

OBAMA WINS PRESIDENCY

McCain concedes, calls for unity

By STEPHANIE SCIANDRA
Editor in Chief

Late Tuesday evening, Sen. John McCain placed a phone call to Sen. Barack Obama, officially bringing the election for the 44th U.S. president to a close.

Obama clinched the election around 11 p.m., making him the first black president of the United States.

Soon after, Obama spoke in Chicago. The president-elect took the stage at 11:59 p.m., addressing an estimated crowd of 125,000 in Grant Park.

"This is our moment," Obama told the mass of supporters. "This is our time – to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; to reclaim the American Dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth—that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope, and where we are met with cynicism and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: 'Yes we can.'"

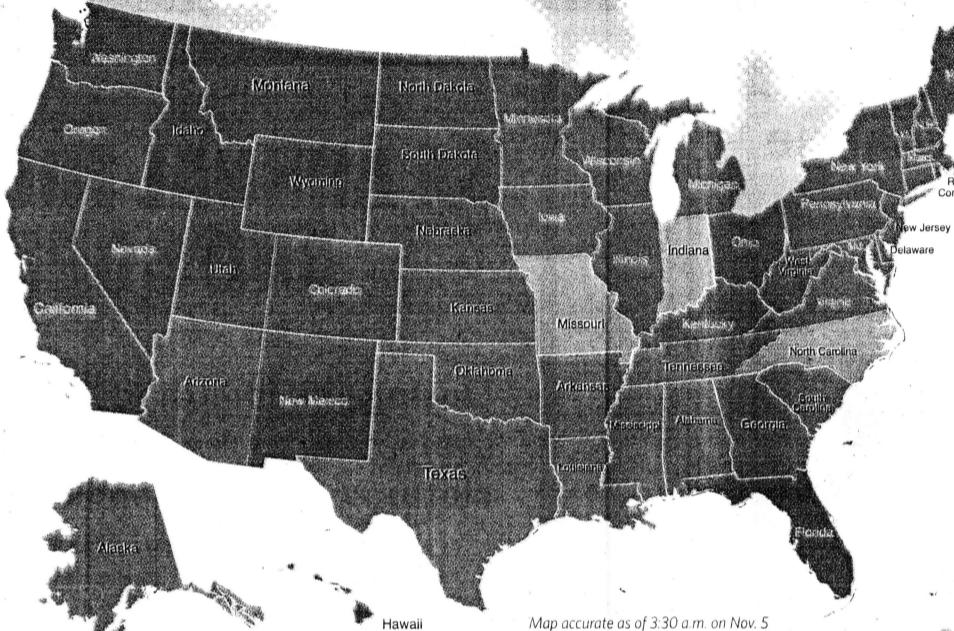
Obama won the key battleground states that previously allowed the Republicans to secure a close victory in 2004 – Virginia, Ohio, Florida, Nevada and Colorado. Iowa and New Mexico, two traditionally Republican states, were also turned blue Tuesday evening.

Key to Obama's victory were the swing states of Pennsylvania and New Hampshire, two states both candidates battled fiercely for.

"I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to," Obama said. "It belongs to you."

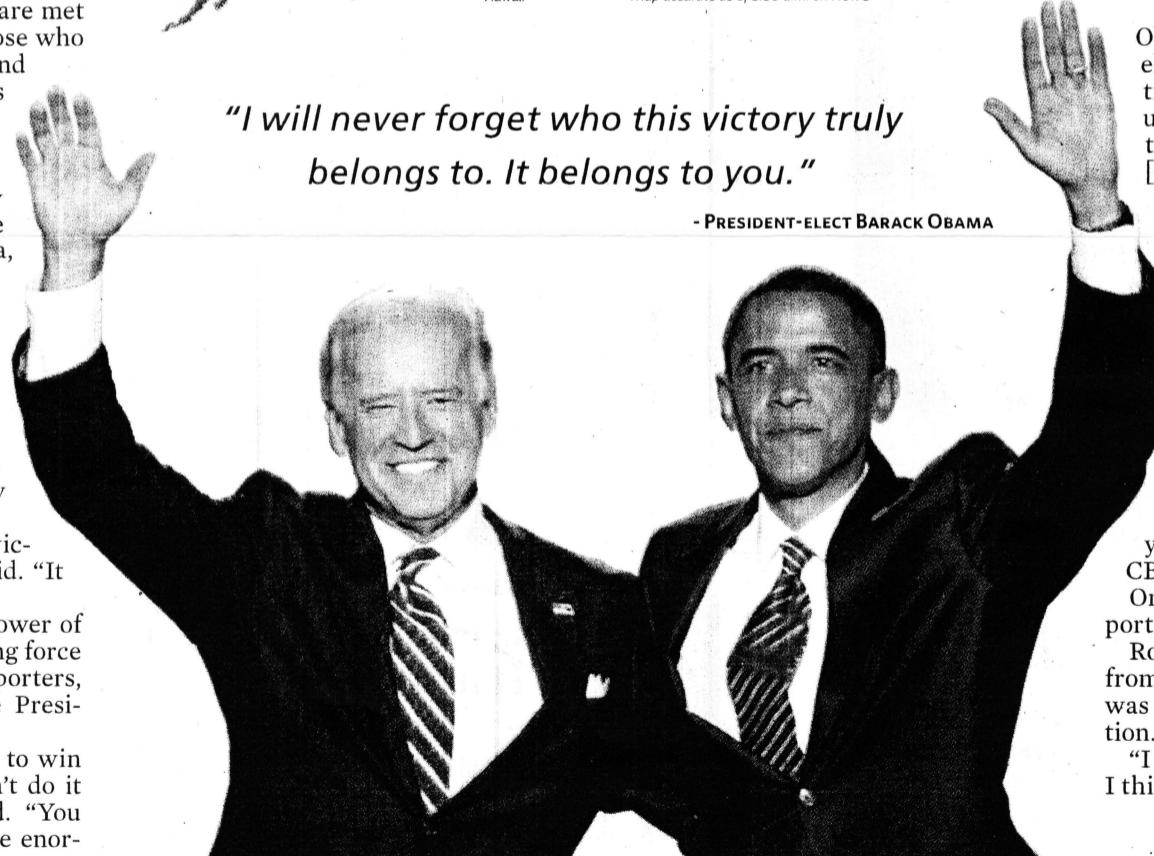
The president-elect cited the power of the younger generation as a driving force in his victory and thanked his supporters, campaign staff, family and Vice President-elect Joe Biden.

"I know you didn't do this just to win an election and I know you didn't do it for me," Obama told the crowd. "You did it because you understand the enor-



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- PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA



mity of the task that lies ahead."

Obama honored McCain, noting his service to the country and a hard-fought race fought both by the Arizona senator and his running mate Sarah Palin. He then extended his gratitude to McCain supporters, citing an intention to serve them and earn their trust.

"If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer," Obama said. "... And to those Americans who's support I have yet to earn, I may not have won your vote tonight, but I hear your voices. I need your help and I will be your president too."

Shortly after Obama was announced as the projected winner, McCain conceded at the Biltmore Hotel in Phoenix.

"I had the honor of calling Sen. Barack Obama to congratulate him on being elected the next president of the country we both love," McCain said. "I urge all Americans who supported me to join me in not just congratulating [Obama], but offering our next president our goodwill and earnest effort to find ways to come together."

McCain took Texas, West Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, North Dakota, Kansas, Wyoming, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Idaho, Kentucky, and his home state of Arizona.

Also late Tuesday night, President George W. Bush congratulated Obama on his victory and consoled McCain, telling him, "John, you gave it your all," according to a CBS news report.

On campus, students were highly supportive of the new president-elect.

Rob D'Agostino, a junior finance major from Lockport, N.Y., voted for Obama and was happy with the outcome of the election.

"I think that it's great for the country, I think [Obama] has a great vision for the

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Andrew Werner / The Spectrum

Ekua Mends-Aidoo, a senior exercise science major, cheered on President-elect Barack Obama with the Black Student Union in Goodyear Hall Tuesday night as the senator took Ohio, the state where Mends-Aidoo had been going door to door to garner support last weekend. "All that work," she said as celebrations resonated throughout the crowded lounge. "All we really need is Ohio."

'That's historical in itself'

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future," D'Agostino said. "I think [Obama] has a lot of courage and he's very easy to...agree with. It seems like he's good for us right now."

Other students, like Tallheeda Scott, a sophomore psychology major, cited the historical significance of Obama's victory.

"To see an African-American make it this far...that's histori-

cal in itself," Scott said prior to McCain's concession.

For many college students, this was first opportunity to vote in a presidential election. Students like Eric Yeung, a senior business major, believe it's important for young people to voice their opinions during elections, especially during a presidential election.

"I believe young people of our generation should actually step up at this time," Yeung said. "It's important for the students to elect the president who will serve them for the next couple years, especially because some of us will be graduating."

Mayvis Ampem, a senior biological sciences major, voted for the first time in a presidential election on Tuesday. She, like many students, felt it was especially important to take advantage of the opportunity to voice her opinion.

"This is my first time, I wanted my vote to count," Ampem said. "I think it's time for a good change to happen."

Students like Sefinee Horace, a junior health and human services major, believe that while Obama's victory may be historic, he's also the right candidate for the position.

"It's not even because he's black, but because he is the right person to be president," Horace said.

Also in contest for the presidency were Roger Calero and Alyson Kennedy of the Socialist Workers party, Gloria LaRiva and Eugene Puryear of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente of the Green Party, Bob Barr and Wayne Root of the Libertarian Party and Ralph Nader and Matt Gonzalez of the Populist Party.

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