



DD Adams (fourth from left, second row) is surrounded by loved ones and supporters.

Council will have new faces

BY LAYLA FARMER
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The results are in. After months of town hall meetings, meet-and-greets and campaigning, the makeup of the new City Council has finally been determined.

Incumbents Molly Leight, Robert Clark (still the Council's lone Republican), Wanda Merschel, Dan Besse and Vivian Burke will be joined by three newcomers: Derwin Montgomery of the East Ward, Denise "D.D." Adams of the North Ward and James Taylor of the Southeast Ward.

Montgomery victory was assured in September when he beat Incumbent Joycelyn Johnson in the Democratic Primary. He faced no General Election opponent.

Adams and Taylor easily won their General Election races on Tuesday. Adams got nearly twice the number of votes as Republican John Hopkins, beating him 66 percent to 33.1 percent, according to complete but unofficial election results.

Adams was endorsed for the seat by City Council Member Nelson Malloy, who represented the North Ward for nearly two decades but decided not to seek reelection this year. She and her supporters wait for election returns and then celebrated her victory at the Hideout Bar on Northwest Boulevard. She chose the location to make a point about the future of the ward.

"This is a small, minority business owner that came up in the North Ward and is trying to make something happen in the North Ward," she said of Hideout Owner Bernard Scales.

Adams spent the day canvassing neighborhoods and polling sites, and calling North Ward voters to encourage them to get out to the polls. By late Tuesday evening, with the majority of the votes counted, Adams was finally beginning to relax.



James Taylor checks election results on Tuesday night as his wife stands close by.

"It's surreal, this journey ... but the work has just begun," she related. "I want to leave my legacy: that I made my neighborhood, my community, the city and the world better when I leave. I'm about bringing people together and making things better for tomorrow."

Taylor learned he had beat Republican Chester "Chuck" Woolard at the Piedmont Club, where he was surrounded by family members and supporters. Taylor trounced his opponent, receiving 701 votes to Woolard's 292, according to unofficial results. Taylor, who joins Montgomery as the Council's only twentysomethings, beat Incumbent Evelyn Terry a few weeks ago in a Democratic runoff.

"It actually feels great," Taylor said. "Anytime you are voted in office by a community that you love so much, it is humbling."

He believes his candor and fresh perspective helped him to secure the win.

"Most importantly, I was genuine to the voters. I expressed that I would be their voice on the Council, and they were receptive," he commented.

Taylor said he is also ready to get to work, and the issues of public safety and economic development in the Ward top his priority list.

"I think people want to feel like they're safe, like their communities are prosperous," he

said. "If you take those concerns and implement those in city government, I think it makes for a more successful community."

Northeast Ward Council Member Burke will extend her run on the Council. She was in no danger of losing to Republican Claudia Shivers. According to election results, Burke received about 70 percent of the vote compared to 29 percent for Shivers.

Burke is embarking on her ninth consecutive term on the City Council.

"It's wonderful," she said of securing yet another Election Day win. "...I'm just grateful to God."

Burke believes the economic development that has taken place in the Ward over the last decade and her commitment to the community at the grassroots level for her continued success.

"I have stayed at the grassroots, and people have said they appreciate what I do," she remarked. "...I'm not just out there at campaigning time; I'm with people all the time."

Burke, who also serves as the city's mayor Pro Tempore, is the longest sitting member in the Council's history.

Republican Ted Shipley was seen as the GOP greatest hope to pick up another Council seat, but he did not come close to betting the Southwest Ward's Besse, who got 58 percent of the vote to Shipley's 42 percent. Merschel, of the Northwest Ward, also easily won reelection.



Dr. Chase speaks at the Survivors' celebration.

school," said the 57 year-old. "I always took care of myself and I always ate pretty well."

Doctors were never able to definitively determine the cause of his stroke, Gaither says. He believes his then-hectic lifestyle of juggling work, college and later, divinity school and community activism, is to blame.

"The constant barrage of workload eventually took its toll," he said. "I can't think of any other reason for it."

Gaither has almost fully recovered. He shows no obvious signs of the ordeal he has endured, and he says his resolve to live is stronger than ever.

"Every human being has a fight or flight drive," he remarked. "Some of us get sick and we roll over and die; I got sick and I fought with everything in my being."

Now, both Gaither and Moore strive to be advocates of stroke awareness. Moore says she hopes her sunny spirit will rub off on those who need it most.

"I hope I have inspired someone ... who was on the brink of giving up," she said. "Life is about continuing on and going forward."

Gaither currently serves on the American Heart Association's Power to End Stroke Task Force for the Triad. An avid cook, Gaither dreams of someday starting a nonprofit where he can show people the joys of healthy living through exercise and cooking courses.

"This should be a commencement, because life is changing," he remarked. "We should be welcoming people into a new means of life. That's what I think needs to happen."

According to the American Stroke Association, common warning signs of stroke often appear suddenly. They include: numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; confusion, trouble speaking or understanding; trouble seeing in one or both eyes; trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; or a severe headache with no known cause. If you or someone you know experiences these symptoms, it is important to seek medical help immediately.

Canion

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ter).

Canion says he stumbled upon the idea for the line while coaching a kids football team last year. He had a shirt printed that said "I Believe in You" as a sign of his dedication to the children on the team.

"I wore it everyday; I didn't care what it smelled like," he quipped.

The idea caught on. "The parents loved it, the kids loved it, and the more I said it, the more they believed it," Canion related. "By the end of the year, I could really see a change in them."

Canion says he wanted the shirts to look as good as he hoped they would make the wearers feel. He contracted with a designer in Portland, Ore., and printed a trial run of 1,500 shirts last April. Within months, he was sold out.

"People resonated with this," he remarked. "They were buying (the shirts) like crazy."

The bulk of Affirmation's sales have arisen from fundraising efforts by local organizations, clubs and schools. Selling the shirts as a fundraiser is a win-win, Canion says, because they instill confidence in the people who wear them, and generate revenue for worthy causes.

"What parent would say no to this?" he questioned. "I wouldn't."

Canion's longtime friend Daphne Page-Reaves of Silver Springs, Maryland has witnessed firsthand the power of the shirts' suggestions. Page-Reaves says she fell in love with the idea of the shirts right away.

"It is a project that I believe in wholeheartedly," she declared. "It is truly an excellent product, but the intention behind it is what makes it the best."

Page-Reaves, an alumna of NC A&T State University, wasted little time in purchasing shirts for herself and for her nine-year-old son, Quentin.

"The shirts are absolutely fantastic," she commented. "(In wearing them) I'm making a statement not only to myself, but to the world as well."

Quentin took to the shirt, which reads "I Believe in Me," right away, Page-Reaves says, but she didn't realize how much the declaration meant to her son until last week, when he confided in her that he was anxious about an important football game he was playing in. After discussing the matter at some length, Quentin told his mother he wanted to wear his Affirmation shirt underneath his jersey to bolster his confidence. At the game, Quentin excelled.

"Even though they lost that game, he was actually able to perform to his personal best," his mother said. "What he did pretty much inspired me. I called Ken up and said, 'I want to get t-shirts for the rest of his team.'"

Affirmative Apparel is not Canion's first



Daphne Page-Reaves and her son, Quentin, proudly wear Affirmation Apparel shirts.

foray into the world of entrepreneurship. He founded his first company, Black Art Gear, in 1993, and enjoyed considerable success. His watches and clocks, which were adorned with the works of African American artists, were featured on QVC, the Home Shopping Network and in the Spiegel catalogue. The company went under a few years ago.

"I went from having nothing to having it all ... and then losing it all," he related.

The many lessons he learned from the peaks and valleys of his life as a businessman led Canion to become a motivational speaker.

"That's what caused me to write, to reflect, to be introspective about my life and how I could use my life to help other people," he said.

Despite being able to motivate audiences all across the nation, Canion says he was in need of a little inspiration of his own.

"I could motivate people to change their lives, but I couldn't motivate myself to lose weight," he commented.

Canion joined a cast of 50 competitors on Season 3 of the NBC reality show "The Biggest Loser" in 2007. Though he was cut from the show, he went on to lose a whopping 100-pounds over the course of the next seven months. Battling his weight, and finally winning, gave him some valuable insight, Canion believes. He went on to pen two books about the lessons he's learned and started his own weight loss boot camp.

"My goal was to use this experience to inspire others," he said. "Now, I have a platform to help other people, and that was what I always wanted."

For more information about Affirmation Apparel, or for fundraising opportunities, visit www.affirmationapparel.com or email ken@kencanion.com.

Stroke

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was never depressed," she said. "I know that everything happens for a reason."

Moore has made the most of the time she's had on her hands during recovery. She's taken up yoga, and recently embarked on a seven-day cruise. She already has a five day excursion in Mexico planned for next year.

"I used to love to travel, but I never had the time. Now, obviously, all I have is time," she said with a grin.

Moore plans to begin work on a master's in Social Work from UNC-Chapel Hill in the near future.


"I don't take anything for granted anymore," Moore related. "I'm enjoying every minute of my life."

The Rev. Otto Gaither was driving down the road one day in 2005 when he realized he couldn't move his right hand. Having experienced some lightheadedness earlier in the day, Gaither, who was well versed on the signs of stroke, says he knew he was in trouble.

"I called my wife and told her, 'I hope I see you again, baby, because I'm having a stroke.'"

Except for high blood pressure, which he was on medication for at the time, Gaither, an associate minister at Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, was the epitome of good health.

"I am right now the size I was when I graduated high




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