

OPINION

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Basking in the Glow of Victory

Obama's moment was 232 years in the making

BY BENJAMIN TODD JEALOUS

Last Tuesday, we ushered in a new era. We destroyed the remnants of Jim Crow, abolished a one-color-fits-all definition of leadership, and declared that our nation would rise above the politics of the past.



The election is over and the result is incredible, but the movement has only just begun.

We witnessed the most inclusive election, enjoyed by the largest, most informed and most motivated electorate in our nation's history. On Nov. 4, we elected an African-American man as President of the United States of

America. We congratulate President-elect Barack Obama and his wife Michelle on their historic win. This moment is 232 years in the making. In this moment, we honor the memory of freedom fighters like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Ida

B. Wells, Medgar Evers, Rosa Parks, and so many others who gave their lives so that the promise of America can be real for all people. It is their sacrifice that made this moment possible.

Full electoral participation has always been a driving goal of the

We registered thousands of voters, on the ground and on the web, but it didn't stop there. Our ground game delivered voters to the polls and defended them once they were there. That's why we were in courtrooms across the country, challenging laws and policies that

served to prohibit eligible voters from casting ballots.

This election wasn't perfect. There were still far too many reports of voter disenfranchisement and harassment. There were still far too many problems with the inequitable distribution of resources that resulted in long lines, faulty machinery, insufficient ballots, and racially motivated voter challenges at polling locations in low-income and minority communities. There were still too many eligible voters who stayed home

on Election Day.

The election is over and the result is incredible, but the movement has only just begun.

As we bask in the glow of Barack Obama's stunning victory, we acknowledge that the battles are still many. Nonetheless, we have proof that an inspired nation can come together across racial, cultural, and generational boundaries to bring about even greater change.

Benjamin Todd Jealous is president and chief executive officer of the NAACP.

Voting for Hope over Fear

Never again will any young boy or girl of color in America be shackled with the awful certainty of not in my lifetime.

Obama renews promise of equal opportunity

BY MARCUS C. MUNDY

After the longest and hardest fought presidential campaign in American history, Barack Obama



has just been elected the 44th President of the United States.

The Urban League of Portland congratulates President-elect Barack Obama, Vice-

President-elect Joe Biden and their families for turning what began as an improbable journey into an historic victory for their party and our country.

We welcome the new vision they bring to Washington and pledge to work with them to tackle the nation's deepening domestic challenges, including the epidemic of home foreclosures, the crisis in public education, as well as rising unemployment and poverty that have hit middle class and urban Americans especially hard in re-

cent years.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the American people for voting hope over fear and electing the first African American president in our nation's history. This is a watershed moment that renews the nation's founding promise of freedom, equality and opportunity for all.

This election has shattered what was once considered an unbreakable glass ceiling that has kept so many generations of minorities and women from dreaming big dreams and reaching their full-potential.

Never again will any young boy or girl of color in America be shackled with the awful certainty of not in my lifetime.

The Urban League of Portland stands ready on day one to work with the new Administration, especially in the effort to craft a comprehensive urban agenda that expands opportunity and unleashes the tremendous untapped potential in our cities.

We also congratulate our new U.S. Senator-elect from Oregon, Jeff Merkley. We look forward to working with him on his agenda for change in Oregon and the country that seeks to end disparities in health, education and employment for African Americans and all working people.

Marcus C. Mundy is chief executive officer of the Urban League of Portland.

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Election Can't Cure Racial Injustice

But it can change perceptions

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The world celebrated when Sen. Barack Obama ascended to the presidency of the United States, the first African-American to do so. His election not only marked a new era in American politics but also a giant leap forward for race relations.

Obama, his campaign staffers and his supporters have done what many thought was impossible. Collectively, we all worked together and made history. Now it is time for us to individually do our parts to make sure we as African Americans continue to progress forward.

There are certain moments in U.S. history that have signaled a positive shift in the way Americans view race and injustices. The 1955 kidnapping and murder of 14-year Emmett Till for allegedly whistling at a white woman brought to light for many white Americans the constant fear blacks in the South lived in.

In 1965, 600 peaceful marchers



were attacked with billy clubs and tear gas by state and local police on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. Television cameras captured the attacks and broadcast them to the nation. Many were horrified by what they saw and became active in the civil rights movement.

Now it is time for us to individually do our parts to make sure we as African Americans continue to progress forward.

More recently, Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath and the government's failure to assist the people of New Orleans renewed discussions around racial, social and economic injustice. Along the way, there have been leaders who have represented each step in America's move toward true racial equality. President-elect Obama is that latest symbol of

hope. But he needn't stand alone.

As individuals we have a responsibility to ourselves and our communities to guide this country in the direction of openness and fairness.

For the most part, white people have, at a very basic level, done theirs. Sixty-one percent of those who voted for Obama were white. It has taken centuries, but now, finally, the majority of white people in America are comfortable with

If you are a father, be responsible. Support your child financially and emotionally.

Young women: Turn off the radio when a sexist and demeaning song comes on. It doesn't matter if the 'beat is hot,' you must have more respect for yourselves. If you don't, how can others?

Parents: Raise your children. Don't let the television or video games replace family time -- time that can be used to guide and educate your child. Become active at their school and get to know their friends. Studies show that children with fully involved parents do better in school and are less likely to go to prison.

America is far from perfect and Obama's election alone won't 'cure' racial injustice. But it can change perceptions. If whites are already beginning to see us differently, it is high time we begin to see ourselves differently. And we must act accordingly.

Judge Greg Mathis is vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

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