

Bryant named mayor

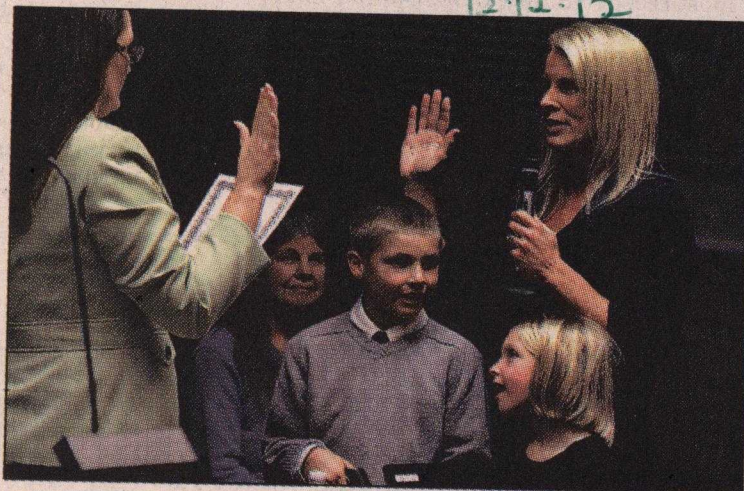
New members sworn in

By J.M. BROWN

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SANTA CRUZ — Two City Council veterans and two newcomers took the oath of office Tuesday as three members departed and Hilary Bryant was named mayor.

After being sworn in with her son Quintin and daughter Maddie standing by, Bryant said “job No. 1 for me is economic development” — that there won’t be funding for environmental and social initiatives without a healthy tax base driven by a good business climate. She also pledged to continue working on improving



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Hilary Bryant has her children Quintin and Madeline by her side as she is sworn in as mayor of Santa Cruz by City Clerk Bren Lehr Tuesday night.

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programs for youth.

“What’s important to me is that my children have the foundation that they can make the world a better place and that Santa Cruz is an amazing place,” she said. “And I think I’m getting there.”

At 41, Bryant is the youngest mayor since 2008. She will preside over the first female-majority council in 14 years. Lynn Robinson, a co-founder of Santa Cruz Neighbors, who came in second to Bryant in the 2010 election, was named vice mayor.

Former Mayors Don Lane and Cynthia Mathews and first-time council members Micah Posner and Pamela Comstock were sworn in to join the two women leaders along with Councilman

David Terrazas.

Though the two represent much different constituencies, Comstock, a founding board member of Take Back Santa Cruz, and Micah Posner, the former director of People Power, represent a second wave of people with young families elected to the council.

Comstock, 41, promised to focus on promoting public safety, economic opportunities and unity.

“This council and community will need to put aside our differences,” Comstock said. “Let’s move forward and not stop progress before it begins.”

As a longtime activist, Posner, 44, noted he’s been “agreeing and disagreeing with (the council) for 20 years, while admiring them.” He urged more permanent housing for the homeless and limiting roadway expansion.

Also an advocate for the homeless, Lane began his third term

on the council Tuesday. Mathews has served two previous eight-year stints on the council, the last ending in 2010.

Leaving the council Tuesday were Beiers, Ryan Coonerty and Tony Madrigal.

Beiers served nearly 16 years, including an 11-year stint that remains a record. She was appointed in 1989 and, like Lane, served during the Loma Prieta earthquake and remained a strong voice for preservation and social services.

Beiers, who returned to the council in 2008, urged her colleagues to implement the city’s Climate Action Plan and take care in evaluating a proposed desalination plant.

“The council has to remain open to the possibility that, in the end, a program of alternatives may be the most cost-effective and most environmentally sustainable way to manage our

water supply through drought conditions,” she said.

Coonerty has left his imprint on the council since 2004 by helping to change the city’s image — from one often seen as anti-business and part of a lefty fringe to one focused on public decency and growing local business. Coonerty launched a number of pro-business initiatives and pushed for tougher rules governing panhandling and other behavior downtown.

“Eight years later, my love for this community is deeper than it has ever been,” Coonerty said.

Madrigal was elected in 2004 and re-elected in 2008, often championing labor issues, gang prevention and immigration support services. He also founded an annual prom dress drive and cactus festival.

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