

A Historic Victory: Andrea Jenkins elected to Minneapolis City Council

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NOVEMBER 7, 2017 MINNEAPOLIS -

Andrea Jenkins has been declared the winner in the race for the Ward 8 seat on the Minneapolis City Council.

With her victory Jenkins becomes the first African American transgender woman in the nation to be elected to the city council of a major city. Having worked for twelve years as a policy aide to two Minneapolis city council members, she is one of the most experienced first-time candidates to run for Minneapolis City Council.

Celebrating her historic win, Jenkins said, “My election is what resistance looks like. It’s also about hope. As a City Council Member, I will be committed to advocating for equity for the most marginalized in our community.”

Current Ward 8 City Council Member Elizabeth Glidden, who didn’t run for reelection, said of Jenkins, “Andrea has faced hard tests in life and career and remains strong, loving, and resilient. She brings calm, she builds relationships, she perseveres, and she is amazing. Andrea will be a great leader not only for Ward 8 but for our whole city.”

Jenkins’s winning campaign was managed by Aurin Chowdhury, who observed, “Throughout this campaign, I’ve seen how people are powerful and community is powerful. Andrea taught me, a 20-year-old woman of color, to confidently lead and persistently do what is necessary to create change. This campaign was run by almost all women and is a testament to what women can achieve when given an opportunity to lead. Andrea’s campaign was a platform to lift up the next generation of political leaders and set the powerful precedent that women should always be in the upper rungs of leadership.”

As Jenkins said in her speech to supporters after her victory was announced, “As an out African American trans-identified woman, I know first-hand the feeling of being marginalized, left out, thrown under the bus. Those days are over. We don’t just want a seat at the table—we want to set the table. At a time in our history when the federal government is

undermining the progress that has been made in women's rights, access to health care, immigrant rights, disability rights, LGBT rights, we must stand up and fight back. Cities are the frontline of defense in these efforts, and I am proud to do this work."

Looking forward to taking office in January, Jenkins reiterated her commitment to equity. In particular she highlighted the need to increase affordable housing and create green jobs, as well as improve police accountability.

The campaign was chaired by Minnesota state senator Scott Dibble. "Andrea is a staunch, passionate advocate for LGBT people's, and everyone's, rights," he said. "In so many ways, for so many years, she has shown up to do the work. She has been generous, living her life openly and authentically, and in so doing helped others claim their own power. As a fellow out LGBTQ elected official, I know Andrea will handle the challenges and demands of public service with aplomb and grace."

Support for Jenkins in Ward 8 was enthusiastic. Camille Gage, a ward resident, said, "I am so excited to know that Andrea will be my council member, a woman who is not only my friend, but the most qualified, committed and exciting choice in the race for Ward 8 City Council. She will do us proud!"

"We are really lucky," says Betty Tisel, another resident of Ward 8, "because Andrea is a person who truly represents all parts of the ward. I feel like she is a person who is comfortable on and respected by both sides of the freeway, north and south. We have a very diverse ward, and it feels really good to know she is somebody who moves so fluently between the differences in our ward."

Robert Lilligren, former Ward 8 City Council Member and current president of the Native American Community Development Institute, said, "From the day I met her nearly 20 years ago in a community leadership course, I've known that Andrea Jenkins has a special balance of love of the people, fierce intelligence, and a drive to make the world a better place. She will make an excellent and effective council member!"

Supported financially by more than 600 donors, this historic campaign mobilized over 100 volunteers, who knocked on doors and called potential voters all over the ward between July and Election Day. Campaign volunteers, along with Jenkins herself, participated in numerous community events, from Open Streets to the May Day and Pride Parades.

Jenkins's campaign was endorsed by a large number of labor groups and local as well as national progressive organizations:

AFL-CIO Regional Labor Federation
AFSCME Minnesota Council 5
Minnesota Nurses Association
Our Revolution
OutFront Minnesota Action
Putting Women in Their Place
SEIU Minnesota State Council
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Stonewall DFL
TakeAction Minnesota
Trans United
Victory Fund
Vote Pro-Choice
womenwinning

She also received the endorsement of the Minneapolis daily paper, the *Star Tribune*. Calling her an “empathetic and gifted communicator,” its editorial board highlighted her “vision for neighborhood improvement that she helped bring to life at the transformed intersection of E. 38th Street and Chicago Avenue S., where she worked with small-business investors, arts initiatives and neighbors to turn around decades of blight.”

Andrea Jenkins is currently the Oral Historian for the Transgender Oral History Project at the University of Minnesota Libraries, documenting the lived experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming people in the Upper Midwest and the United States. She holds a bachelor’s degree in human services, a master’s degree in community economic development, and an MFA in creative writing. An artist and poet, she is the author of *The T is Not Silent: New and Selected Poems* (2015) and the recipient of many awards, including a Bush Foundation Fellowship.

For more information, visit andreajenkinsforward8.org

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