

Topic Page: [Obama, Michelle \(1964 - \)](#)

Summary Article: **Obama, Michelle**

from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

US lawyer, community worker, and First Lady 2009–17. After her marriage in 1992 to Barack Obama she switched from her career as a corporate lawyer to a career in public service and community work in Chicago. In 2009, after Barack Obama's election as US president, she became the first African American First Lady. She was a higher profile First Lady than her predecessor, Laura Bush, and gave her husband strong campaigning support. As First Lady, she promoted a range of causes: support for military families, helping working women balance career and family, healthy eating, and fighting childhood obesity (the 2012 'Let's Move' initiative). At the July 2016 Democratic National Convention she made an impassioned speech in support of the Democrat presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

She was born and raised in Chicago's South Side, an area with a reputation for high levels of crime and poverty. Her father Fraser Robinson worked at a city water plant, and the family lived in a one-bedroom apartment. Her parents instilled a belief in the importance of hard work and education for advancement, and both Michelle and her older brother Craig secured entry to prestigious Princeton University, where she graduated in sociology. After studying at Harvard Law School, she returned to Chicago to work as a corporate lawyer at the law firm Sidley Austin. It was there, in 1989, where she first met Barack Obama, being assigned to mentor him as a summer intern. They married in 1992. The death in 1991 of her father, from multiple sclerosis, led to her reassess her life and career and she left law to work as a Chicago city administrator and as a community outreach worker.

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