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Published January 25, 2006

SPECIAL ELECTION

## Gordon wins in tight race

• **Optometrist defeats former mayor in special election to fill City Council seat vacated by Stacey Murphy.**

By Mark R. Madler, The Leader

DOWNTOWN BURBANK -- Local optometrist David Gordon edged out former Mayor Bill Wiggins by less than 300 votes Tuesday night in a special election that went down to the wire to fill a City Council seat that has been vacant for almost five months.

Gordon, a Planning Commission member, swept ahead of Wiggins by 36 votes late in the evening, when the 35th of 42 precincts had been reported. Wiggins had a hold on the lead most of the night.

When all precincts were reported, Gordon had won with 4,253 votes, or 37.9%, followed by Wiggins with 3,996 votes, or 35.6%, out of a total 11,212 votes.

advertisement "The people recognized it was time for a change and new leadership," Gordon said. "That's exactly what I hope to bring when I join the council and begin my deliberations."

Gordon will be sworn in Feb. 14.

Gordon, a former Planning Board member for four years, campaigned on a pledge to restore integrity and honesty to the council.

A small group of his supporters in City Hall's rotunda applauded when the totals came in.

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Phil Berlin, a Gordon supporter, said that residents were tired of the status quo.

"The issue of putting people first resonated with the voters," Berlin said.

Don Brown, a Wiggins supporter who served with Gordon on the Planning Board, said Gordon's experience on the board would be useful on land-use issues.

"You need some kind of experience to make your life as council member easier," Brown said.

Wiggins served on the council for eight years, from 1993 to 2001, and is Burbank's commissioner on the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority.

He wished Gordon well, adding that he was proud of his bid for the open seat.

"We ran a positive campaign, and I wouldn't have done anything different," Wiggins said.

The council called for the special election following the resignation in August of then-Councilwoman Stacey Murphy after she had been charged with felony cocaine

possession and misdemeanor child endangerment charges. Murphy pleaded guilty to the charges.

Voters had a field of five candidates to choose from in the all-mail election. Along with Wiggins and Gordon, Michael Dontanville, a retired air traffic controller; Vahe Hovanessian, an attorney; and Amy Lawrence, also an attorney, vied for the vacant seat.

Hovanessian received 1,068 votes, or 9.5%, and Lawrence and Dontanville followed with 1,043, or 9.3%, and 852, or 7.6%, respectively.

Lawrence and Dontanville were making their first runs for elected office while Hovanessian mounted his third stab at a council seat.

"In going door to door and talking to the voters, their response to me was that they were very aware of airport and safety issues," said Dontanville, who made airport safety the centerpiece of his campaign. "It was a very good experience, and it was encouraging to go out and meet the voters."

The special election was the third for the city using the all-mail ballot rather than polling places.

City Clerk Margarita Campos employed seven campaign workers to verify ballots with a signature comparison, sort the ballots by precinct and inspect them for damage so they could be scanned properly.

QUESTION

Are you satisfied with the special election's results? E-mail your responses to burbankleader @latimes.com; mail them to the Burbank Leader, 111 W. Wilson Ave., Glendale, CA 91203. Please spell your name and include your address and phone number for verification purposes only.

42 of 42 precincts reporting

Michael Dontanville..... 852 (7.5%)

DAVID GORDON .....4,253 (37.9%)

Burbank Leader: Gordon wins in tight race

Vahe Hovanesian..... 1,068 (9.5%)

Amy Lawrence .....1,043 (9.3%)

Bill Wiggins .....3,996 (35.6%)

Total number of votes: 11,212

Total number of eligible voters: 46,847

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