

BUSINESSPROFILE

MCMORRIS MAKES HIS MOVE

At first glance, Perennial Strategy Group founder Lamell McMorris, could be mistaken for one of those high-powered lawyers or lobbyists who occupy offices near the White House. A closer look reveals a self-starter whose passion for justice, equality and empowerment has brought him to the negotiation table on behalf professional sports' top unions and prominent Fortune 500 companies, turned him into a top sports and entertainment agent (a rarity in this town), and made him a rising star on the city's rapidly changing social scene.

McMorris' desire to effect change dates back to a city-wide walkout of Chicago schools he led as a teenager. He has known no limits since. As a young entrepreneur, he started Perennial Strategy Group on his own in 2002. With just a telephone and a desk, he used his connections and networking to meet others and further the business. After a phone call from a friend who was an NBA referee, McMorris and Perennial were brought on as representation for the NBA Referees Unions, and Perennial Sports and Entertainment was born.

Soon after, Perennial began bringing on athletes as clients as well, managing their day-to-day affairs. But, reverting back to his roots, McMorris wanted to work with goal-oriented professionals looking to achieve their personal dreams in addition to contributing to society, NFL players and Perennial clients Kris Jenkins and Leigh Torrence, for example, have started their own foundations with Perennial's help. "In a business that has been overcome by recruiting scandals and the greed of athletes and agents," he says, "being a Perennial client is not about receiving the biggest paycheck possible, it is about leveraging success and creating a fulfilling life."

That mix of work-meets-play-for-a-cause was evident when the Perennial family of businesses hosted "Party with a Purpose 2008" at the Democratic National Convention in Denver and during the inauguration when Perennial Sports and Entertainment hosted "Artists and Athletes for a Cause." Held at the House of Sweden in Georgetown, Perennial made financial contributions to Ne-Yo's Compound Foundation as well as the Carmelo Anthony foundation. In a town of power players, McMorris is proving that the rules of the game can change just as fast as the players themselves. **WL**



Lamell McMorris



From left: Bob Greenstein, Bruce Riedel, Gail McGovern, David Zaslav, Chuck Todd

UP NEXT: This "leviathan among lobbies" only has about 100,000 members, but its impact on the Hill is equal to or greater than that of much bigger organizations.

NEWT GINGRICH

Founder, American Solutions

BIG THINKER: After 10 terms in Congress and a few years in the political wilderness, the former Speaker has emerged as one of the most influential thought leaders in the GOP. **TICKET TO 2012:** Speculation abounds on a possible presidential run.

KAREN IGNAGNI

President and CEO, America's Health Insurance Plans

HEALTHY BACKING: The outspoken head of the nation's largest health insurance lobby represents 1,300 member companies, which provide insurance for 200 million Americans. **ROUND 1:** Expect Ignagni to play a major role in complex healthcare negotiations.

WAYNE LAPIERRE

CEO, National Rifle Association

GOOD SHOT: Under LaPierre's leadership, NRA membership has grown to nearly four million, with an annual budget of \$120 million. **NEXT BATTLE:** The NRA hopes to block the Obama administration's expected efforts to reinstate a ban on assault weapons that expired in 2004.

TONY PODESTA

President, Podesta Group

GROWING: Head of one of the most successful bi-partisan shops in town, with the changing economy, Podesta has taken on more financial service, energy and health care clients than ever before. **ART AND POLITICS:** Tony and wife Heather, the ultimate K Street power couple, bought Shepard Fairey's iconic HOPE portrait of Barack Obama and donated it to the National Portrait Gallery.

ROBERT RABEN

Owner and Founder, Raben Group

NICHE: A political appointee under Atty. General Janet Reno, today Raben's boutique lobbying shop is one of the most successful in the city. **SALON:** Raben is perhaps best known for hosting salon discussions at his house in Logan Circle with well known journalists and politicians.

H. ALEXANDER ROBINSON

Executive Director/CEO, National Black Justice Coalition

BAND PLAYS ON: In a city with the nation's highest rate

of HIV, Robinson helps raise awareness of the epidemic, and the need for greater activism. **BUILDING BRIDGES:** In January, Robinson and NBJC sponsored the first-ever summit between black church and black gay leaders.

HILARY ROSEN

Managing Director, The Brunswick Group

HIT SONG: The former head of the Recording Industry Association of America knows everyone in the business of media, making her highly sought-after on Wilshire Boulevard and K Street. **LABOR OF LOVE:** When not representing clients or talking politics on CNN, the openly gay Rosen raises big money for LGBT causes.

KARL ROVE

Political operative and commentator

STILL SWINGING: The famously secretive former Bush advisor has flooded the airwaves this spring with outspoken criticism of the Obama administration. **OUTSIDE THE RING:** Aside from media gigs and paid appearances, Rove is penning a memoir for a reported \$1.5 million.

GARY SHAPIRO

President, Consumer Electronics Association

POWER SURGE: Shapiro is the leading advocate for the more than 2,200 electronics companies that make iPhones, Bluetooth, Wii, and HDTV to the tune of \$172 billion a year. **UP NEXT:** Supervising the final switch over of U.S. TV stations to digital signals.

ANDY STERN AND ANNA BERGER

President and National Political Director, Service Employees International Union (respectively)

BIG JOB: Stern leads the second-largest union in the U.S. and Canada, representing over 2 million members. **WORKERS UNITE!:** Berger also chairs Change to Win, a newly formed federation of seven labor unions, including SEIU, the Teamsters, and the United Farm Workers of America.

JOHN WARNER

Partner, Hogan & Hartson

NON-CONFORMIST: The former Republican senator supports key Democratic goals, notably bringing troops home from Iraq and greater U.S. alignment with the Kyoto Protocol. **SIR WARNER:** In 2008, Warner was named an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II.