



## **Parry, Thompson triumphant in Boone County Commission races**

By Blake Nelson

Columbia Missourian

Published Nov. 8, 2016

COLUMBIA — Voters elected Fred Parry and re-elected incumbent Janet Thompson to the Boone County Commission on Tuesday.

Parry, a Republican and magazine publisher, will shake up the commission, which oversees one of the largest and fastest-growing counties in the state. Thompson and the presiding commissioner, Dan Atwill, are both Democrats and lawyers, and Parry continually highlighted this during a campaign that promoted both his outsider status and deep ties to Columbia.

Parry will represent the county's Southern District. His opponent, Democrat Brianna Lennon, was running her first campaign for public office. Lennon lost by 766 votes in a county that often favors Democrats. Parry will replace Democrat Karen Miller, who was first sworn into office the same month that Bill Clinton was first sworn in as president.

Thompson was first elected Northern District commissioner in 2012. On Tuesday, she defeated Republican Brenndan Riddles of Elm Tree by 2,073 votes. Riddles campaigned on many of the same issues that Parry did, including the state of the Central Missouri Events Center and angst over the removal of a soldier's monument from outside the Boone County Courthouse. But Riddles, an electrician seeking his first government gig, could not match Parry's experience working with boards and businesses throughout the county or his fundraising prowess.

Thompson's second term and Parry's first will begin Jan. 1. Atwill, the presiding commissioner, was not up for re-election.

### **Southern District**

Parry broke from his Republican colleagues and held his own watch party at Shiloh Bar & Grill. Around 10 p.m., he was still behind by about 400 votes, and supporters talked in small groups while they awaited the final results.

Then somebody rang a plastic cowbell, everyone rushed to the bar's entrance and a cheer erupted: Parry was ahead. Moments later, Lennon called to concede. Parry talked quietly into his phone. He then turned, smiled and gave a thumbs-up. About 20 supporters cheered again.

Parry stepped onto a chair.

"We had great support from people on both sides of the ticket," Parry said, referring to local Democrats who endorsed him. "I think that made the difference."

He thanked Lennon for helping "elevate the issues" and said he was happy the state had also elected a Republican governor. He made no mention of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, whose face continually appeared on the bar's TV screens.

First on Parry's agenda once he takes office: the Boone County fairgrounds.

Earlier in the evening, Lennon waited nervously with friends and family near the front of a large crowd at the Boone County Democratic Party's election watch party at The Blue Note. The crowd was fixated on the election coverage unfolding on the projection screen, but Lennon and her husband, Scott Files, focused on refreshing her race's results on their phones and computer.

When the final results posted, the couple looked at each other and nodded. She immediately walked outside to call and congratulate Parry.

"I'm going to go to bed, wake up tomorrow and find another way to serve Boone County," Lennon said.

### **Northern District**

Thompson, meanwhile, also watched the results come in at The Blue Note. She didn't have to endure as much suspense, as early results showed her with large margins over Riddles, but she admitted that she was still anxious.

"I'm still scared, you know," Thompson said. "I started to think if I wasn't elected, the work I've been doing wouldn't continue."

Thompson said her main focus at the beginning of her new term would be the renewal of the road and bridge tax.

"It took the route that I expected it to," Riddles said, "but it didn't go the way I wanted it to."

Riddles' loss was offset by joy at the GOP watch party as each new state was called for Trump. Cheers also grew as state and local Republican candidates picked up victories.

Riddles said the first thing he's going to do is take a nap. But he also plans on becoming more engaged as a Boone County citizen.

*Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.*