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Posted on Wed, Nov. 03, 2004

Cleaver going to Washington

By STEVE KRASKE and MIKE RICE The Kansas City Star

Democrat Emanuel Cleaver on Tuesday fended off a fierce and well-financed \$3 million challenge in defeating Republican Jeanne Patterson in the 5th Congressional District race.

The former Kansas City mayor won with 55 percent of the vote to Patterson's 42 percent in the bitterly contested campaign.

"This is a new day. An exciting day," Cleaver said in his victory speech.

"I was met with opponents that consistently engaged in the politics of personal destruction. However, the people were the final judges. People chose the high road over the low-lying lanes. People chose to listen to our proposals for job creation, education and health care. People chose to ignore the distortions and lies," he said.

Patterson, running for her first elective office, had made an unprecedented personal investment in the race, but was behind most of the night before conceding defeat.

"We just ran a really strong campaign. We focused on the issues, focused on the record. We worked really hard," Patterson said.

In other area congressional races, GOP incumbent Sam Graves easily defeated Democrat Charlie Broomfield and won his third term representing the 6th District. In the 4th District, Democratic incumbent Ike Skelton defeated three challengers.

But the closeness of the 5th District contest made it Missouri's most-watched congressional race this year after incumbent Democrat Karen McCarthy decided not to seek re-election. No Republican has won the seat since 1946.

Former President Clinton even weighed in with a recorded telephone message to voters over the weekend in which he said Cleaver, his old friend, had "the knowledge, the experience, the



KEITH MYERS/The Kansas City Star

KEITH MYERS/The Kansas City Star Emanuel Cleaver and his wife, Dianne, greeted supporters at his victory party Tuesday night at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown.



KEITH MYERS/The Kansas City Star

"This is a new day. An exciting day ... People chose to listen to our proposals for job creation, education and health care," Emanuel Cleaver said in his victory speech at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown.



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character and the judgment to represent your interests in Washington."

In conceding, Jeanne Patterson said, "We just ran a really strong campaign. We focused on the issues, focused on the record."

Patterson, 46, countered with a slew of automated phone messages questioning Cleaver's stand on same-sex marriage and the draft, and noting that the former mayor was under investigation by the Missouri Highway Patrol for using an incorrect birth date on his driver's license. The messages also reminded voters that several of Cleaver's colleagues on the City Council had gone to prison on corruption charges.

The last-minute phone flurry came as Cleaver, 60, decried the tone of a race that he said had become increasingly negative. In an advertisement in *The Kansas City Star* on Monday, Cleaver talked about his struggle to teach his 6-year-old grandson about negative advertising.

"I gently explained to my grandson the hurtful power of blind ambition and too much money. About how some people will say *anything* to get what they want, even if it's not true," Cleaver wrote in the ad paid for by the Missouri Democratic Party.

Patterson, of Belton, said repeatedly during the campaign that her heavy barrage of advertising was needed to help her overcome Cleaver's big edge in name recognition. She said her ads were not unduly negative; she was simply pointing out flaws in Cleaver's record as a public official.

On the issues, however, the two took surprisingly similar stands with the exception of the war in Iraq. Cleaver called for a gradual pullout, while Patterson said it was impossible to predict when any withdrawal could begin.

Earlier this year the 5th District race was expected to be a blowout for Cleaver, given his familiarity with voters and the district's heavily Democratic numbers.

Patterson's aggressive spending and attacks against what she regarded as Cleaver's questionable ethics put the Democrat on the defensive.

Patterson said Tuesday night that the huge personal investment was worthwhile and that she had no regrets.

"Absolutely. The experiences, the people, the connections, just the issues, the exposure. It was all worth it," she said.

But it was unclear whether Patterson, after investing millions of her own money, would run again for office. She is married to the CEO of North Kansas City-based Cerner Corp., a health information technology company.

"The ground is still moving. I'm still on this roller coaster," Patterson said. "I'm not saying absolutely not."

The 5th District covers about two-thirds of Jackson County, including Kansas City south of the Missouri River, and the northwest corner of Cass County.

6th District

Graves, of Tarkio, won re-election with 64 percent of the vote to Broomfield's 35 percent.

At his re-election party Tuesday night at the Embassy Suites Hotel near Kansas City International Airport, Graves said he was especially proud that he won resoundingly in Clay County, which is Broomfield's home turf.

"That says a lot about my support," Graves said.

Graves said his priorities in his next term will be national security and ensuring that U.S. troops get the equipment they need.

As he did in his two previous congressional elections, Graves, who turns 41 on Sunday, ran on a strong conservative platform of lowering taxes, supporting President Bush and the military, and

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Graves' tireless fund-raising machine netted more than \$1.5 million, which allowed him to get out that message. He flooded the airwaves with a barrage of attack ads against Broomfield, depicting the former Clay County commissioner as a tax-and-spend politician who would be weak on defense.

Broomfield, 67, of Gladstone, lent his campaign \$400,000, but Graves still was able to outspend him by more than \$300,000.

The numbers were disappointing to Broomfield, who said he was unable to keep up with Graves' fund raising and defend himself from ads that he said distorted his record as county commissioner during the 1980s.

"I ran a fair and honest campaign," Broomfield said Tuesday evening. "Unfortunately, I can't say that about my opponent. In my 40 years of being in politics, I have never seen a dirtier campaign than the one Sam Graves put on."

Broomfield centered his campaign on the need to repeal the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill, stopping the outsourcing of American jobs and providing federal funding for stem-cell research. He said Graves was a lapdog for the Republican Party's far-right wing and criticized him for supporting the drug bill, opposing embryonic stem-cell research and not doing enough to stop job outsourcing.

Graves has supported the Iraqi war and has said that he will work to bring democracy to the Middle East. He said he would work to tighten the country's immigration laws, make Bush's tax cuts permanent, and pass an energy bill that promotes the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol and bio-diesel fuel.

The 6th District covers Clay, Platte and part of eastern Jackson counties, as well as 23 other northwest Missouri counties.

4th District

Skelton — the incumbent since 1977 — easily won another term in Congress. He had 65 percent of the vote to James Noland's 35 percent.

The 77-year-old Skelton, who lives in Lexington, is a strong supporter of the military and the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. He is widely considered a conservative Democrat and has many views in common with his opponents. He opposes abortion and favors gun rights. He voted for a proposed U.S. constitutional amendment to forbid same-sex marriages.

Noland, 77, campaigned as a candidate who could be depended on to support Bush.

The 4th District encompasses a large section of western Missouri.

To reach Steve Kraske, call **(816) 234-4312** or send e-mail to

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Results

Cleaver 55%

Patterson 42%

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