

## Barack Obama the 44th President of the United States

## Obama presidency fitting Black history note

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

The history of African-Americans is unique and rich, and one that has helped to define what it means to be an American. Arriving on ships on the shores of North America more than 300 years ago, recognized more as possessions than people, African-Americans have come to know the freedoms fought for in establishing the United States and gained through the use of our founding principles of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to assembly, and due process of law.

The ideals of the founders became more real and more true for every citizen as African-Americans pressed us to realize our full potential as a nation and to uphold those ideals for all who enter into

our borders and embrace the notion that we are all endowed with certain unalienable rights.

Since Carter G. Woodson first sought to illuminate the African-American experience, each February we pause to reflect on the contributions of this community to our national identity. The history is one of struggle for the recognition of each person's humanity, as well as an influence on the broader American culture. African-Americans designed our beautiful capital city, gave us the melodic rhythms of New Orleans Jazz, issued new discoveries in science and medicine, and forced us to examine ourselves in the pages of classic literature. This legacy has only added luster to the brand of the United States,

which has drawn immigrants to our shores for centuries.

This year's theme, "The Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas," is a chance to examine the evolution of our country and how African-Americans helped draw us ever closer to becoming a more perfect union.

The narrative of the African-American pursuit of full citizenship with all of the rights and privileges afforded others in this country is also the story of a maturing young Nation. The voices and examples of the African-American people worked collectively to remove the boulders of systemic racism and discrimination that pervaded our laws and our public consciousness for decades.

Through the work of

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, Martin Luther King and Thurgood Marshall, the African-American community has steadily made progress toward the dreams within its grasp and the promise of our more Nation.

Meanwhile, the belief that those dreams might one day be realized by all of our citizens gave African-American men and women the same sense of duty and love of country that led them to shed blood in every war we have ever fought, to invest hard-earned resources in their communities with the hope of self empowerment, and to pass the ideals of this great land down to their children

and grandchildren.

As we mark National African-American History Month, we should take note of this special moment in our Nation's history and the actors who worked so diligently to deliver us to this place. One such organization is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — the NAACP — which this year will witness 100 years of service to the nation on February 12.

Because of their work, including the contributions of those luminaries on the front lines and great advocates behind the scenes, we as a Nation were able to take the dramatic steps we have in recent history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, Presi-

dent of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2009 as National African-American History Month.

I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness and appreciation of African-American history.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

## Stimulus

(Continued from Page 1) transit construction.

The president also won money for two other administration priorities — information technology in health care, and "green jobs" to make buildings more energy-efficient and reduce the nation's reliance on foreign oil.

The bill "will be the beginning of the turnaround for the American economy," predicted Sen. Joe Lieberman, the independent from Connecticut.

Republicans couldn't have disagreed more.

"It appears that Democrats have made a bad bill worse by reducing the tax relief for working families in order to pay for more wasteful government spending," said Rep. John Boehner of Ohio.

But some prominent Republicans straddled the issue.

Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, last year's Republican running mate and a potential White House contender in 2012, said her state was ready to accept a projected \$1 billion in federal funds. But she criticized increased spending on social programs, which she said could wind up costing her state in the long run and "don't necessarily stimulate the economy."

The events capped a frenzied 24-plus hours that began at midday Tuesday when the Senate approved its original version of the bill on a party-

line vote of 61-37. Reid, Pelosi and White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel plunged into a series of meetings designed to produce agreement in time for Obama to sign the bill by mid-month.

Pelosi was conspicuously absent from Wednesday's news conference in which members of the Senate announced the agreement. Moments later, Reid arrived in her office, and the two talked by phone with Emanuel, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials had said previously that one of the final issues to be settled was money for school modernization, a priority for Pelosi as well as Obama and one on which they differed with Collins and other moderates whose votes will be essential for final Senate approval.

Originally, Pelosi and House Democrats wanted a new program dedicated to school construction, but Collins held firm against that. In the end, officials said the agreement added \$10 billion to a State Stabilization Fund, with the additional provision that governors may use some of the money for modernizing school buildings but not building new ones.

There also was an unspecified last-minute change in a House proposal that would allow state legislatures to order the use of funds over

the opposition of governors. Officials said that issue related in part to South Carolina, where GOP Gov. Mark Sanford has been a vehement critic of the legislation.

The officials who described the developments and elements of the bill did so on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to speak.

Stocks moved higher in the moments after Reid stepped to the microphone just outside the Senate chamber. The Dow Jones industrials, which plunged 382 points on Tuesday, rose 51 points for the day.

Obama has been contending daily that the plan is essential to avoid turning what is already the worst economic crisis in a generation into a catastrophe.

As if to underscore the urgency, he said a few hours before the agreement was announced that machinery giant Caterpillar Inc. plans to rescind some of the 22,000 layoffs the firm recently announced — once the stimulus is signed into law.

Scaling back the bill to levels lower than either the \$838 billion Senate measure or the original \$820 billion House-passed measure caused grumbles among liberal Democrats, who described the cutbacks as a concession to the moderates, particularly Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., who are under pressure from conservative Republicans to hold down

spending.

Working to accommodate the new, lower overall limit of the bill, negotiators effectively wiped out a Senate-passed provision for a new \$15,000 tax credit to defray the cost of buying a home, these officials said. The agreement would allow taxpayers to deduct the sales tax paid on new car purchases, but not the interest on loans

for the same vehicles.

With numerous demands for the funds in the bill, lawmakers worked to satisfy competing demands.

A Senate-passed provision to give \$10 billion to the National Institutes of Health for research — a favorite of both Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Specter — appeared to have survived.

Not every decision was

driven by concern about job creation, though.

The bill includes \$70 billion to shelter wealthier taxpayers from the alternative minimum tax, originally passed a generation ago to make sure the super-rich didn't avoid taxes. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that provision will have relatively little impact on the economy.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

## PEACE FIGHTERS

Nevada State Senator and Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford, left, and Tony Sanchez, III, right, corporate senior vice president of Sierra Pacific Resources/NV Energy accept their 2009 Las Vegas Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builders Prize awards from Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter, Sr., creator and curator of the GKI Exhibit. Carter is a professor of religion at Morehouse College in Atlanta and dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel. The GKI Exhibit, "A Legacy of Building Peace," will be on display at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and at the College of Southern Nevada's Cheyenne Campus through February. The admission is free.