

"Not only do I think I'm a desi, but I'm a desi"



"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." President Barack Obama

Over two million people braved the cold weather, armed with blankets, warm clothes, they watched as the 44th president of America was sworn in. Millions of people watched the ceremony on TV and the internet.



What is it about President Obama that instills hope in everyone? He promised change, and we

are looking to him to get us out of the economic disaster that this country is facing. We have unwavering faith that he will do it. How did a man, who comes from a multiracial background, a single mother household, and has struggled with finances most of his life become the first African American president of the United States of America?

His story is the American story — values from the heartland, a middle-class upbringing in a strong family, hard work and education as the means of getting ahead, and the conviction that a life so blessed should be lived in service to others.

With a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas, President Obama was born in Hawaii on August 4, 1961. He was raised with help from his grandfather, who served in Patton's army, and his grandmother, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle management at a bank.

After working his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans, President Obama moved to Chicago, where he worked with a group of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants.

He went on to attend law school, where he became the first African-American president of the *Harvard Law Review*. Upon graduation, he returned to Chicago to help lead a voter registration drive, teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago, and remain active in his

community.

President Obama's years of public service are based around his unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around a politics of purpose. In the Illinois State Senate, he passed the first major ethics reform in 25 years, cut taxes for working families, and expanded health care for children and their parents. As a United States Senator, he reached across the aisle to pass groundbreaking lobbying reform, lock up the world's most dangerous weapons, and bring transparency to government by putting federal spending online.

He was elected the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008, and sworn in on January 20, 2009. He and his wife, Michelle, are the proud parents of two daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7.

President Obama was quoted "Not only do I think I'm a *desi*, but I'm a *desi*," in the San Francisco Chronicle. What makes him a *desi*, that he said he can cook Daal and Curry, or that he had *desi* friends and roommates in college? There is a lot more to him being a *desi*.

As far as *desis* go, we can identify with President Obama in so many ways. He is a man with an extraordinary passion, intelligence, charisma and drive. Raised by a single mother, with help from his grandparents and they loved him unconditionally, he understands the value of education, he had to struggle to pay for tuition, books, dorms, food, car, gas, you name it! How many of us had part time jobs while in school? We understand the value of money, have an inherent need to persevere and not give up hope. With single minded determination, we strive towards our goal, whether it is to attain a degree, a new job, family, business or a new life!



President Barack Obama



President Obama knows what it is like to survive on a salary of \$10,000 a year and \$2,000 towards purchasing a vehicle, to work as a community activist, as long as it is taking you in the direction you choose for yourself.

How many of us have had similar jobs as mentioned below while in school?

Obama's summer jobs:

- ◆ As a high school student, Obama's first job was at a Baskin-Robbins ice cream store. He also

has mentioned he worked construction.

- ◆ As a college student at Occidental in Southern California, Obama returned home to Hawaii the summer after freshman year to sell island trinkets in a gift shop.
- ◆ Obama also had a summertime job at a deli counter in Hawaii — making sandwiches.
- ◆ One summer Obama worked for a private company holding a contract to process health records of police officer and firefighters.
- ◆ During one school year at Columbia, Obama was a telemarketer in midtown Manhattan selling
- ◆ New York Times subscriptions over the phone, wearing a headset. He did not like the job because *"he worried that some of the people he called couldn't really afford the subscription."*

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