

# Beiers elected mayor, 4-3

SANTA CRUZ

11-25-98

## ■ Santa Cruz: Opponent Rotkin, alienated from progressives, rejected as vice mayor.

BY JOHN WOOLFOLK  
Mercury News Staff Writer

Santa Cruz City Councilwoman Katherine Beiers was elected mayor Tuesday in a tense vote that reflected the feuding among the city's liberal progressives.

Beiers was elected 4-3 with the support of newly seated councilmen Keith Sugar, Tim Fitzmaurice and Christopher Krohn,

whom she had endorsed in the November election.

"This, too, is a sweet victory," Beiers said.

The vote was a blow to Councilman Mike Rotkin, who had sought the mayoral post and, according to progressive tradition, was next in line for it as the top vote-getter in the previous election.

But Rotkin, once the darling of the progressive movement, has become alienated from it. Along with council allies Cynthia Mathews, Michael Hernandez and outgoing Councilman Scott Kennedy, he was part of a majority on the seven-member council that endorsed unpopular policies, particularly redevelopment of the beach area.

Beiers and her newly seated allies who campaigned against those policies made that point clear Tuesday.

"Politicians pay a high price for losing

touch with their constituents," Beiers said. "Mike . . . is enough of a politician to know that when he voted his convictions at the risk of alienating his constituents, he was jeopardizing his position as a member in good standing of that progressive majority."

Beiers promised some immediate changes that were opposed by the former council majority. The city, she said, will withdraw its approval of a settlement with the boardwalk amusement park for

See MAYOR, Page 4B



**Beiers**  
She promised immediate changes.

## Beiers edges out Rotkin for Santa Cruz mayor

### ■ MAYOR

from Page 1B

ownership of its riverside parking lot. And it will reconsider its no-camping law for the benefit of the homeless.

Mathews and Hernandez, who voted for Rotkin as mayor, chastised the new council majority for the coup. They noted that they agreed to follow the council tradition a year ago in electing Celia Scott, Beiers' ally, as mayor.

"There is an established tradition, and I believe that by following that tradition, we have the opportunity to move beyond the divisiveness of the recent election," Mathews said.

The new council majority also passed over Rotkin for the vice mayoral seat and elected Sugar instead.

A capacity crowd packed the council chambers for the ceremoni-

al session and cheered wildly for outgoing Mayor Scott, Beiers and the three new councilman. They were silent as Kennedy departed, and some hissed at his parting remarks.

Kennedy, who had been vilified by progressives for his support of the beach plan, was both defensive and contrite.

"I know that some have found me difficult to work with," Kennedy said. "I can be direct to the point of bluntness. I have sometimes been too harsh in my judgment of people or my words with people. I apologize for those shortcomings.

"At the same time, I have thrown myself into this work with all of my heart because I have felt the terrific responsibility of public service. In the past eight years, we've done a lot, done some of it well, failed on many other points, and left much undone."