

Jones's victory in Dufferin-Caledon muted by Liberal majority

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Despite lauding the return of the local Tory MPP to Queen's Park, many supporters election night were shocked at the campaign's outcome.

Progressive Conservative Sylvia Jones secured her seat in the provincial legislature for Dufferin-Caledon for the third consecutive time. As results rolled into Jones's Orangeville campaign headquarters, supporters' spirits were buoyed by indications she'd earned as much as 40 per cent of the ballots marked.

To Jones' seat-saving 16,845 votes, Liberal Party hopeful Bobbie Daid tallied 13,054 votes and Karren Wallace of the Green Party rounded out the top three electoral shows with about 7,400 votes.

The also-rans were the New Democratic Party's Rehya Yazbek and the Libertarian Party's Daniel Kowalewski.

Jones entered her First Avenue headquarters to strains of Pharrell's song Happy that was counterpointed with the claps and cheers of Dufferin-Caledon's provincial party faithful.

"We did it again," said Kevin Weatherbee, Jones's campaign chairperson. "You've selected again an amazing candidate and an amazing MPP in Dufferin-Caledon in Sylvia Jones."

"All of you, our volunteers? You made this happen."

For her part, Jones said the outcome wasn't exactly what the campaign had hoped. She referred, specifically, to the Liberal majority won by Premier Kathleen Wynne.

However, she did manage to offer a tongue-in-cheek thanks to Wynne for enabling the political contest to be held in May. But she said the campaign was challenging for a number of reasons. But, throughout, her camp managed the high road.

"You were respectful when others were rude," Jones told her campaign workers. "You were honourable when others chose to sling mud. And you chose the truth when others chose to make things up."

Among the throng gathered on election night was local MP David Tilson. He attributed the Tories' failure to win to the third-party advertising campaigns by various labour unions against the suggested policies of Conservative leader Tim Hudak.

Soon after the loss, Mr. Hudak announced he would resign the party leadership.

Tilson said Hudak's suggestion he'd axe as many as 100,000 civil service middle management jobs in Ontario as one of the nails in the provincial Tories' coffin.

"If you're a teacher or a nurse, you'd be frightened by that," he said.

As for the Liberal majority, the riding's federal representative said, ominously, "You get the government you vote for."

Tilson successfully contested a nomination battle for his job. When asked, he said he isn't worried the Ontario contest could be foreshadowing of things to unfold in Ottawa in 2015 when the writ is to be dropped for the next federal general election.

"A lot can happen in a year," he said.

While she won't be going to Queen's Park, the prospect of a Liberal majority put a big smile on the face of local standard bearer Daid.

"We were in it for a majority," she remarked shortly after arriving at her victory party in Bolton. "Unfortunately, the people of this riding didn't see it the same way."

"We don't have to go to the polls again any time soon," she added.

Daid said transportation gridlock and aggregate were the main issues she was hearing about during the campaign.

"I think we made a lot of heads turn," she commented. "This was truly a grass-roots campaign."

She also promised to stay active in the area.

"I definitely want to make changes to this riding," she said. "There's a lot of great community members I met."

While the Green Party waited at the Mill Creek Pub on election night for the results, the atmosphere was calm and hopeful. Despite the fact that it was clear fairly early on in the evening that the Green Party representative Wallace would not be the next MPP, everyone remained positive as they witnessed higher than ever voter numbers rolling in for the party.

"The voters have spoken and we respect their decision," said Wallace after the full election results were in, after confirming Jones was re-elected to the position. "As a candidate, this loss is on my shoulders alone. I couldn't have asked for a better team. Our numbers were up from 2011, the Green Party's numbers are up all over, and I think that is sending a message to the big three parties that the status quo is not going to serve our needs anymore."

She went on to thank the voters, members of her party and campaign, and everyone who helped spread the message of the Green

Party throughout the province, as well as thanked the party itself for helping her start on her journey through their involvement in the fight against the Mega Quarry in 2011.

She concluded her message with a reminder that it's up to the members of the Dufferin-Caledon riding to ensure their elected representative continues the battle for our land and our livelihoods over the next term.

?What we have to do now is keep the flames to the feet of our elected MPP to stand up for the people of this riding,? said Wallace. ?When we are facing quarries and developments in our backyard that we don't want and threats to our source water, there can be no more room to have a lack of involvement, and that will be up to every one of you. Keep those emails coming to Jones every single day and force her to get involved. We need protection for our land and we need control brought back to the citizens, so it's all up to you now.?