

BIOGRAPHY

Basil Smikle Jr. is a Distinguished Lecturer of Politics and Public Policy at the City University of New York's Murphy Institute, and a Democratic Strategist whose commentary has been regularly featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, and in TheHill.com where he is a contributor. Basil was most recently the Executive Director of the New York Democratic Party during which time he was the "second highest ranking Democrat" in the State. A PhD candidate at Teachers College at Columbia University concentrating in Education and Politics, he is also an adjunct lecturer at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs.

As Executive Director of the Democratic Party, he worked closely with the Chair, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, and Governor Andrew Cuomo to manage strategic and fundraising activities for the State, which included fundraising and oversight of a multi-million-dollar operating budget. He recruited candidates for political office and worked closely with the Democratic National Committee to create partnerships, engage donors and act as surrogate for local and national media outlets.

Recognized as a staunch advocate for public service and education equity, he is part of the next generation of thinkers and policy advocates. Basil was featured in the L.A. Times as "Harlem's New Political Elite". City Hall Magazine once named him one of 50 rising stars in New York Politics. United States Senator Cory Booker called him a "much sought-after consultant". Rev. Sharpton called him an "impressive speaker"; Former Governor David Paterson noted that Basil is a "national caliber political operative".

He gained national attention for his reforms in education and government. An early profile in the Wall Street Journal led to a feature in a New York Magazine cover story on the next generation of African American leaders. The New York Daily News called Basil a "fresh thinking...school reformer". The New York Post "enthusiastically" said "New York needs such vibrant leadership".

Basil was a senior aide to Hillary Rodham Clinton during her first campaign for Senate and later on her Senate staff. Mrs. Clinton called Basil a "key advisor and tremendous public servant...who makes sure all voices are heard". Ron Kirk, the former Mayor of Dallas and President Obama's former US Trade Representative, noted that Basil can "negotiate the politics of any community and knows how to marry it with sound public policy".

He graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Cornell University in Industrial and Labor Relations and received a Master of Public Administration degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

A life-long New Yorker and raised in the Bronx by Jamaican immigrants, he is inspired by his father, a retired textile worker, and mother, a long-time public school special education teacher.

Basil is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons, and 100 Black Men of New York where he helped start the Eagle Academy in the Bronx which has grown to 6 schools in New York and New Jersey. He is also a founding Board Member of the Harlem Hebrew Academy Charter School and sits on the Board of the NYC Center for Charter Excellence.

