

First Lady portrait hung at Nassau Inn

by Chris Sturgis/For The Times

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PRINCETON BOROUGH -- A portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama was added Wednesday to the Class Photo Wall in the Tap Room of the Nassau Inn, adding a second woman and the first black American to the display of noteworthy Princeton University graduates.



Martin Griff/ The Times With Howard Taylor, (Michelle Obama's University co-advisor) watching at left, Valerie Smith Director of the Center for African American Studies and Robert Wuthnow Chair of the Department of Sociology at Princeton University unveil a photo of the first lady and PU graduate in the Class Photo Wall in the Tap Room of the Nassau Inn in Princeton Borough.

"Michelle Obama is a model of sharp intelligence, professional accomplishment, impeccable style, engaged citizenship and commitment to family who has inspired millions of people all over the world," said Valerie Smith, chair of African American studies and the Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature, at the unveiling. "We are proud that a woman of her achievements is the product of sociology and African American studies at Princeton," she said. Obama, formerly Michelle LaVaughn Robinson, received her bachelor's degree with honors in sociology in 1985, and her thesis received an award citation from what was then the program in African American Studies.

She went to Harvard Law School and later to the corporate law firm of Sidley Austin, before becoming vice president of community and external affairs for the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Obama has remained a member of the sociology department's advisory board for the past several years, and the portrait installation provides an opportunity for current students in the department to celebrate her continued accomplishments and service, organizers said.

Obama's senior portrait joins Princeton luminaries from political life, including Bill Bradley, Thomas Kean, James Baker, George Shultz, Adlai Stevenson, John Foster Dulles and James Forrestal, Brendan Byrne and Donald Rumsfeld.

Other celebrities include journalist Charlie Gibson, financial commentator Louis Rukeyser, actor Jimmy Stewart and actress Brooke Shields.