

# The Dallas Morning News

## Shake-up shifts power

### **Ouster of incumbents results in altered approaches, demographics**

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With the winners of three Dallas runoff races confirmed, the City Council faces a major shift in its political dynamics.

Omar Narvaez, Kevin Felder and Tennell Atkins will join former acting Mayor Dwaine Caraway as the newest members of the council when they're sworn in June 19. They've ousted half of the six first-term council members.

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With the winners of three Dallas runoff races confirmed Sunday night, the City Council is facing a major shift in its political dynamics.

The final results of Saturday's election had been delayed because hundreds of mail-in ballots that voters had filed with others' assistance were sequestered as part of an election fraud inquiry.

But even before those last votes were accounted for, the defeat of Mayor Pro Tem Monica Alonzo, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Erik Wilson and council member Tiffinni Young had been expected.

Omar Narvaez will replace Alonzo in western Dallas, while Kevin Felder will take responsibility for South Dallas and eastern Dallas along the Interstate 30 corridor from Young. Former Mayor Pro Tem Tennell Atkins will assume Wilson's southeastern Dallas seat, returning to office after he left office in 2015 because of limits on consecutive terms.

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At least two of the three incumbents in the runoff races had accepted defeat before the official results were announced Sunday night.

"The people have spoken," Wilson said Saturday.

Alonzo also conceded to her opponent.

"I'm always in the community, and I will always continue to be in the community," she said this weekend.

Alonzo lost by the widest margin, 291 votes. Her rival, Narvaez, seized on growing resentment against her in West Dallas, which is mired in an affordable housing crisis as developers try to transform the working-class neighborhood into a chic destination.

Alonzo's critics accused her of failing to do enough to protect families after a landlord pulled 300 aging rentals from the market last fall.

Meanwhile, Narvaez scored political points after the May election when the landlord, Khraish Khraish of HMK Ltd., credited him with negotiating a deal to sell some West Dallas homes to tenants.

His victory adds another person to council member Philip Kingston's City Hall bloc, which often challenges Mayor Mike Rawlings.

Narvaez could not be reached for comment Monday.

In southeastern Dallas, Wilson faced a tough opponent in Atkins, who spent eight years on the council before term limits forced him out in 2015. The candidates generally agreed on the major issues, such as using more taxpayer money to prop up the failing Dallas Police and Fire Pension System fund.

Atkins boasted the endorsement of the Dallas police and firefighter associations and former Dallas Police Chief David Brown. Wilson — like the other two incumbents in the runoff — had the financial support of the political action committee For Our Community, headed by Mari Woodlief, the mayor's campaign consultant.

Atkins said District 8 voters indicated they wanted change when four people decided to run against Wilson. He credited his win to a grass-roots campaign that he said put constituents over the city's elite.

"It was a good name, but [For] Our Community, that super PAC, was not our community," Atkins said.

The returning council member said he would push for more money to address blight and quality-of-life concerns in his district. He plans to schedule a meeting with constituents this summer to ask what they want.

In District 8, complaints persisted that Young wasn't responsive to concerns among her constituents in South Dallas and eastern Dallas.

Her critics attacked her support for the mayor's now-stalled proposal to turn over Fair Park's operations to a handpicked nonprofit led by former Hunt Oil chairman and longtime Dallas civic leader Walt Humann.

Young said all she wanted to do was to move forward with a long-neglected city asset.

Felder, her rival, rejected the idea of handing over the park without a competitive bid. He couldn't be reached for comment Monday.

Dallas County also made official on Sunday night Dustin Marshall's victory over Lori Kirkpatrick for a place on the Dallas ISD board.

Staff writer Tristan Hallman contributed to this report.