Recapping the 2014 election: Gov. Rick Snyder wins a second term

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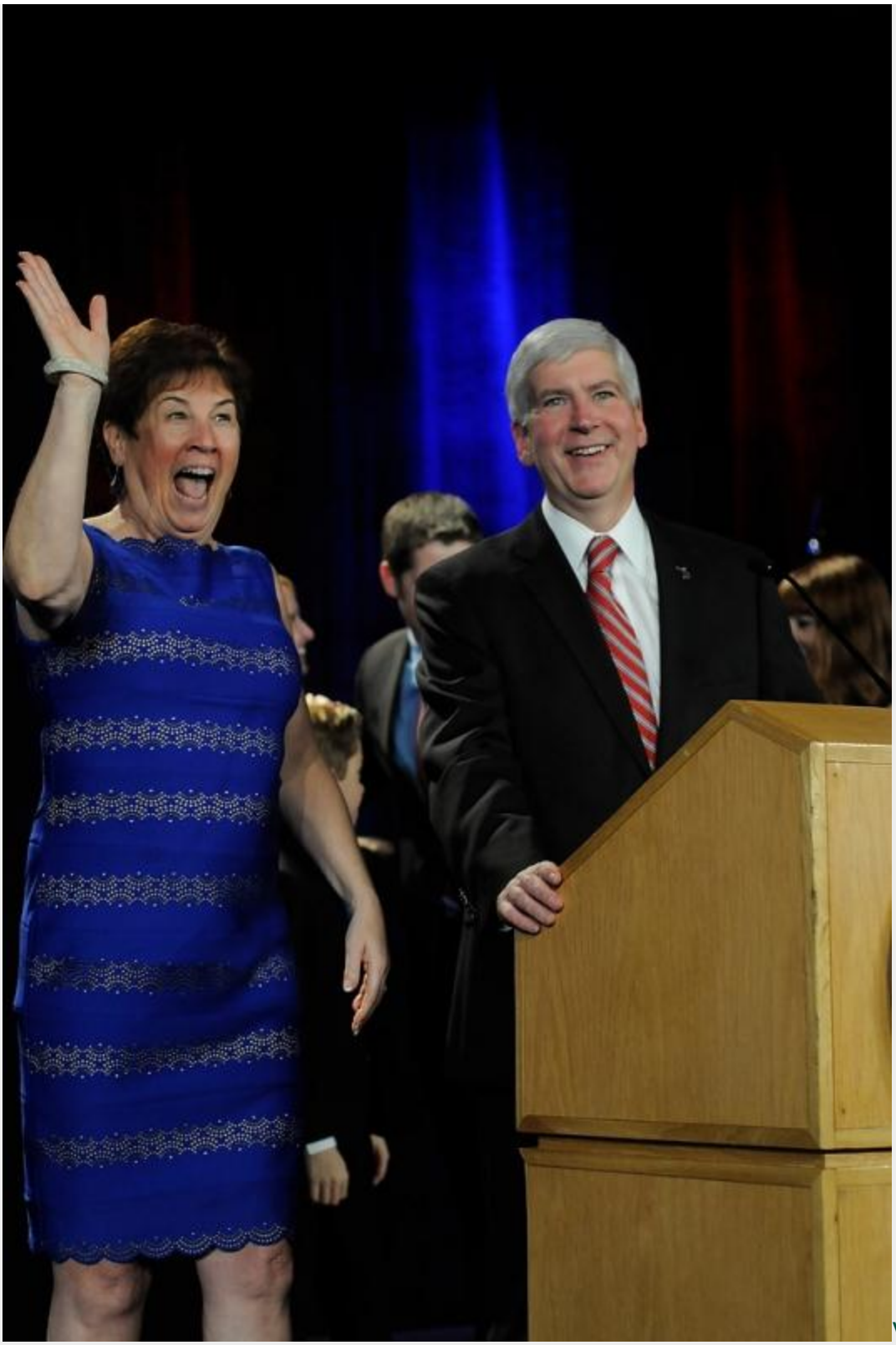
DETROIT — A familiar face will be behind the desk at Michigan's Capitol Building for the next four years.

Gov. Rick Snyder won a second term over Democrat challenger Mark Schauer, with 51 percent of the vote as of midnight.

"I want to say thank you to the team that I like to talk about the most, the team that matters the most to me — that's the team of MIchigan and all the citizens of our state," Snyder said after his win. "That's what we've been doing — showing not why we're different or how we're different, but how when we come together, we can do anything."

By the time Michigan residents began casting their votes, Snyder held only a slim lead on his opponent and MSU alumnus Mark Schauer according to many polls, and largely ran on the platform promoting his ability to balance Michigan's budget.

His campaign was not met without its share of dissent. Snyder has been steadfast in his refusal to take a stance on the same-sex marriage debate, which has frustrated the LGBT community.



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The governor has also taken heat for signing off on a nearly $1 billion cut from the state's education budget in 2011. Though, since the state has slightly rebounded from its economic struggles, Snyder has proposed increases.

Snyder and the GOP held their election party in downtown Detroit at the Marriot inside the Renaissance Center on the city's south side, mere blocks from the sea of blue accompanying Schauer during his election party at the MGM Grand.

Though he didn't address either higher education spending or same-sex marriage laws in his victory speech, he did voice his desire to add to the state's skilled-trade workforce.

"We're going to fill tens of thousands of skilled trade jobs," Snyder said. "We're going to help young people find careers and get them their start. We are going to lead the nation in that."

The main theme to Snyder's speech was four years of hard work, and four more to go. He spent his time speaking on the improvement of Detroit and the state as a whole over the course of his governance.

"When you have success like this, what's the next thing you need to do? It's not to stay where you are or get complacent, it's time to accelerate," Snyder said.

Also speaking at the event were incumbents Attorney General Bill Schuette and Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, who continued the theme of optimism at the GOP's election night party.

"You really did support a leadership team that loves this state, and one that will fight to make sure that Michigan continues to thrive," Johnson told the crowd.

Blue losses

By Election Day, it seemed like it could have been a tight race.

But the party was over before it even started at the MGM Grand Detroit Casino, where Schauer was announced the loser of the election by major news outlets well before he took the stage.

After a race that was deemed too close to call in days prior, Schauer conceded to incumbent Gov. Rick Snyder and gave a somber speech following the loss.

"Its been a long campaign," Schauer said. "Seventeen months, 83 counties and tens of thousands of miles on bumpy roads. We fought hard, we left it all on the field, we made this race about our kids, about seniors, about our middle class, about working people, and despite the onslaught of attacks from his billionaire buddies, we went the distance with Rick Snyder."

Schauer, a Howell, Mich. native and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Michigan's 7th Congressional District from 2009 to 2011, campaigned on a platform of increased education spending, economic growth and prioritizing the state budget.

Schauer also dubbed himself the "education governor," promising to make education a top priority and restore funding to pre-2011 levels. For higher education, Schauer advocated an approach centering on loan refinancing and increased state need-based financial aid.

Unlike Snyder, Schauer was vocal on issues pertaining to LGBT rights, and stated he would fight for establishing marriage equality in Michigan.

Similarly, Mark Totten, a MSU law professor who ran in the democrat slot for Attorney General, was outvoted by current Attorney General Bill Schuette. During his speech, Totten said he hoped to set an example to his children on "what it looks like to fight for what you believe in."

Democrat candidate Godfrey Dillard also struck out in the race against incumbent Secretary of State Ruth Johnson.

Schauer said his campaign was about more than just the next few years, but was a movement for Michigan. In his closing statements, he implored the crowd to seek that "the work continue," because Michigan is not a state that gives up, he said.

A silver lining for Democrats

A silver lining for the Democrats was Gary Peters, also a MSU alumnus, who served as the U.S Representative for Michigan's 14th congressional district, who was announced the winner of the Senate race before the party began.

"We are very excited to see that Gary Peters has won and look forward to working with him as we move forward," Incumbent state Rep. Sam Singh, D-East Lansing, said following the fellow democrat's election to the U.S. Senate. Singh, a MSU alumnus, was re-elected into his seat on Michigan's 69th House District.

Peter's speech focused on the issues, including leveling out the gender pay gap, funding education, and climate change. During his speech, Peters advocated for raising the minimum wage, and said "everybody who works hard and plays by the rules should be able to get their piece of the American dream."

Peters also said he was going to reach for bi-partisanship as much as possible.

Comparative culture and politics senior Brianna Shamsuddoha said she is ecstatic about Peters' election to the U.S. Senate.

“Gary has shown such commitments to such topics that I think he represents college students interests very well,” Shamsuddoha said. “He’s being doing work at loan reform, because that was college graduates worried about as they are paying back their student loans.”

Local candidates, issues

Curtis Hertel Jr. was also elected as State Senator in District 23 replacing fellow Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, who was term limited.

Hertel’s win comes after a primary victory and early lead with his campaign gaining several endorsements over the months leading to the election.

Hertel Jr. graduated from MSU’s James Madison college and has served as Ingham County Register of Deeds since 2009. He said education and equality are some of his primary concerns, including universal preschool and better quality public and higher education.

“An immediate goal is making college education more affordable,” Hertel said. “A lot of mistakes have been made in funding our schools, and we can’t have kids graduating with insurmountable debt.”

Hertel has also set fixing the roads in Michigan as one of his first priorities.

“Anyone who has driven on our roads knows how horrible they are,” he said.

And East Lansing's proposal asking residents to authorize the city to sell parking lots to private developers didn't pass. About 57 percent voted yes for the proposal, but the initiative needs 60 percent of the vote to pass.

Although the ballot proposal was not linked to the Park District project, the city had planned to sell the properties to DTN Management Co., the private developer looking to be chosen for the construction of the Park District redevelopment.

The parking lots on sale are parking lots 4, 8 and 15 in downtown East Lansing. Parking lot 4 is located on the northwest corner of Abbot Road and Albert Avenue. Parking lot 8 is located north of The Peoples Church. Parking lot 15 is located across from City Hall.

Student reaction

Both the MSU College Republicans and MSU College Democrats have put a lot of work into their corresponding campaigns.

Both presidents said their organizations have done a lot leading up to the race, but today, especially, they continued to encourage others to vote.

“We worked on reminder calls, finding students that were registered to vote,” MSU College Democrats President Brianna Shamsuddoha said. “We asked them if they’d voted or if they had a plan to vote.”

MSU College Republicans President Lisa Jankowski said the MSU College Republicans also spent the day making calls individually. And together, Jankowski said they staked out the rock at 9:30 a.m. on Nov. 3 and painted it, “Go Green! Vote Red!”

“One of our members stood out there all last night, guarding it, so I’m really proud of that,” Jankowski said.

For the MSU College Republicans, that work paid off with a Snyder win.

“I’m beyond pleased,” Jankowski said. “Together, with the College Republicans and Spartans for Snyder, we’ve done a lot of work with phones, literature and signs for this election.”

Spartans for Snyder, Jankowski said, is not a registered student organization because they were only around to help get Snyder re-elected in office. Partnering with them, she said they helped them get everything from Snyder signs to bumper stickers.

“We are thrilled with the results,” Jankowski said. “ But unfortunately, Terry Lynn Land didn’t take the win for U.S. Senate.”

However, Jankowski said this election has been incredible nationwide for Republicans.

“We haven’t had Republicans take over both the House and Senate since the Bill Clinton era,” she said. “It’s a big deal because it hasn’t happened in such a long time.”

She said she’s hoping this will be a call for the country to turn direction for the better.

Media outlet: The State News