

THURSDAY  
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Tribune

## Swanson wins Assembly seat nod

■ Democrat faces no major opposition in the 16th District

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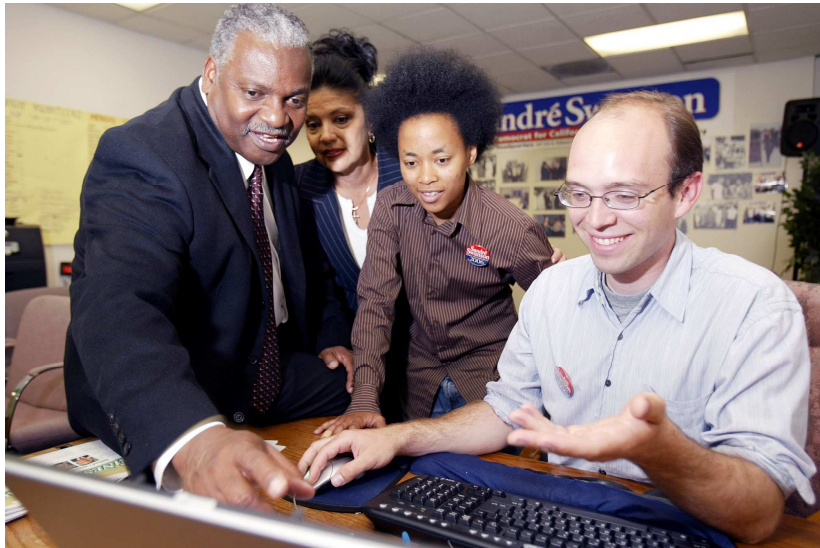
OAKLAND - After 30 years as understudy for two of the East Bay's most beloved politicians, Sandre Swanson will finally be the leading man.

Sleep-deprived but jubilant, Swanson emerged Wednesday morning as the clear victor in the 16th Assembly District race and pledged to build a coalition to help elect a Democratic governor in November and to tackle the tough issues facing Oakland residents, such as crime, inadequate health care and education.

Swanson, former chief of staff for Congresswoman Barbara Lee and district supervisor for former Congressman Ron Dellums, said he is mindful he is the only African American in the state Assembly or Senate north of Los Angeles. But he said he didn't mention race during his campaign, preferring to take a page from his mentor, Dellums, the apparent winner of Oakland's mayoral race with whom he campaigned in the weekend before the election.

"It all began (for me) politically as a young person at Laney College, where I was introduced to the principles of coalition politics by Ron Dellums. He taught me to focus on the issues and it's a lesson I never forgot."

Swanson forged ahead of his main challenger, Oakland City Attorney John Russo, in the early hours Wednesday and never looked back, coming out with 42.2 percent of the vote compared to Russo's 35.7 percent. Ronnie Gail Caplane, a lawyer and former Piedmont School Board trustee who did not shy away from negative ads against her opponents, ended up with 12.2 percent and Alameda City Councilmember Tony Daysog got 9.7 percent.



**SANDRE SWANSON** checks election results with wife Anita and Campaign staffers Veronica Williams and Doug MacLean at his campaign headquarters Wednesday.

**D. ROSS CAMERON** - Staff

Swanson returned to his campaign headquarters at 1 p.m. Wednesday to hugs and applause from supporters, including Oakland City Councilmember Jean Quan (Montclair-Laurel) and 14th District Assemblymember Loni Hancock.

Both women walked door to door for the candidate and looked forward to working with him ? Hancock as a colleague in Sacramento, and Quan as part of a city, county, state and federal government network to address Oakland's needs.

"After 30 years of working for members of Congress, to have the opportunity to mentor people and be a full-time member of Congress, I'm so excited," Swanson said.

Swanson said he would start with the big three: making Oakland schools the best they can be and returning the district to local control; working to make health care accessible to everyone; and improving the prison system to bolster programs that rehabilitate prisoners and thereby reduce the crime rate in Oakland.

Swanson said he is not taking for granted the number of voters who may support Peace and Freedom Party candidate Eddie Ytuarte in the November election. And he also plans to campaign vigorously for Phil Angelides, the Democratic nominee for governor.

Swanson said he had already received a congratulatory call from Russo.

"He said he wanted to work with me, that he had ideas about specific legislation for Oakland, and I said I was happy to work with him on it," Swanson said.

Russo said it was a hard-fought campaign and he didn't regret the effort, despite the outcome. He said he wouldn't rule out another attempt in the future, but now is the time to get behind Swanson. Russo was recently re-elected city attorney and can remain in that post until January 2009.

Russo, who formed the Neighborhood Law Corps to help neighbors deal with blight and other nuisances, said he will work with Swanson on legislation to help California cities, such as Oakland, deal with saturation of liquor stores.

"The campaign's over. It's time to get to work for Oakland," Russo said.

Swanson got a big, late boost from an independent expenditure committee comprised of various labor groups. Sharon Cornu, executive secretary treasurer of the Alameda County Central Labor Council/AFL-CIO, said they made 23,000 calls on behalf of Swanson in the last four days of the campaign, and 120 labor volunteers walked the precincts on election day.