



The 25 most influential York countians

It was hard to choose just 25.

Daily Record/Sunday News

Article Last Updated: 06/03/2008 04:15:30 PM EDT

In retrospect, 25 was far too few.

Even a list of 50 or 100 of our community's most influential people would have had glaring omissions -- people who do so much to make our community work, often in low-key, unheralded ways, who deserve recognition.

But two weeks ago, we asked readers to help us select 25 of the most influential York countians -- so 25 it is (actually 26, as we added a bonus gadfly at the end). Thank you to the many readers who offered thoughtful suggestions. Our hope is that this will create discussion about community leadership and recognize the achievers.

The Daily Record/Sunday News editorial board made the final decisions based on these criteria: We chose people who currently live in York County and who are actively exerting influence on our community today -- for better or worse (though mostly for better).

Disagree with our choices? Comment on this story. Offer your own list.

Read the picks of Tom Norris, who made this list but also sent in his own complete list.

Read editor and historian James McClure's thoughts on 25 influential people from York County history.

Here, in alphabetical order, are our picks:

Abe Amoros: A leader in York's Latino community, he's served as a city council member and has been involved with many local organizations. He has also served in the administration of Gov. Ed Rendell. And he recently completed a stint as interim executive director of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party -- a good friend to have in Harrisburg.

Louis Appell: If we had to single out one single most influential York countian, it would be Mr. Appell. His charitable contributions could fill a book, and his influence as a businessman is legendary.

Bruce Bartels: The president of WellSpan Health heads one of -- if not the -- largest employers in the county.

John Brenner: Mayor of our county seat, he wields a great deal of influence over the present and future success of the entire Metro-York region.

Trish Calvani: President of the multi-branch York County Library System. It's hard to overstate the influence of good libraries if we hope to have a literate, well-read community.

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Felicia Dell: The York County Planning Commission director oversees the blueprint for development in a community struggling with suburban sprawl. We only wish she had more influence to direct smart growth -- as the planning department serves largely as an advisory agency. The Legislature should give her agency more regulatory teeth.

Sally Dixon: The Memorial Hospital president and CEO is looking to expand -- possibly at the site of the former Hawk Lake golf course in West Manchester Township. She's assuring York's smaller hospital can help meet the county's growing medical needs.

Art Glatfelter: Philanthropist, wise man, major player in Democratic circles -- the insurance company owner is in a handful atop a short list when it comes to exerting influence in our county.

Voni B. Grimes: This retired Penn State York exec and tireless volunteer connects people with ideas across the many communities that make up our community.

Michael Helfrich: The self-described "creek freak" started as a young radical fighting pollution in the Codorus. In the process, he managed to gain the respect and cooperation of people of local influence. Now he serves as a Susquehanna Riverkeeper.

Jan Herrold: She's been a behind-the-scenes catalyst in the YorkCounts effort as well as with the nonprofit community. She's also an advocate

for education, health care and women's and children's issues.

Bob Kinsley: Is there a road, bridge or building in York County Mr. Kinsley didn't build? Well, of course. But his construction firm is everywhere -- and so is his influence when it comes to raising funds for good causes. He was the driving force behind the new visitor center at Gettysburg.

Bev Mackereth: The Republican state representative is one of the most influential elected officials in our county.

Eric Menzer: In the administration of former York Mayor Charlie Robertson, Mr. Menzer really ran the show. Now in the private sector, he exerts influence as the leader of YorkCounts and its promising Metro-York initiative.

Steve Nickol: Alas, the influence of the Republican state rep from Hanover might wane after his retirement this year. But he's still the guy other lawmakers go to for smart analysis on various issues.

Tom Norris: The former head of the Glatfelter paper company, he is an effective leader of too many groups and boards to list. See elsewhere on this page for his rendition of the most influential people.

Todd Platts: Our congressman -- possibly for life if he's not elected president (a self-confessed goal). He's the core of the dominant local Republican Party.

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Bob Pullo: The former York Federal CEO's legacy in this town is as grand as the theater that bears his name at Penn State York. In retirement, he still exerts great positive influence locally.

Larry Richardson: Head of the multi-branch YMCA, he's been involved in redeveloping affordable housing in the city, as well as the Y's wonderful new aquatic center at the former Farquhar Park pool.

Joanne Riley: The executive director of the Cultural Alliance of York County effectively oversees an innovative system of funding the arts in our community.

Ryan Sattler: He's the board chairman of York County Community Against Racism, a group working to open eyes to the ugly undercurrent of prejudice that exists in our community. Such efforts are certainly a positive influence.

Bobby Simpson: The executive director of Crispus Attucks Association doesn't just run a community center in the city, he's a leader in the community. He builds up young lives as well as the city itself through redevelopment projects.

Deb Stock: The executive director of the YWCA is helping to expand this wonderful community resource -- among other projects, buying and putting to good use the building that has housed the York Spanish American Center.

Jeanette Torres: The York city school board president is an emerging leader in York County's growing Latino and educational community.

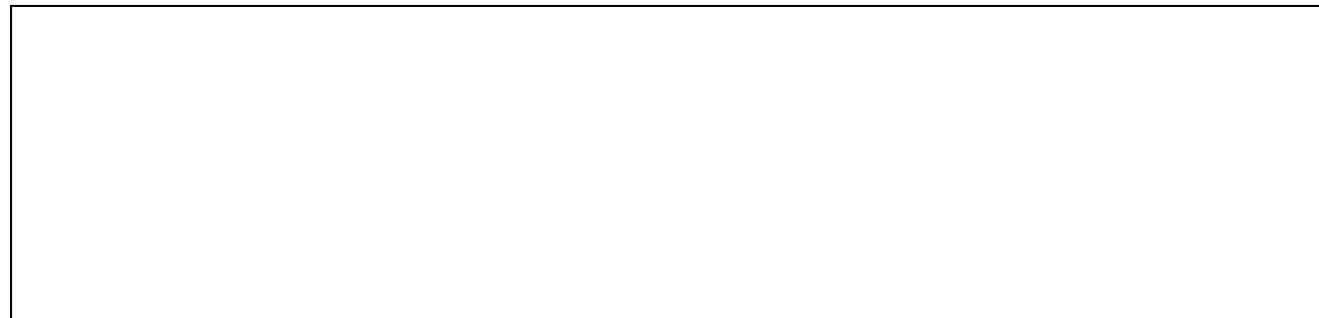
Tom Wolf: The Better York stalwart eased out of his family business and into public service as state Secretary of Revenue. He's certainly put enough of his own revenue into good projects in York. He's rumored to be considering a gubernatorial bid. Go for it, Mr. Wolf, and jump to the very top of the most influential list.

Bonus gadfly: Some gadflies are influential. Some are just, well, gadflies of the most unsavory sort. You could put Pastor Jim Grove in both categories. While he doesn't seem all that influential in persuading folks to adopt his extreme political or religious views, he's influential when it comes to sticking up for his constitutional rights -- actually, *your* constitutional rights. Try to prevent him from exercising freedom of speech, assembly or religion, and he'll see you in court.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think about the list? Talk about it on [The Exchange](#) . Click on 'Countywide and statewide discussion.'

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