

Trump-ed

FROM PAGE 1
 Kellyanne Conway said the pair had a "very gracious, very warm conversation" by phone that lasted about a minute.

"We owe her a major debt of gratitude for her service to our country," Trump said of Clinton, whose hopes of becoming America's first woman president were brutally dashed.

In his first post-election tweet, Trump wrote: "The forgotten man and woman will never be forgotten again. We will all come together as never before."

As day broke in Washington, the White House said President Barack Obama called Trump to congratulate him. Trump will visit him there today.

During a bitter two-year campaign that tugged at America's democratic fabric, the 70-year-old tycoon pledged to deport illegal immigrants, ban Muslims from the country and tear up free trade deals.

There was no disguising the concern of Washington's European partners that Trump's victory might destroy the Western alliance they still regard as a touchstone for stability and the rule of law.

Trump will become America's 45th commander-in-chief of the world's sole true superpower on January 20.

His message was embraced by a large section of America's white majority who have grown increasingly disgruntled by the scope of social and economic change in the last eight years under Obama, their first black president.

Many Americans from minority backgrounds expressed dismay at Trump's victory, which some observers blamed on a backlash against multicultural America.

Although he has no government experience and in recent years has been as well known for running beauty pageants and starring on his reality television series "The Apprentice" as he is for building his property empire, Trump is the oldest man ever elected president.

Yet, during his improbable political rise, Trump has constantly proved the pundits and standard political wisdom wrong.

Opposed by the senior hierarchy of his own Republican Party, he trounced more than a dozen better-funded and more experienced rivals in the party primary.

During the race, he was forced to ride out credible allegations of sexual

assault from a dozen women and was embarrassed but apparently not ashamed to have been caught on tape boasting about grabbing women's genitals.

And, unique in modern US political history, he refused to release his tax returns -- leaving a question mark over how much, if any, tax he has paid while running a global empire.

But the biggest upset came yesterday, as he swept to victory through a series of hard-fought wins in battleground states from Florida to Ohio.

He amassed at least 290 electoral votes to 228 for Clinton, according to network projections.

Clinton had been widely assumed to be on course to enter the history books as the first woman to become president in America's 240-year existence.

Americans repudiated her call for unity among Americans with their wide cultural and racial diversity, opting instead for a leader who insisted the country is broken and that "I alone can fix it."

REPUDIATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT?

The result was also a brutal humiliation for the White House incumbent, Obama, who for eight years has repeated the credo that there is no black or white America, only the United States of America.

On the eve of the election, he told tens of thousands of people in Philadelphia that he was betting on the decency of the American people.

"I'm betting that tomorrow, most moms and dads across America won't cast their vote for someone who denigrates their daughters," Obama said.

"I'm betting that tomorrow, true conservatives won't cast their vote for somebody with no regard for the Constitution."

His bet appears to have been flat out wrong, and America's first black president will be succeeded by a candidate who received the endorsement -- albeit unsought and unacknowledged -- of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan.

The triumph for Trump, a real estate developer-turned-reality television star, was a powerful rejection of the establishment forces that had assembled against him, from the world of business to government, and the consensus they had forged on everything from trade to immigration.

The results amounted to a repudia-

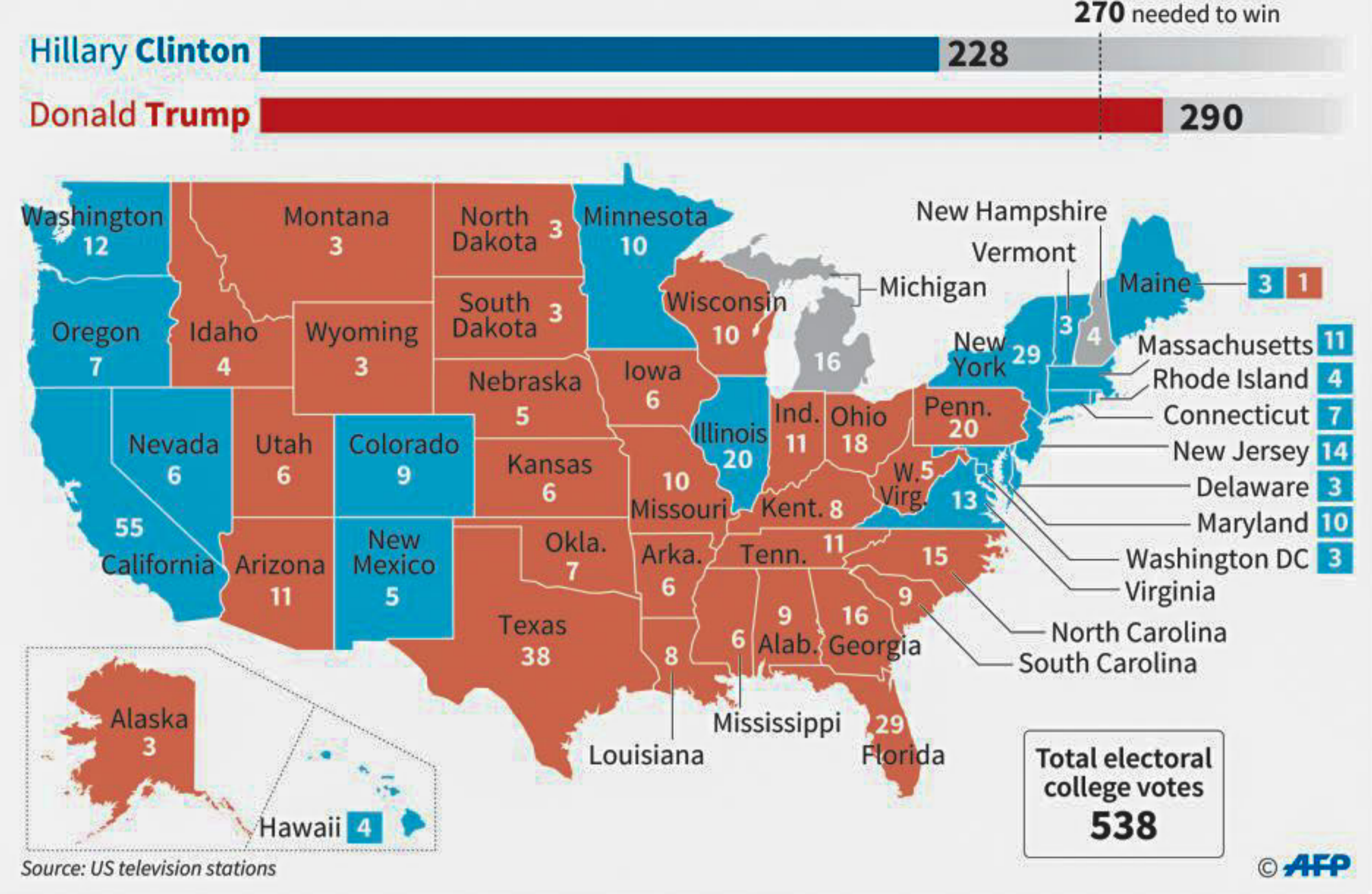
PREVIOUS 10 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

YEAR	CANDIDATES	ELECTORAL VOTES
2012	Barack Obama (D) Mitt Romney (R)	332 206
2008	Barack Obama (D) John McCain (R)	365 173
2004	George W. Bush (R) John F. Kerry (D)	286 251
2000	George W. Bush (R) Al Gore (D)	271 266
1996	William J. Clinton (D) Bob Dole (R)	379 159
1992	William J. Clinton (D) George Bush (R)	370 168
1988	George Bush (R) Michael S. Dukakis (D)	426 111
1984	Ronald Regan (R) Walter F. Mondale (D)	525 13
1980	Ronald Regan (R) Jimmy Carter (D)	489 49
1976	Jimmy Carter (D) Gerald R. Ford (R)	297 240

SOURCE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, USA

US election result

Number of electoral college votes



Source: US television stations

tion, not only of Clinton, but of Obama, whose legacy is suddenly imperilled. And it was a decisive demonstration of power by a largely overlooked coalition of mostly blue-collar white and working-class voters who felt that the promise of the United States had slipped their grasp amid decades of globalisation and multiculturalism.

In Trump, a thrice-married Manhattanite who lives in a marble-wrapped three-story penthouse apartment on Fifth Avenue, they found an improbable champion.

In a departure from a blistering campaign in which he repeatedly stoked division, Trump sought to do something he had conspicuously avoided as a candidate: Appeal for unity.

"Now it's time for America to bind the wounds of division," he said. "It is time for us to come together as one united people. It's time."

That, he added, "is so important to me."

At his victory party at the New York Hilton Midtown, where a raucous crowd indulged in a cash bar and wore hats bearing his ubiquitous campaign slogan "Make America Great Again," voters expressed gratification that their voices had, at last, been heard.

"He was talking to people who

weren't being spoken to," said Joseph Gravagna, 37, a marketing company owner from Rockland County, NY. "That's how I knew he was going to win."

For Clinton, the defeat signalled an astonishing end to a political dynasty that has coloured Democratic politics for a generation. Eight years after losing to President Obama in the Democratic primary -- and 16 years after leaving the White House for the United States Senate, as President Bill Clinton exited office -- she had seemed positioned to carry on two legacies: her husband's and the president's.

POPULAR VOTE
 Trump may have scored an astonishing upset presidential victory, but Hillary Clinton could still receive more votes.

As of yesterday afternoon, hours after Clinton called Trump to concede, the former secretary of state clung to a narrow lead in the popular vote, 47.7%-47.5%.

She had 59,626,695 votes, according to CNN's tally, with 92% of the expected vote counted. Trump had 59,428,493. That difference of almost 200,000 is razor-thin considering the nearly 120 million votes counted so far. The totals will continue to change as absentee votes trickle in.

If Clinton hangs on, she would become the first presidential candi-

date since Al Gore in 2000 to win the popular vote but lose the election. Trump, who clinched the nomination by securing 270 Electoral College votes, currently leads Clinton 289-218, though Michigan, New Hampshire and Minnesota have yet to be called.

Prior to Gore's defeat to George W. Bush in 2000, three other candidates -- Andrew Jackson, Samuel Tilden and Grover Cleveland, all in the 19th century -- had won the popular vote and lost the election.

SMOOTH TRANSITION
 Obama and Clinton sought yesterday to heal the wounds opened by the most acrimonious US election in memory, as they assured Trump that Americans were "rooting" for his success.

The top Democrats made clear they now sought a smooth and orderly transition in the world's largest economy.

Clinton said she had congratulated the Republican overnight after the upset victory by the political novice and former reality TV star, and offered "to work with him on behalf of our country."

Obama took to the Rose Garden to assure the world that the White House would craft a successful transition for

the billionaire Trump, "because we are now all rooting for his success in uniting and leading the country."

"We are Americans first. We're patriots first. We all want what's best for this country," Obama said, as White House staff were seen wiping away tears.

'REDEMPTION, NOT RECRIMINATION'
 Observers greeted the political earthquake with warnings that America had handed power to "an unstable bigot, sexual predator and compulsive liar," in the words of Britain's The Guardian.

But the leaders of America's closest hemispheric partners, Canada and Mexico, quickly made clear their willingness to work with the new president, offering a message of continuity and stability with their giant neighbour.

The Republican Party leadership, too, embraced their newfound hero, with House Speaker Paul Ryan, who had distanced himself from Trump in the final month of the campaign, pledging to "hit the ground running" and work with Trump on conservative legislation.

But Ryan also called for healing, saying the bitterly contested race must now be followed by a period "of

Why Trump won?

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 The questions now are: How did Trump manage to do that? What was his mantra? Why did so many US citizens send him to the White House? Why the media was caught napping?

First of all, Trump knew his base. Blue collar white Americans without higher education. Most of his base is in rural areas, especially in swing states, which can go blue or red on the election night.

Being in show business for quite a while, Trump knew what to tell them, he knew what they wanted to hear. He knew they would take him seriously rather than literally. He knew his base wants to believe in someone.

"He attacked the norms of American politics, singling out groups for derision on the basis of race and religion and attacking the legitimacy of the political process. He ignored conventions of common decency, employing casual vulgarity and raining personal humiliation on his political opponents and critics in

	VOTING SHARE (IN %)						
	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE	HISPANIC	ASIAN	BLACK	OTHERS
TRUMP	53	42	58	29	29	8	37
CLINTON	41	54	37	65	65	88	56

the media," wrote Alexander Burns in the New York Times yesterday.

"Amid all his innumerable blunders, however, Trump got one or two things right that mattered more than all the rest. On a visceral level, he grasped dynamics that the political leadership of both parties missed or ignored -- most of all, the raw frustration of blue-collar and middle-class white voters who rallied to his candidacy with decisive force."

His mantra was "speak their language". He made himself appear as a person who understood the frustrations of the blue-collar middle-class.

"He ignored the rules of modern politics and spoke to Americans in plain, even coarse, everyday language, without massaging his

words through the data-driven machinery of consultants, focus groups and TV commercials. He scoffed at ideologies, preaching a tough, blunt pragmatism fuelled by unbridled, unashamed ego. He told people what they wanted to hear: that a rapidly changing and splintering society could be forced back to a nostalgia-drenched sense of community and purpose, that long-lost jobs could be retrieved, that a pre-globalised economy could be restored," wrote Marc Fisher in the Washington Post.

"Trump won because he understood that his celebrity would protect him from the far stricter standards to which politicians are normally held -- one bad gaffe, and you're done. He won because he

understood that his outrageous behaviour and intemperate comments only cemented his reputation as a decisive truth teller who gets things done. And he won because he had spent almost 40 years cultivating an image as a guy who was so rich, so enamoured of himself, so audacious, and so unpredictable that he could be trusted to act without regard to the powers that be."

"All he had to do, he said, was connect directly to the pains, fears and frustrations of a nation that had been smacked around by globalisation, terrorism, rapid demographic change, and a technological revolution that enriched and enraptured the kids with the stratospheric SAT scores, but left millions of Americans watching their jobs fall victim to the latest apps, overseas outsourcing, robots, and a stunning shift in the nature of commerce and community."

And vote they did for him on Tuesday. Rural republicans in swing states in probably one of the highest turnout elections in living memory voted in large numbers.

They outnumbered voters of the cities of those states, traditionally democrat, and turned the state red.

Pennsylvania fell. The state the Obamas and the Clintons finished their campaign in alongside star powers Bruce Springsteen and Bon Jovi.

No star power could deter the blue-collar white Americans. Ohio and Florida fell.

The media was an ostrich refusing to accept what was coming.

"They couldn't believe that the America they knew could embrace someone who mocked a disabled man, bragged about sexually assaulting women, and spouted misogyny, racism and anti-Semitism. It would be too horrible," wrote Margaret Sullivan in the Washington Post.

The media took every word Trump uttered literally. When the media heard Trump wants to build a wall and Mexico to pay for it, Trump's base heard "we are going to

have a sensible immigration plan". His base took him seriously, not literally.

And of course there was fuelling the hatred for the elite. Trump despite being someone born with a silver spoon in his mouth knew very well how to energise his base. Painting the Clintons as elites he used slogans like "lock her up", and "Hillary for jail".

He even suggested appointing a special prosecutor, when he becomes president, to try Clinton.

It was Clinton's failure that helped Trump a lot. She failed to inject enthusiasm in her base. She could not hold on to the Obama coalition of minority voters that gave him the office twice. She could not get the African American votes as much as she needed, nor could she capitalise on Trump's calling Mexicans "rapists" and locking down the Hispanic voters.

Following the Access Hollywood tape fiasco, she failed to mobilise women against Trump in large enough numbers, which probably

Trump calls for unity

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 for her years of public service.

Riding a wave of euphoria from his supporters at a victory party in his home city of New York, Trump sought to bury the divisions and rancor that had made the 18-month presidential campaign so toxic.

"For those who have chosen not to support me in the past, of which there were a few people, I'm reaching out to you for your guidance and your help so that we can work together and unify our great country," Trump said, during his speech proclaiming a stunning victory in the White House race.

"I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be president for all of Americans."

He was also noticeably conciliatory toward his vanquished rival, whom he has spent months berating as a corrupt favorite of the Washington establishment who broke the law by using a private server to send and receive classified data.

"Hillary has worked very long and very hard over a long period of time, and we owe her a major debt of gratitude for her service to our country," he said.

"I mean that very sincerely."

The provocative billionaire president-elect, 70, said Clinton telephoned him to concede the race shortly after the state of Pennsylvania, which has voted Democratic in presidential races since 1992, was slotted into his win column.

"She congratulated us -- it is about us -- on our victory, and I congratulated her and her family on a very, very hard-fought campaign," he said.

The real estate mogul also pledged to "deal fairly with everyone," including "all other nations."

"We will get along with all other nations willing to get along with us. We will have great relationships," he added.

"While the campaign is over, our work on this movement is now really just beginning," Trump said, in a nod to the grass-roots anti-establishment, anti-Washington ground swell that upended the race with historic results.

"We're going to get to work immediately for the American people, and we're going to be doing a job that, hopefully, you will be so proud of your president."

'Never thought this could happen'

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 "It's been too overwhelming to see things shift in a day, in an hour, in a minute," he lamented.

Indeed, no one was expecting such a violent slap in the face. Some were saying it would be close, but no one imagined the night would turn into a political funeral for the 69-year-old former first lady, senator and secretary of state.

Faces once bright with the hope of seeing America's first female president elected started growing longer and longer at about 9:00 pm Tuesday, when the results appeared to be leaning Trump's way.

"Not great," said Joan Divenuti, a retired rail worker who came from Massachusetts. "Florida was always a problem," she said, shaking her head.

It was not long before the US television networks called the Sunshine State for Trump.

The New York Times only had bad news for them, with their forecast for Trump's chances of winning rising as the night wore on -- from 53 percent to 70 percent to 87 percent... to 95

percent. Heads were shaking in front of the giant screens beaming the results to the crowd, and the voices of reporters echoed in the huge hall, which was otherwise silent.

Supporters frantically refreshed their smartphones in search of better news, and Clinton staff -- who danced to the tunes of Lady Gaga at a final campaign rally in Raleigh just 24 hours before -- seemed despondent.

Clinton decided to remain at her hotel, calling Trump to concede. "We are disgusted, embarrassed, we are sorry on behalf of our country that the white male uneducated vote has spoken today," railed Celia Rowson-Hall, a 32-year-old filmmaker.

"We, as the other half of the country that believes in love, unity, and fairness -- we have to gather together even stronger to fight against this man who only represents hate and bigotry and xenophobia."

Nearby, 40-something Anne Shaw, a civil rights attorney from Illinois, could not hold back her disappointment.

"Trump is a nut case -- he is all over the place," Shaw said.

The real danger for Shaw comes from Trump's running mate Mike Pence, who she deemed "crazy."

Earlier, at the food court located underneath the hall where Clinton had been expected to write her name in the history books, two young women sobbed, and the alcohol was free-flowing.

At a table, two other women stared blankly, their hands on their heads.

"It is surreal," said one government employee who gave her first name as Margarita, a beer in front of her.

She says she fears a new era in America -- not just in terms of politics, but also from those who voted for the 70-year-old Trump.

"Our lives are not safe -- as queer women, as brown women," she told AFP, struggling to put her feelings into words.

- Divided nation - Many spoke about what they felt was total ignorance among Trump supporters.

"I think these people probably flunked out of school -- they don't know history, they don't understand the world," said Elmy Bermejo, who traveled to the Big Apple from San Francisco for the occasion.

But Bermejo tried to see the bright side on a dark night.

"After I have a stiff drink of tequila, I'm going to get up, and since I'm a hopeful person, then I'll do whatever I can to make sure we vote him out of office, because that's what democracy is about," she said.

Shock was the dominant reaction, rather than anger, especially in New York, a Democratic bastion that voted for Clinton -- seemingly very far away from Trump's America that disdains Washington insiders.

"We definitely knew it was close -- not this close," said 22-year-old Evynn Stengel, who started drinking before the disheartening results started trickling in.

"We feel like we live in a bubble -- voting for Trump to me is so shocking."