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Inaugural Special

Passage of power, galas, fashions and more, 23 pages of coverage



By Jack Gruber, USA TODAY

Stepping into history: President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama walk down part of the 1.5-mile parade route along Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House during Tuesday's Inaugural Parade.

## Dawn of 'a new era'

# Obama pledges to remake America

By Richard Wolf  
USA TODAY

Barack Hussein Obama of Illinois assumed the full weight of the presidency Tuesday with a nod to his unique place in history, a list of economic and foreign policy problems to fix and a vow to "begin again the work of remaking America."

"The challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time," the nation's 44th president said. "But know this, America: They will be met."

Looking west from the Capitol at a record crowd of about 1.8 million people who swarmed Washington's National Mall, Obama pledged to right an economy that lost 2.6 million jobs last year and begin withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq. Doing that, he said, would require choosing "unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

The noontime inauguration of the nation's first African-American president marked a transfer of power from the stalwart conservatism of George W. Bush to the government activism embraced by Obama and Vice President Biden of Delaware. As the Dow Jones industrial average plunged 4% to its lowest closing in two months, Obama pledged to create jobs, rebuild roads, transform schools. "We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories," he said.

The 47-year-old son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas spoke before a mosaic of humanity that stretched about 2 miles to the Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his *I Have A Dream* speech in 1963.

Obama took the oath on the Bible of Abraham Lincoln, his hero and fellow president from Illinois, whose signing of the Emancipation Proclamation 146 years ago helped lead to this day. As first lady

### A presidency begins

- Text of Obama's address, 11A
- See photos, videos and interactive graphics at [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com)

Michelle Obama and young daughters Malia and Sasha looked on, Obama referred to himself as "a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant."

The young president served notice that unlike Bush, whose war on Islamic terrorism included tactics likened to torture, "we reject as false the choice

between our safety and our ideals." He offered "a new way forward" to the Muslim world "based on mutual interest and mutual respect."

Though his reflections on Bush's tenure were harsh, the passing of the torch was amicable. It began with morning coffee at the White House and ended as the ex-president boarded a helicopter that would launch his journey home to Texas.

The Obamas then walked parts of the Pennsylvania Avenue parade route from the Capitol to the White House, buildings that slaves helped erect. They watched the parade slip into darkness and attended Inaugural Balls well into the night.

Today, the hard task of governing begins. Obama plans to meet with his economic team to plot the progress of his \$825 billion stimulus package, set for House action next week. He also will meet with his national security team on topics ranging from the conflict in Gaza to the Iraq troop withdrawal.

## In D.C. and beyond, celebrations and a sense of hope

As Obama takes the presidential oath before an estimated 1.8 million, many more feel the vibe of a monumental moment

By Rick Hampson  
USA TODAY

For a day, in what the new president called "this winter of our hardship," almost everyone seemed happy. For a day Tuesday, hope and fear collided as ferociously as any time since 1933. For a day, hope won.

For all the comparisons to Lincoln and Roosevelt and Kennedy, at noon this Inauguration Day there was just Barack Obama, a slender black man in a dark overcoat. He stood in front of a Capitol building that was built partly by slaves.

He looked out at a sea of faces on the National Mall — an estimated 1.8 million of them — and to a nation clouded by war and recession and doubt.

He would have none of the latter. "We have chosen hope over fear," he said, adding that it was time "to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off" and remake the country.

That's when it hit Rita Green, 57, of Gaithersburg,



By Evan Elle, USA TODAY

Dancing the night away: The Obamas take a spin at a ball Tuesday night. The first lady's look, 3B.

Md., who watched from a prized spot near the West Front of the Capitol. She had registered voters and gone to North Carolina to campaign for Obama, but the idea that he would actually occupy the

White House hadn't quite sunk in — until then. "It's official," she suddenly realized. "He made it."

At the White House, outgoing press secretary Dana Perino said, "We're all a little bit sad" that the Bush administration was over.

But in many parts of the USA far from the White House, people were happy — and looking forward to Obama's promise of change: in public housing projects, the auto towns of the Midwest, the Katrina-ravaged neighborhoods of the Gulf Coast and in schools, where for a day students watched history instead of reading about it.

"The whole country is excited," said Colin Powell, the former secretary of State, who himself had entertained thoughts of trying to become the nation's first African-American president.

The streets around the White House had the feel

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