

MIETRO NEWS

News Bureau (718) 822-1174 Fax (718) 822-1562 nydailynews.com/boroughs/manhattan/

Crowley's flying high

Democratic powerhouse hails from family of public servants

BY NADIA ZONIS
DAILY NEWS WRITER

HIS FATHER and grandfather were city cops. His Uncle Walter was a City Council member. His beloved first cousin, Fire Battalion Chief John Moran, died on 9/11.

For Congressman Joe Crowley, public service runs in the family.

"I grew up in a family that was a powerful inspiration and model I have always felt compelled to live up to," he said. "One could not aspire to more than working to improve the lives of your family, your neighbors and the community."

But this family member has certainly outdone himself, rising to a level of power that qualifies him to be called the 500-pound gorilla of city and congressional politics.

At just 45, he is serving his fifth term representing the 7th Congressional District, which spans the East Bronx and north-west Queens.

He is also chairman of the Queens County Democratic Party, likely to have an influence on who the next mayor will be, and on the shape of the City Council after most members are forced out by term limits in 2009.

In Washington, Crowley is the highest-ranking New Yorker in the Democratic leadership. He's the chief deputy whip, a job that involves, as he puts it, "taking the temperature" of the various coalitions within the party and trying to forge a consensus.

He also is vice chairman of the influential New Democrat Coalition, a group of moderates.

But where he may have the most impact is as a member of the powerful Ways and Means Committee that oversees taxes, trade, Social Security and Medicare. He is the first New York Democrat appointed to the committee since Harlem Rep. Charles Rangel 31 years ago. Rangel became chairman of the committee in January.

Crowley grew up in Wood-

side, where he still lives with his wife and three young children.

The Queens College grad served in the state Assembly from 1986 to 1998, when his mentor, long-serving congressman and Queens party boss Tom Manton, announced he would not run again and gave the nod to Crowley — effectively handing him the seat in the largely Democratic district.

Crowley has won every election since. After Manton's death in 2006, Crowley rose to become the county leader.

Irish-American by heritage, Crowley's personable style has served to advance his leadership reputation.

"Joe is a modern-age leader. He listens to his own leaders and decides the best course of action. He's a smart, savvy guy from a political family," said powerhouse political consultant George Arzt.

"He's a power in Congress, certainly, and he has Mayor Bloomberg's ear, despite the political differences," said Arzt. "He also speaks to Shelly [Assembly Majority Leader Sheldon Silver] and has his hands on all levels of government."

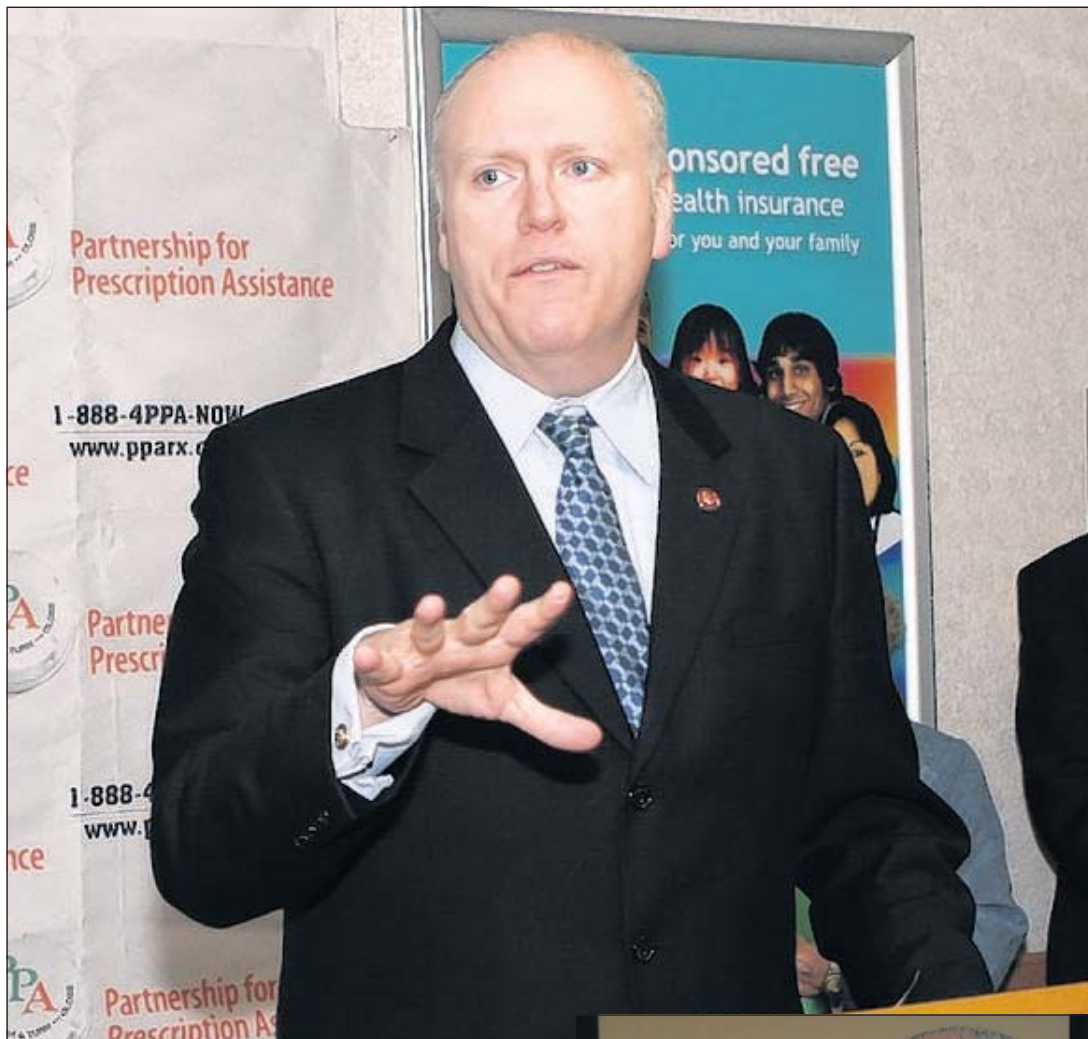
Where does Crowley go from here? Despite all of his high-ranking positions, there's still room to move up.

He has tried unsuccessfully to get the Democratic Caucus vice chairmanship and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairmanship.

"I'm only 45, so if I were able to do 20 years on the Ways and Means Committee, it wouldn't be such a bad thing," he says. "I think there are a lot of options — personally and politically — open to me. I never get too tied down to anything."

Consultant Arzt said he thinks Crowley's star has far to rise.

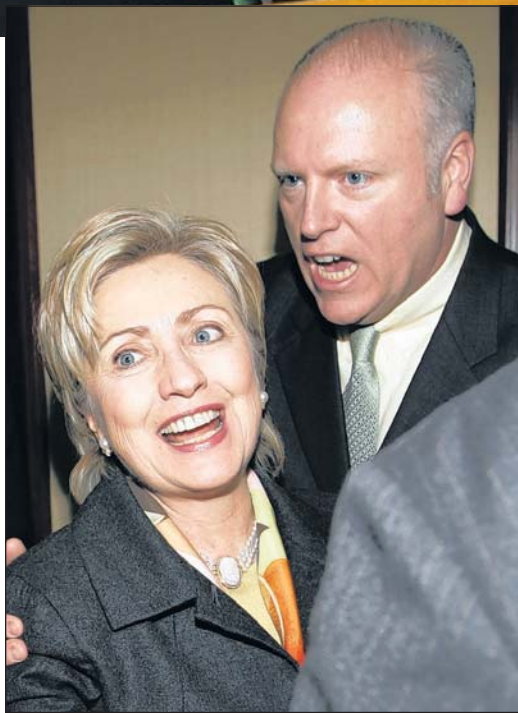
"I think it's tough to know where he's going. He could go to the Senate at some point. He could go for statewide office. He could even go for mayor," Arzt said. "All the options are open for him."



Rep. Joe Crowley is in his fifth term of representing the 7th Congressional District. The Queens County Democratic Party chairman chats with Councilman Eric Gioia (l. in photo below) and Joel Berg, executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. At right, he joins Sen. Hillary Clinton at a meeting on immigration reform. Photo by Ira Cohen



Craig Warga/Daily News



AP

Stew Leonard's
See our AD on Tuesday & Thursday

Great News For The Bronx
Get your FREE Bronx Boro News every Tuesday in the Daily News

