

LYNN DYMALLY, 21, OVERWHELMED BY MARGIN OF VICTORY

Newly-elected trustee promises to promote reading, writing

By Ivan Crosbie
Staff Writer
COMPTON — Less than three weeks after winning almost a landslide victory in the city's unified school district board of trustees race, Lynn V. Dymally, 24, will be sworn into office Nov. 29 during a ceremony in the board's hearing room.

Daughter of former state Lieutenant Gov. Mervyn Dymally, Lynn has become one of the youngest persons to be elected to the district's board of trustees. Although she lived less than one year in the city, she won the highest number of votes in the Nov. 8 election, outnumbering her closest competitor by 483 votes.

Despite strong competition from 14 candidates, Lynn collected 3,258 votes. Responding to his daughter's victory from his Washington, D.C. office, Rep. Dymally (D-Compton) said he was "delighted that Lynn is going to join me in public service and education."

Dymally said that during the course of his daughter's campaign, she "probably received more materials and briefing on education than I had in all my years in the legislature."

Asked if she anticipated winning by such a wide margin, Lynn said she was overwhelmed, that she had no idea she would receive the largest number of votes.

While saying she does not



LYNN DYMALLY
one of youngest

want to be critical of the present board and its administration, the new trustee feels several things need to be done to improve the district's educational process.

"There is a need to increase reading and writing in our district," she explained. "Our youngsters really need special emphasis in these areas."

She feels a need also exists for greater emphasis on mathematics, science and technology. "Our society is technology oriented."

"For our youngsters to compete," she continued, "they must have strong skills in these areas."

One of the problems that has been a thorn in the side of school district officials is that of gang violence. Less than three months ago, gang shootings on two of the district's high school campuses resulted in several students being wounded.

Lynn said, "We need to investigate ways of curtailing our safety problem" in the district.

Another major problem is that of finance. Currently, the district has less than \$2½ million in its reserve funds.

The district is the third largest in the county and has a budget of more than \$100 million. But declining enrollment and the utilization of \$14 million from its reserve funds over the past year leaves its financial base somewhat shaky.

Lynn believes more federal and state funding would help restore financial stability to the district.

"There have been severe funding cutbacks from the state and federal levels," she said. "Our youths don't have jobs and that causes a special problem."

"Many of them come from single parent homes," she continued. "Some parents are unable to provide their children with the things necessary for a pleasant childhood."

Lynn, who was born and grew up in South Central Los Angeles, said she is in tune with the needs of today's youths, having passed through the public schools system herself.

After graduating, she attended the University of California in San Diego, where she earned a bachelor's degree in communications and sociology. Currently, she is completing a master's degree at the University of Redlands and plans to pursue a doctorate in the future.

During her campaign for the board, she said she feels she had been the "most well-read candidate, because I was provided with literature on everything that was printed about education."

"I received books from Carnegie Education Foundation and all the legislative materials on education," she explained. "I was bombarded from every end with educational materials."

"I read books, articles, analyses and proposals. So I received a great deal of education on education."

But what really motivated the 24-year-old to get involved in school

board politics, especially Compton's, was her desire, she said, to do something for the predominantly black-ruled community.

At the time, she explained, she was looking for affordable housing where she could invest "my little savings in property."

She said her father contacted a real estate woman who informed him about a newly-built condominium complex on Acacia Avenue in the city.

As a result, Lynn bought one of the condominiums for approximately \$80,000.

which she now uses as a residence.

"I assessed the opportunity of getting involved here," she explained. "I discovered it offered me an opportunity on a community level."

Working with youths in one of the city's organizations called "Youth for Christ," Lynn feels that "moving to the city makes it more convenient" for her.

"I was really excited about moving here," she said. "Daddy was real proud" about the decision,

"because, most young blacks don't want to move back into the ghetto."

"They want to move to the westside or northside, but not the southside or eastside of Los Angeles."

When she initially moved into the city, she said she had no intention of getting "so involved."

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Southeast legal aid . . .

the former administration offered. "We're bound by the same regulations. We've got the same type of guidelines," she said.

However, one apparent difference between the two administrations is that of staffing. SELAC had approximately 15 persons, handled its own finances and occupied the two-story building.

Gonzales' branch, on the other hand, has a staff of 10, occupies only half of the building and does not handle its own funding.

The branch is also restricted in several ways, she said. One of these involves the type of cases it can handle, given its staff size and conditions under which it operates.

"We provide service for civil cases," the director said. "We don't handle family law like SELAC. But we can refer such cases to our Los Angeles family law center."

LAPLA has three other branches that provide services to East, West and South Central Los Angeles, she said.

Its Los Angeles-based headquarters handles the administration of grants and personnel.

Since July 1, the branch has had its grants renewed twice. Its first funding began July 1 to Sept. 30; then it received new funding from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31.

Gonzales said the corporation "contemplates a six to nine month period to find a permanent provider."

Her branch is among those seeking to get the permanent contract. Under its interim status, she said, "we're trying to do a lot of short term cases, such as benefit programs, social security and landlord-tenant problems."

Cases it cannot handle, such as evictions, foreclosures, welfare, general relief, unemployment insurance, minimum wage violations and discrimination are referred to its headquarters or its sister branches.

"We're not getting involved in too many litigation cases, because of our interim basis," she said.

The director said if her branch gets the permanent contract, she would add more personnel and will be able to provide long term services.

To date, the branch has served approximately 482 clients throughout the Southeast.

Gonzales, who has several years experience in legal aid services, was graduated from law school in 1978. She attended UC Davis and served an internship in a public defender's office in Sacramento.