

Capitola

✓ Harlan chosen mayor

Capitola's first woman mayor

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CAPITOLA — Vice-Mayor Stephanie Harlan fulfilled a dream Thursday night, being unanimously elected the first woman mayor of Capitola.

Harlan, a six-year council member, was passed the gavel by outgoing Mayor Jerry Clarke. Just a few minutes earlier, Clarke was sworn in along with fellow councilmen Ron Graves and Bob Bucher — all of whom handily won another four years on the council in Tuesday's election. Graves was named vice-mayor.

Harlan, 42, has been working to make her dream come true since 1988. She conceded she campaigned two years ago not just to be re-elected, but with the goal of being the top vote-getter.

Traditionally, the council chooses the top vote-getter as vice-mayor, who is elevated to mayor two years down the road. That's the precise road Harlan took.

Graves, in nominating Harlan for mayor, cited her for "working her heart out."

Bucher jokingly presented the new mayor with a sport jacket "that all of us mayors have worn." Graves quipped, "Now you're one of the good 'ol boys."

Harlan noted afterward, "I'm thrilled to be Capitola's first woman mayor."

Harlan is the third woman ever to be on Capitola's council. The two other women council members



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Stephanie Harlan says her hard work has paid off.

both were vice-mayor. Carin Mudgett served as vice mayor from 1980-82, and Ruth Wilson served the same post from 1958-60.

"I don't think there will be any big changes just because I'm a woman," she said. "I do think women look at some issues a little differently than men, but I just want to continue working for the common good of the citizens of Capitola."

Not always on the same wave length as fellow council members, Harlan has had to struggle at times to get her strong environmental point of view across on some issues. More than once, she has been on the losing end of 4-1 votes.

She lost her staunchest ally on the council two years ago when Dennis Beltram lost his re-election

bid.

But Harlan said she only worked harder, and her work didn't go unnoticed by fellow council members.

Clarke said Harlan "has grown" in recent years. The others agreed. Councilman Michael Routh virtually promised Harlan his support for mayor after her re-election two years ago.

Said Harlan, "I think they (fellow council members) appreciate my hard work. ... I think I've shown them that I can be part of the team."

"We're working well as a team," she added. "We don't always agree on everything, but we still work toward the common goal of providing efficient, effective service to the citizens of Capitola."