

# HBCUs Rejoice Over Obama Victory

Contributed by Campus Reports -- Black College Wire  
Sunday, 09 November 2008

Students celebrate, reflect on impact of first black president (Multimedia)  
Norfolk State University(View Video) North Carolina A&T State University(View Slide Show)South Carolina State University(View Slide Show)North Carolina Central UniversityOn July 27, 2004, not many people knew the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention.

But four years later, everyone knows him as the first African-American president of the United States.

Sen. Barack Obama changed history Nov. 4 when he was elected the nation's 44th president.

American voters responded to Obama's platform of change, giving him 338 electoral college votes [in early returns].

"Obama is somebody that people see as different, someone that is bringing about positive change for generations to come," said NCCU business senior Jessica Holland.

The product of a black Kenyan father and a white American mother, Obama dealt with conflicting social perceptions of his multiracial background throughout the campaign.

Obama entered Harvard Law School in 1988 and was elected the first black editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Obama worked as a civil rights lawyer and a University of Chicago Law School professor before being elected to the U.S. Senate in 2004.

Surprisingly, age rather than race was a determining factor in the election.

Only half as many voters polled by CNN viewed race as a major factor as considered age to be.

Strong support from minority and young voters drove Obama's victory home, according to CNN's exit polls. Voters in the 18 to 24 age range voted 68 percent in favor of Obama and voters in the 25 to 29 age group voted 69 percent for Obama.

The only age range to favor McCain over Obama was the 65 and over bracket.

"It was an honor to vote for the first black president. He went against the grain," said Lindsey Rose, an English and political science freshman and a first-time voter.

In Durham County, 76 percent of the more than 134,000 voters who turned out at the polls favored Obama, as of press time.

Chicago's Grant Park filled with Obama supporters to hear his acceptance speech.

"If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible . . . tonight is your answer," he said.

On the other side of the country, in Phoenix, Ariz., McCain praised Obama and urged Americans to congratulate him and put aside their differences to unify in the nation's interest.

Of special note:

- Obama was the nation's first senator to be elected to the presidency since John F. Kennedy in 1960.

- He carried Virginia for the first time since 1964 when the state voted for Lyndon Baines Johnson.

- He scored 72 percent of first-time voters.

- Early voting was crucial to his win. By Monday 24.4 million Americans had cast early or absentee ballots.

- As of 2 a.m. Wednesday, 2,101,986 Democrats and 2,089,826 Republicans voted in North Carolina.

- 62 percent of nationwide voters in a CNN exit poll said the economy was their top issue.

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This staff report was originally published in The Campus Scho, the North Carolina Central University student newspaper. Howard University

Yes, we can, and indeed we did.

History was made last night as Barack Obama was elected as the first African-American President of the United States of America. The

Howard's Blackburn Center ballroom was filled with excitement and anticipation as students gathered for the election viewing party.

"It showed me that a black man can hold the highest position and that I can do anything I put my mind to," said Reggie Dozier, a freshman business management major.

Senior hospitality major Cordell Nelson said, "I feel like this is going to change my life, my children's lives, and my grandchildren's lives. I feel like this historic moment is going to change not only America but the world."

This year's election was a historical moment for people of all ages and races. Years ago, people fought for the right to vote when voting was denied based on skin color and gender.

Four-year-old Deja Jackson tagged along with her mom to the polling booths and let her be voice be heard without even being old enough to vote. When asked who she thought would be the next president, she answered, "Barack Obama."

For freshman English major Tiana Montague, this election was not only her first time voting, but also the first time for her 62-year-old grandfather to exercise his right to vote.

"My grandpa registered to vote this year, and he stood in a long line in the rain in Virginia to vote and make history with his voice," Montague said.

"Someone can look at their children and tell them that they can be anything they want to be and mean it," she said.

However, due to age restrictions, some students were not able to vote but still participated in the night's celebrations.

"I didn't vote," said Jerez Giles, a freshman marketing major. Giles will be 18 on Dec. 23, but still celebrated with his peers.

"I'm upset at the fact that I couldn't take part in the biggest event in U.S. history," Giles said. "But, I am happy that I was able to witness this historic moment."

There was music, food and two large projectors along with periodic moments of excitement when announcing which state the presidential candidates won.

"There was no way that McCain could win," said Dr. Carr, associate professor of the Afro-American Studies department. "He needed to win Ohio and Pennsylvania to win the election."

Carr said, "I feel like for most of the people in this room, you will never know a day when this isn't normal."

Along with it being historic, for many Howard University students this was their first time voting in a presidential election. There were students that cast absentee ballots, while those who were registered in Virginia, Maryland, or District of Columbia voted in person.

"Well, besides it being my first time voting, I'm so inspired to think that someone not only of color but from such humble beginnings can work their way to greatness," said Ashley Anderson, a freshman history major.

"It was invigorating to vote for the first time and in person," said freshman civil engineering major Maurice Dukes. "I want to be a better black man."

Tears of joy ran down the faces of both men and women as Barack Obama was elected the next president. Students

were screaming at the top of their lungs when the news was broke that "their president was black."

"I believe again," said freshman biochemistry major Afia Wilson, in tears. "He did it; I'm so proud."

Tressa Blockett, a freshman sports management major, said, "I'm happy that people in America can look past our past generation's ignorance and we can vote for a candidate not because of his skin color, but because of what he can do for us."

"Anything is achievable, never say never," said Alan Henderson, a senior architecture major. "Obama exemplifies what Ghandi said — to be the change you want to see in the world."

According to HUSA President Nicholas Owen, voting is only the first part in seeing change in the world. He said we now must put forth an effort to make sure our needs are met.

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This article was written by Tahirah Hairston for The Hilltop, the Howard University student newspaper, which originally published this article. Florida A&M University

FAMU students were ecstatic about the announcement Tuesday night of Sen. Barack Obama's historic victory over Sen. John McCain.

In Leon County, which includes Tallahassee and the FAMU campus, Obama won by 24 percent, according to the county supervisor of elections Web site. "When I heard the results, all I could do was run and shout," said Willie Hayes, 18, a freshman computer engineering student from Tampa. "This opens up a lot of doors for black men &hellip; as long as they put their mind to it."

Kevin Cate, Obama's spokesman, said Florida was an important state in the election.

"Florida's role in the election was crucial for Sen. John McCain," Cate said. "Sen. McCain was forced to do a lot of campaigning in a state that should have been given to him. It was no way he could win the White House without Florida. Obama had several avenues to the White House."

The Obama campaign was confident going into the election. He said volunteers and supporters worked hard for Obama to win.

At a Democratic election watch party at the Moon Nightclub on Tuesday night, supporters grew emotional as key states were announced in favor of Obama.

"This is a long time dream that a black man could be chosen as president of the United States," said Annette Thorpe, 88, a retired FAMU employee.

"I began to dream this could happen [during] the civil rights movement," she said. "What I've dreamed for has become a reality."

The reality was disturbing for some Republicans. Dan Abel, Leon County Republican Party Chairman, was not happy with the news of Obama's win.

"I was very disappointed," Abel said. "I would have liked to see the opposite happen."

The Democratic watch party was hosted by chair of the Leon Democratic Party, Rick Minor.

Mayor John Marks told the crowd of Obama supporters that eight years of no change had to end.

"We're going to take back this country," Marks said. "The eight years of nothingness in this country has got to go."

The crowd cheered as Marks repeatedly said, "Fired up and ready to go."

"We're going to have to work with Obama, support him, and make sure that he is the best president ever in America," he said.

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Kamaria Rogers writes for The Famuan, which originally published this article. Erica Butler and Mark Taylor II contributed. South Carolina State University

A sea of SC State students poured into the street in celebration of Barack Obama's decisive victory over Republican nominee John McCain.

Obama's win inspired a midnight procession from the Andrew Hugine Jr. Suites toward the Plaza where the Marching 101 band led students in the victory celebrations.

Students danced, screamed and chanted "Get up for Obama," transforming the popular bulldog fight song to an Obama praise hymn.

The informal party followed the NAACP "election watch" party held in the K.W. Green Student Center.

SC State's local chapter of the NAACP took no chances this Election Day in their quest to usher in the first African American President.

Led by chapter leader Preston E. Zimmerman, volunteers descended upon residence halls knocking on doors, encouraging students to vote, making phone calls to resolve problems with voting and even providing shuttle services to and from polling stations.

The students were joined by high school students from Orangeburg Wilkinson Memorial who were not eligible to vote but who saw the importance of this historic event and joined the cause.

Campus activities board adviser Ariel Singleton who helped organize all of the events said she chose to get involved because of the historical significance of this election and the unprecedented number of young people coming out to vote. "Even one extra vote will make a change," said Singleton.

Freshman Political science and pre-law major Ajanee Laningham said she chose to attend so that she could encourage people in her age group that may not be interested in politics to come with her. "It is a social event that they could come to and have fun, but they will still be able to see the real reason behind it."

SC State proved that while the state of South Carolina still remains Republican territory, the Bulldogs belong to Obama.

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Dervedia Thomas is editor in chief of The Collegian, the South Carolina State University student newspaper, which originally published this article. Tennessee State University

Cheers rang and tears flowed as hundreds of students marched throughout TSU's campus shouting Obama's name, just minutes after U.S. Senator Barack Obama was projected as the next president of the United States.

Starting on the first floor of the Floyd-Payne Campus Center, traveling to the library and Hale Hall, and chanting through campus to settle in the Amphitheater, students marched in unison and embraced what many call a historic day.

"I am so happy, Obama won!" one girl shouted, as others followed, clapping and running.

Some began popping balloons, tearing down posters and knocking over trashcans, while others simply marched and cheered.

One student fired four gunshots, causing several students to run for cover.

TSU police shut the activities down by making everyone disburse around 11 p.m.

Many students proceeded to Jefferson Street to finish celebrating, marching to Fisk University to continue the festivities.

"It's Homecoming, part two," a marcher was heard saying.

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This article was originally published in The Meter, the Tennessee State University student newspaper.