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THE CANDIDATES



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IIP/PUBJ  
U.S. Department of State  
301 4th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20547  
United States of America  
E-mail: [eJournalUSA@state.gov](mailto:eJournalUSA@state.gov)

# About This Issue



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Balloons and confetti fall after the presidential candidate accepts his nomination at a political party's national convention.

Every presidential campaign is dramatic and historic, but as the fervor surrounding the 2008 election continues to build, U.S. voters and the rest of the world will want to consider the candidates' personal histories more closely. What sort of people rise to the top in the U.S. political system, what are their attributes, their sensibilities, and their strengths?

Writer and retired foreign service officer Domenick DiPasquale examines the lives of Barack Obama and John McCain, stressing each candidate's readiness to lead the country, their long campaigns to become their parties' nominees, and their aspirations and achievements as political leaders.

David Pitts, author of a book about President John F. Kennedy, introduces the vice presidential candidates, Joseph Biden and Sarah Palin. For greater context about the evolving role of the vice president, we include an excerpt from the article "Never Cared to Say Goodbye," originally published in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.

Kelly Bronk takes a look at the wives and families of Barack Obama and John McCain. Presidential historian Carl Sferrazza Anthony describes how several U.S. first ladies fulfilled a role that is highly visible — yet largely undefined — in their own unique style.

Michael Jay Friedman writes about the powers of the presidency, the duties of the president, and the limits of power in a divided system of government.

Also included are excerpts from Obama's and McCain's writings and speeches and their Facebook entries, a bibliography, and a filmography.

Two things about this election are certain: A new president of the United States will be sworn into office on Monday, January 20, 2009, and the peaceful transition of power, one of the most critical aspects of the democratic system, will prevail, whichever candidate is victorious.

— *The Editors*



## Elections 2008: The Candidates

### JOHN MCCAIN

- 4 John McCain: Service to His Country**  
Domenick DiPasquale  
The Republican candidate for president has served his country for 50 years as a naval officer and member of Congress.
- 10 John McCain's Vision for the Future**  
Excerpts from "U.S. Foreign Policy: Where We Go from Here," remarks to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, March 26, 2008.
- 11 McCain in His Own Words**  
John McCain describes the feelings he developed for the United States while held a prisoner of war for more than five years by the North Vietnamese.
- 12 John McCain in Facebook**

### BARACK OBAMA

- 14 Barack Obama in Facebook**
- 16 Barack Obama: Breaking New Ground**  
Domenick DiPasquale  
The Democratic candidate for president is the first African American to be nominated by a major political party.
- 22 Barack Obama's Vision for the Future**  
Excerpts from "The American Moment," remarks to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, April 23, 2007.

### 23 Obama in His Own Words

In this excerpt from one of his speeches, Barack Obama talks about a time in his life when he "began to notice a world beyond myself" and about his desire to be an agent of change.

### 24 The Powers of the Presidency

Michael Jay Friedman

The U.S. Constitution outlines the president's authority but is flexible enough to allow each incumbent to define the scope of presidential powers according to his own philosophy of governance and the needs of the times.

### VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

### 26 The Enhanced Role of the Vice President

John M. Murphy and Mary E. Stuckey

The vice presidency of the United States has grown in importance as the demands of the presidency have increased.

### 28 Sarah Palin, the Republican Party's Nominee for Vice President

David Pitts

The governor of Alaska has executive experience and a reputation for being a reformer.

- 31 Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's Nominee for Vice President**  
David Pitts  
A U.S. senator from Delaware has legislative and foreign policy experience.

### **FIRST FAMILIES**

- 34 The Role of the First Lady**  
Carl Sferrazza Anthony  
Since Martha Washington in the 18th century, first ladies of the United States have fulfilled this unique role according to their own interests and the times they lived in.
- 38 The McCain Family**  
Kelly Bronk  
John McCain and his wife Cindy have pursued different tracks to serve their country. McCain's family includes seven children and four grandchildren.

- 40 The Obama Family**  
Kelly Bronk  
Barack Obama and his wife Michelle have devoted much of their adult lives to public service. They have two young daughters.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- 42 *Sidebar:* Third Parties in U.S. Elections**  
Third Party candidates draw attention to ignored campaign issues.
- 43 Additional Resources**  
Books, articles, Web sites, and films about John McCain, Barack Obama, and the U.S. political process.

# John McCain: Service to His Country

Domenick DiPasquale



© AP Images/Gail Burton

Campaigning for president in Annapolis, Maryland, Senator John McCain addresses supporters at his alma mater, the U.S. Naval Academy, in April 2008.

*The Republican candidate for president has served his country for 50 years as a naval officer and member of Congress. While McCain has supported many Bush administration initiatives, he promises a new approach to foreign and domestic issues.*

*Domenick DiPasquale worked 27 years as a foreign service officer with the U.S. Information Agency and the Department of State in Ghana, Kenya, Brazil, Bosnia, Singapore, and Slovenia.*

John McCain's nomination as the 2008 Republican candidate for president caps a remarkable 50-year career in service to his country.

As a naval aviator, prisoner of war in Vietnam, member of Congress, and U.S. senator, McCain's life story has been distinguished by such consistent core traits as a willingness to speak his mind, an adherence to deeply held values and principles, a devotion to duty, and a fiercely guarded streak of independence. Those characteristics, which earned him the abiding anger of

his North Vietnamese captors, and sometimes even the occasional rancor of his Republican colleagues, also have won McCain the support and admiration of millions of American voters.

As the man whom the *Almanac of American Politics* calls "the closest thing our politics has to a national hero" — the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and Purple Heart are among his medals — McCain burnished his already high profile with an independent-minded campaign for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination that captured the imagination of many Americans. He emerged from that losing effort as one of the most respected voices in the U.S. Senate, especially on national security issues, and one of the most prominent figures in the Republican Party.

Perhaps more than any other quality, the concept of personal honor has been consistently central to McCain's private and public persona.

"In prison, where my cherished independence was mocked and assaulted, I found my self-respect in

a shared fidelity to my country,” McCain wrote in his autobiography *Faith of My Fathers*. “All honor comes with obligations. I and the men with whom I served had accepted ours, and we were grateful for the privilege.”

### THE EARLY YEARS

The son and grandson of U.S. Navy admirals, John Sidney McCain was born August 29, 1936, in the U.S.-administered Panama Canal Zone territory. The military legacy of his family, which traces its roots to the Highlands of Scotland, actually extends as far back as America’s 18th-century War of Independence, when one of McCain’s ancestors served on George Washington’s staff.

In typical military fashion, the young McCain learned to adapt quickly as his father’s assignments forced the family to move frequently from one naval base to the next. This constant uprooting may have played a role in shaping McCain’s temperament. As he put it, “At each new school I arrived eager to make, by means of my insolent attitude, new friends to compensate for the loss of others. . . . At each new school I became a more unrepentant pain in the neck.”



Future presidential candidate John McCain (in center) with his grandfather (left) and his father (right), both U.S. Navy admirals, in a family photo from the 1940s.



In military dress, naval officer John McCain stands next to his father, Admiral John McCain

In 1954, McCain graduated from Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia, and kept his “unavoidable appointment” to the U.S. Naval Academy. At the academy, he embarked upon a self-described “four-year course of insubordination and rebellion.” Earning a reputation as an affable fellow always ready for a party, racking up numerous demerits for his behavior, and often struggling academically, McCain persevered and graduated in 1958.

### NAVAL AVIATOR AND POW

Commissioned as a naval officer, McCain attended flight school in Pensacola, Florida, where he earned his pilot’s wings. In the early 1960s, he embarked on several aircraft carrier deployments to the Mediterranean. As American involvement in the Vietnam War deepened in the mid-1960s, however, McCain began to aspire to positions of command and determined that a credible combat record was the best way to achieve it.

Serving on the *USS Forrestal* in the Tonkin Gulf off the North Vietnamese coast in 1967, McCain barely escaped with his life when a horrific fire swept the flight deck and engulfed his A-4 attack jet as he waited to launch. Soon thereafter, McCain voluntarily transferred off the crippled ship to another squadron aboard the carrier *USS Oriskany*.

McCain’s life changed forever on October 26, 1967. While he was on a bombing raid against an electrical power plant in Hanoi, a surface-to-air missile tore the right wing off his A-4. Ejecting from his doomed aircraft, McCain parachuted into a lake in the center of the city, suffering two broken arms and a broken knee. Captured

immediately, he began five and a half years of imprisonment, marked by often brutal mistreatment and torture, in a series of North Vietnamese prisoner of war (POW) camps.

Like other American POWs, McCain was the frequent target of savage beatings and interrogations conducted by his captors to elicit military information or anti-U.S. propaganda statements. After refusing an offer of early release, McCain was beaten so severely for several days that he eventually signed a forced confession, an event that caused him anguished

Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images/Terry Ashe

© AP Images



Naval fighter pilot John McCain (front right) stands with his squadron.

© AP Images/Library of Congress

despair and shame. Yet he rebounded from this personal nadir to earn a reputation as a “tough resister,” the ultimate compliment his fellow POWs bestowed upon the toughest among them.

McCain attributed his endurance of captivity, including two years of solitary confinement, to faith — “faith in God, faith in country, faith in your fellow prisoners.” Speaking of his fellow POWs’ resistance and bravery, McCain said of his imprisoned comrades, “They were a lantern for me, a lantern of courage and faith that illuminated the way home with honor, and I struggled against panic and despair to stay in its light.”

### ENTRY INTO POLITICS

After the signing of the peace accord between the United States and North Vietnam in January 1973, which included the release of all POWs, McCain regained his freedom on March 15 of that year. Despite the severity of his wartime injuries — McCain can be seen in news footage limping off the plane that carried him to freedom — he worked intensely to rehabilitate himself physically to the point that he regained his flight status as a naval aviator.

From 1973 to 1974 he attended the National War College in Washington, writing a thesis that examined

POW resistance in captivity, but it was a subsequent assignment that eventually charted a new direction in McCain’s life. In 1977, McCain began to work as a Navy liaison officer to the U.S. Senate. In this role, the *New York Times* noted, he “relished the push and pull of legislative battles (and) ... built personal friendships and professional collaborations across ideological divides, a hallmark of his later Senate career.”

Retiring from the Navy in 1981 after foregoing the offer of promotion to admiral, McCain moved to Arizona, the home state of his second wife Cindy, whom he had married in 1980. In 1982, he made his first run for political office and was elected to a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from Arizona’s First Congressional District with 66 percent of the vote. Reelected to the House in 1984, McCain subsequently ran for and won

in 1986 the Senate seat vacated by the retiring incumbent Barry Goldwater (himself the 1964 Republican presidential nominee).

In the early years of his Senate career, McCain focused on issues close to his personal experience, such as national defense, support for military veterans, and normalizing relations with Vietnam, working on this



© AP Images/Susan Walsh

Senator John McCain asks a question during a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, September 2007.





Naval officer John McCain limps off an airplane after his release from captivity in Vietnam in 1973.

last issue with Democratic Senator John Kerry, a fellow Vietnam War hero. Years later, when Kerry was the 2004 Democratic presidential candidate and under political attack for allegedly misrepresenting his military service, McCain rose to the defense of his fellow veteran Kerry's war record.

Reaching across the political aisle is not uncommon for McCain. He has attempted to forge consensus with his Democratic colleagues in the Senate on solutions for complex, controversial issues — sometimes successfully, as in the case of normalized relations with Vietnam; sometimes unsuccessfully, as in McCain's attempt with Senator Edward Kennedy to tackle the highly charged question of illegal immigration.

Now in his fourth term in the Senate, McCain has amassed a congressional voting record in line with most mainstream Republican political beliefs — a strong national defense, low taxes, opposition to activist judges, and a pro-life position on the abortion issue. Yet he has also played the role of maverick as an advocate of campaign finance reform and as a strong opponent

of wasteful “pork-barrel” government spending and the practice of “earmarking,” or specifying funding for legislators’ pet projects.

## **RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT**

McCain's first foray into presidential politics came in 2000, when he ran for the Republican presidential nomination. Many voters found his candor, self-deprecating humor, and straightforward style attractive qualities that gained him not just national attention but also support transcending traditional party lines; his campaign bus was titled “The Straight Talk Express.” McCain went on to score an impressive upset victory against the putative front-runner George W. Bush in the always-important, first-in-the-nation primary of New Hampshire. However, his campaign had mixed results thereafter as he failed to attract sufficient numbers of core Republican voters in other states. After losses in such major states as California and New York, McCain suspended his campaign and eventually threw his support to Bush, who returned the White House to Republican hands that November with his election as president.

Over the next several years, McCain's profile in national politics remained high. Congress finally enacted into law in 2002 the landmark legislation on campaign finance reform coauthored by McCain and Democratic Senator Russ Feingold. An advocate for a strong national defense policy, McCain supported the decision to invade Iraq in 2003, although he later turned sharply critical of the way the war was conducted in its early stages.

Reelected to the Senate for a fourth term in 2004 by a 77 to 21 percent margin, McCain initially was viewed as one of the strongest contenders, if not the front-runner, for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. Yet as a large field of Republican candidates entered the race and began to organize in 2007 for the following year's marathon of primaries and caucuses, the McCain campaign began to implode, with staff shake-ups, serious financial problems, and fading polling results.

McCain's tenacity — the very quality that had gotten him through his POW years — again proved the indispensable factor in getting him through this rough period. “I have a very complicated strategy for you,” one of his advisors told him. “Stay in the race until you're the last man standing.”

That is precisely what McCain did. Skipping the first-in-the-nation contest of the Iowa caucus, McCain gambled and focused his efforts on the January 8 primary



© AP Images/Stephan Savoia

After a town hall meeting with New Hampshire voters during the 2000 presidential race, John and Cindy McCain enjoy a shower of confetti.

in New Hampshire, site of his great success in 2000. Spending months in that state and holding 101 town hall meetings with New Hampshire's famously independent voters, he was rewarded with a key victory over his major Republican rivals. Although victories in other early voting states were split among McCain, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, McCain solidified his front-runner position in the February 5 "Super Tuesday" primary election held simultaneously in more than 20 states. McCain won in such populous states as California, Illinois, and New York, amassing a lead in delegates that none of his rivals could catch. On March 4, 2008, victories in Ohio and Texas allowed McCain to cross the threshold of 1,191 delegates needed to secure the Republican presidential nomination.

### **A MCCAIN PRESIDENCY**

The question of McCain's age has arisen during the campaign; if elected, McCain would take the oath of office at age 72, the oldest-ever first-term president.

He has attempted to defuse concerns about his age and fitness for the job with an active campaign schedule and with his trademark humor directed at himself — cracking that he is "as old as dirt" and has "more scars than Frankenstein." McCain perhaps also sends a subtle message that his health and energy level are up to the demands of the presidency by sometimes bringing along his robust 96-year-old mother Roberta to campaign rallies.

McCain's campaign platform reflects his support of many traditional Republican policies, but also a willingness to chart a new course where he believes it necessary. An early and outspoken advocate of the 2007 U.S. troop surge in Iraq, he has argued for maintaining a U.S. military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan until those nations achieve stability, as well as for continuing an aggressive fight against international terrorism, all tenets of current U.S. policy. His energy plan calls for greater use of nuclear power and more offshore oil drilling, while his economic policy favors making permanent the large tax cuts enacted during the Bush presidency.



© AP Images/Emilio Morenatti

On a congressional delegation trip to Afghanistan in 2005, John McCain addresses reporters after meeting with Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Senator Hillary Clinton stands at left.

On other issues, however, McCain has promised an approach different from that of the current administration. He has emphasized, for example,

a more collaborative approach with U.S. allies on foreign policy questions. He also has pledged a more activist response to global warming and climate change, including a 60 percent cut in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Whatever the outcome of the 2008 election, John McCain undoubtedly will continue to serve the country to which he has devoted a lifetime. The reason is found in a simple yet eloquent passage from his autobiography in which he reflects upon a lesson learned while in captivity in North Vietnam.

“It wasn’t until I had lost America for a time,” he wrote, “that I realized how much I loved her.” ■

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*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# John McCain's Vision for the Future

*Excerpts from "U.S. Foreign Policy: Where We Go from Here," remarks to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, March 26, 2008.*

Leadership today means something different than it did in the years after World War II, when Europe and the other democracies were still recovering from the devastation of war and the United States was the only democratic superpower. Today we are not alone. There is the powerful collective voice of the European Union, and there are the great nations of India and Japan, Australia and Brazil, South Korea and South Africa, Turkey and Israel, to name just a few of the leading democracies. There are also the increasingly powerful nations of China and Russia that wield great influence in the international system.

In such a world, where power of all kinds is more widely and evenly distributed, the United States cannot lead by virtue of its power alone. We must be strong politically, economically, and militarily. But we must also lead by attracting others to our cause, by demonstrating once again the virtues of freedom and democracy, by defending the rules of international civilized society and by creating the new international institutions necessary to advance the peace and freedoms we cherish. Perhaps above all, leadership in today's world means accepting and fulfilling our responsibilities as a great nation.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the heart of this new compact must be mutual respect and trust. Recall the words of our founders in the Declaration of Independence, that we pay "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." Our great power does not mean we can do whatever we want whenever we want, nor should we assume we have all the wisdom and knowledge necessary to succeed. We need to listen to the views and respect the collective will of our democratic allies. When we believe international action is necessary, whether military, economic, or diplomatic, we will try to persuade our friends that we are right. But we, in return, must be willing to be persuaded by them.

America must be a model citizen if we want others to look to us as a model. How we behave at home affects

how we are perceived abroad. We must fight the terrorists and at the same time defend the rights that are the foundation of our society.

\*\*\*\*\*

There is such a thing as international good citizenship. We need to be good stewards of our planet and join with other nations to help preserve our common home. The risks of global warming have no borders. We and the other nations of the world must get serious about substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years or we will hand off a much-diminished world to our grandchildren.

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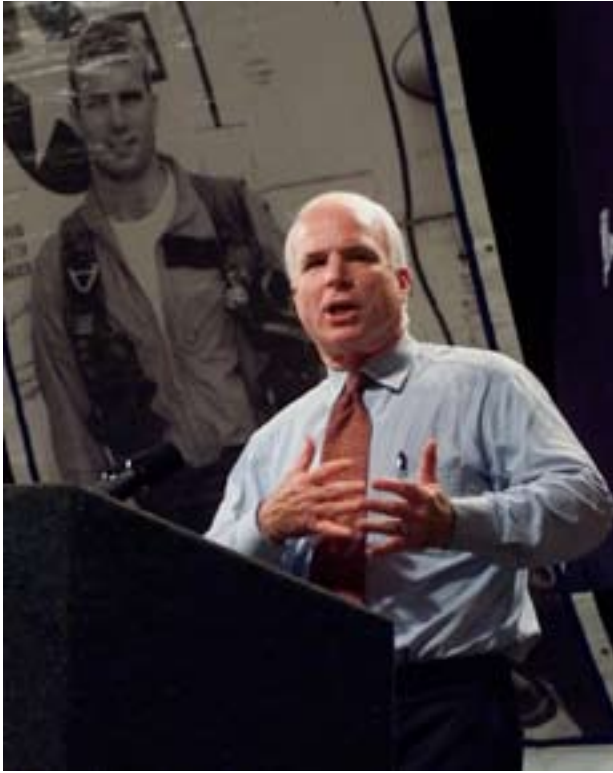
The United States did not single-handedly win the Cold War; the transatlantic alliance did, in concert with partners around the world. The bonds we share with Europe in terms of history, values, and interests are unique. Americans should welcome the rise of a strong, confident European Union as we continue to support a strong NATO. The future of the transatlantic relationship lies in confronting the challenges of the twenty-first century worldwide: developing a common energy policy, creating a transatlantic common market tying our economies more closely together, addressing the dangers posed by a revanchist Russia, and institutionalizing our cooperation on issues such as climate change, foreign assistance, and democracy promotion.

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If we are successful in pulling together a global coalition for peace and freedom — if we lead by shouldering our international responsibilities and pointing the way to a better and safer future for humanity, I believe we will gain tangible benefits as a nation. ■

Source: [http://www.lawac.org/speech/indexes/2007-08\\_index.htm](http://www.lawac.org/speech/indexes/2007-08_index.htm)

# McCain in His Own Words



© AP Images/Ron Edmonds

During the 2000 presidential primary campaign, McCain delivers an address in South Carolina in front of a photograph from his days as a fighter pilot.

*In his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention on September 4, 2008, John McCain describes the feelings he developed for the United States while held as a prisoner of war for more than five years by the North Vietnamese.*

I've been an imperfect servant of my country for many years. But I have been her servant first, last, and always. And I've never lived a day, in good times or bad, that I didn't thank God for the privilege.

Long ago, something unusual happened to me that taught me the most valuable lesson of my life. I was blessed by misfortune. I mean that sincerely. I was blessed because I served in the company of heroes, and I witnessed a thousand acts of courage, compassion, and love.

On an October morning, in the Gulf of Tonkin, I prepared for my 23rd mission over North Vietnam. I hadn't any worry I wouldn't come back safe and sound. I thought I was tougher than anyone. I was pretty independent then, too. I liked to bend a few rules, and pick a few fights for the

fun of it. But I did it for my own pleasure, my own pride. I didn't think there was a cause more important than me.

Then I found myself falling toward the middle of a small lake in the city of Hanoi, with two broken arms, a broken leg, and an angry crowd waiting to greet me. I was dumped in a dark cell, and left to die. I didn't feel so tough anymore. When they discovered my father was an admiral, they took me to a hospital. They couldn't set my bones properly, so they just slapped a cast on me. When I didn't get better, and was down to about a hundred pounds, they put me in a cell with two other Americans. I couldn't do anything. I couldn't even feed myself. They did it for me. I was beginning to learn the limits of my selfish independence. Those men saved my life.

I was in solitary confinement when my captors offered to release me. I knew why. If I went home, they would use it as propaganda to demoralize my fellow prisoners. Our Code said we could only go home in the order of our capture, and there were men who had been shot down before me. I thought about it, though. I wasn't in great shape, and I missed everything about America. But I turned it down.

A lot of prisoners had it worse than I did. I'd been mistreated before, but not as badly as others. I always liked to strut a little after I'd been roughed up to show the other guys I was tough enough to take it. But after I turned down their offer, they worked me over harder than they ever had before. For a long time. And they broke me.

When they brought me back to my cell, I was hurt and ashamed, and I didn't know how I could face my fellow prisoners. The good man in the cell next door, my friend, Bob Craner, saved me. Through taps on a wall he told me I had fought as hard as I could. No man can always stand alone. And then he told me to get back up and fight again for our country and for the men I had the honor to serve with. Because every day they fought for me.

I fell in love with my country when I was a prisoner in someone else's. I loved it not just for the many comforts of life here. I loved it for its decency; for its faith in the wisdom, justice, and goodness of its people. I loved it because it was not just a place, but an idea, a cause worth fighting for. I was never the same again. I wasn't my own man anymore. I was my country's. ■

Source: <http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/News/Speeches/ef046a10-706a-4dd5-bd01-b93b36b054bc.htm>

# John McCain in Facebook



## John McCain

**Country:** United States

**Currently Running For**  
Office: President  
Party: Republican Party

**Current Office**  
Office: Senate  
State: Arizona  
Party: Republican Party

**Detailed Info**  
Gender: Male  
Birthday: August 29, 1936  
Political Views: Conservative  
Religious Views: North Phoenix Baptist Church  
Interests: Sports, Hiking, Fishing, Boxing, Basketball, Football, Baseball, History

Favorite Movies: Viva Zapata, Letters From Iwo Jima, Some Like It Hot  
Favorite Books: For Whom the Bell Tolls  
Favorite TV Shows: 24, Seinfeld

### **Work Info**

Employer: Running for President  
Position: Candidate for the Republican Party  
Time Period: April 2007 - Present

Employer: United States Navy  
Position: Captain, Squadron Commander, Pilot  
Time Period: 1958 - 1981  
Description: Naval honors include the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Employer: United States Congress  
Position: Senator  
Time Period: 1986 - Present  
Description: Elected to the United States Senate to take the place of Arizona's great Senator Barry Goldwater. Senator McCain is currently the senior senator from Arizona.

Employer: United States Congress  
Position: U.S. Representative  
Time Period: 1982 - 1986  
Description: Elected to Congress representing what was then the first congressional district of Arizona.

### **Education Info**

Colleges: United States Naval Academy '58  
National War College '73

### **Contact Info**

Email: info@johnmccain.com  
Phone: 703-418-2008  
Location: P.O. Box 16118  
Alexandria, VA 22215

Source: <http://www.facebook.com/johnmccain> as visited 22 August 2008.

# Barack Obama in Facebook



## Barack Obama

**Country:**

**United States**

## Currently Running For

Office:

President

Party:

Democratic Party

## Current Office

Office:

Senate

State:

Illinois

Party:

Democratic Party

## Detailed Info

Gender:

Male

Relationship Status:

Married to Michelle Obama



Birthday: August 4, 1961  
Religious Views: Christian  
Interests: Basketball, writing, loafing w/ kids  
Favorite Music: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Johann Sebastian Bach (cello suites), and The Fugees  
Favorite Movies: Casablanca, Godfather I & II, Lawrence of Arabia and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest  
Favorite Books: Song of Solomon (Toni Morrison), Moby Dick, Shakespeare's Tragedies, Parting the Waters, Gilead (Robinson), Self-Reliance (Emerson), The Bible, Lincoln's Collected Writings  
Favorite TV Shows: Sportscenter  
Favorite Quotes: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." (MLK)

### **Work Info**

Employer: United States Senate  
Position: Senator  
Time Period: January 2005 - Present

### **Education Info**

Grad School: Harvard Law '91  
Colleges: Columbia '83  
Political Science, with a concentration in International Relations  
Occidental '83

### **Contact Info**

Phone: 8666752008

Source: <http://www.facebook.com/barackobama> as visited 22 August 2008.

# Barack Obama: Breaking New Ground

Domenick DiPasquale



Barack Obama at a primary election night rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 2008.

© AP Images/Chris Carlson

Obama, the first African-American presidential candidate to win the nomination of a major U.S. political party, brings a life story unlike that of any previous nominee. The biracial son of a Kenyan father and a white mother from the American heartland, Obama shot to national prominence with his well-received keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004, the same year he was elected to the U.S. Senate from the state of Illinois. Just four years later, he rose to the top of a field crowded with Democratic heavyweights to clinch his party's nomination for the White House.

With a polished speaking style, a command of eloquent and uplifting rhetoric, the ability to inspire the enthusiasm of young voters, and the sophisticated use of the Internet as a campaign tool, Obama is very much a 21st-century candidate. Yet he has demonstrated the timeless skills common to all campaigns, including the ability to effectively wage old-fashioned political trench warfare as he ground through a long and sometimes divisive five-month primary season to defeat his chief opponent, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In his campaign, Obama stressed two overarching themes: changing Washington's traditional way of conducting the nation's business and invoking Americans of diverse ideological, social, and racial backgrounds to unite for the common good.

"There's not a liberal America and a conservative America — there's the United States of America," Obama said in his address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention. "There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. . . . We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, all of us defending the United States of America."

*The Democratic candidate for president brings youth, eloquence, and a compelling personal history to the 2008 campaign. Obama captured his party's nomination by advocating change in U.S. policy, both foreign and domestic.*

*Freelance writer Domenick DiPasquale is a former foreign service officer who served in Ghana, Kenya, Brazil, Bosnia, Singapore, and Slovenia.*

Barack Obama's unique biography and successful campaign for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination have opened a new chapter in U.S. politics.

## THE EARLY YEARS

Obama's parents came from vastly different backgrounds. His mother, Ann Dunham, was born and raised in small-town Kansas. After her family moved to the Hawaiian Islands, she met Barack Obama Sr., a Kenyan scholarship student enrolled at the University of Hawaii. The two married in 1959, and on August 4, 1961, Barack Obama Jr. was born in Honolulu. Two years later the senior Obama left his new family, first for graduate study at Harvard and then for a job as a government economist back in Kenya. The young Obama met his father again only once, at age 10.

When Obama was six, his mother remarried, this time to an Indonesian oil executive. The family moved to Indonesia, and Obama spent four years attending school in the capital city of Jakarta. He eventually returned to Hawaii and went to high school there while living with his maternal grandparents.

In his first book, *Dreams From My Father*, Obama describes this period of his life as having more than the usual share of adolescent turmoil, as he struggled to make sense of a biracial heritage then still relatively uncommon in the United States. Being rooted in both black culture



Ann Dunham Obama holds son Barack Obama in an undated photo from the 1960s.

State Senator Barack Obama at the Springfield, Illinois, capitol building.



and white culture may have helped give Obama the expansive vision he brought to politics years later, one that understands both points of view.

“Barack has an incredible ability to synthesize seemingly contradictory realities and make them coherent,” his law school classmate Cassandra Butts told *New Yorker* magazine writer Larissa MacFarquhar. “It comes from going from a home where white people are nurturing you, and then you go out into the world and you’re seen as a black person.”

Obama left Hawaii once more to attend Occidental College in Los Angeles for two years. He later moved to New York City and earned a bachelor of arts degree from Columbia University in 1983. In a commencement address, Obama described his thinking at the time: “... by the time I graduated from college, I was possessed with a crazy idea — that I would work at a grassroots level to bring about change.”

## CALLED TO PUBLIC SERVICE

In search of his identity and a purposeful direction in life, Obama subsequently left his job as a financial writer with an international consulting firm in New York and headed to Chicago in 1985. There, he worked as a community organizer for a coalition of local churches on the city's South Side, a poor African-American area hard hit by the transition from a manufacturing center to a service-based economy.

“It was in these neighborhoods that I received the best education I ever had, and where I learned the true meaning of my Christian faith,” Obama recounted years later in the speech announcing his presidential candidacy.

Obama enjoyed some tangible successes in this

work, giving South Side residents a voice in such issues as economic redevelopment, job training, and environmental clean-up efforts. He viewed his primary role as a community organizer, however, as that of a catalyst mobilizing ordinary citizens in a bottom-up effort to forge indigenous strategies for political and economic empowerment.

After three years of such work, Obama concluded that to bring about true improvement in such distressed communities required involvement at a higher level, in

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the realm of law and politics. Accordingly, he attended Harvard Law School, where he distinguished himself by being elected the first black president of the prestigious *Harvard Law Review* and graduating *magna cum laude* in 1991.

With these credentials, “Obama could have done anything he wanted,” noted David Axelrod, now his presidential campaign strategist. Obama returned to his adopted hometown of Chicago, where he practiced civil rights law and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago. In 1992 he married Michelle Robinson, another Harvard Law graduate, and worked on voter registration in Chicago to help Democratic candidates such as Bill Clinton.

With a continuing strong commitment to public service, Obama decided to make his first run at elective office in 1996, winning a seat from Chicago in the Illinois state senate. In many ways the race was a logical progression of his earlier work as a community organizer, and Obama brought much of that same expansive outlook — the politician as an enabler of citizen-directed grassroots efforts and a builder of broad-based coalitions — to his vision of politics.

“Any African Americans who are only talking about racism as a barrier to our success are seriously misled if they don’t also come to grips with the larger economic forces that are creating economic insecurity for all workers — whites, Latinos, and Asians,” he said at the time. Among his legislative accomplishments over the next eight years in the state senate were campaign finance reform, tax cuts for the working poor, and improvements to the state’s criminal justice system.

### THE NATIONAL STAGE

In 2000 Obama made his first run for the U.S. Congress, unsuccessfully challenging Bobby Rush, an incumbent Democrat from Chicago, for Rush’s seat in the House of Representatives. Dispirited by his lopsided primary loss to Rush and searching for influence beyond the Illinois state legislature, he sold Michelle on the idea of his running for the U.S. Senate in a last-shot “up or out strategy” to advance his political career.

Senator Obama in his office at the Hart Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill in 2006.

The 2004 U.S. Senate race in Illinois had turned into a free-for-all the year before, when the Republican incumbent, Peter Fitzgerald, announced he would not seek reelection. Seven Democrats and eight Republicans contested their respective party’s primary for the senatorial nomination. Obama easily captured the Democratic nomination, winning a greater share of the vote — 53 percent — than his six opponents combined.

With the Republicans then holding the 100-member U.S. Senate by a razor-thin majority of 51 seats, Democrats saw the senatorial contest in Illinois as critical to their chances of retaking the Senate that November (in fact, they only regained control in 2006). The desire to give Obama’s campaign a boost through a prominent role, the well-known oratory skills Obama possessed, and the very favorable impression he already had made on Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry clinched the decision to select Obama as the convention’s keynote speaker.

Obama’s speech, with its soaring, polished language on the need to transcend partisan divisions and its call for a “politics of hope” rather than a politics of cynicism, did more than rouse convention-goers; it catapulted Obama into the national media spotlight as a rising star of the Democratic Party. He went on to win handily in the Senate race that autumn, capturing an overwhelming 70 percent of the popular vote. Although



© AP Images/Manuel Balce Ceneta

the near-total disarray that year among Republicans in Illinois undoubtedly contributed to the landslide margin, Obama's victory was impressive in its own right, as he won in 93 of the state's 102 counties and captured white voters by better than a two-to-one margin.

Obama's reputation as a new breed of politician, one able to overcome traditional racial divides, grew steadily. In a *New Yorker* profile of Obama, writer William Finnegan, noting Obama's talent at "slipping subtly into the idiom of his interlocutor," said Obama "speaks a full range of American vernaculars." Obama offered his own explanation why he could connect with white voters.

"I know these people," he said. "Those are my grandparents. ... Their manners, their sensibilities, their sense of right and wrong — it's all totally familiar to me."

In the Senate, Obama amassed a voting record in line with that of the Democratic Party's liberal wing. His criticism of the war in Iraq has been one of his trademarks, dating back to a speech in 2002, even before the war started, when he warned that any such military action would be based "not on principle but on politics." He also has worked to strengthen ethical standards in Congress, improve care for military veterans, and increase use of renewable fuels.

### **RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT**

The long Democratic primary election campaign of 2008, with elections or caucuses in all 50 states, was historic in several ways. African-American and women candidates had run for the presidency before, but this time the two front-runners were a woman and an African American. As Obama and seven other contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination began to organize in 2007, opinion polls consistently put Obama in second place behind the presumed favorite, New York Senator Hillary Clinton. Obama, however, was highly successful in this early stage of the race at enlisting an enthusiastic



Barack Obama campaigning in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2007.

© AP Images/Gregory Smith

cadre of supporters, especially among youth, establishing a nationwide grassroots campaign organization, and fundraising through the Internet.

With Clinton enjoying greater name recognition, a well-oiled campaign machine, and support at the state level from leading Democrats, the Obama camp devised an innovative strategy to negate these advantages: targeting states that used caucuses rather than primaries to select delegates and focusing on smaller states that traditionally voted Republican in the general election. This approach capitalized on the Democratic Party's system of proportional representation — awarding convention delegates in each state in rough proportion to a candidate's share of the vote — as opposed to the Republicans' system of awarding most or all convention delegates to the winner in each state.

The strategy paid off with the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses on January 3, 2008, when Obama scored an upset victory over Clinton. The Iowa win was a game-changer; as the *Washington Post* put it, "Beating Clinton ... altered the course of the race by establishing Obama as her chief rival — the only candidate with the message, organizational muscle, and financial resources to challenge her front-runner status."

It paid off once more on “Super Tuesday” — the elections held simultaneously in 22 states on February 5 — when Obama dueled Clinton to a tie and swept rural states in the West and South. And it paid off yet again when Obama went on to win 10 more consecutive contests in February, cementing a lead in delegates Clinton never again could catch.

Finally, on June 3, exactly five months after the contest began, the exhausting race was over. The combination of a victory in Montana and growing support from previously uncommitted super-delegates gave Obama the majority of delegates needed to clinch the presidential nomination.

“Because you chose not to listen to your doubts or your fears but to your greatest hopes and highest aspirations,” Obama told supporters that evening at a victory rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, “tonight we mark the end of one historic journey with the beginning of another.”

### **AN OBAMA PRESIDENCY**

If elected, Obama would be one of the youngest presidents. Born at the tail end of the 1946-1964 baby

boom generation, he also would be the first president to have come of age in the 1980s, which of itself might portend change. The atmosphere in which he grew up was markedly different from the socially tumultuous 1960s that shaped earlier baby boomers’ outlook. As Obama once said about the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, contested by candidates from a much earlier cohort of that postwar generation, “I sometimes felt as if I were watching the psychodrama of the baby boom generation — a tale rooted in old grudges and revenge plots hatched on a handful of college campuses long ago — played out on the national stage.”

Obama’s “Change We Can Believe In” and “Change We Need” slogans reflect his campaign’s emphasis on taking the United States in a new direction. Obama has advocated a steady timetable for withdrawing U.S. combat troops from Iraq, although he would leave some for training and antiterrorism missions. Other foreign policy positions include increasing U.S. military and development assistance to Afghanistan, closing the Guantanamo Bay prison for terrorism detainees, and strengthening nuclear nonproliferation efforts. Domestically, Obama wants to invest 150 billion



The Obama family wave to the crowd at a political rally in Iowa in January 2008.

dollars over 10 years to spur development of clean energy technology, increase investment in education and infrastructure to make the U.S. economy more globally competitive, and restore fiscal discipline to government spending.

The *New Yorker's* Larissa MacFarquhar offered one theory on Obama's noticeable appeal across traditional political lines. "Obama's voting record is one of the most liberal in the Senate," she observed, "but he has always appealed to Republicans, perhaps because he speaks about liberal goals in conservative language."

"In his view of history, in his respect for tradition, in his skepticism that the world can be changed any way but very, very slowly," she wrote, "Obama is deeply conservative."

Win or lose in November, Obama has broken new

ground in U.S. politics. His candidacy came at precisely the time when many Americans believed their country needed a fundamental transformation in its direction. *Washington Post* political columnist E.J. Dionne may have summed up perfectly the serendipitous confluence between Obama's candidacy and the American zeitgeist when he wrote:

Change, not experience, was the order of the day. Sweep, not a mastery of detail, was the virtue most valued in campaign oratory. A clean break with the past, not merely a return to better days, was the promise most prized. ■

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*The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

# Barack Obama's Vision for the Future

*Excerpts from "The American Moment," remarks to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, April 23, 2007.*

I believe that the single most important job of any President is to protect the American people. And I am equally convinced that doing that job effectively in the 21st century will require a new vision of American leadership and a new conception of our national security — a vision that draws from the lessons of the past, but is not bound by outdated thinking.

In today's globalized world, the security of the American people is inextricably linked to the security of all people. When narco-trafficking and corruption threaten democracy in Latin America, it's America's problem too. When poor villagers in Indonesia have no choice but to send chickens to market infected with avian flu, it cannot be seen as a distant concern. When religious schools in Pakistan teach hatred to young children, our children are threatened as well.

Whether it's global terrorism or pandemic disease, dramatic climate change or the proliferation of weapons of mass annihilation, the threats we face at the dawn of the 21st century can no longer be contained by borders and boundaries.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many Americans may find it tempting to turn inward, and cede our claim of leadership in world affairs.

I insist, however, that such an abandonment of our leadership is a mistake we must not make. America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, but the world cannot meet them without America. We must neither retreat from the world nor try to bully it into submission — we must lead the world, by deed and example.

We must lead by building a 21st century military to ensure the security of our people and advance the security of all people. We must lead by marshalling a global effort

to stop the spread of the world's most dangerous weapons. We must lead by building and strengthening the partnerships and alliances necessary to meet our common challenges and defeat our common threats.

And America must lead by reaching out to all those living disconnected lives of despair in the world's forgotten corners — because while there will always be those who succumb to hate and strap bombs to their bodies, there are millions more who want to take another path — who want our beacon of hope to shine its light their way.

\* \* \* \* \*

America is the country that helped liberate a continent from the march of a madman. We are the country that told the brave people of a divided city that we were Berliners too. We sent generations of young people to serve as ambassadors for peace in countries all over the world. And we're the country that rushed aid throughout Asia for the victims of a devastating tsunami.

Now it's our moment to lead — our generation's time to tell another great American story. So someday we can tell our children that this was the time when we helped forge peace in the Middle East. That this was the time when we confronted climate change and secured the weapons that could destroy the human race. This was the time when we brought opportunity to those forgotten corners of the world. And this was the time when we renewed the America that has led generations of weary travelers from all over the world to find opportunity, and liberty, and hope on our doorstep. ■

Source: [http://www.barackobama.com/2007/04/23/the\\_american\\_moment\\_remarks\\_to.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2007/04/23/the_american_moment_remarks_to.php)



# Obama in His Own Words



© AP Images/Charles Rex Arbogast

Barack Obama addresses a rally campaign in Idaho in February 2008.

*In this excerpt from one of his speeches, Barack Obama talks about a time in his life when he “began to notice a world beyond myself” and about his desire to be an agent of change. These remarks were made in a commencement address at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, May 25, 2008.*

I became active in the movement to oppose the apartheid regime of South Africa. I began following the debates in this country about poverty and health care. So that by the time I graduated from college, I was possessed with a crazy idea — that I would work at a grassroots level to bring about change.

I wrote letters to every organization in the country I could think of. And one day, a small group of churches on the South Side of Chicago offered me a job to come work as a community organizer in neighborhoods that had been devastated by steel plant closings. My mother and grandparents wanted me to go to law school. My friends were applying to jobs on Wall Street. Meanwhile, this

organization offered me \$12,000 a year plus \$2,000 for an old, beat-up car.

And I said yes.

Now, I didn't know a soul in Chicago, and I wasn't sure what this community organizing business was all about. I had always been inspired by stories of the Civil Rights Movement and JFK's [President John F. Kennedy's] call to service, but when I got to the South Side, there were no marches, and no soaring speeches. In the shadow of an empty steel plant, there were just a lot of folks who were struggling. And we didn't get very far at first.

I still remember one of the very first meetings we put together to discuss gang violence with a group of community leaders. We waited and waited for people to show up, and finally, a group of older people walked into

the hall. And they sat down. And a little old lady raised her hand and asked, “Is this where the bingo game is?”

It wasn't easy, but eventually, we made progress. Day by day, block by block, we brought the community together, and registered new voters, and set up after-school programs, and fought for new jobs, and helped people live lives with some measure of dignity.

But I also began to realize that I wasn't just helping other people. Through service, I found a community that embraced me; citizenship that was meaningful; the direction I'd been seeking. Through service, I discovered how my own improbable story fit into the larger story of America. ■

Source: [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/25/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_70.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/05/25/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_70.php).

# The Powers of the Presidency

Michael Jay Friedman



© AP Images

President Franklin Roosevelt (center), representing U.S. interests, after meeting with world leaders Winston Churchill (right) and Joseph Stalin at the close of World War II.

*The U.S. Constitution outlines the president's authority but is flexible enough to allow each incumbent to define the scope of presidential powers according to his own philosophy of governance and the needs of the times.*

*Michael Jay Friedman is an editor in the Bureau of International Information Programs at the U.S. Department of State. He holds a doctorate in U.S. diplomatic and political history.*

**T**he men who have held the presidency of the United States — and at this writing they have all been men — have expressed divergent views of their experience. Grover Cleveland (1885-1889 and 1893-1897) suggested, “After the long exercise of power, the ordinary affairs of life seem petty and commonplace.” Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) so enjoyed the “bully pulpit” that he came out of retirement to run again for the presidency. But for James K. Polk (1845-1849), the presidency was “no bed of roses.” And Ulysses S. Grant

(1869-1877) flatly declared, “I never wanted to get out of a place as much as I did to get out of the presidency.”

What are the powers of the president and how have they evolved over time? Generations of American schoolchildren have learned that Congress makes the laws and the president enforces them. This helps, but only a little. The U.S. Constitution is the source of the president's authority, but it is a concise document, more of an outline than a blueprint (the proposed European Union constitution is more than 35 times longer). It leaves room for each president — subject always to “checks and balances” of the legislative and judicial branches — to interpret the breadth of his powers in accordance with his personal philosophy of governance and the demands of the times.

Article II of the Constitution begins, “The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.” It states the term of office — four years — and lists several categories of presidential powers:

- The president is “Commander in Chief” of the armed forces;
- The president may grant reprieves and pardons for legal offenses;
- The president may make treaties, with the “advice and consent” of two-thirds of “Senators present”; appoint ambassadors and Supreme Court justices, with majority Senate confirmation; and appoint all other “public Ministers ... and Officers of the United States”;
- The president shall “from time to time ... recommend to [Congress] such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient”;
- The president may veto legislation passed by Congress, subject to override by a two-thirds vote of each house (Article I, Section 7).

While other constitutional provisions limit generally the powers of the entire federal government including the president, Article II is flexible. President Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929) limited his exercise of presidential power to an occasional nudge in the right direction. As Coolidge once described his governing philosophy, “We have enough laws already, I don’t need to sign any more.”

But even those presidents determined to interpret their powers strictly found that affairs of state spurred them toward greater assertiveness. The first president, George Washington (1789-1797), at first interpreted literally the provision that he obtain Senate “advice” while negotiating treaties. On August 22, 1789, Washington accordingly presented himself to the Senate — sword in hand — to request its specific instructions for negotiating a contemplated treaty with the Creek Indians. As senators



President Richard Nixon visits the Great Wall, signalling the opening of diplomatic relations with China in 1972.

© AP Images

filed ever more contradictory motions, John Quincy Adams, himself a future president (1825-1829), confided the result to his diary:

When Washington left the Senate chamber he said he would be damned if he ever went there again. And ever since that time treaties have been negotiated by the executive before submitting them to the consideration of the Senate.

While the powers of the presidency have waxed and waned within their broad constitutional limits, domestic and foreign challenges have sparked a trend toward greater executive authority. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, for example, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) secured congressional approval of many New Deal programs. These were administered by new executive branch agencies that remade much of the nation’s economy even as they augmented presidential power. America’s 20th-century emergence as a great power similarly enhanced the president’s commander-in-chief power.

These developments have not gone uncontested. In 1935 the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the National Recovery Act, a crucial piece of New Deal legislation, over Roosevelt’s vehement objection. And the limits of a president’s authority to deploy American troops absent a congressional declaration of war remains politically contentious.

The complexities of modern legislation have further augmented the presidency. Consider the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974. Congress wished to establish minimum standards of healthfulness for public drinking water but delegated the responsibility for setting those standards to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an administrative agency in the executive branch. Congress routinely authorizes EPA and its hundreds of sister agencies to promulgate and enforce regulations that elaborate on the statutory requirements. Congress may overturn any regulation, but there are more than Congress could ever review. In this way, the modern “administrative state” has shifted additional responsibilities to the executive branch — and to the president.

Constitutionally limited yet sufficiently flexible and robust to address modern challenges, the presidency remains one key to the American people’s ongoing experiment in self-government. ■

# The Enhanced Role of the Vice President

John M. Murphy and Mary E. Stuckey



© AP Images/Bob Daugherty

Outgoing President Ronald Reagan (right) congratulates President George H.W. Bush at his inauguration on January 20, 1989.

*The vice presidency of the United States has grown in importance as the demands of the presidency have increased. Likewise, vice presidents have become better known to the American public and are more likely to be nominated — though not necessarily elected — to the presidency themselves.*

*John M. Murphy is associate professor of speech communication at the University of Georgia. He specializes in contemporary political rhetoric.*

*Mary E. Stuckey is associate professor of communication and political science at Georgia State University. She has just finished a book manuscript titled Americans in Light and Shadow: Presidential Articulations of National Identity; other books are Strategic Failures in the Modern Presidency and The President as Interpreter-in-Chief.*

“There is an old story about a mother who has two sons. One goes to sea and the other becomes Vice President of the United States. Neither is ever heard from again.”  
—Hubert H. Humphrey, Vice President of the United States, 1965-1969

The institutional, cultural, and structural pressures for a more effective vice president will continue to grow. Throughout much of the nation’s history, the vice presidency was, in the sanitized words of a disgruntled occupant, worth little more than a bucket of warm spit. Prior to World War II, vice presidents occupied little of the administration’s or the public’s attention. These men regarded the office as a graceful prelude to retirement, with at least one notable exception in

John C. Breckinridge, who, after serving as Buchanan’s vice president, lost an 1860 run for the presidency and then fought the United States as a Confederate major general and secretary of war during the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865). This not entirely happy precedent has attracted no imitators.

After the emergence of the administrative state and the United States as a world power, however, the vice president could no longer be ignored. The acceleration of U.S. power and governmental complexity in subsequent decades has meant that the presidency is no longer a one-person job. A series of incremental steps, ranging from the assignment of specific tasks to the allocation of office space within the White House, has raised the profile and power of the vice president. Increasingly, the vice president has emerged as a key rhetorician for the administration, in circumstances ranging from Richard Nixon’s “Kitchen Debate” to Al Gore’s North American Free Trade Agreement debate. As a result, it has become difficult for the president to get by with a useless vice president.

In short, the presidency is now too big. President Bill Clinton enlisted the vice president and the first lady



© AP Images/Ruth Fremson

Vice President Al Gore and President Bill Clinton at a meeting in the Old Executive Office Building in 1997.

as partners, and President George W. Bush's reliance on Richard Cheney, particularly early in his term, was so marked that *The Economist's* Lexington columnist observed that the vice presidency is being upgraded into a prime ministership.

Such an evolution of the office puts the vice president squarely in the public spotlight, making him or her a logical presidential contender.

In fact, the nature of contemporary politics in general and presidential campaigns in particular makes it more likely that future presidents will campaign for their vice presidents. In the 11 presidential contests between 1960 and 2000, the ones since the advent of television as a serious force and the concomitant and debated decline of political parties, vice presidents or former vice presidents have been their parties' nominees nine times. Only twice (Lyndon Johnson in 1964 and Gerald Ford in 1976) has the candidacy been a result of the death or resignation of the president and the ascension of the vice president to the status of incumbent. In the 11 elections prior to that period (1916 through 1956), only twice were vice presidents or former vice presidents their parties' nominees, and both resulted from the death of the previous president.

Given that recent presidents have, perforce, used their vice presidents more, these formerly unknown

placeholders now possess priceless opportunities to establish themselves in the consciousness of the national television audience. In addition, with a minimum of presidential cooperation, they can warehouse political consultants on the payrolls of national committees, travel extensively and in comfort at government expense during the years prior to the election, and utilize the resources of the executive branch to develop policy positions. Most important in the present atmosphere, they are ideally situated to raise huge amounts of money and scare off or overwhelm potential opponents. As late as 1988, then Vice President George H.W. Bush faced a formidable roster of opponents to his nomination for president. By 2000, most Democrats refused to run against Vice President Gore despite the Clinton scandals and the discontent of liberal activists with the administration, and Gore brushed aside his only competition with the ease and disdain that Michael Jordan felt for the New York Knicks. As political columnist Jules Witcover said, "The vice presidency, once considered the equivalent of a gold watch awarded for faithful party service and a one-way ticket to political oblivion, [has come] to be viewed differently."

Presidents, in short, now need their vice presidents to establish, cement, and continue their visions of the country. Presidents cannot do the job without the help of vice presidents; presidents cannot run for a third term and must turn to vice presidents; and, given the political advantages that vice presidents possess, presidents can seldom, if ever, designate someone else as a chosen heir. Yet the arguments used by most presidents to help their vice presidents end up hurting their vice presidents. Presidents still talk as if vice presidents are creatures of the president. Increasingly, they are not. We have reached the point at which vice presidents are close partners of presidents and inevitable nominees of their respective parties. They are also the almost inevitable losers in the general election. Presidential rhetoric on behalf of vice presidents exemplifies the law of unintended consequences; presidents never care to say goodbye, and yet the ways in which they bid farewell hasten the departures of their political programs and loyal heirs. ■

Excerpted from "Never Cared to Say Goodbye: Presidential Legacies and Vice Presidential Campaigns," © *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, March 2002. Reprinted by permission.

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# Sarah Palin, the Republican Party's Nominee for Vice President

David Pitts



© AP Images/Stephan Savoia

Alaska Governor Sarah Palin campaigns with John McCain in Ohio.

*The governor of Alaska shares John McCain's reputation for being a reformer and for sometimes going against their party's platform.*

*David Pitts is a freelance journalist whose articles on politics have appeared in the Washington Post, the Washington Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Baltimore Sun, and other major U.S. newspapers.*

“I stood up to the special interests, the lobbyists, big oil companies, and the good-ol’ boy network,” said Sarah Palin, the Republican nominee for vice president, in her acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. The mother of five is most proud

of the reforms she has championed, particularly as governor of Alaska.

Palin's roots are in the American West. She was born in 1964 in Idaho, but her family moved to Alaska, which became a state in 1959, when she was an infant. Her origins are modest. Both her parents, now retired, worked for the school system. She has a degree in journalism with a minor in politics from the University of Idaho. Her husband of 20 years works in the oil industry and as a commercial fisherman. Before she got into politics, Palin was a television sports reporter. The one-time beauty queen, basketball player, and coach loves to hunt and fish in her off time, typical activities of many Alaskans.



© AP Images/John L. Russell

In 2007, Sarah Palin with Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm measures siding for a Habitat for Humanity house in Michigan.

One reason Republican nominee John McCain chose Palin to be his running mate is that she has executive as well as legislative experience, according to newspaper accounts. Palin served two terms on the local council in Wasilla (population: 8,500) not far from Anchorage. She also served two terms as the town's mayor. Palin ran for governor of the state in the fall of 2006 after winning the Republican primary against incumbent Governor Frank Murkowski. She defeated a former two-term governor in the general election, running on a reform platform.

During her political career, Palin has compiled a mostly conservative record, especially on social issues. She is a lifelong member of the National Rifle Association (NRA), a lobbying group promoting the rights of gun owners. She also is against abortion and belongs to the organization Feminists for Life. In addition, she opposes gay marriage. However, she is not rigidly ideological. For example, Palin's first veto as governor was of a bill that would have barred gay state employees from receiving partnership benefits. She is popular with the people of

Alaska and has consistently earned high approval ratings, even among the state's rough and tough frontiersmen. She is "a hardworking, pro-business politician whose friendly demeanor (that Palin smile) made her palatable to the typical pickup-driving Alaskan man," according to a profile in *Alaska* magazine.

## GOING HER OWN WAY

Highlights of her record as governor include passage of a landmark ethics bill and opposition to corruption, including within her own political party. She also has opposed "pork-barrel projects," projects that bring federal money to political constituents, even those favored by Republicans. Palin also has made a point of standing up to big oil, winning a tax increase on oil company profits, the revenues from which are being partially returned to Alaskan taxpayers. In addition, she championed legislation mandating a one-year waiting period for politicians between leaving office and working for the state's powerful energy companies.

Palin is strongly in favor of opening up the state's abundant federal land to energy businesses. Like McCain, she favors offshore oil drilling, but unlike him she also supports drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). In June of 2007, Palin signed into law the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act designed to facilitate a gas pipeline that would eventually distribute North Slope natural gas to consumers throughout North America.

Despite her reputation for championing ethical government and fighting special interests, Palin is currently under investigation by a committee of the Alaska state legislature. Earlier this year, she fired the commissioner of public safety, who later asserted he lost his job because of his reluctance to fire a state trooper involved in a custody and divorce battle with Palin's sister. As of early September, the investigation had not concluded. Palin says the charge is without foundation.

In a joint appearance in Dayton, Ohio, where McCain introduced Palin, the Republican nominee portrayed his running mate as a maverick much like himself who has "reached across the aisle" and worked with Democrats to get things done. McCain praised Palin as a person of "deep compassion" who fights "against corruption." Palin described herself as "a hockey mom" whose purpose is to "challenge the status quo and serve the common good." In her remarks, she praised McCain's approach to Iran, Iraq, and the recent crisis in Georgia.

McCain's choice of a woman to be the Republican nominee for vice president was seen by much of the

American press as an attempt to appeal to disgruntled Hillary Clinton supporters who were disappointed that Clinton was not on the Democratic ticket. Palin specifically mentioned Clinton's failed campaign, saying that with a vote for McCain-Palin, "we can shatter that glass ceiling" that Clinton cracked. The "glass ceiling" is an invisible obstacle that prevents women and minorities from advancing to leadership positions. Hillary Clinton hoped to break through the glass ceiling by winning the ultimate contest, the presidency of the United States.

Aides to McCain said Palin would make the Republican ticket more competitive in the mountain West. They also said that Palin's relative youth — she is 44, three years younger than Obama — also was important to McCain, who introduced her to the American public on his 72nd birthday, August 29.

In an interview with *People* magazine shortly after Palin's selection, McCain said, "I think the important thing was that she's a reformer," a point he underlined in an interview on the Fox News television network two

days after her debut as his vice presidential nominee. Asked if Palin had sufficient national security experience, McCain said his running mate has "the right judgment" and that she brings to the ticket "a spirit of reform and change." As a consequence of McCain's pick — whatever happens in the November election — the United States will have either its first African-American president or its first woman vice president. Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman to run for vice president on a major party ticket when Democratic nominee Walter Mondale selected her as his running mate in 1984. But the Mondale-Ferraro ticket went down to defeat that year to incumbent Republican President Ronald Reagan and his vice president, George Herbert Walker Bush, the current president's father. ■

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# Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's Nominee for Vice President

David Pitts



© AP Images/Wilfredo Lee

Democratic vice presidential candidate Senator Joe Biden takes a question during a campaign event in Florida.

*A U.S. senator brings middle-class values and extensive foreign policy experience to Barack Obama's presidential campaign.*

*Freelance journalist David Pitts is a former writer for the State Department.*

“I count my role in helping to end genocide in the Balkans and in securing passage of the Violence Against Women Act as my proudest moments in public life.” So wrote Senator Joseph R. Biden, the Democratic nominee for vice president of the United States, in his 2007 autobiography *Promises to Keep: On Life and Politics*.

Key to understanding this self-appraisal is Biden's background. He is an Irish Catholic, born under modest circumstances in 1942 in Scranton, a mostly working-

class city in northeastern Pennsylvania. His mother was a homemaker; his father, a car salesman. The family moved to the state of Delaware when Biden was 10. He was the first in his family to obtain a college degree and is a graduate of Syracuse University Law School in New York.

The turning point of Biden's political career came when he was first elected to the U.S. Senate, representing Delaware, in 1972 when he was 29 years old. A few weeks before he was sworn into office, his wife and daughter were killed in an automobile accident. His two young sons survived the accident but were seriously injured. (Biden remarried in 1977, a union that produced a daughter.) Another calamity occurred in 1988 when he was diagnosed with two potentially fatal brain aneurysms. His recovery was long and painful. He was absent from



© AP Images/M. Spencer Green

Obama and Biden wave to a Springfield, Illinois, crowd in August 2008.

the Senate for seven months, bedridden much of that time.

During his Senate career, Biden has compiled a predominantly liberal record. Although he is well liked by Republicans and has worked across party lines, he mostly has supported his own party. For example, according to the *Washington Post*, he has voted with Democrats in the current Congress, 96.6 percent of the time. He “is widely seen as a liberal-minded internationalist,” wrote Michael Gordon in the *New York Times*. “He has emphasized the need for diplomacy but has been prepared at times to back it with the threat of force.”

In his early years in the Senate, Biden concentrated on domestic issues, particularly civil liberties, law enforcement, and civil rights. He became a member of the Judiciary Committee in 1975 and was its chair from 1987 to 1995. Biden’s most significant legislative accomplishment during this time was the landmark Violence Against Women Act (1994), which he authored. It provides billions of dollars in federal funds to address gender-based crimes. But Biden sometimes departed from the conventional liberal view. He was a strong advocate, for example, of tougher drug sentencing laws. He also opposed busing to achieve racial integration of schools while underlining his commitment to civil rights.

## A FOREIGN AFFAIRS PERSPECTIVE

Biden has distinguished himself in the Senate in foreign affairs. He has been a member of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1975 and its chair from 2001 to 2003 and from 2007 to now. Barack Obama was assigned to this committee after he was elected to the Senate in 2004 and got to know Biden well as they worked together. Obama currently heads the Europe subcommittee, formerly chaired by Biden. On a key foreign policy issue, however, Obama and Biden disagreed. Biden voted for the final Senate resolution authorizing a U.S. invasion of Iraq, whereas Obama (not yet in the Senate at the time) spoke out against it.

Prior to voting for the final resolution, however, Biden worked with Republican Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana to pass a resolution authorizing military action only after the exhaustion of diplomatic efforts. Biden voted to authorize the war after that resolution was rejected. But he also voted against an amendment that would have required the Bush administration to seek further authorization before invading Iraq. By 2005, Biden called his vote on Iraq “a mistake.” In a joint appearance in Springfield, Illinois, after Obama selected Biden as his running mate, the Democratic standard bearer said his number

two is “an expert on foreign policy whose heart and values are rooted firmly in the middle class.” Obama also called Biden “a powerful critic of the Bush-McCain foreign policy and a voice for a new direction that takes the fight to the terrorists and ends the war in Iraq responsibly.”

During his time on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden traveled widely overseas and is on first-name terms not only with many foreign leaders, but also with their deputies and top aides — as well as opposition leaders. He has dealt with such significant issues as arms control, nuclear proliferation, NATO enlargement, super-power rivalry, and U.S. relations with the Third World. He also has been a strong advocate of the Global AIDS Initiative and an early supporter of international efforts to rein in carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. (Biden first drafted climate control legislation two decades ago.) He also has generally backed free trade treaties. The long-term senator has taken a particular interest in Africa. He was an early critic of the apartheid regime in South Africa. In Darfur, he has advocated stronger action to stem the bloodshed there.

Biden’s most significant foreign policy accomplishment, according to most observers, was his effort to combat hostilities in the Balkans during the 1990s. Biden was said to be an influential voice urging the Clinton administration to take action against Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. In their Springfield appearance, Obama said that Biden “helped shape policies that would end the killing in the Balkans.” Specifically, Biden urged intervention to stop ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia. He later supported the NATO bombing campaign to force Serbia to leave Kosovo.

Biden has twice run for the presidency — in 1988 and again this year. Both times he was unsuccessful. The Obama campaign said that Biden was selected as a running mate for many reasons but prominently cited the Delaware senator’s expertise and record on foreign policy. If elected, Biden would be the first Catholic vice president and the first vice president from Delaware. ■

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# The Role of the First Lady

Carl Sferrazza Anthony



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Martha Washington, the first “first lady,” was addressed as “Lady Washington.”

*Since Martha Washington in the 18th century, first ladies of the United States have held a highly visible yet undefined position in the U.S. government. The author describes how several first ladies fulfilled this unique role, according to their own interests and the times they lived in.*

*Carl Sferrazza Anthony is the author of First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents’ Wives and Their Power, a two-volume set that examines every first lady from 1789 to 1990, and other titles about the first families.*

The role of the first lady, the U.S. president’s spouse, has evolved from fashion trendsetter and hostess of White House dinners to a more substantive position. While there have been diverging views on the roles of women in society, the first lady is

still a role model for American women. One of the highest-profile jobs in the U.S. government comes with no official duties, no paycheck, and almost limitless possibilities. The first lady can influence the president and can even exercise a degree of political power over policy and legislation.

Having a “first lady” has been part of American life since the founding of the presidency in 1789. Although the United States had just recently won its independence from Great Britain following the American Revolution, the first president’s wife, Martha Washington (1789-1797), was treated by the elite of the first capital cities of New York and Philadelphia as if she were a “lady” of the British royal court. She was referred to in public as “Lady Washington,” her popular nickname from the Revolutionary War era.

Her immediate successor, Abigail Adams (1797-1801), had also earned some fame of her own during the Revolution for her highly political opinions expressed in letters to her husband and other legislators. During her husband’s presidency, she was criticized as “Mrs. President” for so publicly voicing her politically partisan views.

Fusing elements of the ceremonial and political, the ebullient Dolley Madison (1809-1817) firmly established this new national archetype. Dolley Madison risked her own well-being to remove iconic treasures of the fledgling United States from the burning White House during the War of 1812. Her heroism made her a legend and identified her in the public imagination as an ideal “presidentress.” Dolley Madison dressed in elegant fashions to attract newspaper coverage yet remained democratically accessible to all citizens. She led an effort for orphans and sought equal access for women in public places from Supreme Court hearings to oyster houses. She created the standard by which all of her successors were judged until the time of the global humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945).

The public expectation for such a position was so established by the mid-19th century that when Harriet



© AP Images

Eleanor Roosevelt toured the South Pacific during World War II and visited the sick in military hospitals.

Lane (1857-1861) served as hostess for her uncle, the only bachelor president, James Buchanan, a new title was used for her that covered both presidential spouses and other women relatives who served as hostesses for those presidents who were widowed or single — first lady. The title was first printed in 1860 in *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

### A CHRONICLE OF FIRSTS

The achievements and activities of first ladies who served between Dolley Madison and Eleanor Roosevelt did not attract great public attention but were often notable. Julia Tyler (1844-1845) was the first to be photographed and have her image publicly distributed in an engraving. Mary Lincoln (1861-1865) was the first enmeshed in controversy and was the subject of newspaper editorials. Lucy Hayes (1877-1881) was the first exploited for commercial merchandising. Frances Cleveland (1886-1889 and 1893-1897) was the first to issue a press release, which denied a whispered scandal about her private life. Helen “Nellie” Taft (1909-1913) was the first to ride in her husband’s inaugural parade, declare her support for women’s suffrage, and earn public credit for successfully lobbying for federal legislation. Edith Wilson (1915-1921), in the context of protecting her husband as he recovered from a stroke, became the

first to assume management of the presidency, prompting many to consider her something of the first “first lady president.” Florence Harding (1921-1923) was the first to vote, deliver speeches, and publicly declare her sense of obligation to intervene in government affairs affecting specific constituencies, such as veterans, working women, and humane societies.

Eleanor Roosevelt’s husband, President Franklin Roosevelt, had polio, a disease that prevented his walking and thus his freedom of movement to inspect various conditions around the country. Mrs. Roosevelt assumed this essential role, which she said was like being his “eyes

and ears.” In addition to her duties as first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a monthly magazine column and a daily newspaper column, lectured, hosted a weekly radio show, and authored several books. She was an international figure who had influence on the world stage.

Her immediate successors, Bess Truman (1945-1953) and Mamie Eisenhower (1953-1961), were more traditional hostesses and charity patrons. Jacqueline Kennedy (1961-1963) added the roles of historian and decorator as she presided over the historic restoration and preservation of the White House and other public sites, and she was a champion of American arts and culture. Global fascination with Mrs. Kennedy intensified because she spoke several languages and visited South American, Asian, and European nations. In conjunction with the rise of television and the growing movement for women’s equality in all spheres of life, there was a public expectation at the time that first ladies address current issues, tailored to their strengths, ambitions, expertise, and interests.

### A MORE SUBSTANTIVE ROLE

Lady Bird Johnson (1963-1969) became a pioneer of the growing environmental protection and urban renewal movements, fostering federal legislation that sought to restore public highways to their natural appearances and to remove visually marring sites.



© AP Images

Jacqueline Kennedy visited the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, in 1962.

Betty Ford (1974-1977) stirred controversy by her frank discussion of political issues that affected women, registering her support for the Supreme Court decision

upholding a woman's right to choose abortion and lobbying state legislatures to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. When Mrs. Ford disclosed her own breast cancer, she helped eradicate the taboo against discussing the health problem that affected millions of women.

Rosalynn Carter (1977-1981) testified before Congress to aid people with chronic mental health problems, led a global relief effort for Cambodian refugees, and held substantive meetings with Central and South American political and military leaders as a representative of the president.

Nancy Reagan (1981-1989) led a campaign to dissuade school-aged children from using illegal drugs, helped monitor her husband's appointments to ensure that his advisors remained loyal to his policies, and encouraged President Reagan's friendship with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, which eventually led to an arms reduction treaty.

Barbara Bush (1989-1993) led an effort to reduce adult illiteracy, believing it to be an underlying cause for many social problems.

In 2001, Hillary Clinton (1993-2001) became the only former first lady elected to public office, the U.S. Senate. As first lady, she headed a health care reform effort to provide insurance to all Americans. In the more traditional role of first lady, she created an outdoor sculp-



© AP Images/Mario Cabrera

First Lady Barbara Bush reads to preschoolers in New York in 1990.

ture garden and displayed contemporary American art in the historic rooms of the White House. In 2008, Hillary Clinton ran for president of the United States and nearly won her party's nomination.

Laura Bush (2001-present) began her tenure as first lady by encouraging childhood reading but expanded her influence into a broad range of issues, including heart disease in women, aiding at-risk young men with positive-oriented goals, increasing federal support for libraries, and teacher training. She also made independent trips to Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, promoting equal access to health care and education for women. Notably, she spoke

out in support of persecuted Buddhist monks in the nation of Myanmar.

The first ladies' travels, their causes, and activities are newsworthy events in the United States. Because of their relation to the president, they are political celebrities and have been able from earliest times to use their position to influence styles and advocate for social and political causes. ■

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# The McCain Family

Kelly Bronk



John McCain appeared on the cover of *People* magazine with his wife Cindy and his seven children.

*John McCain and his wife Cindy have pursued different tracks to serve their country: he in government service and she in charitable and commercial enterprises. McCain's family includes seven children and four grandchildren.*

*Kelly Bronk is a journalism student entering her senior year at Northwestern University in Illinois.*

In the American tradition of blended families, John McCain's family is a textbook example in every sense of the word. The senator's large family includes seven children, who range in age from 48 to 16 and span two

marriages, plus four grandchildren.

McCain's three oldest children are from his relationship with Carol Shepp, a fashion model he married in 1965. McCain adopted Shepp's two young sons from a previous marriage, Doug and Andrew, and the couple had a daughter, Sidney.

Doug, 48, following in his father's footsteps, served as a pilot in the United States Navy. Currently a pilot for American Airlines, he lives with his wife in Virginia and has two children. McCain's other adopted son, Andrew, is vice president and chief financial officer of Hensley & Company, a beer distribution business owned by the family of McCain's current wife, Cindy. Andrew lives in Arizona and is married with two children. McCain's eldest daughter, Sidney, resides in Toronto, Ontario, and works in the music industry as general manager of V2 Records, Canada.

For McCain's three oldest children, growing up meant dealing with the prolonged absence of their father, who was held in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war (POW) camp for five and a half years. "I didn't really have a father to miss because I didn't know what a father was," said Sidney, who was nine months old when her father was captured, in an interview with the *New York Times*.

After the end of the Vietnam War, McCain returned home in 1973.

"I had a lot of time to think over there, and came to the conclusion that one of the most important things in life — along with a man's family — is to make some contribution to his country," McCain wrote in a *U.S. News & World Report* article describing his war experiences.

After his return, McCain's marriage with his first wife was never quite the same, and the couple later divorced. They have remained amicable over the years, and she has been a supporter of his political career.

McCain met his second wife, Cindy Hensley, in 1979. She attended the University of Southern Califor-

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© AP Images/Mary Altaffer

Three generations of John McCain's family: wife Cindy McCain, mother Roberta McCain, and daughter Meghan McCain in Mississippi.

nia, where she earned an undergraduate degree in education and a master's degree in special education. After graduation, she taught disabled children. Hensley met McCain while vacationing in Hawaii, and after a brief courtship, the couple married in 1980. They have four children, including an adopted daughter.

Mrs. McCain, 54, has devoted much of her adult life to humanitarian work, especially as an advocate for children's health care issues. In 1988, she founded the

American Voluntary Medical Team, a nonprofit organization that coordinates humanitarian aid trips for medical professionals. She is also deeply involved with international nongovernmental organizations including HALO, Operation Smile, and CARE.

In addition to her humanitarian work, Mrs. McCain is also a savvy businesswoman. She currently chairs the board of Hensley & Company, her family business and one of the largest beer distributorships in the United States. Although she inherited the control of the company after her father's death in 2000, Hensley & Company has prospered under her guidance and is now valued at more than \$250 million.

The McCains' oldest daughter, Meghan, 23, recently graduated from Columbia University. Throughout college, she was interested in journalism, and she is currently writing a blog ([www.mccainbloette.com](http://www.mccainbloette.com)) about her experiences working as an aide on her father's presidential campaign.

Jack, 22, is attending his fourth year at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Like his father, he hopes to become a naval aviator. Building on the family's long military legacy, Jim, 20, is a private first class in the U.S. Marine Corps, and he recently returned from serving in Iraq.

The McCains adopted their youngest daughter, Bridget, now a 16-year-old high school student, from Mother Theresa's orphanage in Bangladesh when she was just 10 weeks old. ■

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# The Obama Family

Kelly Bronk



© AP Images/M. Spencer Green

Barack Obama relaxes with wife Michelle and daughters Malia, right, and Sasha in 2004.

*Barack Obama and his wife Michelle have devoted much of their adult lives to public service. They have two young daughters.*

*Journalism student Kelly Bronk is interned with the State Department in summer 2008.*

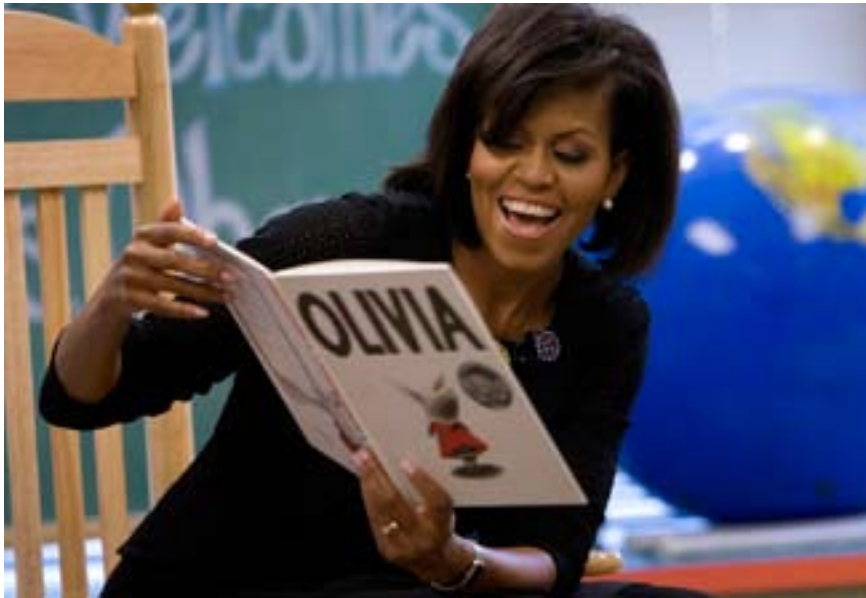
If Barack Obama wins the presidential election in November 2008, the Obamas will be the first African-American family to move into the White House.

Obama and his wife, Michelle, 44, are well aware of the significance of this groundbreaking campaign and what his historic run means to many Americans. In her campaign stump speech, Mrs. Obama often mentions a 10-year-old girl she met in a South Carolina beauty shop who told her that if Obama is elected president, “it means that I can imagine anything for myself.”

“She could have been me,” Mrs. Obama told *Newsweek*. “Because the truth is, I’m not supposed to be here, standing here. I’m a statistical oddity. Black girl, brought up on the South Side of Chicago. Was I supposed to go to Princeton? No. . . . They said maybe Harvard Law was too much for me to reach for. But I went, I did fine. And I’m certainly not supposed to be standing here.”

Michelle Robinson was born and raised in a working-class family in Chicago, Illinois. Her father worked at the municipal water department and was a Democratic precinct captain, while her mother was a stay-at-home mom who took care of her and her older brother, Craig.

She worked hard in school and landed a spot in the Princeton University class of 1985. After earning an undergraduate degree in sociology with a minor in African-American studies, she attended Harvard Law School.



Michelle Obama reads to children at a military school in Norfolk, Virginia.

© AP Images/Rob Ostermaier

recently, she served as vice president of community and external affairs at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

“She certainly seems to be someone who would take advantage of the podium the White House affords her,” said Dr. Myra Gutin, a historian and professor of communications at Rider University in New Jersey. “She is bright, she is articulate, and she has professional experiences in management.”

The Obamas are hoping that their enthusiasm for public service and their extensive professional successes will help Obama win the November election. But for Obama, two of the driving forces behind his desire to be president and have

Barack Obama and Michelle Robinson met in 1989 when she, then an associate at the Chicago, Illinois, law firm Sidley & Austin, was assigned to mentor Obama, who was a summer intern.

Obama asked Robinson to attend one of his community organizing sessions in Chicago. She accepted and attended a meeting, where she told *Newsweek* that he spoke to participants about closing the gap between “the world as it is, and the world as it should be.”

They continued to date, and the couple married in 1992. The Obamas share a passion for public service and have devoted much of their adult lives to careers in the public sector.

After leaving the corporate law practice where they met, Mrs. Obama held several positions in Chicago government, and she was founding executive director of Public Allies – Chicago, an organization that encourages young people to pursue public service jobs. Most

a positive impact on the world are his young daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha (short for Natasha), 7. If Obama wins the election, his daughters will be the youngest inhabitants of the White House since Amy Carter, who was 9 years old when her father, Jimmy Carter, was elected president in 1976.

“My life revolves around my two girls,” Obama said in a Father’s Day speech at a Chicago church. “And what I think about is what kind of world I’m leaving them. What I’ve realized is that life doesn’t count for much unless you’re willing to do your small part to leave our children — all of our children — a better world. That is our ultimate responsibility as fathers and parents.” ■

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# Third Parties in U.S. Elections



© AP Images/Scott Applewhite

Left to right: Former Republican presidential contender Ron Paul, Cynthia McKinney from the Green Party, Chuck Baldwin from the Constitution Party, and independent candidate Ralph Nader advocated for greater media inclusion of third-party presidential candidates at a news conference on September 8, 2008.

The Republican and Democratic parties long have dominated the American political landscape. Since 1856, every president elected by U.S. voters has belonged to one of those two parties. But there are more than 30 other political parties, known as “third parties.” Candidates also can run as Independents, without any party affiliation.

Many of the numerous smaller parties or independent candidates have been important factors in elections, — by drawing attention to campaign issues that otherwise may be ignored or by increasing voter turnout to send a message to the major parties by accumulating protest votes. In some cases, political experts argue, a third-party candidate also can change the outcome of an election. One of the most notable third-party candidates in recent history is Ralph Nader, who won 2.7 percent of the popular vote as the Green Party candidate in 2000. Nader won no Electoral College votes, but some Democrats still argue that Nader cost Al Gore the presidency by taking votes that most likely

would have gone to the Democratic candidate.

Nader is among the potential dozens of third-party candidates competing for the presidency in 2008, although this time he is running as an Independent. Among them will be Libertarian Party candidate Bob Barr. Barr is a former Republican congressman. The Green Party’s presidential candidate is Cynthia McKinney, former Democratic congressional representative from Georgia.

The current third parties that have national voter registrations of more than 100,000 are the socially and economically conservative Constitution Party, the left-of-center Green Party, and the fiscally conservative but socially liberal Libertarian Party. Among smaller third parties are several state Conservative parties, the Centrist Party, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party. ■

# Additional Resources

Books, articles, Web sites, and films on John McCain, Barack Obama, and the U.S. political process

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## INTERNET RESOURCES

Guide to the 2008 Election  
<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/elections/index.html>

The Long Campaign  
<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#1007>

The New York Times: The Long Run  
The Lives and Careers of the 2008 Presidential Contenders  
<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/politics/series/thelongrun/index.html>

Official Campaign Web Site  
[www.BarackObama.com](http://www.BarackObama.com)

Official Campaign Web Site:  
[www.johnmccain.com](http://www.johnmccain.com)

Washington Foreign Press Center: John McCain  
Webliography  
<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/101266.htm>

Washington Foreign Press Center: Barack Obama  
Webliography  
<http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/101270.htm>

## FILMOGRAPHY

### Documentaries:

**Democracy in America** (2003)  
Producer: Annenberg/CPB  
Synopsis: A video resource for teachers of civics; shows examples of democracy in action.  
Running time: 30 minutes

**Framework for Democracy** (2002)  
26 parts — 30 minutes each, produced 2002  
Producer: Intelcom  
Synopsis: This series demystifies the vagaries of a democratic government in the 21st century. It is linked with Harvard University historian, Tom Patterson's textbook, *We the People*, published by McGraw-Hill.  
Running time: 30 minutes

**Vote for Me: Politics in America** (1996)

Producer: The Center for New American Media  
Synopsis: Entertaining series that looks at American culture as reflected in political campaigns across the United States.  
Running time: 60 minutes

**Feature films:**

**Advise and Consent** (1962)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055728/>

Producer: Columbia Pictures Corp.  
Synopsis: A drama portraying the clash of political personalities and interests on Capitol Hill in Washington during a Senate investigation of the president's choice of a new secretary of state.  
Running time: 138 minutes

**All the President's Men** (1976)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074119/>

Producer: Warner Bros.  
Synopsis: In the run-up to the 1972 presidential election, *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward covers what seems to be a minor break-in at the Democratic Party's national headquarters. The editor of the *Post* is prepared to run with the story and assigns Woodward and Carl Bernstein to pursue it.  
Running time: 138 minutes

**All the King's Men** (1949)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0041113/>

Producer: Columbia Pictures Corp.  
Synopsis: Willie Stark, a dynamic backwoods lawyer, batters his way into the governor's mansion with the help of his hard-boiled secretary, Sadie Burke, and reporter Jack Burden. Once elected, Willie uses his unprincipled charm to become a brutal dictator, but his unquenchable thirst for power threatens to topple the monarch and his kingdom.  
Running time: 109 minutes

**The Best Man** (1964)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0057883/>

Producer: United Artists Corp.  
Synopsis: A behind-the-scenes political satire that describes the bitter struggle for a party's presidential nomination between an ambitious and self-righteous character assassin and a reflective and scrupulous intellectual who is faced with the need to use his opponent's smear tactics.  
Running time: 102 minutes

**The Candidate** (1972)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0068334/>

Producer: Warner Bros.  
Synopsis: California lawyer Bill McKay fights for the little man. His charisma and integrity get him noticed by the Democratic Party machine, and he is persuaded to run for the Senate against an apparently unassailable incumbent.  
Running time: 110 minutes

**The Contender** (2000)

Producer: Dreamworks Pictures

Synopsis: Laine Hanson, a senator, is nominated to become vice president following the death of the previous office holder, but during the confirmation process, she is the victim of a vicious attack on her personal life.  
Running time: 126 minutes

**The Great McGinty** (1940)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032554/>

Producer: Paramount  
Synopsis: Dan McGinty, originally just a hobo, proves his toughness to a mob boss who takes him in; he earns the position of alderman, and then mayor, in a corrupt city administration.  
Running time: 82 minutes

**Primary Colors** (1998)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119942/>

Producer: Tele-München UGC PH, BBC, and Marubeini/Toho-Towa; Universal Pictures  
Synopsis: A man joins the political campaign of a smooth-operator candidate for president of the United States.  
Running time: 143 minutes

**The Seduction of Joe Tynan** (1979)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0079875/>

Producer: Universal Pictures  
Synopsis: Respected liberal Senator Joe Tynan is asked to lead the opposition to a Supreme Court appointment.  
Running time: 107 minutes

**State of the Union** (1948)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040834/>

Producer: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)  
Synopsis: An industrialist is urged to run for president, but this requires uncomfortable compromises on political and personal levels.  
Running time: 124 minutes



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