

Photo by Ian Esplen

Thirty minutes later, a sense of calm came over the crowd as Crockatt began to pull away.

That calmness quickly turned to excitement and loud cheers as it was revealed online that Conservative Erin O'Toole had won the Durham, Ont. riding with more than 50 per cent of the vote.

By 10 p.m., the crowd knew it wasn't a matter of if Crockatt would be going to Ottawa, but more a matter of by how much she would retain the seat for the Conservatives.

Crockatt finally arrived at around 10:30 p.m. and was greeted by a joyous crowd that was chanting her name. The chants continued as she spoke to her supporters and answered a few questions from the media.

"As I look around this room, I see so many friends and I see so many new faces as well. That has been a hallmark in this campaign," Crockatt said. "I've just been completely overwhelmed by how many people have come out to help us volunteer and help us win this riding tonight."

Adding to this, she thanked each of her competitors for running and giving the voters a selection of choices on the ballot.

Crockatt concluded her speech with a passionate promise to the community to go to work for them as a Member of Parliament.

"There is no question that I will work tirelessly on your behalf in Ottawa, and I will proudly stand up for Calgary Centre, for its diversity, for its economy, for its environment and for our responsible, sustainable energy development," she said.

Liberals say results send important message

Though the mood grew increasingly sombre as hundreds of Harvey Locke's Liberal supporters gathered and viewed results at The Garage in downtown Calgary, an upbeat Locke addressed his team.

"I've always said that you either have a victory party or wake, so let's have a good wake," Locke conceded while champagne was passed around.

"I have to accept that I lost it, but the Conservatives must realize they are not invisible and the political climate in Calgary is changing."

Locke then headed to Tory headquarters to congratulate Crockatt, speaking briefly with the media about his own campaign.

"About 63 per cent of people in Calgary Centre did not vote Conservative — that tells you something about diversity here," Locke said.

"I think we've shown that the Liberal Party of Canada is competitive to win an election in Calgary."

Green Party candidate inspired by campaign

For Green Party candidate Chris Turner, whose strong showing in pre-election polls helped the Calgary Centre race gain national attention, a third-place showing was anything but a defeat.

"This is not any kind of loss," Turner told a large group of supporters gathered at the Commonwealth Bar and Stage.

"This was Calgary's moment and we seized it together."
Turner, a 39-year-old author and journalist, decided to run in the byelection after a conversation with federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May.

He said he was initially unsure about his first foray into running for political office. The success of his campaign surprised even himself.

"I was scared to take the kind of risk that you have to take to do this — which means embracing hope," Turner said. "I have to admit that I thought it would be too hard to make a difference, and that we would not be able to get to this point.

"I underestimated Calgary."

Turner said that the attention his campaign received showed that the political landscape in Calgary is changing.

"We absolutely proved, even though we were defeated in the polls, that Calgary cannot be taken for granted. This is a city ready for change," Turner said. "We changed the way people think about Calgary across the country.

"I have never felt more inspired by politics in my life."

Turner's optimism about his campaign was shared by many of his volunteers gathered at the Commonwealth.

Campaign volunteer Dale D'Silva said he hopes Turner serves as an example for others who might be encouraged to either volunteer for campaigns or to run for political office.

"It was exciting to see this campaign attract volunteers from across all ages and political affiliations," D'Silva said.

"I hope that carries forward and allows other stellar candidates to come forward and build on this momentum in upcoming elections."

NDP candidate looks to the future

Although NDP candidate Meades understood that a loss was knocking at his door, it did not stop him from enjoying the success of running as a Calgary Centre candidate for the first time.



Green Party candidate Chris Turner said the by-election campaign “inspired” him and helped change Calgary’s image across Canada.

Photo by Karry Taylor

Meades, the director of a public policy advocacy organization, had campaigned on a platform heavily focused on social issues. His supporters gathered at the Melrose Café to watch results.

The crowd had its own rhythm — with hoots 'n' hollers — while glasses tapped and fellow New Democrats cheered Meades on.

"I didn't know it until now, but the first time I have ever really had the chance to live my values is when I ran for NDP," Meades said to a crowd of supporters.

"This is the party that represents the core values of Canadians."



NDP candidate Dan Meades thanks his supporters on election night.

Photo by Sharday Isaac

With the byelection for the Calgary Centre seat among the tightest federal races in nearly four decades, Meades believes his fourth-place showing "does not limit the potential of the NDP in Calgary.

"We got caught in a bit of a vote squeeze in this election," Meades said.

"Byelections are funny thing — anything can happen."

Meades said his volunteers, friends and supporters continue to "humble" him and that the NDP will celebrate a job "well done."

"We celebrate what we know happens in 2015 when we take over this country," Meades said.

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