

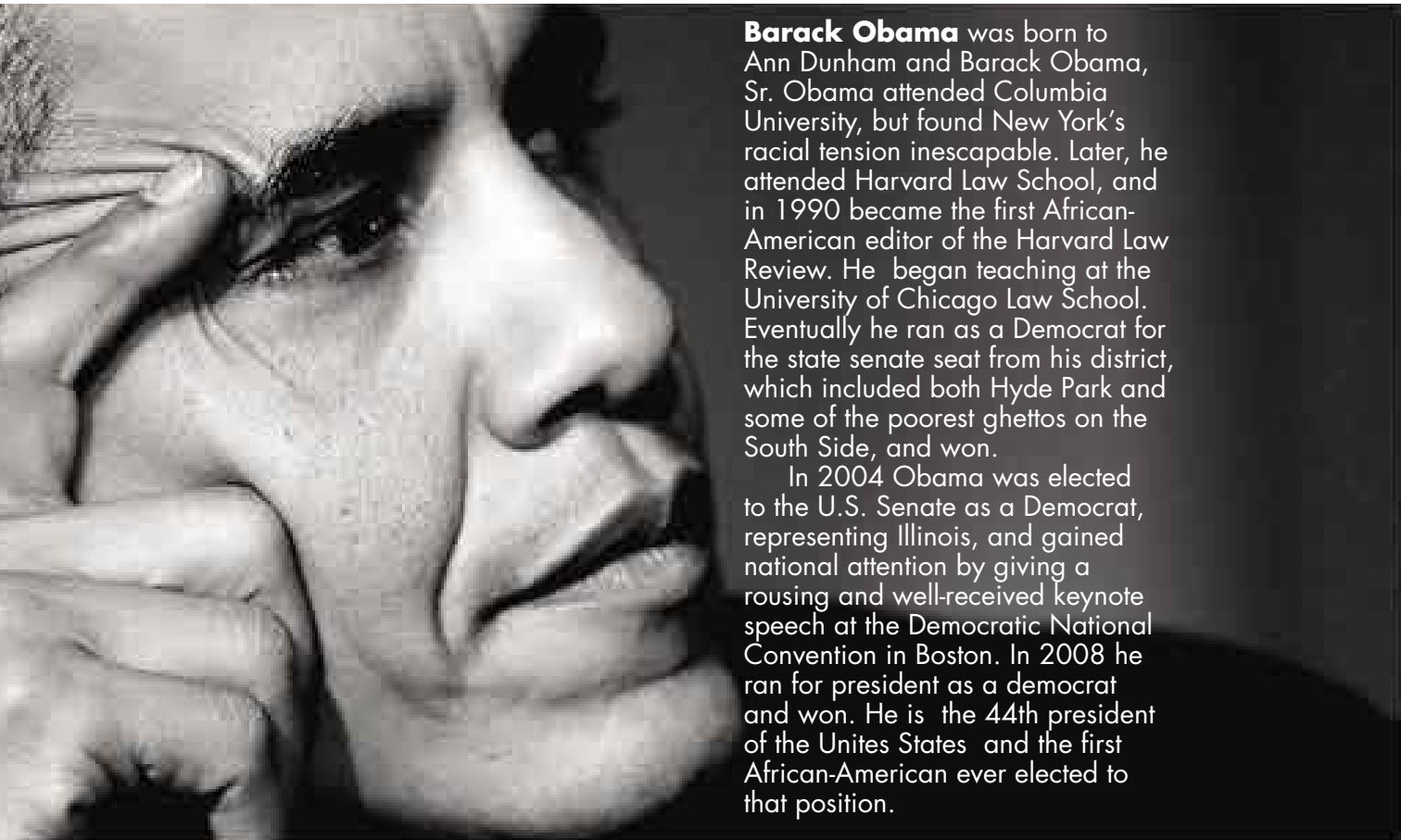
**TODAY I SAY TO YOU THAT THE CHALLENGES WE FACE ARE REAL, THEY ARE SERIOUS AND THEY ARE MANY. THEY WILL NOT BE MET EASILY OR IN A SHORT SPAN OF TIME. BUT KNOW THIS AMERICA: THEY WILL BE MET.**

**INAUGURATION**  
**01/22/2009**



**CHANGE**

# Barack Obama



**Barack Obama** was born to Ann Dunham and Barack Obama, Sr. Obama attended Columbia University, but found New York's racial tension inescapable. Later, he attended Harvard Law School, and in 1990 became the first African-American editor of the Harvard Law Review. He began teaching at the University of Chicago Law School. Eventually he ran as a Democrat for the state senate seat from his district, which included both Hyde Park and some of the poorest ghettos on the South Side, and won.

In 2004 Obama was elected to the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, representing Illinois, and gained national attention by giving a rousing and well-received keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in Boston. In 2008 he ran for president as a democrat and won. He is the 44th president of the United States and the first African-American ever elected to that position.

# CHANGE!

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: Thank you. Thank you.

CROWD: Obama! Obama! Obama! Obama!

My fellow citizens: I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne  
5 by our ancestors.

I thank President Bush for his service to our nation...

(APPLAUSE)

... as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

10 Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath.  
The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the  
still waters of peace. Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering  
clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not  
simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because  
15 We the People have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears, and  
true to our founding documents.  
So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans.  
That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation  
is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our  
20 economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility  
on the part of some but also our collective failure to make hard choices  
and prepare the nation for a new age.  
Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health  
care is too costly, our schools fail too many, and each day brings further  
25 evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and  
threaten our planet.  
These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less  
measurable, but no less profound, is a sapping of confidence across our



30 land; a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real, they are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met.

35 (APPLAUSE)

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

(APPLAUSE)

In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less.

It has not been the path for the faint-hearted, for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame.

Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things—some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor—who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

For us, they fought and died in places Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions; greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions -- that time has surely passed.





Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

(APPLAUSE)

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done.

75 The state of our economy calls for action: bold and swift. And we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth.

We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together.

We will restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's  
80 wonders to raise health care's quality...

(APPLAUSE)

... and lower its costs.

We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age.

All this we can do. All this we will do.

85 Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions,  
who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their  
memories are short, for they have forgotten what this country has already  
done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined  
to common purpose and necessity to courage.

90 What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted  
beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us  
for so long, no longer apply.

MR. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too  
big or too small, but whether it works, whether it helps families find jobs  
95 at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified.

Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the  
answer is no, programs will end.

And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to  
account, to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the  
100 light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a  
people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good  
or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched.

But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the  
105 market can spin out of control. The nation cannot prosper long when it  
favors only the prosperous.

The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size  
of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the  
ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart -- not out of charity,  
110 but because it is the surest route to our common good.

(APPLAUSE)

As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our  
safety and our ideals.

Our founding fathers faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine,  
115 drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter  
expanded by the blood of generations.

Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for  
expedience's sake.

And so, to all other peoples and governments who are watching  
120 today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father  
was born: know that America is a friend of each nation and every man,  
woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are  
ready to lead once more.

(APPLAUSE)

125 Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism  
not just with missiles and tanks, but with the sturdy alliances and  
enduring convictions.

They understood  
that our power alone  
cannot protect us, nor  
130 does it entitle us to do  
as we please. Instead,  
they knew that our  
power grows through  
its prudent use. Our  
135 security emanates  
from the justness of  
our cause; the force  
of our example; the  
tempering qualities of  
140 humility and restraint.



We are the keepers  
of this legacy, guided  
by these principles  
once more, we can  
145 meet those new threats  
that demand even  
greater effort, even  
greater cooperation  
and understanding

150 between nations. We'll begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and  
forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan.

With old friends and former foes, we'll work tirelessly to lessen the  
nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet.

155 We will not apologize for our way of life nor will we waver in its  
defense.

And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and  
slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that, "Our spirit is stronger  
and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."

(APPLAUSE)

160 For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a  
weakness.

We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and  
nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from  
every end of this Earth.

165 And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and  
segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more  
united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday  
pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows  
smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must  
play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.



170 To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual  
interest and mutual respect.

To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame  
their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on  
what you can build, not what you destroy.

175 To those...

(APPLAUSE)

To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the  
silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but  
that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.

180 (APPLAUSE)

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to  
make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved  
bodies and feed hungry minds.

185 And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we  
can no longer afford indifference to the suffering outside our borders,  
nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For  
the world has changed, and we must change with it.

190 As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with  
humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol  
far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us,  
just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages.

We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty,  
but because they embody the spirit of service: a willingness to find  
meaning in something greater than themselves.

195 And yet, at this moment, a moment that will define a generation, it is  
precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the  
faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation  
relies.

200 It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break; the  
selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend  
lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours.

205 It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke,  
but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our  
fate.

Our challenges may be new, the instruments with which we meet  
them may be new, but those values upon which our success depends,  
honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity,  
loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old.

210 These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress  
throughout our history.

What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required  
of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of



every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the  
215 world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly,  
firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so  
defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship.

This is the source of our confidence: the knowledge that God calls on  
220 us to shape an uncertain destiny.

This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed, why men and  
women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration  
across this magnificent mall. And why a man whose father less than 60  
years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand  
225 before you to take a most sacred oath.

(APPLAUSE)

So let us mark this day in remembrance of who we are and how far  
we have traveled.

In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band  
230 of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river.

The capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was  
stained with blood.

At a moment when the outcome of our revolution was most in  
doubt, the father of our nation ordered these words be read to the  
235 people:

"Let it be told to the future world that in the depth of winter, when  
nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country,  
alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet it."

America, in the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our  
240 hardship, let us remember these timeless words; with hope and virtue,  
let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may  
come; let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested  
we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we  
falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we  
245 carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future  
generations.

Thank you. God bless you.

(APPLAUSE)

And God bless the United States of America.

250 (APPLAUSE)



# CHALLENGE

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