



THE 2009 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS



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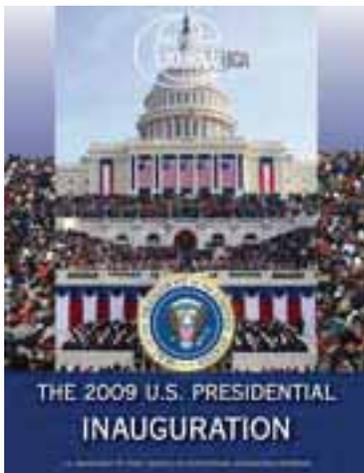
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Crowd on National Mall in Washington, D.C.
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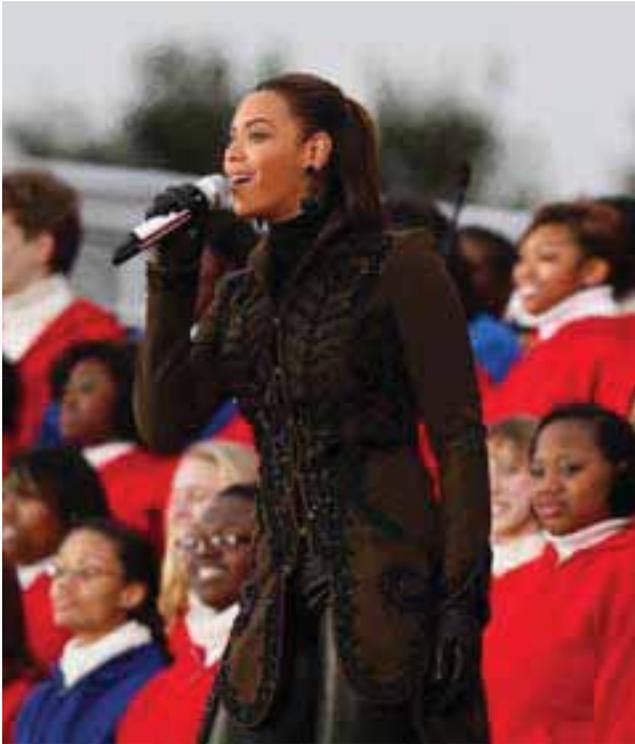


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THE 2009 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

Special Edition—January 2009

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Singers Beyoncé (left) and Bono perform during the inaugural concert in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on January 17, 2009.

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

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.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the 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 wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. 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.

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.

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. 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 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 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

common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

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. 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.

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. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to 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.

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 the guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. 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. 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. 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. 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 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 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 sixty years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with 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 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 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 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 carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.



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Above: Some of the crowd for the inauguration stand and sit on a statue next to the reflecting pool in front of the Capitol.

Left: A view of the crowd witnessing the swearing-in ceremony of Barack Obama as 44th President of the United States.

Below: Joe Biden, with his wife, Jill, at his side, takes the oath of office as vice president from Justice John Paul Stevens.





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Above: President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and their children, Malia (right) and Sasha, wave from the podium after Barack Obama is sworn in as 44th President of the United States.

Left: President and Mrs. Obama wave to the crowds while walking part of the inaugural parade route from the Capitol to the White House along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Below: Some inaugural souvenirs.



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“With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come.”

President Barack Obama

Above: Drummers in the Florida A&M University Marching Band perform in the inaugural parade.

Right: President and Mrs. Barack Obama dance at the Commander in Chief Inaugural Ball at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.



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Left: In the early morning of January 21, 2009, the presidential limousine is parked in front of the south portico of the White House after President and Mrs. Obama returned from the inaugural balls.



in Chicago to help Democratic candidates. In 1992 he married Michelle Robinson, another Harvard Law graduate. Barack and Michelle Obama have two daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7.

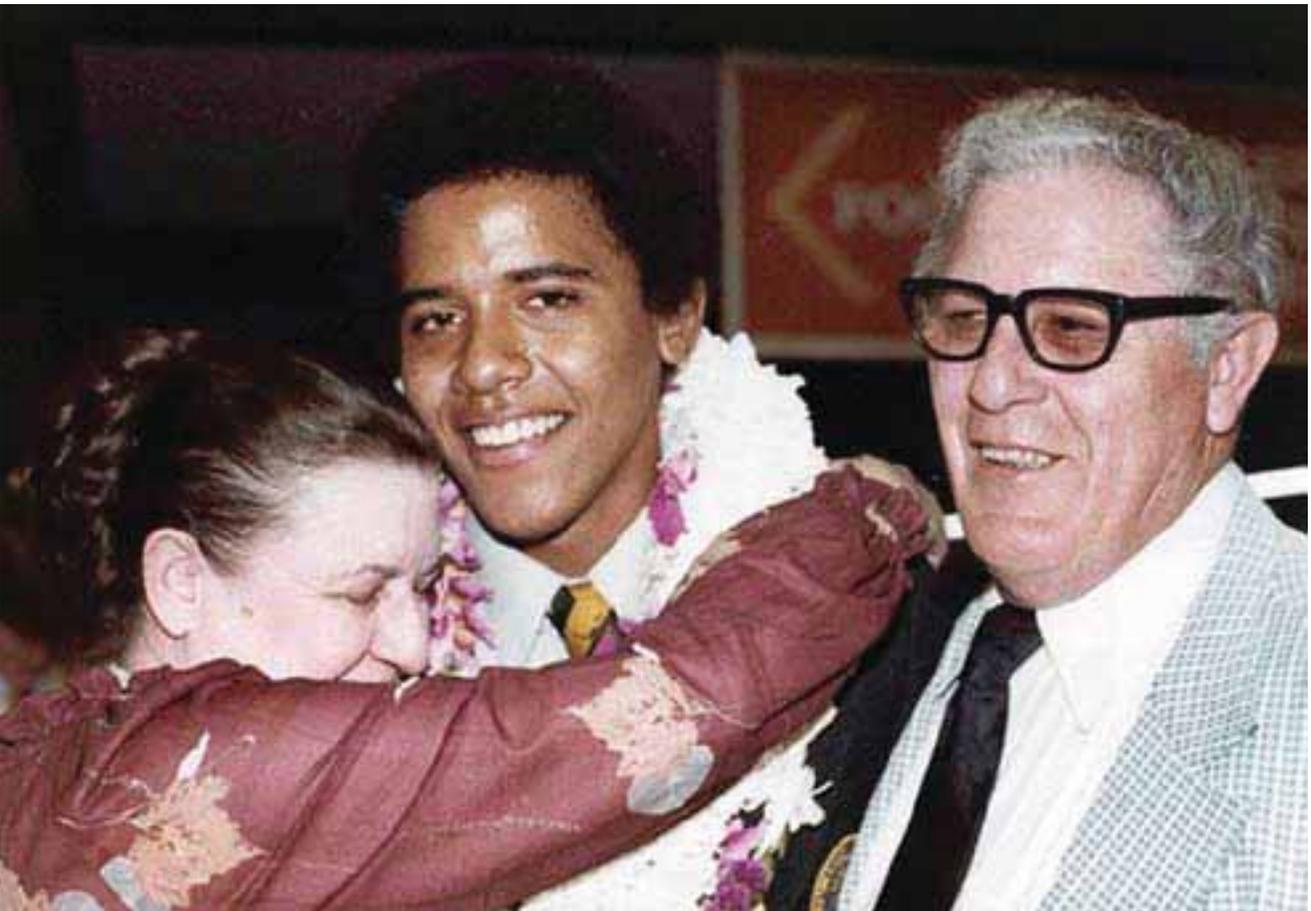
Obama made his first run at elective office in 1996, winning a seat in the Illinois State Senate. His legislative accomplishments over the next eight years in the state senate included campaign finance reform, tax cuts for the working poor, and improvements to the state's criminal justice system.

THE NATIONAL STAGE

After an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Congress in 2000, Obama ran for the U.S. Senate in 2004. He easily captured the Democratic nomination, winning a greater share of the vote — 53 percent — than his six opponents combined.

Left: The young Barack Obama with his mother, Ann Dunham, around 1963.

Below: Barack Obama celebrates earning his secondary school diploma with his grandparents, Madelyn Payne and Stanley Armour Dunham, in Hawaii in 1979.



Celebration

Around the World



Children from the school Barack Obama attended while living in Indonesia dance during an inaugural party for him in Jakarta.



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Above: These *matryoshkas*, traditional Russian nesting dolls made of wood, depict U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

Below left: Political and business leaders gather in a palazzo in downtown Rome to watch as Barack Obama is sworn in as President of the United States.

Below right: In a ceremony at Paris's Hôtel de Ville (City Hall), where a crowd is watching a big-screen television broadcasting Barack Obama's inauguration, a woman waves the "Betsy Ross Flag," the first flag of the United States.



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Vice President Joe Biden

A Biographical Sketch

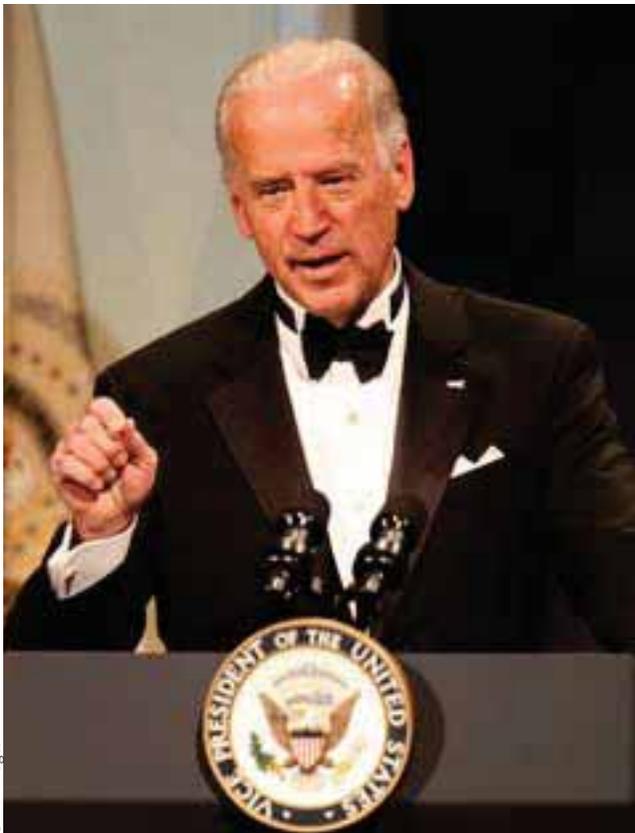
Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. was born November 20, 1942, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the first of four siblings. In 1953, the Biden family moved from Pennsylvania to Claymont, Delaware. Joe Biden graduated from the University of Delaware and from Syracuse University Law School, and then served on the New Castle (Delaware) County Council. At age 29, he became one of the youngest people ever elected to the United States Senate.

Just weeks after the election, tragedy struck the Biden family, when Biden's wife and their one-year-old daughter were killed and their two young sons critically injured in an auto accident. Biden was sworn in as senator at his son's hospital bedside, and he began commuting to Washington every day by train, a practice he maintained throughout his career in the Senate.

In 1977, Biden married Jill Jacobs. Jill Biden, who holds a PhD in education, has been an educator for more than two decades in Delaware's schools.

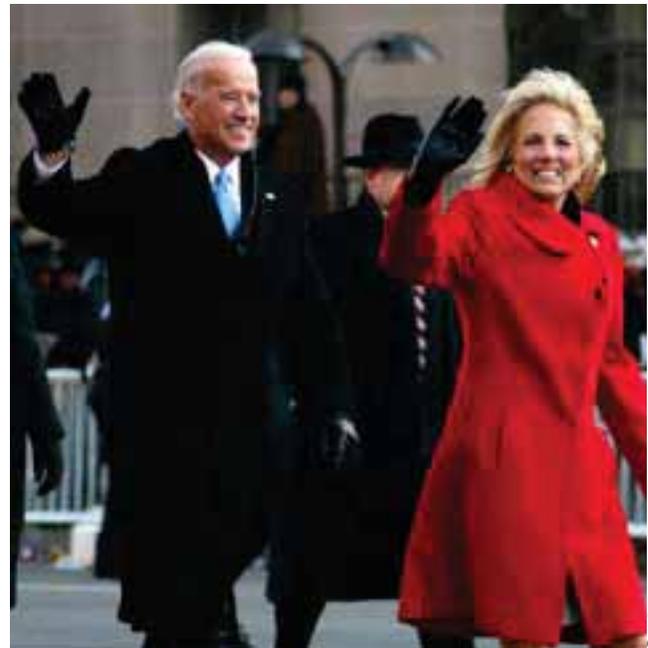
Vice President Biden has three children: Beau, Hunter, and Ashley. Beau serves as Delaware's attorney general and is currently deployed to Iraq as a captain in the 261st Signal Brigade of the Delaware National Guard. Ashley is a social worker, and Hunter is an attorney. The vice president also has five grandchildren.

As a senator from Delaware for 36 years, Biden was a leader on some of America's most important domestic and international challenges. As chairman or ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee for 17 years, Biden was widely recognized for his work on criminal justice issues, including the landmark 1994 Crime Bill and the Violence Against Women Act. As chairman or ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee beginning in 1997, Biden played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. He has been at the forefront of issues and legislation related to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, post-Cold War Europe, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.



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Vice President Joe Biden speaks to guests at the Commander in Chief Ball on January 20, 2009.



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Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, walk along Pennsylvania Avenue in the inaugural parade.