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## Obama takes historic spot as first black president

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama ushered in a new era for the United States, becoming the first black leader of the country founded by slave-owners, and telling the world America is "ready to lead once more" after eight divisive years under George W. Bush.

Taking the helm of a nation beset by economic troubles and two wars, Obama told Americans in his inaugural address Tuesday that "starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and begin the work of remaking America."

Before a crowd that swelled to more than 1 million on the National Mall, Obama assumed power over a nation longing for change after an era that that witnessed the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, the beginning of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and an economic collapse not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

From Kenya and Indonesia, where Obama has family ties, to Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America, his inauguration sparked a volcanic explosion of hope for better days ahead. People around the world gathered in front of their television sets to witness the moment in history, and Obama addressed them directly.

"To all the other peoples and governments who are watching 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 that we are ready to lead once more," Obama said.

A gifted, inspirational speaker, the son of a Kansas-born mother and Kenyan-born father has raised the hopes of millions at home and abroad with his promises to emphasize diplomacy, seek global solutions to climate change, reject torture and shut down the Guantanamo Bay prison.

His words carried a call for personal accountability and a repudiation of the Bush years.

"Our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions - that time has surely passed," Obama said. "Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America."

Obama's 10-year-old daughter, Malia, aimed a camera at her father as he spoke. His wife, Michelle, leaned onto the edge of her seat, body tensed and brow knitted.

His speech took note of his historic place as the first black president in understated but deliberate language, and he spoke of himself as "a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant" yet one who now could take its most sacred oath.

Immediately after the inauguration ceremony, Bush and his wife, Laura, boarded a helicopter alongside the U.S. Capitol, to begin their journey home to Texas. The new president and his wife walked them to the chopper - keeping with tradition - to see them off.

It was a day of high spirits - jarred by sudden concern about the health of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, a legendary Democrat who is suffering from brain cancer. He was rushed from a post-inauguration luncheon in the Capitol in honor of Obama. Doctors said later the seizure had been prompted by fatigue.

When the luncheon finished, Obama led off the inaugural parade from the Capitol to the White House, paying homage to pioneers who paved the way for the United States' first black president.

To rousing cheers, the new president and his wife stepped out of

their limousine to greet part of the enthusiastic crowd that lined the parade route.

Among those following Obama's limousine down Pennsylvania Avenue were re-enactors from a black Civil War regiment, World War II's surviving Tuskegee Army - the country's first group of black military pilots and crew - and Freedom Riders who battled for civil rights.

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## Durham Committee Holds 74th Annual Meeting

The 74th Annual Meeting of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People (DCABP) will be held Sun., Jan. 25, 5:30 pm at Immanuel Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church, 2104 Alston Avenue. The host pastor for this first 2009 public meeting of the DCABP is Dr. John Nixon.



CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

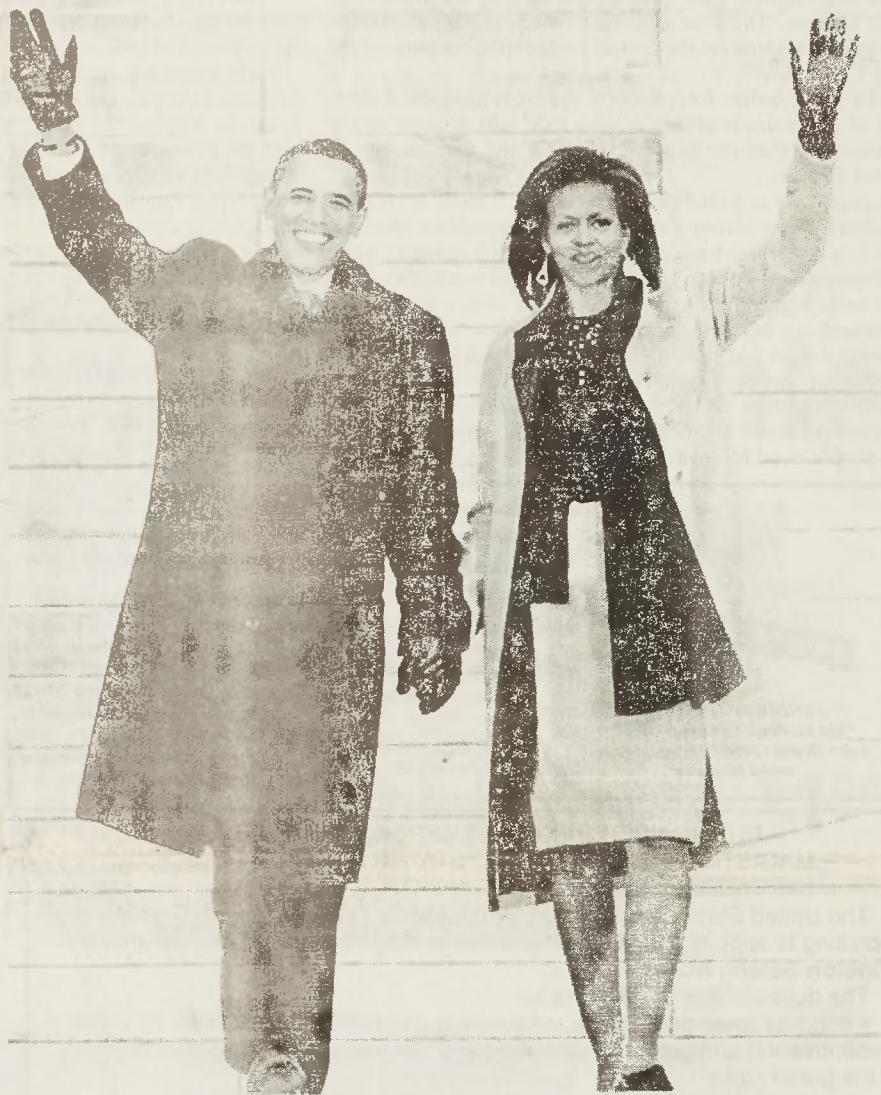
The public is invited to attend this occasion that officially begins the 74th year of the organization informally known as the "Durham Committee" that was founded in 1935. The Annual Meeting, mandated by the constitution, is to report to the community at-large; past and present initiatives, plans, and projects; and to install the 2009 volunteer leadership team of twenty-seven (27) members including, nine general officers and eighteen (18) chairs and vice chairs of the nine standing committees: namely, the Civic, Economic, Education, Health, Housing, Legal Redress, Political, Religious and Human Affairs, and Youth Committees. The "Durham Committee" is a broad-base community organization whose constitutional purpose is "to serve as a representative of and as a leadership body for the Black citizenry of the City and County of Durham in order to promote the welfare of that citizenry in civic, cultural, economic, educational, health, housing, political and youth affairs. The principle function is to work toward the elimination of racial discrimination or racial distinction in public and/or private affairs."

The keynote speaker for this public event is Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke, a Brooklyn, native, who in November 2006 was elected with 89% of the vote to represent New York's 11th Congressional District. Representative Clarke is currently a member of three U.S. House of Representative Committees: Education and Labor, Homeland Security, and Small Business; and two subcommittees of Contracting and Technology and Rural and Urban Entrepreneurship. Representative Clarke's 2009 legislative agenda, in the 111th Congress includes: education, healthcare, housing crisis, jobs, civil liberties, labor (reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act - WIA), improvement of the Small Business Administration (SBA), dramatic improvement and significant changes to the No Child Left Behind Act, reauthorization of the Housing and Community Development Act, creation and implementation of a universal healthcare system, enhancement of 8 (a) Program, Small Disadvantage Business Program and Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone Program, and reintroduction of H.R. 6803 - Real Estate Assessment Center Inspective Improvement Act of 2008.

It is a distinct privilege to have Congresswoman Clarke share her 2009 legislative agenda with us during her presentation because her focus speaks directly to the priority interests of the "Durham Committee" including Economic, Education, Health, Housing, Political and Youth Affairs. We urge the public to come out to hear a dynamic congressional leader with an inspirational challenging message. An elective congresswoman who was recently re-elected in November 2008 with 94% of the vote and sworn in as Whip of the Congressional Black Caucus.

An additional highlight of this occasion will be a motivational presentation about HK on J by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, president of North Carolina NAACP. The Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HK on J), founded in 2007, will take place Saturday, February 14, 2009 beginning at 9:30am at Chavis Park in Raleigh. The program will continue with a march to Jones Street starting at 10:30am and ending in front of the legislative building with demands to urge state legislators to address all 14 priorities of the Peoples Agenda. All NAACP members and friends are specially invited to be present at this event. We must be ready to accept the charge from the NAACP president, Dr. Barber, to become an important part of this historic movement. For as Dr. Barber proclaims, it is a "Movement not a Moment."

In this historic year of 2009, our new President, Barack Obama, has challenged us all to join his efforts and become involved and empowered. Our theme for this year is aligned with Obama's challenge, "Empowerment Demands Works, Knowledge, and Unity." It's a chance to join collectively in the "Yes We Can" belief.



President and Michelle Obama (Photo by Metropolis)

## Obama inauguration moves NC residents at home, DC

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina leaders and supporters of President Barack Obama spoke of racial progress and high expectations Tuesday as they watched him make history by taking the oath of office.

"It leaves you almost speechless," said state Sen. Charlie Dannelly, 84. He and his wife, Rose, stood in front of the TV in their Charlotte home as a sign of respect as Obama was sworn in as the country's first black president.

"My body was full of goose pimples," said Dannelly, who is black. Dannelly thought of the giant steps the United States had made since the days of civil rights activist the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "I thought about how proud I am, of how much our country has grown."

Obama's November election victory proved a milestone for North Carolina as well. He edged Republican nominee John McCain by 14,200 votes to give the state's electoral votes to a Democrat for the first time since 1976.

North Carolina residents who wanted to see history in person found inaugural tickets to be hot ones, as many congressional offices held lotteries to distribute them.

Shelton Iddeen, 57, of Greensboro was among those from North Carolina who braved the frigid weather to participate in history. He arrived at the Mall at 4 a.m. and huddled in front of an ambulance to warm up after saying he couldn't feel his toes.

Mikki Hill, 26, came from Winston-Salem with his mother. "It's not just about a black president," he said. "Everybody is behind him. Everybody's come from as far as the Earth is wide."

First-term Sen. Kay Hagan, D-N.C., watched the ceremony from in front of the Capitol and could see the more than 1 million people packed in to the Washington Monument. Now it's time for Obama and other elected leaders to get to work, she said.

"He's got a Congress and the American people who expect great things," Hagan said in an interview. "We're in a situation of dire economic straits and people want to see change. But the other side of that equation is there is a lot of hope."

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., called the former Illinois senator a friend with whom he hoped he could work on issues such as health care, energy and education.

"The history that will be written on Barack Obama is now in his hands," Burr said. "He now has a tremendous amount of responsibility that was just laid on his shoulders."

Burr sat near McCain at the inauguration and is a close political ally of the GOP nominee. He said McCain wasn't looking back on the campaign.

"That's not John McCain," he said. "When it's all over, somebody won and somebody lost."

Excitement about Obama, and the Democratic primary between him and Hillary Rodham Clinton, helped party voter registration and turnout soar, which helped generate victories for Hagan and Perdue, who became North Carolina's first female governor.

Perdue didn't attend the inauguration - she had already visited Washington twice in the past week and felt it was best she should stay home and work on the budget shortfall. A later meetings and a visit to the crews trying to clear roads from a rare snowstorm. Perdue was able to watch the tail end of the ceremony with staff members on a small television in the old Capitol building. She watched other portions afterward on the Internet.

"It's just tremendously uplifting," Perdue said in a phone interview. "I think this is probably as good as it gets for all of us in terms of a new start."

Sen. Vernon Malone, 77, recalled briefly the indignities of the Jim Crow era in his childhood - his mother had to go to the bathroom on the side of the road during a family car trip because there were no restrooms for blacks.

"I don't look back on that, but you can't forget it," said Malone, who had three television sets on his southeast Raleigh home so he wouldn't miss anything. "If you spend too much time on that, it creates a kind of resentment that will psychologically damage you."

"Our best days are still in front of us."