

Community Comment  
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### Night and Day

On Tuesday we all had the good fortune to hear from our current President, Barrack H. Obama, as he gave his farewell address. I heard three major themes in his speech.

First, this man thanked everyone who helped, in one way or another, elect him President twice. He specifically thanked those who helped in the two campaigns. Running for any office is daunting in itself. Running for President takes a monumental effort. Mr. Obama had great help and he was inspirational as a candidate. He also thanked those he never met such as state democratic party members and the local organizers. And, he also thanked the voters. In the end, it's the voters who count.

Second, Mr. Obama recounted his respect for the job. There is, perhaps, no job on earth with greater responsibility. The power comes from the position, not the person. He seemed to get that. He admitted that he grew in the job. As he leaves office, he enjoys over a fifty percent approval rate. After eight years in office, when people are tired of the person no matter who it might be, that is remarkable. He talked about the democratic process and traditions that we have spent two hundred and forty years establishing and the many things that were accomplished under his watch. He did inherit the worst economy since the great depression. He now owns the record for the most jobs created in his term. We have the big three auto makers still in business because of him. The economy would probably be more robust still with a little cooperation from congress. But the republicans vowed to block anything to make him fail as President on the very day of his inauguration and we are all the worse for that political strategy. Osama bin Laden is dead because of his leadership. On the issue of race, while we have made great strides, there is obviously more work to do.

Third, he acknowledged the difficulty of the position and it's demands on the family that lives in the White House. His girls were little when they moved in and they seemed to have done well under the glare of the public spotlight. He and his wife are to be congratulated for the family they have raised. He approached the position with knowledge, skill, and dignity and there was not the smallest hint of scandal. His thoughts about his wife and her work, and the closeness with Vice President Biden were genuine and touching.

I certainly didn't agree with everything he did and I doubt I ever could with any President. But he made me proud to be an American and to have my children and grandchildren know him as President. I, for one will miss him.

On Thursday I watched the first press conference with President Elect Trump. His appointees are what you would expect from this person. They, and he, have no regard for experience or conflict of interest issues. They don't separate their business from their

government position. They are not serious public servants. This is not about policy differences, this is a matter of character.

This is a troublesome and sad new administration. I worry for my children's future.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.