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Dan Gelber {LEGEND}

I was a 26-year-old kid when Dan Gelber splashed onto the scene in Tallahassee in 2000, a brand-new member barely 10 days into his term given the task of making the Democratic case in the House battle over presidential electors.

I thought to myself: Who is this guy?

Dan is a rare partisan who's also universally respected. He passed major legislation while overseeing the Democrats' largest gains in the Legislature in 40 years. He defined the terms of the debate, even on issues that his side lost. He is still the intellectual leader of our party. Asked to identify one Democrat who could be governor, Jeb Bush picked Dan Gelber.

A man of unimpeachable character, he never forgot why he got in public life. Even six years after leaving office, there isn't a smart Democratic pol in Florida who doesn't seek his counsel—and for good reason. Dan is very much a role model on how to succeed in public life.

Andrew Weinstein is the managing partner in the Weinstein Law Firm. He's on the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and is finance chairman of the Florida Democratic Party.

PHOTOS: Delaney (Dennis Ho); Gelber (AP Photo/Phil Coale)

**The 100 Most
Influential People
In Florida Politics**