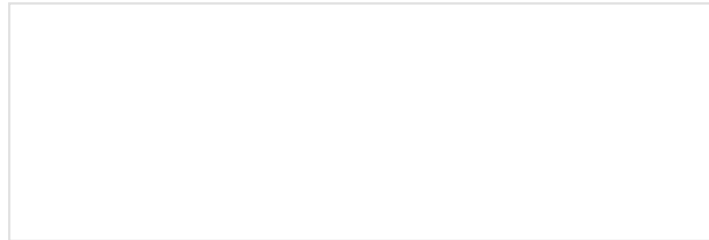


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# Obama Left Mark on HLS

*Profs fondly recall Law School alum as he launches presidential bid*

By MARIE C. KODAMA, CRIMSON STAFF WRITER [January 19, 2007](#)

Days before he launched his campaign for the presidency, Barack H. Obama gave Law School professor David B. Wilkins '77 a heads up: one of the professor's favorite students might be heading to the White House.

But that favorite student wouldn't be Barack. It'd be Michelle R. Obama, his wife.

The presidential hopeful graduated magna cum laude from the Law School in 1991; his wife earned the degree three years earlier.

But the senator was still outstanding in his own right—"brilliant, charismatic, and focused," said Wilkins, the Kirkland and Ellis professor of law. The two forged a relationship after Obama became the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review.

Obama announced the creation of an exploratory committee Tuesday, effectively launching his bid for the presidency, but he revealed his decision to his closest supporters in a conference call days earlier.

"He talked about how the timing was not exactly what he himself expected, but with a tremendous response from the nation, that this is an important moment and a great opportunity to step forward," Wilkins said.

Loeb University Professor Laurence H. Tribe '62, who taught Obama and employed him as a research assistant, remembers him as a "brilliant, personable, and obviously unique" person. Tribe said that Obama's theoretical perspective on applying modern physics to law was "very impressive."

"He is obviously a serious intellectual as well as a fantastic campaigner who can reach across boundaries," Tribe said. "He will make an extraordinarily fine president."

Wilkins, too, vows to be "supportive of him in any way possible" and said that he is a "terrific candidate offering a fresh perspective that is desperately needed in American politics."

He said he advised Obama to become a Supreme Court clerk. Obama recognized the honor in pursuing that post, Wilkins said, but quickly added that he wasn't interested.

"He said that he wanted to write a book about his life and his father, go back to Chicago, get back into the community, and run for office there. He knew exactly what he wanted and went about getting it done," Wilkins said. "He was the kind of person who you knew was destined for greatness."

Obama announced his presidential ambitions in a video on his Web site earlier this week, saying "I certainly didn't expect to find myself in this position a year ago. But...I've been struck by how hungry we all are for a different kind of politics."

The announcement had been expected for weeks, shocking few.

"It wasn't much of a surprise," said the president of the Harvard College Democrats, Brigit M. Helgen '08. "His intent has been pretty clear, for example, with his trips to New Hampshire."

Support, at least within the Dems, seems to be divided.

"There is a strong 'Students for Obama' group, but at this point, I would say it's pretty even between Obama and Hillary [R. Clinton]," Helgen said.






The newly formed "Students for Obama" plans to get in touch with the campaign as soon as it can and initiate trips to New Hampshire in the spring, according to group member Nathaniel J. Lubin '09.

Obama is expected to formally throw his hat into the ring Feb. 10.

—Staff writer Marie C. Kodama can be reached at [mckodama@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:mckodama@fas.harvard.edu).

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**Uvmer** · 3 years ago

Well, Harvard University also says they have a Native American Woman in the Law School Staff. That is untrue. So what else is not true in the name of "Diversity"?

<http://www.boston.com/news/pol...>

4 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

**Phillip Cantor** · 4 years ago

I'd like to hear from some of Trump's professors.

6 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

**Bill Thompson** · 4 years ago

If he will not release his grades, we only have hearsay that he graduated magna cum laude, right?

2 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

**AKRNC** → Bill Thompson · 4 years ago

The school has acknowledged he graduated magna cum laude, what part of that don't you understand? You can find it by googling it within 5 seconds. Magna cum laude applies to those with a GPA of 3.75 to 4.0, you only get to that point by working hard. It is commonly known that it takes an SAT score of 1500 or above to get into Harvard, not to mention that they accept only one out of every ten applicants. Did an affirmative action program help President Obama when it came to getting into Harvard? Nobody can accurately answer that question, however, affirmative action did not assist him in graduating magna cum laude. There's only one way to do that, to apply yourself and to excel at your studies. President Obama graduated with high honors proving he did what was needed to get this recognition.

11 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

**BigDogJunction** → AKRNC · 3 years ago

No, the school did NOT acknowledge anything. Some dipwad Obamabot claimed he did.

5 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

**Reedlandj** → BigDogJunction · 3 years ago



Common sense, BigDogJunction. Every college or graduate school program I ever attended listed students' academic distinction. These would have been filed in the bottom of drawers of proud mothers, so at least a few of them could have been pulled out when said moms realized that a classmate of their sons and daughters had been elected president. If he hadn't been listed magna cum laude on said programs, you think no one on the planet would have blown the whistle? You could more easily slip sunrise past a barnyard full of young, vigorous rosters.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**alistz** → AKRNC • 3 years ago

That SAT test is what they are hiding. Affirmative action did assist him in graduating magna cum laude. It's kind of like that nobel peace prize that he didn't earn. Or that Grammy award he didn't earn. See...leftists have infiltrated Harvard and the give the black guy who regurgitates their propaganda "A"s.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**myfanwy** → AKRNC • 3 years ago

Neither did affirmative action get him elected president of the Harvard Law Review. The election process is rigorous. Law Review editors are chosen from among their classmates based on their academic rankings. These editors then choose the Law Review president.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**myfanwy** → Bill Thompson • 3 years ago

William Thompson, your post highlights your ignorance. First of all, most people who have been to college and graduate school know that transcripts are only released at the request of the student, and usually are mailed directly to the institutions of higher learning designated by the student. They contain information such as social security numbers that are not meant for public consumption.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**myfanwy** → Bill Thompson • 3 years ago

I'm sure Harvard would confirm that much. It is written in the graduation program.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

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