

# MICHELLE OBAMA

In *Becoming*, former First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama chronicles her journey to becoming one of the nation's most prominent advocates for women's rights and inclusion and. T

This deeply personal memoir takes readers through her painful moments and private struggles as she fought to be heard as a Black woman in America. From the South Side of Chicago to the national stage, Obama's life story in her own words reminds us to be resilient and remember the power of constant growth and self-discovery.

As first lady, Obama served as a role model for women and worked as an advocate for poverty awareness, education, nutrition, physical activity, and healthy eating. She supported American designers and was considered a fashion icon. After her husband's presidency, Obama's influence has remained high,

in 1996, and that year Michelle became the associate dean of student services at the University of Chicago, where she helped organize the school's community outreach programs. In 2002 she became the executive director of community and external affairs for the University of Chicago. Two years later Barack was elected to the U.S. Senate and came to national prominence with a speech he gave on the final night of the 2004 Democratic primary. In 2005 she became president of community and external affairs for the University of Chicago Medical Center.

When her husband announced his candidacy for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination, Michelle took a prominent role in his campaign. She took leave from her position at the University of Chicago to devote herself more fully to campaigning while still maintaining time to care for her and Barack's two young daughters. An adept speaker, she stumped extensively for her husband during the long Democratic primary race, and in June 2008 Barack became the party's presumptive nominee. Michelle's openness on the campaign trail and in interviews—she often humanized her husband by discussing his faults and implored observers not to “deify him”—endeared her to many.

However, critics of her husband's campaign took issue with some of her comments—such as when she remarked, while campaigning in Wisconsin in February 2008, that “for the first time in my adult lifetime, I am really proud of my country.” Michelle later clarified her statement—saying that she meant to say that she was proud that Americans were eagerly engaging in the political process during the 2008 election—and she continued to have an active role in her husband's campaign. Indeed, campaign aides referred to her as “the closer,” for her persuasiveness on the stump among uncommitted voters who attended rallies. On November 4, 2008, Barack was elected 44th president of the United States, defeating Arizona Sen. John McCain; he took office on January 20, 2009, and was reelected in 2012.

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