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Mary Sheffield Secures Spot in Detroit Mayoral Race, Awaits Challenger for November Election

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Detroit City Council President Mary Sheffield has clinched a place in the November mayoral election, moving one step closer to potentially becoming the city's first female and first Black female mayor. Tuesday's primary narrowed the field, with Sheffield emerging as the clear frontrunner. However, her opponent for the general election has not yet been confirmed.

Sheffield, elected to the City Council in 2013 at just 26 years old and serving as president since 2022, addressed supporters Tuesday night at a rooftop venue in downtown Detroit. "Detroit, we made this moment together," she declared. "This is our moment." She dedicated her primary win to Detroiters often overlooked, children told to "dream small," struggling neighborhoods, seniors, and college students choosing to stay in the city.

With Mayor Mike Duggan stepping down after three terms, the city's leadership is at a turning point. Duggan, now running as an Independent candidate for Michigan governor in 2026, guided Detroit through its post-bankruptcy recovery. Under his leadership, the city demolished over 25,000 blighted properties, balanced its budget for 12 consecutive years, and saw substantial affordable housing development.

The list of candidates hoping to face Sheffield in November remains broad. Leading the pack for second place, as of late Tuesday, were the Rev. Solomon Kinloch Jr. and Saunteel Jenkins. Kinloch, senior pastor of the 40,000-member Triumph Church, is a longtime spiritual leader and former autoworker affiliated with the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. Jenkins, a former council member and current nonprofit executive, also has considerable public sector experience.

Other notable candidates include Fred Durhal III, a sitting City Council member and former Michigan state representative; former Detroit Police Chief James Craig, who led the department during the city's financial crisis but has faced setbacks in previous Republican political bids; attorney Todd Perkins; entrepreneur John Barlow; business owner Joel Haashiim; and digital content creator DaNetta Simpson.

The city Sheffield hopes to lead is far removed from the Detroit of 2013, when a state-

appointed emergency manager filed for what became the largest municipal bankruptcy in United States history. By the end of 2014, Detroit had shed or restructured \$7 billion in debt and steadily rebuilt its financial credibility.

In 2023, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated a slight population uptick to 633,218, a rare milestone for a city long grappling with decline. Detroit is also drawing national attention as a cultural and business destination. The 2024 National Football League (NFL) Draft brought in a record-setting crowd of over 775,000 people, and new hotel developments continue to reshape the downtown landscape.

Perhaps most symbolic of the city's rebirth is the renovated Michigan Central Station. Once a symbol of decay, the site was revitalized by Ford Motor Company into a cutting-edge hub for mobility projects, reopening in 2024 after six years of reconstruction.

Despite these gains, Detroit's next leader will face pressing challenges. The city's economy, still closely tied to the automotive industry, must navigate global trade pressures. Stellantis, the manufacturer of Jeep and Ram, reported a \$2.68 billion net loss in the first half of the year, largely due to U.S. tariffs and other financial burdens.

As the November election approaches, Detroit voters will be tasked with choosing a mayor who can safeguard the progress achieved and steer the city toward long-term growth and stability.