

Jill Tipton Makes History as Lincolnton's First Woman Elected Mayor

Jay Dellinger, Publisher

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LINCOLNTON, N.C. — Jill McAlister Tipton made history Tuesday, November 3, when voters elected her as Lincolnton's first woman mayor. For Tipton, the victory marks another chapter in a life shaped by family, faith, education and service to others.

Tipton, a Republican who currently represents Ward Three on the Lincolnton City Council, defeated Democrat Jim R. Watson. Unofficial results showed Tipton receiving 1,879 votes to Watson's 1,610, a margin of 269 votes. The results remain subject to the official canvass and Tipton will become mayor when she takes the oath of office.

A Lincolnton native, Tipton graduated from Lincolnton High School before earning a bachelor's degree in English from Campbell University and a master's degree in reading from Appalachian State University. She spent 31 years teaching in Lincoln County Schools, primarily at the middle school level, before

retiring from full time teaching.

Retirement did not end her involvement in education. During her 2022 City Council campaign, she was working as a substitute teacher with students with special needs and as an educational tour director with Group Travel in Hickory.

Beyond the classroom, family has always held an important place in Tipton's life. She and her late husband, Charlie Tipton, raised three children, two daughters and a son, all of whom are now adults. Throughout her years as a wife, mother and educator, family remained one of her greatest priorities and helped shape the values she carried into her work and community involvement.

Charlie was an important part of that family story and was well known in his own right throughout the Lincolnton community. A musician and songwriter, he devoted much of his musical life to Christian music. He led praise and worship at his church for nearly 24 years, performed at the Billy Graham Training Center and received recognition at a national Christian songwriting event. Recordings of his music remain available online.

The faith reflected in Charlie's music has long been central to Jill's life as well. A devoted Christian who attends church regularly, she has spent years helping others through her church and community service. That commitment extended beyond Lincoln County through her involvement with Hope for Haiti Children's Center, also known as Danita's Children, in Ouanaminthe, Haiti.

By 2022, Tipton had reportedly spent approximately 14 years volunteering with the ministry. Her involvement included trips with church groups and independent visits during which she sometimes stayed at the children's center for as long as a month, helping children and supporting the center's work.

Closer to home, Tipton has participated in church activities and meal deliveries through Christian Ministry. The Business and Professional Women's Club of Lincolnton recognized her as a Lincoln County Woman of the Year. She has also served as the City of Lincolnton's representative on the Lincoln County Public Library Board of Trustees.

Her years of work in education and the community preceded her entry into local government. In November 2022, Tipton defeated longtime council member Martin Eaddy for the Ward Three seat and began serving that December. On the council, she has participated in decisions involving city budgets, land use, development and municipal services.

In 2026, Tipton supported a temporary pause on new data-center applications while the city considered standards for those projects. During the mayoral campaign, she also addressed concerns about higher property tax bills following revaluation and voiced support for social-work assistance connected with the police department.

With Mayor Ed Hatley choosing not to seek another term, Tipton won the Republican primary in March before defeating Watson in Tuesday's general election. Once sworn in, she will serve a four-year term as mayor, presiding over City Council meetings and representing Lincolnton at official functions.

For Lincolnton, the election marks a historic first. For Tipton, it brings together the roles that have defined much of her life: wife, mother, teacher, Christian volunteer and public servant. She now prepares to lead the city she has long called home.