Pols open, gov race a dead heat

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Arizonaans will head to the polls today to vote for a number of state offices that will likely affect the outcome of the election in November, but with some races neck-and-neck, results may not be in tonight.

With the races for governor and secretary of state expected to be too close to call, voting offices expect the counting could take days.

Democrat Janet Napolitano and Republican Matt Salmon have been campaigning aggressively in a close race for Arizona governor.

A poll late last month, which surveyed 662 voters, showed Napolitano with a 16-point lead among likely voters, up from the previous week’s 3-point lead.

But a Rocky Mountain Poll released Friday showed that Napolitano’s lead has shrunk to only 3 points over Salmon among “likely voters.”

The poll’s margin of error is plus or minus 5.6 percentage points.

The split stretches beyond the state’s borders. A national poll by the Pew Research Center illustrated the difference, with 46 percent of likely voters siding with Democrats and 44 percent saying they plan to vote for Republicans today.

Whoever inherits the governorship of Arizona will assume a $1 billion state deficit and a seat on the state’s Board of Regents, which will grant him or her influence in UA-centered issues like tuition increases and admission standards.

The Arizona Students’ Association, a student-lobbyist group, is co-sponsoring the effort. The group spent the month preceding the election working to register students to vote.

Election records have until Nov. 13 to count and verify early ballot signatures, said State Elections Director Jessica Funkhouser.

Funkhouser expects a rise in early ballot voting from the September primary election, in which nearly 37 percent of registered voters cast their ballots.

Voters who have not mailed in their early ballots can still drop them off at their polling precinct or at their county recorder’s office on Nov. 13.

Students, colleagues, friends and family of Cheryl McGaffic, Barbara Monroe and Robin Rogers, killed in the bombing of the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, gathered Monday morning to pay tribute to the beloved women who were killed last Monday.

Nursing students wore ribbons, carried flowers and many tied purple ribbons around their arms. Purple was Robin Rogers’ favorite color. A harp played softly at the entrance of the auditorium, where nearly all the 2,800 seats were filled.

Nursing students and faculty sat in a group near the front of the auditorium, many holding hands.

“I realize we’ve lost much more than professors or colleagues here,” President Pete Likins said. “We’ve all lost part of ourselves.”

At 8:30 a.m., the auditorium grew silent as the USS Arizona bell rang repeatedly, marking the moment former student Robert S. Flores Jr. shot and killed three of his professors.

After the service, nursing students and faculty walked back to the College of Nursing building for a private service.

Despite the tears, much of the service was celebratory as students walked through the building to the offices of Barbara Monroe, Robin Rogers and Cheryl McGaffic.

Some said they felt relieved that is helping us get through it,” said Jennifer Moberly, a nursing student.

As students walked through the main courtyard, they were met by large pictures of their slain professors, posters from other campus clubs and colleges expressing their sympathy to the nursing students.

People throughout the world have offered nursing students and faculty sympathy, prayers and services.

“They are unstoppable,” associate nursing professor Paula Meek said. “Cheryl, that was not you. We will carry on as you would have us.”

Classmates and friends held a moment of silence in the science plaza in front of the Science Center.

“I cannot believe what just happened,” fellow nursing student Paula Boccaccio said.

“Ii is hard to believe we’re actually here,” said Jennifer Moberly, a nursing student.

“Some give up their lives to be less than they can be,” associate nursing professor Paula Meek said. “Cheryl, that was not you. We, we will live up to your vision of who we can be. We will follow your heart until we are unstoppable.”

Nursing faculty member Fran Bartholomoues remembered Barbara Monroe especially in clinical assessment, resulting in laughter from the nursing staff and students.

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