

Election agony and ecstasy

Helms, Frank, Studts, Glick, Achtenberg, Migden win

by Rex Wockner

Gays and lesbians suffered a sickening defeat Nov. 6 when virulently anti-gay U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) was returned to office, turning back a challenge from black, pro-gay opponent Harvey Gantt. The vote spread was 53-47 percent.

On the positive side, America's two openly gay congressmen, Barney Frank and Gerry Studts (both D-Mass.) both won re-election, 65-35 percent and 53-47 percent respectively.

Meanwhile, gays and lesbians in San Francisco are ecstatic over the election of two lesbians, Roberta Achtenberg and Carole Migden, to the Board of Supervisors. Migden came in third and Achtenberg fourth in a 25-way race for five seats on the board. They join openly gay board president Harry Britt. Voters also passed Proposition K, granting gays and lesbians the right to register their relationships at City Hall. The vote was 54.1 percent in favor of the law, which does not grant gay couples any spousal benefits or rights. San Francisco is the first major city in the U.S. to allow gays to register their relationships.

Another victory for the gay and lesbian movement was the re-election of U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), whom gays consider one of their best Senate friends. Simon, a key sponsor of the recently passed Hate Crimes Statistics Act and the struggling federal gay-rights bill, handily defeated challenger Lynn Martin 65-35 percent.

In Columbus, Ohio, gay U.S. House candidate Mike Gelpi, a Democrat, went down to defeat by a margin of 72-28 percent against conservative Republican incumbent John Kasich.

Downtown-Manhattan lesbian Deborah Glick won a Democratic seat in the New York State Assembly, capturing 78 percent of the vote. She is the first gay or lesbian ever elected to statewide office there.

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, gay Democratic one-term incumbent state Rep. Joe Grabarz was

re-elected with 58 percent of the vote.

In Maine, one-term incumbent lesbian Democratic state Rep. Susan Farnsworth of Hallowell was re-elected with 60 percent of the vote. And lesbian Democrat Dale McCormick of Monmouth captured a state Senate seat with 53 percent of the vote. But lesbian Democratic state Senate candidate Sive Neilan of Hope lost her bid, receiving 39 percent of the vote.

In Brattleboro, Vermont, gay Democratic state House candidate Ron Squires received 817 votes to incumbent Stuart Hunt's 815, according to AP. A recount is expected. Gay state Senate Democratic candidate Howard Russell of Burlington, Vt., lost his bid, according to AP.

In Minneapolis, five-term incumbent gay state Sen. Alan Spear and five-term incumbent lesbian state Rep. Karen Clark, both of the Democrat-Farmer-Labor party, were re-elected. Spear received 73 percent of the vote and Clark 72 percent.

In Seattle, gay two-term Democratic state Rep. Calvin Anderson will return to the House. He garnered a whopping 85 percent of the vote.

And of course, here in Portland, Republican U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield, target of an aggressive, two-year-long outing campaign by ACT UP, was re-elected by a 54-46 percent margin, a much smaller victory than in past elections.

Among gay losers Nov. 6 was Boston Republican Mike Duffy, who captured 44 percent of the vote in a shot at the state House. And in Washington, D.C., Jim Harvey came in fifth in an eight-way race for two at-large seats on the City Council. He received four percent of the vote.

All in all, in the 20 races tracked here—and we may have missed a few—gays, lesbians and their supporters emerged victorious in 13 or 14 of the contests—depending on how Sen. Hatfield's victory is judged. His voting record has been two-thirds pro-gay since the outing campaign began.

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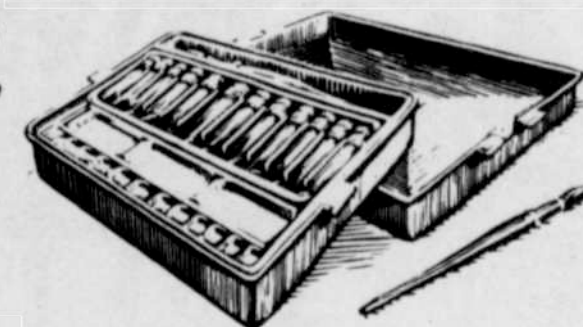
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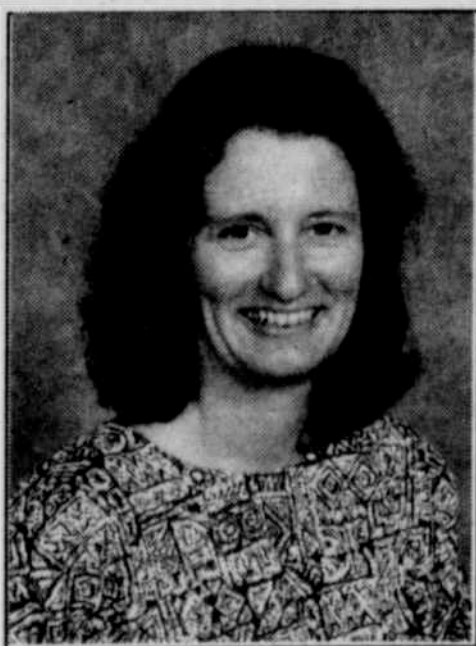


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