



Step toe's governor:
Luis G. Fortuño

CONSULTING GAME

Luis G. Fortuño

As governor of Puerto Rico, Luis G. Fortuño did the impossible: He simultaneously reduced the budget deficit and cut taxes. The secret, he says, was making “real” cuts.

“We reduced real expenses by 20 percent. This is not cutting the rate of growth, or taking under consideration inflation,” he says. “These are real cuts, above and beyond the numbers. You do that, and then you can do many other things. It’s not easy; it’s painful. And it can cost you politically.”

Having lost his bid for a second term, Fortuño is returning to Washington as a member of the corporate and government-affairs practices at Steptoe & Johnson. The 52-year-old met his wife here 30 years ago and says, “We have fond memories, especially of the Georgetown area. We look forward to strolling up and down M Street once again.”

Born in San Juan, P.R., Fortuño has a bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University and a law degree from the University of Virginia. He has devoted most of his career to serving the largest U.S. territory—more populous than 22 of the 50 states. Before being elected governor, Fortuño was Puerto Rico’s sole elected delegate on Capitol Hill for four years and the island’s resident commissioner for another four.

The zealous cost-cutter is something of an oddity: When he coasted to victory by 12 percentage points in 2008, Fortuño became Puerto Rico’s first Republican governor since 1969 and only its second since 1949.

Christopher Snow Hopkins

AROUND THE AGENCIES

Polly E. Trottenberg

Polly E. Trottenberg, confirmed on New Year’s Day as the Transportation Department’s undersecretary for policy, is one of the few Capitol Hill veterans who can say she worked for both senators from a state at the same time.

A Boston native and graduate of Barnard College at Columbia University, Trottenberg, 48, spent a few years working in New York City and Chicago before heading to Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. After earning a master’s degree in public policy, she became a policy analyst for Massachusetts state Sen. Lois Pines. (Trottenberg ended up marrying the aide who hired her, Mark Zuckerman; he is now deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council.)

Working on Beacon Hill was a “fascinating experience,” Trottenberg said, especially during the reign of Senate President William Bulger, brother of one of the most notorious mobsters in Boston history, James “Whitey” Bulger. But after more than two years there, Trottenberg moved into her chosen field, transportation, by becoming a top aide at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

She missed the legislative work, though, and networking in Washington landed Trottenberg what she calls “my dream job” in 1996—transportation assistant to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y. One of the senator’s pet projects was converting New York City’s James A. Farley Post Office (ZIP code 10001) into a train station, a goal just now being achieved a decade after Moynihan’s death, she said.

Trottenberg was working for Moynihan when Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., entered the Senate in 1999; the senior senator had announced he would not seek a fifth term in 2000, and Moynihan encouraged her to join Schumer’s staff. While transitioning, she was, in effect, working for both New York senators, and the contrasts between the two men were overpowering, she said. “Senator Moynihan had a wonderful sense of history and sense of humor, and was never in a hurry,” Trottenberg noted. “Senator Schumer just wanted to get it done fast.”

After seven years with Schumer, including two devoted mostly to recovery work after 9/11, Trottenberg became deputy chief of staff and legislative director for Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., in January 2006. “Learning about California after so many years working with New Yorkers was a real eye-opener,” she said. “People there try to have a little more balance in their lives.”

Then in August 2008, Trottenberg was offered a chance to lead Building America's Future, a bipartisan coalition promoting investments in infrastructure that was founded by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, and ex-California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

President Obama appointed Trottenberg assistant secretary for policy at DOT in 2009, and she became acting undersecretary when Roy Kienitz, who had worked with Trottenberg in Moynihan's office, left the position in 2011. Obama nominated her for undersecretary last year, and she was confirmed by the Senate on Jan. 1.

Mike Magner

SPECIAL INTERESTS

Jon Scholl

"It's a tough thing to articulate," says Jon Scholl, referring to the connection between a farmer and his land. "To step into those fields every spring and see a new rebirth, a new re-generation of life—it creeps into your soul."

A fourth-generation farmer, Scholl resigned last month as president of the American Farmland Trust, which seeks to reconcile the policy aims of the environmental and agricultural communities. When it comes to issues such as soil erosion and wasteful water usage, the two often find themselves at odds. "Both [communities] have tremendously divergent points of view and interests," he says. "Fundamentally, that's what the American Farmland Trust does: try to stretch across the two."

Scholl grew up on a corn and soybean farm in McLean County, Ill., a 3,500-acre operation bristling with wind turbines, now becoming increasingly common across the Midwest and Great Plains. He still lives just miles down the road, on land that his grandmother bought in the 1920s.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in agricultural science from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Scholl spent 25 years with the Illinois Farm Bureau, followed by a stint as counselor for agricultural policy at the Environmental Protection Agency.

When he returns to Illinois, the affable 57-year-old will teach agricultural policy as part of an "experiential learning program" at the University of Illinois designed to be "a hands-on process, in which students learn by doing," Scholl says. "Students obviously have opportunities at the university to undertake a lot of studies on a theoretical or abstract basis. This is a program where students actually get involved in doing things, such as the process of developing and giving testimony, or meeting and talking with Cabinet secretaries and congressmen."

When not teaching, Scholl can be found in his woodworking shop, crafting a grandfather clock for his son and his daughter-in-law-to-be.

C.S.H.

WORLD AFFAIRS

Jérôme Sauvage

Providing international aid to developing countries can be both enormously rewarding

and terribly frustrating, says Jérôme Sauvage, the new deputy director of the United Nations Development Program in Washington.

Sauvage's first assignment for the agency was as a young professional from 1983 to 1985, helping Vietnam rebuild its economy. "I saw a communist country open its markets and watched it change and become self-sufficient, strong, and confident," he says.

Fast-forward to late 2009, and Sauvage was confronted with a very different task: reopening the UNDP office in Pyongyang, North Korea, more than two years after it was closed because of concerns about its operations.

Working in the Republic of North Korea is "very challenging," Sauvage says. "It is a difficult place to be," with little contact allowed with the people who desperately need assistance. No American aid groups work there, he notes, so the U.N. is about the only outside organization helping to provide food and health care to the struggling population.

Now Sauvage has a much broader role, working to strengthen the U.N. Development Program's relationship with the U.S. government. He expects to spend plenty of time at the State Department and on Capitol Hill; Congress partially funds the organization's work in 177 countries and territories.

He will also be part of "an enormous push for transparency" ordered by the agency's administrator, Helen Clark, a former prime minister of New Zealand, says Sarah Jackson-Han, spokeswoman for the UNDP's Washington office.

Sauvage, 54, is a French national who studied law at Sorbonne University in Paris and international affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. His wife, Carolyn Sauvage-Mar, is an American who also graduated from SAIS.

Sauvage has worked in more than a half-dozen countries, including Madagascar, Cambodia, India, and Pakistan, and he has done two tours at UNDP headquarters in New York City.

M.M.

CONSULTING GAME

Kevin Sheridan

It's the stuff of campaign lore: then-Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska wracked by nerves and proving to be a slow study as Republican John McCain's vice presidential running mate in 2008. Contrast that with the GOP's 2012 VP nominee, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

"Paul Ryan turned out to be the quickest study of any politician I've ever worked for," says Kevin Sheridan, who was Ryan's communications director during the campaign. "There's a reason he was a vice presidential



DOT policy chief: Polly E. Trottenberg

PHOTO: RICHARD A. BLOOM



At JDA Frontline: Kevin Sheridan

pick at 42. He's got an incredibly quick mind."

Last month, Sheridan, 38, was named an executive vice president at JDA Frontline, a public-affairs firm founded by Jim Dyke, who was communications director for the Republican National Committee during the 2004 election cycle. JDA Frontline has offices in Washington and in Charleston, S.C.

During last year's contest, Sheridan confronted "three hurdles." The first was building a campaign apparatus for a candidate who did not yet exist: Sheridan was brought in a month and a half before Mitt Romney chose Ryan as his running mate. "I was in this weird position of assembling a campaign team ... for a candidate we didn't know," Sheridan says. "The campaign manager, Matt Rhoades, would regularly try to spook us, saying, 'You ready today? You ready today?'"

When Ryan—whom Sheridan says is close to members of the "conservative intelligentsia"—joined the ticket, he was mobbed by legions of reporters who had "grown tired of the three other principal candidates.... We were the sole story for a good several weeks, but we managed in no small part because the candidate was extremely adept at navigating the tough interviews."

The second hurdle was Ryan's speech at the Republican National Convention, which included a memorable zinger that sought to crystallize the disillusionment of some 2008 supporters of President Obama: "College graduates should not have to live out their 20s in their childhood bedrooms, staring up

at fading Obama posters and wondering when they can move out and get going with life."

The third and final hurdle was the vice presidential debate, in which the boyish Ryan jousting with the 70-year-old silverback, Vice President Joe Biden. "In my opinion, [Ryan] won the debate quite handily," Sheridan says.

He grew up in Vernon, Conn., outside Hartford; his mother was a teacher for 40 years, and his father worked for an insurance company—"Hartford's favorite industry."

A self-admitted "political know-it-all," Sheridan majored in political science at the University of Connecticut and managed his first political campaign right after graduating. Shortly thereafter, he established a direct-mail business for local and statewide campaigns.

After serving as an aide in the Legislature—"those were the days of the faxed press release"—Sheridan bolted his home state, which was blue and getting bluer. "Connecticut's a tough place to be a young Republican," he says. Following a year with then-Gov. Jim Gilmore, R-Va., he came to Washington as a spokesman for the Republican National Committee. After that, he was press director for the U.S. Agency for International Development and then spent seven years as a senior vice president at Edelman.

Sheridan is credited with having invented the practice known as "bracketing," although he objects to the highfalutin term. In preparation for President Bush's 2004 reelection campaign, Sheridan and his RNC colleagues "came up with ways to meddle with the

emerging [Democratic] candidates," among them former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt, Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, and the eventual nominee, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts. "We were looking for creative ways to get into their coverage and define them early," Sheridan says.

Ultimately, Kerry was labeled a "flip-flopper," a sobriquet that, along with the scurrilous "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth" campaign, doomed his candidacy. Since 2004, "bracketing" has come to mean little more than low-level campaign trash-talking, Sheridan says. "'Bracketing' was just this weird term we came up with.... I used to think, 'I can't believe people are actually seriously using this term!' When I hear principals or elected officials saying it, I think, 'Wow, this has really jumped the shark!'"

When not reading biographies, Sheridan plays "too much softball for a man my age." C.S.H.

HILL PEOPLE

Cathy Koch, Alex McDonough

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has two new policy advisers, Cathy Koch and Alex McDonough.

Koch, most recently the tax chief for the Democratic staff at the Senate Finance Committee, is now Reid's chief adviser on tax and economic policy. She takes over from Bob Greenawald, who had served eight years in Reid's office and more than 25 total years as a Senate aide.

Before joining the Finance Committee staff under Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., in 2008, Koch was senior tax-policy adviser for then-Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., and staff director of the Finance Committee's Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure Subcommittee. Before that, she held jobs at Amgen, Ernst & Young, and PricewaterhouseCoopers, and she was also an adjunct professor of microeconomics and public finance at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute.

Koch began her congressional career with the Joint Committee on Taxation.

McDonough has been an aide to Reid for seven years, both as legislative assistant and policy adviser on environment, energy, and natural resources. He succeeds Chris Miller, who recently left Capitol Hill after more than 25 years.

Before joining Reid's staff, McDonough worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Central Asia. M.M.