Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris gives hope to us all

By Mel Kleinveldt-Lewis  
Staff Member

Kamala Harris gives hope by her mere presence as the new Vice President-Elect of the United States of America. To have an image of a strong woman in the White House speaks directly to the confidence and future successes of all little girls and women who see themselves represented by Vice President-Elect Harris.

A quote from her book The Truths We Hold reflects upon her mother’s perseverance, “She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as Black girls, and she was determined that we would grow into confident, proud Black women.”

Women in our lives and the ones we see as a representation of ourselves have all helped to create who we are today. There have been generations of beautiful women from all walks of life who have fought and struggled to get us to this point. In her first speech as Vice President-Elect, Harris pays tribute to all women by saying, “the generations of women, Black women, Asian, White, Latina, Native American women who throughout our nation’s history have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all.”

This is a victory for all women and a special time in our history for Black women and women of color. As a Black woman and an immigrant, there is a feeling of joy and pride that fills my heart to see the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother and Black father ascend to the office of Vice President. “The black women who are often, too often, overlooked but so often prove that they are the backbone of our democracy” Harris said.

It is a time to overcome and a time to move past obstacles that have held us back for too long. History is being made by electing the first woman Vice President in America. A strong, confident Black woman is the new Vice President-Elect. In the same speech, Harris speaks to President-Elect Joe Biden’s character and says, “he had the audacity to break one of the most substantial barriers that exist in our country and select a woman as his Vice President.” She goes on to make the most profound statement, “but while I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last.”

The continuous fight for fair housing

By Mel Kleinveldt-Lewis  
Staff Member

A time for giving thanks has turned out to be a time to make amends. It is a well-known fact that discriminatory practices within the real estate industry have caused an unequal wealth gap in America. In a Nov. 2020 article in REALTOR® Magazine, a vow was included to “correct lasting inequities in housing.”

On Thursday, Nov. 19, the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) issued an official apology during a virtual summit on inclusion. The 2021 NAR President Charlie Oppler spoke about taking action to foster diversity in American life. Oppler stated, “understanding the history of discrimination in this country means we must understand the history of housing discrimination.”

The history of fair housing is a far reaching one according to the NAR President. It goes back to a passage added into the Code of Ethics in 1924. The passage read that realtors “should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood ... members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”

Remembering this history is part of the solution to the problem of discrimination. We cannot go back in time to change what has happened, but we can face the problem head on.

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Oppler acknowledged this when he said, “Change starts with us. We must remember this history if we hope to repair America’s racially divided communities.”

Alongside Charles Oppler was NAR Director of Fair Housing Policy, Bryan Greene who also pointed out the practices of discrimination such as steering, redlining and blockbusting. These racist policies and practices were wrong according to Oppler. The NAR Director of Fair Housing Policy stated, “unfortunately REALTORS® were engaged in discriminatory practices...like redlining and of course we all know blockbusting harmed communities.”

Facing the issue of discrimination has turned REALTORS® into leaders in their communities according to Greene. There are plans to focus on accountability and change in the new Fair Housing ACT! which was unveiled in January. Bryan Greene added, “now we are talking about expanding the Fair Housing Act in ways we could not have imagined perhaps several decades ago.”

The passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 did not solve the quandary of discrimination Greene maintained. He added that this history of discrimination is a legacy that African Americans still live with. “Our neighborhoods are still very segregated and you can see in our neighborhoods the imprint of redlining from 80 years ago,” stated Greene. These discriminatory policies, according to Greene, have led to the wealth gap between White Americans and African Americans, leading to broader issues like health, employment and education disparities.

“I realize that words are not enough, actions are always louder than words,” said Oppler after a heartfelt apology on behalf of the National Association of REALTORS®.

According to the NAR President the expansion of the Fair Housing Act is the positive action being taken to restore decades worth of inequality. Bryan Greene explains this new initiative, “it underscores our commitment to greater accountability, culture change and better training,” adding, “we’re working with the US Chamber of Commerce to deal with economic inequality and push for inclusion.”

He continues, “We’re also working with the National Association of Real Estate Brokers to address minority homeownership and to do what we can together to create more opportunities.”

Change starts with us. We must remember this if we want to repair America’s racially divided communities”

- Charlie Oppler
NAR President

Meet The Staff

My name is Serenay Washington and I’m a freshman. I’m a part of the OBSS program, NSHSS, and Honor Society. I love drawing and painting as my hobby. I love all music genres and adore animals.

Brian Nnamdi Obichere is a fourth year Mechanical Engineering student. I was born and raised in Nigeria then he moved to the States to pursue a degree. I enjoy playing the guitar, playing video games, and road trips.

This year is my first year as an incoming freshman at Fresno State, my name is Joanna Lopez I am a motivating, respectful person and I enjoy promoting growth & development in others. I have had experience in volunteering at (MCH) Madera Community Hospital. I am the middle child and I am the first generation in my family to go to college. I am majoring in Pre-health and I am obtaining my bachelor’s degree in Social Work.