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# After loss, Preckwinkle supporters ponder her future

*The county board president says she'll still focus on progressive agenda*



by MAYA HORTON and Maia McDonald/Block Club Chicago April 8, 2019





Toni Preckwinkle

Supporters of mayoral candidate Toni Preckwinkle gathered inside of the Promontory restaurant in Hyde Park, where they watched political newcomer and former federal prosecutor Lori Lightfoot become Chicago's first black female mayor.

As votes filed in on Tuesday, many of Preckwinkle's constituents were left shocked at the outcome. Former federal prosecutor and attorney Lori Lightfoot won in a landslide, 74 percent to 26 percent.

"Well, other than disappointment, I don't know what to say," said Barbara Burchjola, a Preckwinkle supporter from the Edgewater neighborhood on the Northside of the city.

"It's gonna be an interesting four years," she said. "I just want [Lightfoot] to do a good job for the city. Get the finances in order to make sure that people can afford to live in the city of Chicago. I know one mayor can't do that by herself, but I don't have many

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expectations of her. I'm not a Lightfoot supporter."

Lightfoot, 56, won in convincing fashion, defeating the 72-year-old Cook County board president and 19-year alderman in all 50 of the city's wards. Despite the results, Preckwinkle's supporters were unwavering in their support of the veteran politician.

"I'm hoping that we still see more of Toni," said Preckwinkle supporter Kelvin Falkner. "I think she's an impressive politician. I think she has the vision and the experience to get what we need done...but you know, I want to give Lightfoot a chance. I'm hoping that she comes in and she's what we need her to be because the city really needs that right now."

With the election over, Preckwinkle will continue to be a fixture in the city's politics. Her term as county board president does not end until 2022. Preckwinkle also serves as the chair of the Cook County Democratic Party.

"She will continue to fight for these ideals and we will be right behind her for years to come," Ald. Sophia King (4th) reminded Preckwinkle supporters. As Preckwinkle took the stage to deliver her concession speech, the room chanted "Toni! Toni! Toni!"

In her speech, she reflected on the legacy of her campaign, and the work she believes Chicago still has to do, including working collaboratively with community stakeholders, addressing the criminal justice system and creating new goals around sustainability. She also demanded more opportunities for the underemployed and the unemployed.

"At the end of the day that's what's truly historic about this election," Preckwinkle said to her supporters. "It's not simply gender or race but about our values. This campaign was about real issues, working class families throughout our neighborhoods."

She finished with one final message to Chicagoans for the future.

"Keep fighting. Nothing worth fighting for is ever easy. But it's always, always, always worth it to fight for what you believe in and I'm going to keep fighting, too."

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