

Granholm gets strong suburban support

BY CHRIS C. DAVIS AND TEDD SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITERS

Jennifer Granholm apparently spent enough time campaigning in western Wayne County - including some Republican strongholds - to make a difference.

The Northville resident and state attorney general rumbled her way to victory in the governor's race Tuesday, bringing an end to her 22-month quest for the office of Michigan's chief executive.

In doing so, Granholm became the first female governor in the state's history and the first Democrat since Jim Blanchard was defeated by John Engler in 1990. Granholm handily defeated her Republican opponent, current lieutenant governor Dick Posthumus.

Granholm arrived in the Detroit Renaissance Center Marriott Hotel ballroom at around 11:15 p.m., facing a cheering throng of supporters. Those in attendance held aloft curds bearing the slogan "One Michigan," which was a theme the governor-elect stuck with during her 15-minute victory speech.

"Tonight, I am honored and humbled to stand before you as the next governor of the state of Michigan," Granholm began. "While it was my name and John Cherry's name on the ballot, the victory belongs to you. This victory belongs to our Michigan. This victory belongs to one Michigan."

With 98 percent of precincts reporting Granholm held a 52-47 (percentage) advantage over her opponent Wednesday morning.

Part of that margin could be attributed to a strong showing in traditionally Democratic western Wayne communities and stronger than expected numbers in Republican-leaning communities such as Livonia, Plymouth Township and Canton Township.

She also lost by only 160 votes in Farmington Hills and about 2,000 in Farmington Falls (out of 26,000 ballots cast).

Granholm came within 1,250 votes of Posthumus in Canton, even though state Sen. Loren Bennett, a longtime Canton resident, was Posthumus' running mate.

In the City of Plymouth, she won by 50 votes.

Redford Township, Westland and Garden City were solidly in the governor-elect's camp.

Granholm said Tuesday's results gave credence to beliefs she had maintained since her gubernatorial bid began nearly two years ago.

"Tonight, the people have spoken, and your votes reaffirmed what I have believed since the very first day of this campaign," she said. "We are duty-bound to our families and to the future of our state."

Granholm took time to thank her campaign workers, and her family, including her husband, Dan Mulhern, with whom she exchanged a brief kiss at the podium.

"He has uplifted me and encouraged me and been my equal partner for 17 years," she said to the crowd.

GRACEFUL CONCESSION

Posthumus - in his concession speech just moments before in Lansing - also thanked his wife. Pam Posthumus smiled and nodded when her husband said: "This (campaign) certainly wasn't her choice."

The lieutenant governor, who trailed in polls from the very beginning of the campaign, bowed out gracefully, offering an olive branch to his opponent.

"This leg of the journey ends tonight, and a new one begins tomorrow," Posthumus said. "I wish Jennifer Granholm the best. This state is more than one person. This state is all of us. No matter who is leading it, it's all of us here that make the difference."

Posthumus said the campaign's success was in raising issues. "What I take from the results is that the people of Michigan had a platform to discuss things like lower taxes and how we want to allocate our resources," he said.

The lieutenant governor said he was proud of his working to help reduce the state's unemployment rate and to help bring about school finance reform through Proposal A.

Bennett - who gave up a nearly two-year campaign for secretary of state to accept the GOP lieutenant governor nomination - declined to appear publicly at the Republican rally on Tuesday. A man who left with his State Senate office Wednesday wasn't returned.

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Jennifer Granholm rallies her supporters as she arrives to vote Tuesday at the beginning of a long election day.

BRYAN MITCHELL | OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Cox declares victory in AG race; Land cruises

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

The race for Michigan attorney general between Republican Mike Cox and Democrat Gary Peters was still being fought a day after the polls closed.

Throughout the early morning hours Wednesday, a razor-thin lead separating the two candidates swung back and forth. The dramatic race appeared over when Cox declared victory from his Livonia headquarters around noon.

Peters, however, refused to concede. Although Peters didn't return calls, a spokesman for the Michigan Democratic Party said the declaration was premature.

"We are in no way, shape, or form conceding this race at all. And any characterization that we are would be completely incorrect," said Ben Kohnman, the party's communication director.

But with nearly 100 percent of the precincts reporting as of 2 p.m. Wednesday, it appeared Cox, 40, would win by about 5,500 votes. He will be the first Republican to be attorney general since 1954.

"The people of Michigan have spoken. And I am ready to do the people's work," Cox said. Cox, a Livonia resident, has worked with the Wayne County prosecutor's homicide unit since 1990, and has served as chief of the unit since 2001. The former U.S. Marine has also served two years as an assistant prosecutor for Oakland County.

As he declared victory Wednesday, Cox looked haggard after being up all night. In fact, he said he'd had 20 Diet Cokes and four hours of sleep since Monday.

He felt the difference in the campaign was his experience, which was a big focus of his advertisements.

"You've got to have the tools to do the job when you get there," he said. "The ads about experience made me think of what people told me on the campaign trail."

In Oakland County, Cox earned 50 percent of the vote, while Peters took 47 percent. In Wayne County, Peters topped Cox by a 2-to-1 margin.

It is uncertain whether Peters will ask for a recount, although Kohnman hinted he might.

Cox's campaign featured him putting \$250,000 miles on his well-worn '95 Escort, which became a joke among staff who refused to ride with him.

The effort, according to campaign supporter and Livonia planning commissioner Jim McCann, was enough to squeak out a victory. "It makes you think that every cent ounce was worth it," McCann said.

Among those stopping in at his headquarters Wednesday afternoon were staffers, supporters and even his parents, John and Margaret Rita Cox of Livonia, beaming with pride.

"He's accomplished what he wanted," said the proud father.

In Michigan's other major statewide race, Republican Terri Lynn Land defeated Democrat Melvin "Butch" Hollowell to succeed term-limited Candice Miller as Michigan secretary of state.

The 44-year-old Land, a resident of Byron Center, contributed more than \$1.4 million of her own money to her campaign. Her family owns a chain of hair salons in western Michigan.

With 99 percent of the precincts reporting, Land led Hollowell with 55 percent of the vote. Hollowell, a Detroit attorney, earned 43 percent of the statewide vote.

Land also won Oakland County voters, earning more than 60 percent of the vote but pulled in only about 36 percent in Wayne County.



Bill Baesler | OBSERVER

Mike Cox thanks his supporters at his campaign headquarters in Livonia Wednesday.

Voters turn down arts tax proposal

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

For the second time in two years, voters in Oakland and Wayne counties have shut down a millage proposal to fund Metro Detroit cultural institutions.

More than 53 percent of the voters in Oakland County voted "no" on Proposal K, dubbed the "arts, parks, and kids" proposal. The proposal did fare better in Wayne County, where 57 percent

of the voters gave their approval. To succeed, Proposal K needed approval from at least 60 percent of the voters in Wayne County, and 50 percent in Oakland.

Proponents of the proposal are blaming the poor economy for its defeat.

"There is no question we were running against the economy," said Steve Hamp, president of Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. "Voters had to make tough choices with the

poor state of the economy. We accept that fact."

If it had been approved, the half-cent tax increase would have generated about \$46 million annually.

Most of the money would have been split up by 17 major institutions, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, Cranbrook Educational Community, and Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. About a third of the money would have been

sent to local communities for cultural and recreational activities.

Hamp said he was happy with the campaign he and other cultural leaders led this time around. He said it was more organized than the one they led two years ago for the failed Proposal A.

"We've had a great campaign. It was a far better effort than we had two years ago. I think we really got our message across," he said.

Tobacco money proposal defeated

BY ALEX LUNDEBERG
STAFF WRITER

Michigan voters Tuesday faced five ballot proposals that would have had wide-ranging effects on state school financing, water quality, work rules and the way residents choose all of the above. One passed.

The most controversial issue was State Proposal 4, which would have reallocated through a constitutional amendment nearly \$300 million from the settlement with tobacco companies to anti-smoking campaigns and private health organizations.

The proposal was defeated by an almost 2-1 margin.

Michigan State Republican Press Secretary Jason Brewer

said that while the GOP paid little money to defeat the proposal, party members shouted from the rooftops that it was a bad idea.

"The party has been very vocal in its opposition to it," he said.

Not only did almost every member of the Republican caucus come out against it, but traditional opponents of the party lined up to say it was not right for Michigan. Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jennifer Granholm and former Attorney General Frank Kelley also opposed the proposal.

"It was a synergy of issues," Brewer said. "It was the merit scholarships, the apparent lack of accountability, there was a

lot of well-known bipartisan opposition as well as virtually every editorial board in the state was against it."

He said the campaign for the proposal was well-financed and well-represented - and still lost at the polls. He said he didn't see how it could ever come back.

Don Potter, president of the Southeast Hospital Michigan Health and Hospital Council, said this was a major issue for outgoing governor John Engler, who worked to defeat the proposal. But Potter said the campaign helped focus attention on the issue.

"A coalition has been formed that will be active in health issues and money in the future,"

Potter said. "Michigan has done the worst job with that money of any state in the country. It's been used as a cookie jar by the state. There's more of a knowledge of that now."

In the other ballot battles: State proposal 1, which would have eliminated straight-ticket voting, was rejected by voters.

State proposal 2, approving bonds to replace aging water system infrastructure, also was approved.

State proposal 3, which would have amended the state constitution to give state employees collective bargaining rights without binding arbitration, was turned down by voters.

Levin, Rocky end their campaign as friends

BY JONI HUBBARD
STAFF WRITER

Aware that he had little chance of defeating popular incumbent U.S. Senator Carl Levin, Republican Andrew Raczowski appears to have lost none of his passion for politics - or his sense of humor.

A post-election ad heard on WWJ radio Wednesday drew interest from statewide and national media, the Farmington Hills native said.

After introducing himself, he intoned, "At the polls yesterday, we all went out and voted our conscience. I lost."

Expressing his thanks to supporters, he also urged citizens to leave behind divisive politics and support the candidates who were successful.

The ad, according to a voice-over at the close, was paid for by the "last dollar" of Raczowski's campaign fund.

"We threw that together," Raczowski said in a phone interview Wednesday afternoon. "We wrote that script in about 45 minutes."

The ad didn't cost much either, which was fortunate since his campaign funds were dwarfed by that of Levin, a well-funded Senate veteran who holds positions on a number of vital committees.

The off-rumped and bespectacled Levin, 68, spent more than \$4.6 million to the less than \$900,000 raised by Raczowski's campaign. Political analysts across the state never questioned whether Levin would win; the only unknown was the margin.

With 99 percent of precincts reporting, Levin held 61 percent of the vote to Raczowski's 38 percent. Farmington Hills resident Eric Borregard, a Green Party candidate, received 24,030 votes, or about 1 percent.

Levin's margin of victory was larger than it was six years ago, when he garnered 58 percent of the vote against Republican challenger Ronna Romney.

Elected in an upset victory over incumbent Republican Robert Griffin in 1978.

In remarks Tuesday night at the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit, Levin expressed gratitude to his supporters and said winning an election never gets any less exciting.

"Each time is more and more overwhelming," he said.

While Levin was unavailable for comment Wednesday, Raczowski noted that he and Levin had an amicable conversation on Election Day. In published comments, Levin referred to Raczowski as "a candidate for the future."

"I was very flattered," Raczowski said, adding he and Levin have agreed to stay in touch. He hopes to learn from the Senator in ways that will help him give back to his own community.

Raczowski, affectionately known by friends



Levin

and foes alike as "Rocky," maintained a level of confidence as he traveled a total of 98,668 miles by car, putting forth a strong personal effort despite devastating family hardships. His father, Bogdan, died unexpectedly Jan. 7; an uncle passed away during the Senate campaign and an aunt is very ill.

At a kick-off rally held in late January, Raczowski said when he first discussed a run against Levin with his parents, everyone agreed the move would be akin to political suicide.

"The next morning, however, his father called to tell him, in Polish, 'I think you can do this.'"

Raczowski has no doubt his father is watching over him.

"I'm a true believer in my faith," he said. "I believe what we do here on earth is a preparation for a better life. You cry because you miss the person, but you're strengthened and charged by the fact that you're never alone."

Term-limited as a state representative, Raczowski had announced a bid for U.S. Congress and withdrew after redistricting kept Farmington and Farmington Hills represented by veteran Republican Joe Knollenberg. Rocky was the country's youngest U.S. Senate candidate.

While he has hinted publicly that this will not be his last political election, the 33-year-old will go back to a private life as the owner of a printing business and service as a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve.

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