Others in the race were Libertarians Mark Noble and Robert Bridges with 7 percent and 4 percent of the votes, respectively.

**By IKE MGBATOGU**

Contributing Writer

COLUMBUS – When Michelle Mills was appointed to the Columbus City Council earlier this year, she was picked out of 49 applicants vying for the job. After her appointment, Council President Andrew Ginther expressed confidence in the qualities she would bring to the council, noting that she will “serve with distinction.”

She has been on the council for several months and, apparently, Columbus voters are impressed with her performance.

Mills was elected last week on her own merits, paving the way for more opportunity, as she said after her appointment, to work with the council and “Mayor Coleman to make Columbus a better place to live. Mills and Councilmember Zach Klein, who was also elected on his own strength, were appointed at the same time to replace departed Charleta Tavares and Michael Mentel.

Mills, a native of Cleveland, ran alongside three other Democrats, going up against two Republicans and two Libertarians in an eight-way race that swept her and her colleagues back in office in a landslide fashion.

Of all the eight candidates, Mills led the way in terms of votes, corralling 90,188 votes that summed up to 18 percent of the votes cast. Ginther wasn’t too far behind with 84,967 votes, representing 17 percent. Klein and Craig with 79,778 votes or 16 percent and 70,592 votes or 14 percent, respectively, followed.

Mills was immensely elated.

“This is an awesome feeling, to be elected by the greatest city in the country,” she said. “Let’s get to work to make the city even better than it awesomely already is.”

But not everyone in the city shares Mill’s Kumbaya “awesome” sentiment.

Republican candidates in the race criticized the Democratic monopoly of the process of appointing new council members, arguing that it helps perpetuate them in power, all while refusing to have rigorous debates on the issues facing the city.

One of those issues was the $705 million general fund budget.

Daryl Hennessy, who placed sixth with 10 percent of the vote, assailed the council's handling of the budget, saying, "The 2011 budget approved by the Columbus City Council earlier this year is a budget of repeated mistakes, unfulfilled promises, and missed opportunities."

Craig came fourth among the Democratic winners. As the election approached, unpleasant reports about his activities involving the illegal use of his deceased mother's parking permit surfaced, causing him to take some time to address it, and ended up beating his closest rival Matt Ferris who received 11 percent of the vote by just 3 percentage points. Ferris received 55,344 votes.

Others in the race were Libertarians Mark Noble and Robert Bridges with 7 percent and 4 percent of the votes, respectively.

*Mgbatogu is a freelance writer and editor of Onumba.com based in Columbus. He can be reached by email at Onumbamedia@yahoo.com*