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OPINION

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Glorious Day, Glorious Result

America's first black president

The following is an editorial of the Portland Observer:

Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th president of the United States was a glorious day for all Americans.

By becoming the first African American president, Obama fulfills the promise in our Declaration of Independence which states that all men are created

equal. Democracy made this historic day possible.

By a clear majority, people of all backgrounds rejected the racial biases of the past and voted for a person who had proved his qualifications for the highest office in the land and as our commander in chief.

As a community organizer, constitutional law professor and U.S. Senator, Barack Obama ran a campaign that reached out to the American people. He im-

pressed America with his oratory skills and intellect.

He earned support from all demographics, regardless of race and ideology, but especially from the many drum majors for equality and civil rights.

This doesn't mean racial divisions have ended. We know the hurtful hate of prejudices still cause great harm and must be confronted today and tomorrow.

But the inauguration of a person of color is a fulfillment of

the ideal that children anywhere can aspire to become president themselves.

President Obama fulfills the dream of our great civil rights hero, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who looked for that day when a person is America is judged on their character and not the color of their skin.

America judged character. Obama's inauguration as the first African American President is a grand result of the long fight for equality and justice.

Enduring Power of a Dream

Barack Obama brings new chapter

BY RALPH B. EVERETT

Today we begin a new chapter in the story of America and in the promise it holds for all people.

Two hundred and thirty-three years after our country was founded on bedrock principles of humanequality, an African Ameri-



can now occupies the highest elected office in the land. Behind that simple fact are many tales about the arc of our history and the people who have helped bend it toward this moment.

President Barack Obama has already begun to set a new direc-

tion to address the enormous burdens that have been placed on his shoulders.

But for the rest of us, especially those who never thought they would live to see this day, it is a time to pause and reflect on the wonders of our democracy and the enduring power of the dream that has been carried through the ages from the founding fathers to Dr. King and into the present day.

It is a time to teach our children about the new possibilities that are now theirs to behold.

And while the vision of a more

perfect union now seems closer to our grasp, our new President has noted that there is a long road ahead of us.

At the same time, he has spoken eloquently about a new spirit of service and responsibility in which each American is called upon to look after not only ourselves, but each other.

We wholeheartedly endorse that message and pledge to carry it forward in every aspect of our work.

Ralph B. Everett is president of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

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Enormous Positive Change

BY REA CAREY

America made history today with the swearing-in of Barack Obama as its 44th president.

It is our hope this truly marks the dawn of a new political era of engagement in the life of this country.

In his speech, the president spoke of our nation's need to reaffirm its enduring spirit and "carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea ... [the] promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

Our country has made significant strides in advancing this



'noble idea' toward full-fledged reality, but we're not there yet. Too many people continue to face discrimination and hardship.

As President Obama assumes the role of America's foremost leader, we call upon him to fulfill the promise of a nation where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are recognized and valued as part of this country's strength, spirit and solution.

The fact that the official White House Web site was updated just this afternoon with a list of commitments to LGBT rights is already enormous positive change."

Rea Carey is executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.



President Obama's Leadership

BY SEN. JEFF MERKLEY

As I traveled to the Capitol today, I could feel a growing sense of excitement all over this city. At one point, Mary and I went passed a city bus full of people chanting 'Obama' and the streets got progressively more crowded and festive as we neared the National

Mall. There was a tremendous feeling of purpose and a readiness to embark on a new chapter in our nation's history.

President Obama really captured the difficult place we are in as a country — faced with two wars and a broken economy.

He observed, however, that America has faced difficult challenges before. And as we have worked together to overcome those challenges, we will work together to overcome what lies before us.

President Obama appropriately gave a serious speech — not one full of applause lines but one that really outlined the problems we face and prepared the nation for the difficult choices we will have to make to get back on track. I know I join all Americans in pledging to work with President Obama to take the necessary steps to restore peace and prosperity, and ensure that we are all able to fulfill our God-given potential.

Jeff Merkley of Portland is the newly elected U.S. Senator from Oregon.