

Ramsey tops clarkson for city council seat - - Times-Picayune, The (New Orleans, LA) - March 16, 2014 - page A 12

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Former Judge Nadine Ramsey won election to the New Orleans City Council on Saturday, beating Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson in a bitter campaign that ended her return to her home district and nearly a quarter century of public service.

From the start, Ramsey was seen as a formidable candidate for the District C seat, capitalizing on the frustrations of businesses, including the taxicab industry angered about reforms and French Quarter clubs opposed to measures to regulate noise.

In her speech, Ramsey began by thanking God and paying homage to her parents, who worked as a laborer and a clerk.

"It is a wonderful opportunity. I know that great challenges and responsibilities (are) ahead of me," Ramsey, who grew up in the Ninth Ward but now lives in Algiers, said in a later interview. "But you know I'm ready for the challenge and looking forward to it."

She also was able to draw support from all neighborhoods in the city's largest and most diverse district. Ramsey received 59 percent of the vote. Just 24 votes separated the women in the Feb. 1 primary, with Clarkson finishing first.

For Clarkson, her earlier plans to retire will now come to fruition. She had been set to leave public office at the end of the council's term in May. But asserting he needed a "partner" to help continue his agenda, Mayor Mitch Landrieu persuaded Clarkson, 78, to take on one more campaign to replace incumbent Kristin Gisleson Palmer, who opted not to seek re-election.

In her concession speech, Clarkson said she is proud of her 24-year record. "We have all won because we have fought the good fight. We were part of a team that brought back the greatest city in America," she said. "We go out in a blaze of glory, having taken the challenge to be part of the team one more time."

Clarkson held the district post twice, from 1990-94 and 2002-04. She was elected at-large in 2007 and re-elected three years later.

In making her case for council, Ramsey argued a third district run by Clarkson violated the spirit of term limits. Ramsey also struck hard at Clarkson on bread-and-butter issues, including increases in water and sewer bills, a \$2 fare on the Algiers ferries and her support of a 20-year extension of Crescent City Connection tolls. And in the final days of the campaign, race became a dominant issue when Ramsey accused Clarkson of insensitivity for refusing to apologize for her fond remembrances of the 1950s and not acknowledging segregation.

District C includes Algiers, the French Quarter, Marigny, Bywater and Tremé.

65 of 65 precincts Votes Pct.

Nadine Ramsey 8,003 59%

Jackie Clarkson 5,494 41%

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