



Power Forward: My Presidential Education

Reggie Love

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Reggie Love is a unique witness to history, whose introduction to Washington was working in Junior Senator Barack Obama's mailroom. As "body man" to Obama during his first presidential campaign, Love's job was to stay one step behind the candidate, but think and act three steps ahead during a typical eighteen-hour workday. As President Obama's personal aide during that momentous first term, Love sat yards from the Oval Office and often spent more time with the President than anyone else. While his experiences were unique, the lessons he learned during his tenure with the President are universal. Persistence. Responsibility. Passion for a cause greater than yourself. In short, maturity.

Love has been singularly lucky in his mentors. At Duke University, where he was a walk-on and a captain of its fabled basketball team, Love learned from Coach Krzyzewski that sports builds character--from President Obama, Love learned that how you conduct your life defines your character.

Accountability and serving with honor were learned during unsought moments: co-coaching with Malia Obama's and Sasha Obama's basketball team with the President; lending Obama his tie ahead of a presidential debate; managing a personal life when no hour is truly your own. From his first interview with Senator Obama, to his near-decision not to follow the President-elect to the White House, Love drew on Coach K's teachings as he learned to navigate Washington. But it was while owning up to (temporarily) losing the President's briefcase, playing pick-up games in New Hampshire to secure votes, babysitting the children of visiting heads of state, and keeping the President company at every major turning point of his historic first campaign and administration, that Love learned how persistence and passion can lead not only to success, but to a broader concept of adulthood.

Power Forward is a professional coming of age story like no other.

Power Forward: My Presidential Education Details

Date : Published February 3rd 2015 by Simon & Schuster (first published January 6th 2015)

ISBN : 9781476763347

Author : Reggie Love

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Politics, Autobiography, Memoir, Biography, History



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From Reader Review Power Forward: My Presidential Education for online ebook

Robin says

I would say a solid 3.5 stars. There were some good things to take away from the book, and I appreciated it being read by the author. That added a lot of nuance to the stories that would have been missed if read by someone else.

Alex Jones says

Great read and I really enjoy the book. He mostly talk about his personal journey behind campaigns with senator Obama. He also talk about his personal growth and professional development as result of his association with Obama. I get close up look at evolving of Obama who eventually become the president.. Great insights and it help me a lot in term of perspective of what required to be a man and what required to success in America!

Scott Dieterle says

I enjoyed hearing Reggie Love's story going from College athlete at Duke to working in then Senator Obama's office in DC. After getting his foot in the door, Reggie was witness to history. The book not only gives you a glimpse of the more personal side of President Obama, but Reggie's personal story is a great story of a young man maturing and gaining life experience in a way he never imagined for himself.

Emily Antoszyk says

Memoir by Reggie Love - assistant to Obama as he made the transition from senator to POTUS. Reggie is from Charlotte, went to Duke, and fell into a position with Obama as his porter, confidant, basketball opponent, and friend. I wished there was more about his time with Obama, most of the chapters talk about his time with Obama in relation to lessons he learned playing college football and basketball at Duke. The story was OK, but the writing was unimpressive.

Naeemah Huggins says

Reggie Love was President Obama's Personal Aide or bodyman from the time he announced his candidacy in 2007 to 3 years into his presidency. He talks of what he has learned through this unique and once in a lifetime experience and how he has personally changed and become a better man by it. President Obama comes off as the down to earth fatherly figure that we know and love, and I'm not sure if this was intentional but Reggie came off as a cocky self involved whiner. POTUS had to put up with some less than desirable attitudes from him, in the beginning he was less than serious about his responsibilities, a product of being

Generation Y I'm sure. Given he was 23 when he started working for Obama, I'm issuing a presidential pardon and hoping that he truly did learn from the experience. The book as just an OK listen. I think Reggie may have picked up some of Obama's staccato speech characteristics through osmosis. The book gets a solid 2 for effort and an extra star for giving me an intimate look at the man behind the nation.

J Beckett says

Title: Power Forward

225 pages

Publication Date: February 3, 2015

By Reggie Love

Political memoirs are not at the top of my literary must-read list, nor are they even at the bottom. The fact is, they aren't on the list at all. I've read several (a couple were memorable) and without fail, most left me emotionally arid, dry to my core, bored, filled with questions and weary from their tireless, one-dimensional commentary. I was often rendered, for reasons still difficult to explain, overcome with the feeling that I had fallen, somehow, beneath the 'caste' radar of privilege and intellectual equality when compared to the book's cartoonish characters, settings, and plot. More often than not, I found myself pouring over amber pages occupied by ivy league tales, the family business, elaborate trips, family trusts, Martha's Vineyard or some impressively surreal sexual tryst at a Gregorian "compound" in eastern Europe. These memories, while expressive, never reflected the life with which I am familiar, so the highly beloved memoir is usually not a viable contender on the list of my next great read.

Surprisingly, I found, purely through curiosity, an inspiring book based on political reflection that had me more entertained than I would have ever imagined. What separated this memoir from most, aside from its subject matter and immediate personal connection, was the fact that it was written by a true insider; what was referred to as "a body man," a personal assistant. Not surprisingly, it was a memoir based on the ever mesmerizing and incomparably tantalizing Obama presidency. The book, Power Forward, was written, respectfully (almost ad nauseum), by President Obama's "body man," Reggie Love.

Because I think everyone should read this book, whether a fan or opponent of President Obama, I will try to avoid giving too many spoilers, but... will say this...

Love has written a political "adoration" story, uniquely allowing glimpses into the day (more like a year or two) of the life of a budding, and eventually, the American president, before and after he took office. Impressively, he was able to effectively capture the feelings, magic and mayhem of campaigning [upon these American trails] as an African American with no initial national clout and then, almost magically, granted the very high and likely possibility of being victorious and becoming a historical "first".

Love writes with a gentle pen. Certainly he could have exposed some sort of muck that makes a writer's career, especially considering the position he was in, but opted to show that his respect superseded that quest for notoriety and temporary exposure. The stories are relatively light and kind, bonding and special, reminiscent more of big brother / little brother or father and son than employer/employee. Undoubtedly, Love knew then, although he opted, it seems, to act aloof throughout the book, that he was a pretty damn lucky guy.

For most of the memoir, Love quietly references possible careers in basketball, football or corporate America

(going as far as try-outs and practices), but seems to put his position as "body man" to a politician--a political icon-- on the cusp of significant governmental tremble, in the same category as boy scout or "oops" man. He spends an exorbitant amount of time informing the reader of his numerous mistakes and graceless blunders, mistakes that, for as minor as they seemed, sometimes stole away the fact that he had attended Duke, has hard earned stock, and pretty sharp wits. There are several moments in the book when Love gives the impression that working as the young senator's assistant was a: "I had no other choices," type gig, rather than, as the writing of the book proves, a stepping stone or gateway to a dream come true.

There are more depth and anecdotal moments as the memoir progresses, but not in the same vain as a great novel or season writer's non-fiction. The reader is exposed to and gets swallowed up in fraternity type interactions, a constant thrill of competitiveness, and several doses of 'bro-therapy', giving the reassurance that Obama is real in his naturalness, but carries himself in constant awareness of his purpose. Jokes and playful manly interactions are sincere, but it is clear, according to Love's commentary, that everyone knew Obama was the Alpha. There is so much remaining to comment upon, but the methods used in the writing of this book does not permit for much to be said without treading upon that forbidden zone of spoiling the story further.

The book is episodic, almost oppressive in its choppy approach. But it is, as aforementioned, entertaining and a relaxed read. Truthfully, it would make a decent documentary if ever produced for television; more HBO than VH1.

Despite its valleys, as it does have some magnificent peaks, Power Forward is a worthy read and a personal journey which helps one to understand why ("firsts" aside) the world loves this president.

Newt Taylor says

There are plenty of heartfelt American success stories out there(Love's boss being one of them). The uniqueness of this memoir is actually the inside story of a Presidential campaign, so Love missed a golden opportunity to create a 4 star book that hasn't been told numerous times over. His saving grace is his humbleness(unlike the JD Vance's of this genre). Throughout, Love acknowledges his good fortune, gives credit where credit is due, and never overestimates his writing skills. Reggie Love aside, Power Forward is recommended for anyone interested in the unbelievable demands of a Presidential campaign, or an affirmation of Obama's stellar character. Duke basketball fans may enjoy Love's journey, as well.

Phil Lawless says

Reggie Love was Barrack Obama's body man with the election campaign for a year and then in the White House for three years. Reggie played basketball at Duke and was on one of the championship teams in 2001, one of the reasons I bought the book. Reggie gives a very inside view of the campaign, the incredible amount of work required and how Obama responded to all the pressure.

It was a very engaging book. Reggie and Barack became very good friends. Reggie matured in his job and it shows in his own critiques of his life.

Nkj Fletcher says

I essentially like this book for all the same reasons others gave four stars. It was a quick and easy read. I personally found several aspects of his youth relatable. Finally I really appreciated his unique insight into President Obama the person.

Janet says

I received a copy of this book as part of GoodReads' First Reads program in exchange for an honest review.

And honestly – I loved this book!

Reggie Love tells his story not in linear fashion but in "lessons learned" chapters with titles like "Don't Get Too Comfortable on the Bench" and "You Can't Buy Momentum." Each chapter ends with him gaining new wisdom and maturity, but the focus is as much on his parents, coaches, and other mentors who have helped him – including Senator-turned-candidate-turned-President Barack Obama – as it is on himself.

That graciousness, and the humility with which he owns all his mistakes and then overcomes them, makes Love an enjoyable narrator to spend time with. This is a smart young man who, like all youths, had to grow into his potential, and is keenly aware that he might have squandered it if those around him hadn't cared enough to set high expectations and then alternately encourage him and kick his butt until he gained enough maturity and self-awareness to do so himself.

Love's relationship with President Obama is the context within which he tells his overall story, but the book is less about the specifics of that relationship than I had expected. While it's clear that the two men became friends over time, in the book Obama appears more as the leader of a team and as an exemplar of passion, integrity, and character for Love to learn from than as a buddy. However there are enough personal anecdotes from that relationship, from their first days in the Senator's office through the campaign trail and into the White House, to get some vivid insights into the man behind the public figure.

In the last few chapter, the President's aide has matured to the point that he himself becomes a mentor to a fourteen year old boy (through Capital Partners for Education) and chooses to leave his White House job in order to focus on his continuing education – although it is clear that he continues to be one of the President's friends, someone who still plays basketball with him and exchanges personal notes.

I think this would be a great book for almost any young person to read to get an idea of both the challenges and the possibilities of growing up and being a successful human being. Love's focus is on character, not resumes or income (although it's clear that he's not going to have any trouble with the latter), persistence, sense of humor, and personal responsibility. I'm 50 years old, and I found myself inspired to push my perceived limits and tackle the challenges of my life with more enthusiasm.

Kevin C says

This book, "Power Forward: My Presidential Education" by Reggie Love, has been on my household bookshelf for about six months, I have always been interested in the "Political Process" so I knew this book would bring great insight to current and former trends in Washington D.C. After finishing the first chapter I knew this book was a perfect fit for my Sophomore Year Reading Challenge September Book.

Reggie Love was just your typical teenage boy, growing up in Charlotte, North Carolina. Love attended High School, at the Providence Day School also located in Charlotte. Love's family struggled to make ends meet and could barely afford to send him to the Providence Day School, but with his father's strong work ethic he was able to attend school where he excelled in the classroom. Although Love was a stellar student he was an athlete at heart. Love played both Basketball and Football at the Providence Day School.

Following his senior year, Reggie Love committed to Duke University where he was on a dual athletic scholarship for both Football and Basketball. At Duke, Love majored in Political Science, which was the dawn of his time with Senator and soon to be President Barack Obama. Following Graduating from Duke, Love applied for an Internship on Capitol Hill with Senator Barack Obama. In 2006, Love was interviewed by future White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, instantly a bond had formed and Reggie began about two weeks after the interview. The transition from life, from Charlotte to Washington D.C. was extremely difficult. In Charlotte, life was much more relaxed as D.C. was scheduled second by second. On February 10th, 2007 Senator Barack Obama (a democrat) announced his intentions to run for President of the United States. Soon after this Reggie Love began to serve in the Obama Campaign as Senator Obama's assistant, in this he was responsible for completing every task that the candidate had asked for. Reggie soon learned about Obama's love for basketball. He saw this as an opportunity to bond with the candidate so he took advantage of this. Love noted that Obama and him would play one on one basketball before every public event. Love said one of his most valuable lessons that Obama had taught him was to interact with people in any political presence. Love and Obama would often play games of Basketball with teenagers in inner city settings. Up until the day of the election the chaotic campaign stops would bring stress to Love and Obama's day to day life. On the evening of November 4th, 2007, Barack Obama had one the presidency which was a bittersweet moment for Love. Love was preparing to head back to Charlotte and begin an Office Job like many of the people he graduated with. He was wrong. Obama offered Love a Position as the Personal Aid to President and he began on January 20th, 2008.

In this Book, the Contrast between personal stories and professional stories really compliment each other perfectly. Love reflects on the Bond that he built with Obama from a Professional Standpoint. The Only thing that I dislike about this book is the way that it is set up, the Book starts in 2008, then Jumps to Love's Childhood then Jumps to 2006 which can be confusing to some readers. I highly recommend "Power Forward: My Presidential Education"

Clint says

Relatively brief book CD by former Duke University basketball player-turned-President Obama "body man" details what he calls his maturation as a close associate of the 44th president. The North-Carolina native Love intersperses his childhood and career at Duke with his association with Obama's first presidential campaign and then his three years with the president in the White House. Although his writing is a cliche-

ridden puddle and his view of Obama is man to God and nowhere balanced, he nevertheless spins a few interesting stories about the campaign and some of the inglorious things he had to do as a presidential aide.

Larkin Tackett says

This book was an easy read with simple and purposeful writing. Love's autobiography is about family, politics, and sports, with underlying themes of race, effort, and character. Having spent a few years in politics and campaigns myself at the beginning of my own career, this is a coming-of-age story with which--despite Love's race and athletic prowess--I could identify.

pati says

A perfect example of Bildungsroman; I enjoyed the narrative, a very quick read.

George Briggs says

Basketball Connection

Duke University basketball captain and football player shared a love for basketball, and soon after became Senator Obama's personal assistant. Reggie Love pens a very insightful story of not only his personal growth, but also reveals the behind the scene experiences of a president who has already impacted America in many positive ways. Reggie Love lauds the intelligence, patience, and vision of his boss who from day 1 had to deal with negativity and obstruction from the other side of the aisle in Congress. At times, I saw many of the same themes mentioned by President Obama in his book Audacity To Hope.
