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# Black History Month legal tribute: former FLOTUS Michelle Obama



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She's a lawyer. A wife. A mother. A fashionista. A mentor. A storyteller. A proud African-American woman. A Chicagoan. Relationship goals. And those are just a few words to describe the former FLOTUS Michelle Obama. From healthy food choices to wearing bangs, she's been a much-talked about topic.

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**BLACK HISTORY MONTH  
LEGAL TRIBUTE: FORMER  
PRESIDENT BARACK H.  
OBAMA**



**BLACK HISTORY MONTH  
LEGAL TRIBUTE: NELSON  
MANDELA**



There have been countless books written about her time in the White House, including Mandi Norwood’s “Michelle Style: Celebrating the First Lady of Fashion” and the 200-plus photography book “Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs” edited by Deborah Willis and Emily Bernard. Name a magazine, and chances are she’s been on the cover: TIME, Ebony, Vogue, Glamour, Essence, InStyle, Upscale, MORE, Variety and the list goes on.

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No matter how Americans felt about her husband/former President Barack H. Obama's politics, there was one thing that many could agree on: Michelle could be as loved and admired from Republicans as she was from Democrats. Exhibit A: The reactions of former **Presidents George W. Bush and George H. Bush** around her. By now all of the jokes have been told about how much current FLOTUS Melania Trump and **speechwriter Meredith McIver** must enjoy Michelle's speeches. **Other conservatives** have also come forward to give Michelle's speeches a few kudos, too.

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But “let’s move” beyond red and blue politics to find out about the woman behind the J. Crew gloves and Isabel Toledo dress.

### Behind the legal scene

1. By now, most have seen the wide-tooth grin from Barack kitesurfing and vacationing with Richard Branson. Expect that same kind of smile from Michelle when it comes to skiing. Her take on it: “When I’m skiing, that’s, like, one of the few places in the winter where I feel free.” (Source: [BlackAmericaWeb](#), [CNN](#))

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2. Her enthusiasm about health started long before Let's Move. Before moving to Washington D.C., she was the Vice President for Community and External Affairs at University of Chicago's Medical Center. (Source: [University of Chicago](#))

3. While she worked at the University of Chicago, hospital employees' community service efforts increased nearly fivefold. Community members volunteering in the hospital nearly quadrupled. (Source: [University of Chicago](#))

4. If/when Barack makes Michelle mad, R&B singer Anthony Hamilton said Barack told him he must play "Float" to make nice with the former FLOTUS. (Source: [Sun Times Network](#))



Recommended Reading: “[Black History Month legal tribute: former President Barack H. Obama](#)”

5. Michelle is a supporter of Alma Thomas, the first African-American woman to have a solo exhibition at Manhattan’s Whitney Museum of American Art. One of her art pieces, “Resurrection” from 1966, was placed into the White House after Michelle redecorated. (Source: [The New York Times](#), [Vogue](#))

6. Ellen DeGeneres introduced Michelle to boxed wine during a trip to CVS, but Michelle is not a newbie to cocktails. It turns out she does enjoy a good margarita. (Source: [The Ellen Show on YouTube](#), [Politico](#))

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7. Michelle admits to being a little “theatrical,” including performing in plays until she was 8 years old. Why? “I love to make people laugh,” she admits. (Source: [Vogue](#))

8. Chances are slim that a lawyer won’t want the last word, and Michelle may have gotten this habit from her mom. “It’s a tough place, our household. We’re pretty competitive. We’re all opinionated. I’m talking from Grandma on down, so, yeah, if that’s not in your personality, I can be a bit much. Because I get worked up about stuff. I can kinda go: ‘And then. And another thing.’” (Source: [Vogue](#))





9. If that White House farewell party, which included late-night chicken and waffles and plenty of celebrities, wasn't exciting enough, it turns out that Michelle may have learned her party hosting skills from her own family. Purnell "Southside" Shields, her grandfather and a house painter, was notorious for parties with rib fests, playing cards and plenty of jazz. And if he didn't want his guests to leave, it wasn't uncommon to have late-night meals (ex. cheeseburgers and milkshakes) at 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. (Source: [Chicago Tribune](#), [DNA Info](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Times](#))

10. Michelle, who earned a law degree from Harvard in 1988, left corporate law in 1991 to pursue community service. She was an assistant to then-Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. A couple of years later, she became the executive director for the Chicago branch of Public Allies, a diverse leadership-training program geared toward young adults. (Source: [History](#), [Public Allies](#))

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Please visit [J. Paye in Brief's News](#) to read the entire six-part Black History Month legal series tribute, honoring [former President Barack H. Obama](#), [former first lady Michelle Obama](#), [Nelson Mandela](#), [Loretta Lynch](#), [Kamala Harris](#) and [Charlotte E. Ray](#).

Shamontiel L. Vaughn compiled this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

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