

## A North Carolina Writer at the Inauguration

Written by Kimberly Davis

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Before this election, I lived in my fair share of red states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, Virginia, and North Carolina. It wasn't enough for Barack Obama to just win the election; I wanted North Carolina to become a blue state.

By election day, I'd only lived in Charlotte for sixteen months, but I felt just as invested as any native who supported him. By the time the election came around, he'd been to North Carolina seven times. I had volunteered and been to three rallies in Charlotte, one for his primary run and two election events, and my husband and I even got to shake his hand. I didn't read the polls or believe the pundits; no one knew which way this state would go. Days later, when North Carolina was finally declared for Barack Obama I was overjoyed.

"I live in a blue state! Take that, other states!"

I called my friends in Virginia and Indiana who had already crossed over to blue-state status to tell them North Carolina made the cut. I would have gone to the presidential inauguration even if he hadn't won the state, but the fact that he did made the victory just a bit sweeter.

With only a six-hour drive between me and history, metro passes, train tickets, and layers of warm clothes were all I needed. Despite not having swearing-in ceremony tickets at the time, I knew that it would work out somehow.

I wasn't just going to this inauguration for myself. I was going for my ninety-one-year-old grandmother, who can only shake her head and smile when Barack Obama is on television. I went for her husband, my grandfather, who was killed in 1961 trying to get black people to register to vote. I was going for my future children, who will read about America's first black president in their history books and I can tell them, "Yes, you can be anything you want to be." President Barack Obama's inauguration was even bigger than that; I felt as though I celebrated with our state, country, and the world.

What will forever stand out to me about attending President Barack Obama's inauguration won't just be the overwhelming sense of being a part of history or the belief that our country decided we really wanted change, although I still pause whenever I get those feelings. In the midst the

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grandeur of this moment, I took note of the little things:

The piles of Barack Obama postcards slid through the door of the Union Station Post Office waiting to be mailed to our president. Each one of those cards had a note written on it, and they came from someone who believed in our country and our future.

Throngs of people chanting “Yes You Can!” to the few brave souls who decided to climb into nearby trees to get a better view and the loud “Awww” when they couldn’t quite make it up.

My favorite scenes were the huddles of people, who had tickets but didn’t get into the ceremony, who began listening through mp3 players, cell phones, and radios just to hear Barack Obama’s inaugural address. Thousands, including myself and friends, didn’t let getting locked out of the ceremony dampen their excitement.

I was there. Yes it was freezing cold and yes I was vying for space along with two million other people, but I was there. I get to tell this story to friends and family and the story will live on long after I’m no longer here. President Barack Obama’s inauguration is now a permanent part of my life story.