

DAILY NEWS

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This could be the year the new mayor comes from the outer boroughs

Brooklyn's Bill de Blasio has emerged as a frontrunner in the current race for mayor; the last non-Manhattan resident to win the office was Abe Beame in 1973

By JOSHUA SPIVAK

Following the collapse of Anthony Weiner's campaign for mayor, Public Advocate Bill de Blasio has suddenly made a big move in the polls. The latest survey, released this week by the Wall Street Journal-NBC-Marist College, had de Blasio running neck-and-neck with Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

The little-known de Blasio of Brooklyn may be able to take advantage of a once-a-generation outpouring of outer-borough anger that finally gives a candidate the chance to break Manhattan's amazing hammerlock on Gracie Mansion.

The 2013 election comes after a series of high-profile government failures for the outer boroughs, such as the mayor's politically tone-deaf original decision to hold the NYC marathon while a number of neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island were still without electricity, water or livable shelters.

Prior to that, snowmageddon shut down parts of Brooklyn and Queens for days on end, while Manhattan streets were well-plowed. These events may be well remembered by outer-borough residents who have constantly complained about being ignored by the city's leadership. And it has been a long while since the head of that leadership hailed from any place but Manhattan.

It may seem strange, but despite it only being the third-largest borough in terms of population, Mike Bloomberg is just the latest in a string of Manhattan residents to win the mayoral office. While some recent mayors were born outside the city or in the outer boroughs (Rudy Giuliani lived in Brooklyn till he was 7; Ed Koch was born in the Bronx), the last time a candidate who was a non-Manhattan resident won the office was back in 1973, when Brooklyn's Abe Beame won his first and only term in office. Before that, you have to go back to William O'Dwyer, who resigned in 1950.

Manhattan has also been the home of most of the recent major party losing candidates in the last 30 years – though the last two, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and City Controller Bill Thompson, both lived outside of those 36 square miles.

In fact, since the creation of New York City in the 1898 consolidation, the outer boroughs have rarely elected mayors, and those choices were pretty much a handful of Brooklynites like Seth Low and John Hylan, all in the early days of the new city.

The outer boroughs don't lack for political success on the state level. Outer borough candidates have been very successful, including Sen. Chuck Schumer from Brooklyn, the Cuomo clan based in Queens (though Andrew now lives in Westchester) and Gov. Hugh Carey, a former Brooklyn Congressman. It is only on the city level that Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island have been shut out.

Despite this historic lack of success, some of the recent government lapses echo the last time an outer borough candidate managed to capture the mayor's office. In 1969, Mayor John Lindsay's administration's failed to ensure that the outer borough streets were cleaned of snow, which sparked famed protests against his leadership. While Lindsay managed to win reelection as a Liberal, he was succeeded by Beame.

Could these slights against the outer boroughs turn the political landscape around? Until now, the leading candidate in the polls was Quinn, once again from Manhattan. But perhaps the residual anger from Hurricane Sandy and the 2010 snowstorm, and poor races by other candidates, could push de Blasio or one of the other outer-borough candidates forward.

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