

MICHELLE OBAMA SPEECH

The following is an excerpt from Michelle Obama's address to the Democratic National Convention on August 25, 2008 in Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Obama is the wife of Democratic candidate Barack Obama.

But each of us also comes here tonight by way of our own improbable journey.

I come here tonight as a sister, blessed with a brother who is my mentor, my protector and my lifelong friend.

I come here as a wife who loves my husband and believes he will be an extraordinary president.

I come here as a mom whose girls are the heart of my heart and the center of my world — they're the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning, and the last thing I think about when I go to bed at night. Their future — and all our children's future — is my stake in this election.

And I come here as a daughter — raised on the South Side of Chicago by a father who was a blue-collar city worker and a mother who stayed at home with my brother and me. My mother's love has always been a sustaining force for our family, and one of my greatest joys is seeing her integrity, her compassion and her intelligence reflected in my own daughters.

My dad was our rock. Although he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in his early 30s, he was our provider, our champion, our hero. As he got sicker, it got harder for him to walk, it took him longer to get dressed in the morning. But if he was in pain, he never let on. He never stopped smiling and laughing — even while struggling to button his shirt, even while using two canes to get himself across the room to give my mom a kiss. He just woke up a little earlier and worked a little harder.

He and my mom poured everything they had into me and Craig. It was the greatest gift a child can receive: never doubting for a single minute that you're loved, and cherished, and have a place in this world. And thanks to their faith and hard work, we both were able to go on to college. So I know firsthand from their lives — and mine — that the American dream endures.

And you know, what struck me when I first met Barack was that even though he had this funny name, even though he'd grown up all the way across the continent in Hawaii, his family was so much like mine. He was raised by grandparents who were working-class folks just like my parents, and by a single mother who struggled to pay the bills just like we did. Like my family, they scrimped and saved so that he could have opportunities they never had themselves. And Barack and I were raised with so many of the same values: that you work hard for what you want in life; that your word is your bond and you do what you say you're going to do; that you treat people with dignity and respect, even if you don't know them, and even if you don't agree with them.

And Barack and I set out to build lives guided by these values, and pass them on to the next generation. Because we want our children — and all children in this nation — to know that the only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work for them.

...

That is why I love this country.

And in my own life, in my own small way, I've tried to give back to this country that has given me so much. That's why I left a job at a law firm for a career in public service, working to empower young people to volunteer in their communities. Because I believe that each of us — no matter what our age or background or walk of life — each of us has something to contribute to the life of this nation.

It's a belief Barack shares — a belief at the heart of his life's work.

...

So tonight, in honor of my father's memory and my daughters' future — out of gratitude to those whose triumphs we mark this week, and those whose everyday sacrifices have brought us to this moment — let us devote ourselves to finishing their work; let us work together to fulfill their hopes; and let us stand together to elect Barack Obama president of the United States of America.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

ANN ROMNEY SPEECH

The following is an excerpt from Ann Romney's address to the Republican National Convention on August 28, 2012. Mrs. Romney is the wife of Republican candidate Mitt Romney.

Tonight I want to talk to you about love.

I want to talk to you about the deep and abiding love I have for a man I met at a dance many years ago. And the profound love I have, and I know we share, for this country.

I want to talk to you about that love so deep only a mother can fathom it — the love we have for our children and our children's children.

And I want us to think tonight about the love we all share for those Americans, our brothers and sisters, who are going through difficult times, whose days are never easy, nights are always long, and whose work never seems done.

...

It's the moms who always have to work a little harder, to make everything right.

It's the moms of this nation — single, married, widowed — who really hold this country together. We're the mothers, we're the wives, we're the grandmothers, we're the big sisters, we're the little sisters, we're the daughters.

You know it's true, don't you?

You're the ones who always have to do a little more.

...

Mitt's dad never graduated from college. Instead, he became a carpenter.

He worked hard, and he became the head of a car company, and then the governor of Michigan.

When Mitt and I met and fell in love, we were determined not to let anything stand in the way of our life together. I was an Episcopalian. He was a Mormon.

We were very young. Both still in college. There were many reasons to delay marriage, and you know? We just didn't care. We got married and moved into a basement apartment. We walked to class together, shared the housekeeping, and ate a lot of pasta and tuna fish. Our desk was a door propped up on sawhorses. Our dining room table was a fold down ironing board in the kitchen. Those were very special days.

Then our first son came along. All at once I'm 22 years old, with a baby and a husband who's going to business school and law school at the same time, and I can tell you, probably like every other girl who finds herself in a new life far from family and friends, with a new baby and a new husband, that it dawned on me that I had absolutely no idea what I was getting into.

That was 42 years ago. Now we have five sons and 18 grandchildren and I'm still in love with that boy I met at a high school dance.

I read somewhere that Mitt and I have a "storybook marriage." Well, in the storybooks I read, there were never long, long, rainy winter afternoons in a house with five boys screaming at once. And those storybooks never seemed to have chapters called MS or Breast Cancer.

A storybook marriage? No, not at all. What Mitt Romney and I have is a real marriage.

I know this good and decent man for what he is — warm and loving and patient.

...

It's true that Mitt has been successful at each new challenge he has taken on. It amazes me to see his history of success actually being attacked. Are those really the values that made our country great? As a mom of five boys, do we want to raise our children to be afraid of success?

...

I can't tell you what will happen over the next four years. But I can only stand here tonight, as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, an American, and make you this solemn commitment:

This man will not fail.

This man will not let us down.

This man will lift up America!

It has been 47 years since that tall, kind of charming young man brought me home from our first dance. Not every day since has been easy.

But he still makes me laugh. And never once did I have a single reason to doubt that I was the luckiest woman in the world.

I said tonight I wanted to talk to you about love. Look into your hearts.

This is our country.

This is our future.

These are our children and grandchildren.

You can trust Mitt.

He loves America.

He will take us to a better place, just as he took me home safely from that dance.

Give him that chance.

Give America that chance.

God bless each of you and God Bless the United States of America.