

The at-large City Council seat vacated by Anthony Hall will be retained by a minority as former City Controller Leonel Castillo and attorney Sheila Jackson Lee head for a runoff.

That means the council gained one minority spot as political unknown Beverley Clark benefited from incumbent Jim Westmoreland's recent racial gaffe to become the first black woman elected to council. Clark took 55 percent of the vote for the at-large Position 1.

With all votes tallied, Castillo, who is Hispanic, had 45 percent of the votes to 33 percent for Lee, who is black.

Castillo and Lee eliminated podiatrist Ron Lepow, former Harris County Commissioner Jamie Bray, attorney Freddie Jackson and attorney Tom Zakes for at-large Position 4. It was held six years by Hall, one of four current black council members.

In another contested at-large council race, incumbent Eleanor Tinsley easily outdistanced bookkeeper Lon P. Arnett with 83 percent of the vote for at-large Position 2.

Incumbents won all the contested district council races, including Larry McKaskle of northwest District A, Ernest McGowen of northeast District B, Vince Ryan of central and southwest District C, Rodney Ellis of south District D, Frank Mancuso of southeast District E, Christin Hartung of west District G, Dale Gorczynski of north central District H and Ben Reyes of east District I.

In uncontested races, incumbent Jim Greenwood retained his at-large Position 3, incumbent Judson Robinson retained his at-large Position 5, incumbent John Goodner retained his southwest District F, and City Controller George Greanias won a second term.

In the race to replace Hall, Lepow had 11 percent of the vote; Bray, 7 percent; and Jackson and Zakes, 2 percent each.

Tuesday night, Castillo said the results correlated with tracking he did of 3,000 voters on Monday that showed he had about 49 percent of the vote. He attributed his lead primarily to high voter turnout in Hispanic precincts outside the district of the only Hispanic councilman, Reyes of District I.

"A lot of Hispanics who don't live in District I felt like they could participate for the first time," Castillo said.

Castillo, 58, served as city controller from 1971 to 1977, when he left for Washington, D.C., to serve two years as commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service under President Jimmy Carter. He returned in 1979 and promptly lost a mayoral race to Jim McConn and a race for controller to Lance Lalor in 1981.

He stepped down as president of Houston International University in order to campaign, though he will continue teaching classes there.

Lee, 38, is a Yale University graduate who moved to Houston in 1978. She worked for the Fulbright & Jaworski law firm for several years before moving to the law firm of Booker T. Morris. She has made three unsuccessful bids for judgeships since 1984.

"A runoff will be different," Lee said. "It's real important to get your voters out in a runoff. In a general election with this many candidates, you just try to get your name out."

Mayor Kathy Whitmire must schedule a runoff date, expected to be in early December in conjunction with the congressional runoff between Hall and state Sen. Craig Washington.

The race for Hall's position started late because the councilman did not decide until September to run for the congressional spot left open when U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland died in August.

Most blacks and Hispanics felt it was important that a minority maintain the position held by Hall.

Not including the undecided Position 4 seat, the council's racial makeup after the election will be four blacks, one Hispanic and nine whites, including Mayor Whitmire.

Because the candidates were left with little time to collect money to purchase advertising, most political observers felt Castillo had the best chance of winning because of the name identification he generated as controller. In a runoff, however, Lee could have the upper hand if large numbers of blacks vote in the congressional runoff.

There were no surprises in any of the city's district council races.

In the hotly contested District A race, McKaskle won with 54 percent of the vote. Former Spring Branch school board member Helen Huey came in a distant second with 38 percent, and retired businessman Stanley T. Casey garnered 8 percent of the vote.

In District H, Gorczynski won an easy victory over James Dixon, minister of Northwest Community Baptist Church. Gorczynski, first elected to City Council in 1979, claimed 70 percent, and challenger Dixon took 30 percent.

Strong showings among the District D and I incumbents eliminated the threat of a runoff, which some had feared because of the crowded field of candidates vying for the council seats.

Ellis led the field of four challengers vying for the District D seat with 68 percent of vote. His foremost challenger, HISD Trustee Elizabeth Spates, was second with 23 percent. Houston Police Officer Mae Walker took 6 percent of the vote, and Ovide Duncantell Jr. received 3 percent.

On the east side, Reyes won the race for the District I council seat with 72 percent of the vote. Challenger George S. Hernandez Jr. received 13 percent, George H. Benavides garnered 11 percent, and Benino "Nino" Garcia Jr. took 2 percent.

District B voters showed strong support for McGowen, giving him 67.5 percent of the vote. His opponent, Patricia A. Reaux, was a distant second with 32.5 percent.

Ryan easily was re-elected in District C, garnering 86 percent of the vote. Challengers Charles R. McGuire Jr. and Mark Hadwiger tallied 8 and 5 percent, respectively.

In District E, voters returned Mancuso to council with 76 percent of the vote, while challenger B. Jeanne Elliott collected 24 percent.

Hartung also walloped her opponent for the District G seat, garnering 86 percent of the vote.

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