

Wong wins 3d term as mayor

Remains at the helm in Fitchburg

Holyoke elects 22-year-old novice

By Kathy McCabe

GLOBE STAFF

Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, the state's first Asian-American woman mayor, staged a remarkable comeback to win reelection to a third term yesterday, and a 22-year-old political novice won a stunning victory to become mayor of the Western Massachusetts city of Holyoke.

Wong, who was trounced in the September primary by Councilor Joseph Solomon, outpolled her challenger by about 900 votes, or 4,286 to 3,351, according to the city clerk's office. Wong lost the September primary to Solomon.

"We put boots on the ground," a breathless Wong, 32, said last night by telephone. "A lot of people came forward who said they hadn't voted in the primary, and we wanted to make sure people came out."

Wong spent the day knocking on doors in the small Central Massachusetts city of about 40,000. Campaign workers called voters, checked names at the polls, and held signs at the city's 12 polling places. "We won because of the hard work by many people who believed in the vision I set four years ago, to protect tax dollars and to revive a city with a lot of creativity," Wong said.

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In Holyoke, 22-year-old challenger Alex Morse ousted incumbent Elaine Pinta, winning 5,121 to 4,513, according to the city clerk's office. Pinta, a former 14-year city councilor, became the city's first female mayor when she was elected two years ago.

Morse, who graduated from Brown University in May, ran as an outsider, promising to improve low high school graduation rates, encourage business in the city, and improve services. He also opposes construction of a casino in the city of about 40,000, one of the state's poorest, with a poverty rate of 28.4 percent, according to 2010 federal census data.

Elsewhere, four new mayors were elected to replace those who did not seek reelection, while other incumbents held onto their seats.

In Malden, Councilor Gary Christenson bested opponent Deborah Fallon, winning 66.7 percent of the vote for mayor, according to the city clerk's office. He will succeed Mayor Richard C. Howard, who is leaving office after 16 years.



Alex Morse, 22, won the mayor's race in Holyoke.

In Peabody, Councilor Edward A. Bethencourt Sr., 38, easily defeated Sean Fitzgerald, a lawyer, in the



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Mayor Lisa Wong thanked her supporters in a victory speech at her Main Street headquarters in Fitchburg.

Left to right: Henry Woolsey (MLEV), Ryan Czepakanski-Moir (OR), Jessica Bardi (OR), Jenny Wheeler, Wong Campaign Manager, and unidentified man.