

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Barack Obama

PERSON

Obama, Barack

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Barack Obama;

**Life Dates:** August 4, 1961-

**Place of Birth:** Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

**Residence:** IL

**Work:** Washington, D.C.

**Occupations:** State Senator; U.S. Senator; President

## Biographical Note

Barack Obama was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii. He attended Occidental College for two years before transferring to Columbia University in New York, where he became interested in a career as a social activist.

After graduation, Obama found work as a community organizer, which led him to Chicago. Obama was hired to head the Developing Communities Project and served in this capacity for over three years. However, realizing the limitations of working at such a localized level, Obama enrolled at Harvard Law School. At Harvard, Obama excelled, eventually becoming the President of the Harvard Law Review, the first African American ever to hold this position. After he graduated from Harvard, Obama wrote a book, *Dreams from My Father*, based on his family's experiences. He went to work at the Chicago law firm of Miner, Barnhill & Galland.

On advice from friends, Obama ran for a vacant state Senate seat in 1996, and was successfully elected to represent the 13th Legislative District. In 2000, Obama ran for a seat in Congress but lost to incumbent Bobby Rush. In 2004, Obama successfully ran for a seat in the United States Senate representing Illinois, becoming only the fifth African American senator in United States history. On February 10, 2007, Obama announced that he would run for President of the United States. On June 3, 2008, Obama became the presumptive democratic nominee for the U.S. presidency. He is the first African American to ever win a major political party's nomination for president. On November 4, 2008, Obama became the president-elect when he won the election for President of the United States. He is the first African American president in the history of the United States. Obama was sworn-in as U.S. president on January 20, 2009.

Obama and his wife, Michelle, are the parents of two daughters, Sasha and Malia.

## Related Entries

**Punahou School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**diploma**

**Occidental College** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Columbia University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Harvard Law School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**University of Chicago Law School** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**senior lecturer of constitutional law**

**Delete** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1984 to 1988]

**Miner, Barnhill & Galland** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1991 to ?]

**Civil rights attorney**

**Project Vote** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1992 to ?]

**Director**

**Illinois State Senate** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1997 to 2004]

**Illinois State Senator**

**United States Senate** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2005 to ?]

**U.S. Senator**