



LaRueList Café®

LaRueList Café® Presents

LaRueList® Game Changers

— WOMEN'S HISTORY EDITION —



Jeannine LaRue

Decades of leadership.
Still changing the game.

#DecadesOfImpact #LivingLegacy

From the Publisher

By Shanique Taliaferro | **The Game Changers**



This edition was created with care, intention, and deep respect for leadership. LaRueList Game Changers honors people fully — the work they do, the lives they touch, and the responsibility they carry. As Publisher, my role was to help shape and curate that vision so it could be shared clearly and thoughtfully.

I have been deeply influenced and mentored by Jeannine Frisby LaRue. She is known by many as "Mama LaRue" because she leads with generosity, wisdom, and an instinct to uplift, always making room for others to shine. That spirit guided how this work was approached and how recognition lives on these pages.

With so many deserving women, narrowing the list for this first edition required care, conversation, and trust. This edition is an offering and a beginning — not a conclusion — with many more LaRueList editions to come. Thank you for spending time with this edition. My hope is that these pages connect you — to Jeannine Frisby LaRue, and to the many women whose leadership continues to shape lives, communities, and generations — each a Game Changer in her own way.

-Shanique Taliaferro
Publisher



Clearing a Path Forward

There comes a moment when you realize you are no longer walking a path — you are clearing one. I felt that truth in rooms where I was often the only woman, sometimes the only Black woman, always aware that my presence carried a responsibility larger than my name.

I began my journey as a teacher, grounded in the belief that education, care, and truth change lives. That belief carried me into public service and leadership — into spaces where policy is written, industries are regulated, and decisions shape families, cities, and generations. I know the cost of being first. I know what it means to leave rooms changed by your presence.

Honoring the Matriarchs and Other Game Changers

Game Changers are not defined by a single moment — they are defined by momentum. They are women who step into systems as they exist and refuse to accept them as they are. Some cleared paths long ago. Others are shaping them now. This list honors women across generations — the matriarchs who paved the way, the leaders carrying the work forward today, and those whose impact continues to guide us even though they are no longer with us. This is my love letter to women who led anyway — and to those still walking forward.



Photography: Courtesy of LaRueList Cafe®

*“Game Changers
are not defined by
a single moment
— they are defined
by momentum.”*

– Jeannine LaRue

Founder, LaRueList Cafe®

For the women who cleared the path – and those still walking it.

— A LaRueList Cafe® Editorial Series

LaRueList[®] Game Changers

TOP 5 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

1



#1 - Sheila Y. Oliver

The Late Lieutenant Governor

A trailblazer whose leadership, service, and impact will forever shape the future of New Jersey.

LaRueList® Game Changers

TOP 5 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

2



#2 - Governor Mikie Sherrill

The State of New Jersey

Driving leadership, service, and progress for the people of New Jersey.

LaRueList® Game Changers

TOP 5 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

3



#3 - Congresswoman

Bonnie Watson Coleman

The State of New Jersey

The Congresswoman for New Jersey's 12th Congressional District whose leadership continues to uplift communities across the state and beyond.

#3 Top 5 Honoree



LaRueList® Game Changers

TOP 5 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

4



#4 - Senator Shirley Turner

The State of New Jersey

A long-serving State Senator and Senate President Pro Tempore whose leadership continues to shape policy and strengthen communities across New Jersey.

#4 Top 5 Honoree



LaRueList® Game Changers

TOP 5 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

5



#5 - Christine Todd Whitman

Former New Jersey Governor

A former governor whose leadership continues to shape conversations on governance, policy, and principled leadership nationwide.



LaRueList[®]

MATRIARCHS OF IMPACT

Honoring women whose leadership, service, and influence
have shaped communities across generations



Amina Baraka

Pioneering poet and cultural force of the Black Arts
Movement; mother of Ras Baraka.



Ruthi Zinn Byrne

Founder of Zinn Graves & Field, Inc.,
advancing civic and nonprofit leadership.



Anne Y. Kim Cha

Community Leader · President advancing
Korean American seniors.



Allison Davis

Media leader and NABJ founding member
amplifying diverse voices.



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MATRIARCHS OF IMPACT

Honoring women whose leadership, service, and influence
have shaped communities across generations



Karin Elkis

Sr. VP, Optimus Partners. Long-standing
leadership in public affairs/government service.



Hazel Gluck

Public Servant · Set the bar for women in
New Jersey civic life hands down



Lynne Hurwitz

Civic Leader · Longtime community advocate
in public service.



Dr. Theodora Lacey

Civil Rights Advocate · Leader in New Jersey
school integration.



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MATRIARCHS OF IMPACT

Honoring women whose leadership, service, and influence
have shaped communities across generations



Susan Bass Levin

Philanthropist · Entrepreneur · Strategist · Former
state and municipal leader.



Margarita Muñiz

Former Newark Deputy Mayor · Public
leadership and higher education



Idida Rodriguez

Government Affairs Leader · Managing partner
shaping New Jersey public policy.



Judy Shaw

Political Strategist · First woman Chief of Staff
to a New Jersey Governor.



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MATRIARCHS OF IMPACT

Honoring women whose leadership, service, and influence
have shaped communities across generations



Rev. Dr. Deborah L Stapleton

Interfaith & Community Leader · Faith leader with a
legacy of service.



Hazel Stewart

Church Mother · Spiritual pillar supporting
pastors across generations.



Myra Terry

Founder - Established multiple organizations
advancing women in politics.



Cleopatra Tucker

Community Matriarch · A lifelong public
servant shaping communities in Newark and
beyond.



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MATRIARCHS OF IMPACT

Honoring women whose leadership, service, and influence
have shaped communities across generations



Barbara Wallace

Former Mayor · Decades of strengthening
communities through public service.



Loretta Weinberg

Political Trailblazer · Longtime New Jersey
legislator and former Senate Majority Leader.



Loretta Winters

Civil Rights Advocate · NAACP Leader
Advancing equity and justice across New Jersey.



Joan Wright

Public Servant · Decades long career in
private/public sectors; both appointed and elected.





Recognizing the strategists and operators whose work shapes elections, governance, and public influence



Saily Avelenda

Senior advisor, NJ Democratic State Committee ·
Leadership and advocacy



Estina Baker

Senior political and labor strategist ·
Leadership and worker advocacy



T. Missy Balmir

Founder, Thorough Planning · Campaign
planning and operations



Laura Bustamante

Jersey City Chief of Staff · Has numerous
successful campaigns under her belt





Recognizing the strategists and operators whose work shapes elections, governance, and public influence



Marilyn Davis

Founder, MD Connects
Strategic engagement and outreach



Dyese Davis

Democratic County Chair · Leading party strategy
and civic engagement



Stephenine Dixon

National political strategist
Civic engagement and organizing



Gail Gordon

Republican political strategist · Fundraising and
donor engagement





Recognizing the strategists and operators whose work shapes elections, governance, and public influence



Jeanette Hoffman

President, Marathon Public Affairs · Strategic communications



Jennifer Holdsworth

Senior political strategist and attorney · Campaign leadership



Geri Jannarone

Political strategist · Campaign leadership and organizational strategy



Tricia Maguire

Founder & Chairwoman, Elect Women NJ · Political leadership





Recognizing the strategists and operators whose work shapes elections, governance, and public influence



Laura Matos

Partner, MAD Global Strategy · Public affairs and advocacy leadership



Della McCall

Campaign base vote director · Electoral strategy and field operations



Janice Mironov

Mayor & County Chair · Municipal governance and leadership



Peg Schaffer

Vice Chair, NJ Democratic State Committee · Political leadership





Honoring women serving at the highest levels of state government, whose leadership strengthen our communities.



Louise Scott-Rountree

Faith-based leader · Community advocacy and public service



Hira Shaikh

Senior public affairs and branding strategist, Moxie



Regena Thomas

Former NJ Secretary of State · Government leadership



Amy Torres

Executive Director, NJ Alliance · Immigrant justice advocacy



LaRueList®

STATE POWERHOUSES

Presenting appointed women in the Mikie Sherrill Administration
and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Alex Ball

Chief of Staff • Governor Sherrill, providing senior leadership and strategic coordination.



Nabilia Baptiste

Chief of Staff • Lieutenant Governor Caldwell, guiding executive priorities and coordination.



Nicole Brossoie

Senior Director • Governor Sherrill, oversees the appointments process.



Dana M. Burley

Clerk • NJ General Assembly, overseeing legislative records and administration.



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Presenting appointed women in the Mikie Sherrill Administration
and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Margo Chaly

Acting Secretary · Higher Education, advancing
access and innovation statewide.



Jess Cohen

Executive Director · NJ Senate Majority Office,
managing legislative operations.



Mary Cruz

Acting Chair and CEO · NJ Civil Service
Commission, leading workforce policy.



Jen Davenport

Attorney General · State of New Jersey, serving
as chief law enforcement officer.



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STATE POWERHOUSES

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and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Kellie Doucette

Chief Operating Officer · Governor Sherrill,
overseeing executive operations and performance



Shirley U. Emehelu

Acting State Comptroller · State of NJ
providing fiscal oversight and accountability.



Jeanne Hengemuhle

Acting Superintendent · New Jersey State
Police, leading statewide law enforcement.



Jill Hirsch

President and CEO · NJ Sports and Exposition
Authority, overseeing major venues.



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STATE POWERHOUSES

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and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Priya Jain

Acting Commissioner · Transportation, directing
infrastructure and mobility initiatives.



Rosalie Johnson

Acting Chief Administrator · NJ Motor Vehicle
Commission, overseeing operations.



Victoria Kuhn

Commissioner · Department of Corrections,
overseeing facilities and rehabilitation.



Lily Laux

Acting Commissioner · Education, guiding
statewide education policy.



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and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Yvonne L. Mays

Brigadier General and Commissioner · Military
Affairs, leadership and readiness.



Yolanda Melville

Director · NJ Division on Civil Rights,
advancing civil rights enforcement.



Susan Ochs

Acting Commissioner · Banking and Insurance,
overseeing financial regulation.



Vereliz Santana

Community Engagement Strategist · Coalition
building and outreach.



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Presenting appointed women in the Mikie Sherrill Administration
and legislative offices leading critical state conversations



Jennifer Sellitti

Public Defender · State of New Jersey, leading
statewide public defense services.



Jacquelyn A. Suárez

Commissioner · Department of Community Affairs,
supporting housing and local government.



Catherine Tung

Policy Chief · Governor Sherrill, leading policy
development and legislative strategy.



Regina Wilder

Director · Internal and Constituent Relations,
Assembly Majority Office.





LaRueList[®]

ELECTED EXCELLENCE

Recognizing distinguished elected leaders trusted by voters to guide policy, governance, and the future of communities.



Governor Mikie Sherrill



Congresswoman Bonnie Watson
Coleman (D)
Congressional District 12



Congresswoman LaMonica
McIver (D)
Congressional District 10



Congresswoman Nellie
Pou (D)
Congressional District 9



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Senator Renee C.
Burgess (D)
Legislative District 28



Senator Kristin M.
Corrado (R)
Legislative District 40



Senator Nilsa I.
Cruz-Perez (D)
Legislative District 5



Senator Linda R.
Greenstein (D)
Legislative District 14



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Senator Angela V.
McKnight (D)
Legislative District 31



Senator M. Teresa
Ruiz (D)
Legislative District 29



Senator Holly T.
Schepisi (R)
Legislative District 39



Senator Britnee N.
Timberlake (D)
Legislative District 34





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Senator Shirley K.
Turner (D)
Legislative District 15



Assemblywoman Rosaura
"Rosy" Bagolie (D)
Legislative District 27



Assemblywoman Katie
Brennan (D)
Legislative District 32



Assemblywoman Linda S.
Carter (D)
Legislative District 22





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Assemblywoman Alixon
Collazos-Gill (D)
Legislative District 27



Assemblywoman Margie
Donlon M.D. (D)
Legislative District 11



Assemblywoman Mitchelle
Drulis (D)
Legislative District 16



Assemblywoman Aura K.
Dunn (R)
Legislative District 25





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Assemblywoman Dawn
Fantasia (R)
Legislative District 24



Assemblywoman Victoria A.
Flynn (R)
Legislative District 13



Assemblywoman Shama A.
Haider (D)
Legislative District 37



Assemblywoman Andrea
Katz (D)
Legislative District 8





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Assemblywoman Tennille
R. McCoy (D)
Legislative District 14



Assemblywoman Carmen Theresa
Morales (D)
Legislative District 34



Assemblywoman Carol A.
Murphy (D)
Legislative District 7



Assemblywoman Ellen J.
Park (D)
Legislative District 37





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Assemblywoman Luanne
Peterpaul (D)
Legislative District 11



Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor
Marin (D)
Legislative District 29



Assemblywoman Annette
Quijano (D)
Legislative District 20



Assemblywoman Verlina
Reynolds Jackson (D)
Legislative District 15





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Assemblywoman Maureen
Rowan (D)
Legislative District 2



Assemblywoman Heather
Simmons (D)
Legislative District 3



Assemblywoman Lisa
Swain (D)
Legislative District 38



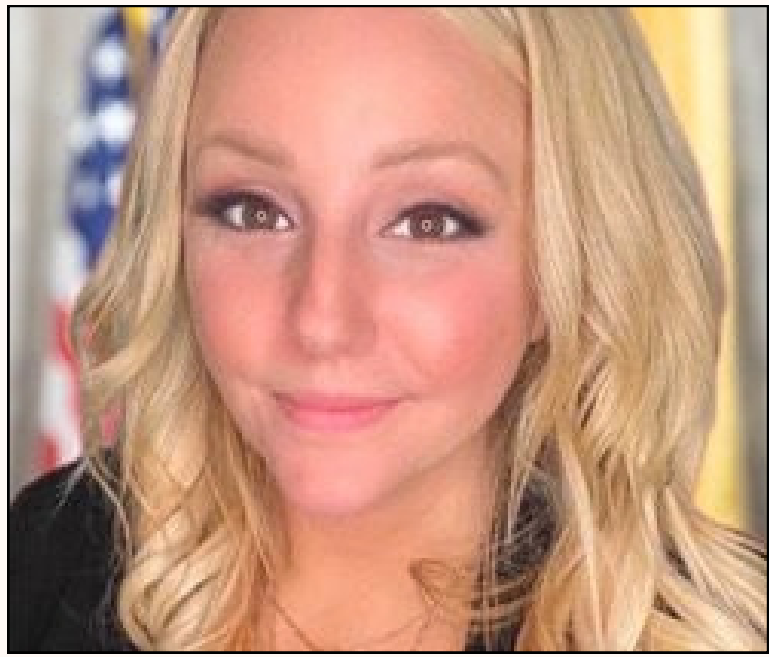
Assemblywoman Shanique
Speight (D)
Legislative District 29



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Assemblywoman Marisa
Sweeney (D)
Legislative District 25



Assemblywoman Cleopatra G.
Tucker (D)
Legislative District 28





Celebrating influential executives whose leadership and vision drive innovation, opportunity, and economic growth across NJ



Adenah Bayoh

Real Estate Developer and Restaurateur •
Entrepreneurship



Megan Cryan Bell

NJ State President EVP Public Affairs Moxie
Strategies • Government affairs



Elisa Charters

Co-Founder and President Latina Surge • Latina
leadership



Tai Cooper

Chief Community Development Officer NJEDA •
Economic development





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Resources • Energy leadership



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Janellen Duffy

Executive Vice President River Crossing
Strategy Group • Government affairs



Brenda Ross Dulan

Principal The Ross Dulan Group • Political
strategy





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Aisha Glover

Global Head of Urban Innovation Audible •
Urban innovation



Karen Kessler

CEO Kessler PR Group • Strategic
communications



Wendy Lazarus

Principal WML Public Affairs •
Public policy



Amy Mansue

CEO Inspira Health • Healthcare
leadership





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Maggie Moran

Founding CEO Moxie Strategies • Political strategy and business development



Cheryl Norton

COO & EVP American Water • Infrastructure leadership



Cristina Pinzon

Founder President Stateside Affairs • International policy



Arlene Quinones Perez

Equity Partner DeCotiis Law Firm • Legal advocacy



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Marelyn Rivera

Founding CEO Conexion • Community engagement



Clarisa Romero

CEO Career Satisfaction Academy • Career development



Michele N Siekerka

President and CEO NJ Business and Industry Association • Business advocacy





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Deb Tantleff

Founding Principal TANTUM • Real estate development



Deb Visconi

President and CEO Bergen New Bridge Medical Center • Healthcare innovation



Carol Voorhees

CEO NJM Insurance Group • Insurance leadership



Melanie Willoughby

Executive Director NJ Business Action Center
Business advocacy and economic growth



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INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Executive Director NJ Public Health
Institute • Public health leadership



Leslie Anderson
President & CEO NJ Redevelopment
Authority • Economic development



Lisa Asare
President & CEO NJ Maternal & Infant
Health Authority • Maternal & infant health



Jacqueline Baptiste
Executive Advisor African American Chamber
of Commerce • Business leadership



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Celebrating influential leaders driving policy, equity, and systemic change across New Jersey



Cathleen Bennett

President & CEO NJ Hospital Association •
Healthcare leadership



First Lady Rosalee Boyer

Co-founder Salvation and Social Justice •
Organizational leadership



Jesse Burns

Executive Director League of Women
Voters NJ • Civic engagement



Mary Coogan

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NJ • Child advocacy



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Global Head of Corporate Marketing
Novartis • Corporate leadership



Melissa Fox
Chief Operating Officer Acenda Integrated
Health Behavioral • Health Leadership



Vivian Cox Fraser
President & CEO Urban League of Essex
County • Economic empowerment



Samra Haider
President & CEO Geraldine R Dodge •
Foundation Philanthropy



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Jeanne LoCicero
Legal Director ACLU of New Jersey
• Civil rights



Kaylee McGuire
Deputy Commissioner NJ Department of
Human Services • Aging and Disability services



Pamela Morgan
Chair Zonta International UN
Committee • Global advocacy



Katherine Nunnally
President & CEO Smith Family
Foundation • Philanthropy





Celebrating influential leaders driving policy, equity, and systemic change across New Jersey



Henal Patel

Policy Director NJ Institute for Social Justice • Policy leadership



Lata Reddy

Senior Vice President Prudential Financial Chair • Prudential Foundation



Amber Randolph

Associate Vice President Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • Health equity



Lilia Rios

Founder La Providencia • Community leadership



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Nicole Rodriguez

President New Jersey Policy Perspective
• Economic policy



Linda Schwimmer

President & CEO NJ Health Care Quality
Institute • Healthcare policy



Maisha Simmons

Associate Vice President, Robert Wood
Johnson Foundation • Equity and social justice



Debbie Walsh

Director Center for American Women and
Politics • Women's leadership



LaRueList[®] SOCIAL IMPACT

Celebrating women driving change, advancing equity, expanding opportunity, and transforming communities through leadership.



Helen Archontou

CEO · YWCA of Bergen County
Community Impact



Valerie Arthur

Executive Director · Christ Centered in the
CityBoard Chair · Smith Family Foundation



Staci Berger

CEO · Housing & Community Development
Network NJ Housing justice



Laurel Brennan

Secretary-Treasurer · NJ AFL-CIO
Labor leadership



LaRueList® SOCIAL IMPACT

Celebrating women driving change, advancing equity, expanding opportunity, and transforming communities through leadership.



Sandy Castor

Executive Director · Middlesex County
Economic Development



Deborah Cornavaca

Director of Government Relations · NJ
Public policy



Teska Frisby

Gun Violence Prevention Lead · Mercer
County Community safety



Samantha Gordon

Communications Director · Salvation and
Social Justice Strategic communications



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Celebrating women driving change, advancing equity, expanding opportunity, and transforming communities through leadership.



Racquel Romans-Henry
Director of Policy · Salvation and Social
Justice Social justice



Jennifer Higgins
President · AFT New Jersey
Education leadership



Ana Maria Hill
State Director, NJ · 32BJ SEIU
Labor leadership



Dena Marie Mattola Jaborska
Executive Director · NJ Citizen Action
Economic justice



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Karen Bellamy Lewis
Senior Staff · IFPTE
Labor policy



Michele Liebttag
President · Mercer County Central Labor
Council Labor leadership



Brielle Winslow-Majette
Acting Director · Garden State Equality
LGBTQ+ advocacy



Dee Marshall
CEO · AI Training Plus
Workforce innovation



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Patricia Campos Medina

Executive Director · Worker Institute at
Cornell Worker rights



Antoinette Miles

State Director · NJ Working Families
Economic justice



Taraun Tice McKnight

Deputy Administrator · Mercer County
Public service



Nedia Morsy

Director · Make the Road NJ
Immigrant rights



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Kathy Ahearn O'Brien
Executive Director · Hyacinth
Public health



Debbie Parks
Associate Director, NJ · AFSCME
Workforce advocacy



Michelle Richardson
Executive Director · Hudson County Economic
Development



Laura Fenster Rothchild
COO · Isles, Inc.
Community development



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Petal Robertson
Vice President · NJEA
Education advocacy



Safanya Searcy
Director · SEIU
Labor strategy



Robin Walton
Chair · Southern NJ Chamber of Commerce
Business leadership



Kaitlyn Wojtowicz
Executive Director · Planned Parenthood
Reproductive rights





Celebrating the next wave of women shaping what's ahead through innovation, influence, and bold leadership.



Luisa Rodriguez-Aponte

President · 100 Hispanic Women NJ
Community leadership



J. Noelle Baptiste

Co-founder · Noir Marketing & Design
Marketing and branding



Jade (Mostyn) Bechelli

Chief of Staff · Department of Human Services
Public service



Shadaya Bennet

Chief of Staff · Assemblywoman Speight
Government leadership





Celebrating the next wave of women shaping what's ahead through innovation, influence, and bold leadership.



Kenya (Kenny Bee) Bullock
School Programs and Partnerships Manager ·
Count Basie Center Arts education



Skye Chang
Process Engineer II · IPS
Engineering and innovation



Alea Couch
Senior Policy Advisor · Governor's Office
Housing and Community Revitalization



Emma Corrado
Deputy Chief Operating Officer · Governor's
Office Government operations





Celebrating the next wave of women shaping what’s ahead through innovation, influence, and bold leadership.



Theresa Dowd

Manager, Public Relations & Communications ·
Hackensack Meridian Health Public relations



Hannah Doherty

Founder and CEO · areweinloveprod
Creative production



Athina Fassu

Director of Legislative Affairs · Department of
State Policy and legislation



Alyia Frisby

Owner · Miss Frisby Haircare
Entrepreneurship





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Fatima N. Heyward
President · Young Democrats of America
Political leadership



Siming Hsu
Principal of Client Engagement · Moxie
Strategic communications



Paige Johnson
Account Manager · BASF
Corporate leadership



Parul Aneja Khemka
Chair · South Asians for America NJ
AAPI political and civic leadership





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Elena Laughton

Public Information Manager · NJ Alliance for
Action Public affairs



Krishna Martes

Chief of Staff · Assemblyman Kearney
Legislative leadership



Anna Martinez

Director · NJ Division on Women
Women's policy



Emy Quispe

Chief of Staff · Department of Labor
Workforce development





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Thalia Sirjue

Chief of Staff · Department of Health
Public health



A'Dorian Murray-Thomas

Founder and CEO · SHE Wins Inc.
Women's empowerment



Daniela Carolina Velez

Director · NJ Division on Women
Women's policy



Lana Vercellino

Outreach Specialist · Port Authority
Public service



Clearing a Path Forward

There comes a moment when you realize you are no longer walking a path — you are clearing one. I felt that truth in rooms where I was often the only woman, sometimes the only Black woman, always aware that my presence carried a responsibility larger than my name.

I began my journey as a teacher, grounded in the belief that education, care, and truth change lives. That belief carried me into public service and leadership — into spaces where policy is written, industries are regulated, and decisions shape families, cities, and generations. I know the cost of being first. I know what it means to leave rooms changed by your presence.

Honoring the Matriarchs and Other Game Changers

Game Changers are not defined by a single moment — they are defined by momentum. They are women who step into systems as they exist and refuse to accept them as they are. Some cleared paths long ago. Others are shaping them now. This list honors women across generations — the matriarchs who paved the way, the leaders carrying the work forward today, and those whose impact continues to guide us even though they are no longer with us. This is my love letter to women who led anyway — and to those still walking forward.



Photography: Courtesy of LaRueList Cafe®

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are not defined by
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by momentum.”*

– Jeannine LaRue

Founder, LaRueList Cafe®

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