

## The Halls of Power

Black history has been a progressive climb from without the lowest echelons of society during slavery to the highest. When you think of black history, we often think of the civil rights movement, of John Brown's violent protests, of the Underground Railroad. But black history doesn't end with any one event. It is always in the process of being made every day.

Even in the last ten years, huge steps forward have been made at the very top governmental positions by notable and highly qualified black Americans who are making all of us proud in the contributions they are making to America. Colin Powell was an accomplished general who demonstrated with quiet dignity and authority that he could lead many men into battle. He was rewarded for his valiant efforts finally reaching the very top levels of the government serving as President Bush's Secretary of State in his first administration. Throughout the halls of government and anywhere Secretary Powell served, he was treated with respect and the honor that he deserved for serving his country so well.

Following the honorable service of Colin Powell a just as distinguished public servant, a black woman by the name of Condoleezza Rice. It was a proud day when she stepped into that office showing how far America had come from the days when blacks could not eat in the same restaurants as whites or drink from the same drinking fountains. And her service has been just as distinguished, meeting with heads of state from Africa to Europe to the Middle East to South America and making great accomplishments throughout her career.

These two black Americans are true examples of Doctor King's vision of people who were recognized not for the color of their skin but the content of their character. Their excellence as leaders and their amazing resume's they brought to their jobs provide tremendous inspiration to black boys and girls in school that they too can rise up in this society and go as far as they want to go if they let their natural gifts and skills come to the surface. They do not need a government program or special help to succeed. America has far to go but Dr. Rice and General Powell are examples that the system can reward black people of excellence and will not over look the contributions they can make to America's future.

And now we are on that part of black history that is yet to be. The future is a part of black history yet to be written. And we witness another black leader of excellence preparing to be considered for the very top position of power in the country, perhaps in the world, the presidency of the United States. And as with General Powell and Dr. Rice, Barrack Obama will not be judged as a black man or in the context of the racial struggle in this country. Already he is being admired and praised for his leadership, his eloquence and his ability to bring new vision to this country. It is a day of pride for all of black America to see Barrack Obama be considered for this position. He will have to work hard and be judged on his talents, skills, experience and ability to lead. But it's a testimony to how far the country has come that he has just as much of a chance to win that election as any other candidate. And if he wins he will knock down

one more barrier to black people and throughout African American society, children will be able to say, there is nothing I cannot do if I try hard. And that is the vision every civil right leader since the civil war has wanted for blacks in America.

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