex Democratic line in 1995, he nearly pulled off an upset in the primary. McEnroe died on February 8 at 90-years-old.

Renaissance man Dan Todd was the scion of one of New Jersey’s most prominent political family and was elected to the State Assembly in 1967 at age 29, to represent all of Somerset County. As an assemblyman, Todd expressed frustration with the slow pace moving issues forward and bashed internal competition over bill sponsorship. After one term in Trenton, he moved to work on Richard Nixon’s White House staff and in posts at the State and Transportation departments. Later, he helped run the successful gubernatorial campaign of his sister, Christine Todd Whitman. He died on June 3 at age 82.
An affable and transformational former six-term mayor of Hamilton Township, Jack Rafferty died on February 17 at age 82. He won a Hamilton council seat in 1969 and was elected mayor in 1975. Re-elected five times, Rafferty was also an assemblyman representing parts of Mercer and Middlesex counties from 1986 to 1988. He served as New Jersey co-chairman of Ronald Reagan’s 1980 campaign and unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for governor in 1981.

Kenneth Armwood, a beloved Middlesex County Commissioner with a great future still ahead, died unexpectedly on March 29. He was 46-years-old. Armwood was serving his third term in county government as part of a political career that began with his election to the Piscataway school board one year after his high school graduation. He slater served nine years as a councilman and was a former council president.
Fritz Mondale was the attorney general of Minnesota when he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1964 to replace the new vice president, Hubert Humphrey. He was elected vice president in 1976 on a ticket with Jimmy Carter, and was the Democratic nominee for president in 1984 against Ronald Reagan.

A former U.S. Senate Majority Leader and the 1996 Republican presidential nominee, Bob Dole was a World War II hero who was seriously wounded during a German attack and initially left for dead on an Italian battlefield. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1960 and to the U.S. Senate in 1968. He carried New Jersey as the GOP candidate for vice president in 1976.
A second-generation coal miner who became president of the AFL-CIO in 2009, Trumka died on August 4. He was 72 and served as a staff attorney for the United Mine Workers and later spent 13 years as president of that union.

Raised in the New Jersey-adjacent South Bronx, Colin Powell rose to the rank of four-star General in the U.S. Army. He served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as National Security Advisor to President Ronald Reagan, and as U.S. Secretary of State during George W. Bush’s first term.
Ruth Ann Minner was elected as the first woman to serve as governor of Delaware in 2000 and re-elected in 2004. She served two terms as lieutenant governor and as a state senator and state representative. She died at age 86 on November 4.

Pete du Pont represented Delaware as a four-term congressman and two-term governor. He sought the Republican nomination for president in 1988. He was 86 when he passed away on May 8.
IN MEMORIAM

The New Jersey Globe wishes to remember the many members of the New Jersey political community who passed away in 2021.

- Bob Abrams
- John Alati
- Regina Albohn
- Lou Manuel Albi
- Clark Allen
- Lewis Addeo
- Marx Arnowitz
- John Armeno
- Frank Askin
- Marilyn Ayscue
- Avelino Avelenda
- Robert Badini
- Warren Baldwin, Sr.
- John Battisini
- Marlou Belyea
- Lucille Bleeker
- Philip Bolstein
- William Boettcher
- Fred Bost
- Patrick Bottazzi
- Thurston Briscoe
- Bud Broome
- John R. Bruno
- Malcolm Burd
- Clifford Burtoft
- Paul Calociro
- Frank Carpenter
- George Casbona
- Priscilla Read Chenoweth
- Dennis Cifiento
- Kevin Clancy
- Elizabeth Clarken
- Catherine Copp
- Donald Codey
- Robert Costello
- Gene Costill
- John Cipriano
- Lita Colligan
- Lorraine Connors
- Delores Corona
- Charles Datz
- Edwina Davis
- Madelyn Davis
- Delbert Davis
- Louis DeBell
- Carol Anne de Groot
- Laura DeSantis
- David Dichter
- Vincent Dorsa
- Patricia McGarry Drake
- John Patrick Elward, Jr.
- James Failace
- Abigail Fair
- Gwendolyn Faison
- John Feroli
- Ralph Ferrara
- Gerald Fitzpatrick
- Lee Forrester
- John Franklin
- Malcolm Fraser
- Robert Fulper
- Michael Galloway
- Genevieve Gannon
- Peter Garcia
- Michael Garvin
- Donald Gelnaw
- Angie Girgenti
- Jerry Gormley
- Richard Gove
- Bob Grace
- Jane Grall
- Rosemarie Gusciora
- Eileen Gill Gure
- Gregory Hall
- Thomas Hand
- Bernard Hartnett, Jr.
- Robert T. Healey, Sr.
- Michael Hennessy
- Marilyn Rhyne Herr
- Sherry Hutchins-Henderson
- Thomas Higgins
- Leonard Ingrassia
- Honey Campana Jablonski
- Ken Jonson
- Leo Johnson
- Lawson June
- Ed Kasuba
- Robert W. Kean, Jr.
- Leonard Kaiser
- Steve Kalafer
- Thomas Kelaher
- John Patrick Kelly
- Stachia Kloza
- Harry Knowles
- Michael Kovacs
- Jackie Kort
- Judith Ann Krueger
- Eugene Kresge
- Bill Larkin
- Marc Levenson
- John-Edwin Loftus
- Phyllis Marchand
- Anthony Mautone
- David Melitz
- Richard J. McCormack
- Robert McDevitt
- Anita McKeon
- J.P. Miele
- Ralph Morano
- Terry Mulcahy
- Richard Murray
- Kay Myers
- Bill Myrtle
- John W. Noonan
- Ray Odierno
- James O’Connell
- Dr. Declan O’Scanlon, Sr.
- Kenneth Olson
- Nancy Pallotta
- Wanda Payne
- Albert Pelham
- Joe Pisano
- Gregorio Polimeni
- Dorothy Radig
- Helen Reilly
- Joseph Riley
- Carol Rimm
- Mary Louise Eggers Ripnick
- William J. Robinson
- Muriel Rothman
- Bob Rudolph
- Alfred Russo
- Anthony Russo
- Joseph Ryglicki
- John Sarafian
- Peter Sarf
- Stephen Schultz
- Edward Scott, Sr.
- Edward Seaman
- Lena Chang-Sheeran
- Officer Brian Sicknick
- Ben Simmermon
- Joan Slomka
- Al Smith
- Paul Sollami
- Frank Sovinee
- Fred Space
- David Sparks
- Lorraine Hartley Spencer
- James Eugene Stevenson
- Harry Stone
- Lee Stoukas
- Charles Tahaney
- John Tesauro
- Herbert Thomas
- Leonard Tobias
- Jack Trafford
- Thomas Trier
- Thea Unoch
- Mark Urban
- Blanquita Valenti
- Marie Villani
- Maggie Wilson
- John Wojtaszek
- Harold Wovansiker
- Charles Olden Wright
- John Yanish
- Gerry Yavor
- Margaret Young
- Jeff Zeigelheim
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