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Woods and Woodard take office

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David Woods and Chris Woodard joined the ranks of the East Palo Alto City Council last night in a special swearing-in ceremony.

Pat Foster, suffering from jet lag after flying home Tuesday from South Africa, was named mayor, and Donna Rutherford was tapped to be vice mayor.

Woods and Woodard, sworn in by acting City Manager Sandy Salerno, both said they were excited to be joining the five-member governing body.

Woodard's acceptance speech was particularly moving as the Palo Alto fire captain paid tribute to his mother, who died during the council campaign.

Woodard explained to the standing room only crowd that he was wearing red so that his mom could see him from Heaven.

Council said good-bye to longtime council members Myrtle Walker and Sharifa Wilson yesterday.

Both women were presented with proclamations from the city in recognition of their tenure as community leaders.

Lori Reese-Brown, a senior planner with the city who was put on administrative leave in May for reasons never made public, read Walker's proclamation last night.

Reese-Brown told the Daily News the



INCOMING — Chris Woodard, left, and David Woods, greet outgoing East Palo Alto City Council member Sharifa Wilson at their inauguration last night. Daily News photo by Susan Bradley.

city had suddenly invited her to come back to work. Reese-Brown didn't elaborate.

Reese-Brown's was placed on leave a day after the city was served with a court petition demanding it approve a restaurant-lounge project on University Avenue.

The project, which was recommended for approval by Reese-Brown, had been rebuffed by former Mayor R.B. Jones, because the project applicant, C.L. Gaines, had refused to pay Jones thousands of dollars in bride money, court documents allege.

Jones is now serving a 27-month fed-

eral prison term in Lompoc for accepting a bride in an unrelated case.

Others in attendance last night include Palo Alto Mayor Vic Ojakian, newly elected Menlo Park Mayor Nicholas Jellins, Redwood City council member Ira Ruskin, San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, former East Palo Alto's Mayor Barbara Mouton, new Menlo Park fire district Chief Paul Wilson, newly elected Ravenswood school board trustees Marcelino Lopez and Adam Mitchell and Palo Alto fire Chief Ruben Griljva.