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Valerie B. Jarrett, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison

Jarrett's Background

President and CEO, The Habitat Company, 2007-2009

Executive Vice-President, The Habitat Company, 1995-2007

Department of Planning and Development, Commissioner 1992-1995

Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor Richard M. Daley 1991-1992

Deputy Corporation Counsel for Finance and Development 1987-1991

Private practice in Real Estate Law 1984-1987

EDUCATION

B.S. Stanford University
J.D. University of Michigan Law School

Who is Valerie Jarrett?

“Jarrett is one of Barack and Michelle Obama’s closest friends. She is someone both Obama and his wife have described as ‘like family.’ The Chicago Tribune quotes him as saying, “I trust her completely.” And Michelle says, “She’s always one of the people that he and I talk to when we’re about to make a move.” Fn.1.

This trust extends from the personal to the professional realm. Reportedly in the White House, Jarrett calls him “Mr. President,” in the West Wing and “Barack” in

the East Wing. She is his most trusted professional advisor as well. “If there’s a consigliere in the White House, it’s Valerie,” said [John] Podesta, former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton.” Fn.2. She has the president’s ear even on issues where she has little experience. She was part of all the important campaign decisions “and while her lack of campaign experience sometimes frustrated political operatives, they dared not protest, because of her

Well paid to do good...

relationship with the Obamas.” Fn.3. In the White House her “long ties to both Obama and his wife establish her as the president’s eyes and ears, positioning her as a counterweight to other senior advisers.” Fn.4.

“ For the last decade Valerie Jarrett has claimed to be helping the poor. The poor have remained poor while Ms. Jarrett has made herself rich. ”

-Bill Wilson, President of Americans For Limited Government

After law school Jarrett practiced real estate law and then left private practice for government service joining the Chicago government as Deputy Corporation Counsel for Finance and Development. She then served as Mayor Daley’s Deputy Chief of Staff and later headed up the Department of Planning and Development. She left that Department in 1995 to become Executive Vice President at the Habitat Company, a property management company that had been appointed by the courts to oversee construction of all public housing in Chicago. “At first, Habitat’s job was to desegregate housing by building ‘scattered site’ units in more affluent white neighborhoods across the city. But the effort had little impact.

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Sources for further reading:

Barack's Rock, VOGUE, October 2008. Available online at: http://www.style.com/voque/feature/2008_Oct_Valerie_Jarrett/. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

Fn.1. Don Terri, *'In the path of lightning'; Valerie Jarrett is known as the other side of Barack Obama's brain. Can this tough-minded adviser, who is guided by aphorisms and gut instinct, help him reach the White House?*, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, July 27, 2008 at 8. Available online at: <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/jul/27/health/chi-072708-jarrett>. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

Fn.2. Julianna Goldman, *Washington Outsider Jarrett Is Obama Envoy to Bankers*, BLOOMBERG, April 16, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601070&sid=aiSpqgX8USIM>. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

Fn.3. Jodi Kantor, *An Old Hometown Mentor, And Still at Obama's Side*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, November 24, 2008, at A1. Available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/24/us/politics/24jarrett.html?_r=2. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

Fn.4. See Fn.3.
Fn.5. See Fn.2.

Fn.6. Jason Grotto and Laurie Cohen, *Obama adviser shapes city housing policy*, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, July 6, 2008, at C22. Available online at: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-cha-habitat-sunday-06-jul06_0_1187978.story. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

Fn.7. Binyamin Appelbaum, *Grim proving ground for Obama's housing policy*, THE BOSTON GLOBE, June 27, 2008, at A1. Available online at: http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2008/06/27/grim_proving_ground_for_obamas_housing_policy/?page=full. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

What you really need to know about Jarrett.

Jarrett reported the following income on her financial disclosure report filed in February 2009:

Organization	Type	Amount
The Habitat Executive Services, Inc.	Salary	\$302,000
The Habitat Executive Services, Inc.	Deferred Compensation	\$550,000
The Chicago Transit Authority	Deferred Compensation	\$35,560
Navigation Consulting, Inc.	Director's Fee	\$76,000
Veolia Transportation Services	Director's Fee	\$24,000
Joyce Foundation	Director's Fee	\$5,700
Chicago Stock Exchange, Inc.	Director's Fee	\$34,444
Rreef American REIT II	Director's Fee	\$58,000
USG Corporation	Director's Fee	\$146,643
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago	Director's Fee	\$1,900
Total Compensation		\$1,234,247

See Jarrett's Form SF-278 available online at: http://s3.amazonaws.com/propublica/assets/financial_disclosures/Jarrett_Valerie_278.pdf. (Accessed April 29, 2009.)

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The company built about 1,800 units, mostly in lower-income Hispanic neighborhoods before the program ended." They eventually convinced the courts to allow development where "CHA and Habitat could show that the neighborhood would become 'revitalized' through large public and private investments that would lead to racial integration." This came as a result of CHA's and Habitat's desire to tear down the Henry Horner Homes, across the street from the United Center. It led to the implementation of the "Plan for Transformation" that would replace existing public housing with developments that included public housing, affordable housing and market housing. This began in 2000. As of July of last year "the city ha[d] lost more than 13,000 housing units for the poor at a time when low-income families face one of the worse housing crises in recent history. After years of neglect and abandonment, many residents doubt that Jarrett and CHA officials have their interests at heart." Only about one third of the residents were able to return to redeveloped projects. Meanwhile "Habitat has earned \$6.8 million in fees and \$10.8 million in administrative expenses since the plan started in 2000, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The company also earns millions as a property manager for the CHA," while Ms Jarrett has lived very comfortably at her lakefront apartment, pulling in a six-figure base salary plus hundreds of thousands of dollars in compensation for serving on boards. Fn.6.

The most glaring example of neglect is Grove Parc Plaza located in the district that President Obama represented for eight years in the Illinois legislature. "About 99 of the units are vacant, many rendered uninhabitable by unfixed problems, such as collapsed roofs and fire damage. Mice scamper through the halls. Battered mailboxes hang open. Sewage backs up into kitchen sinks." Residents have been complaining for years to little avail. "As late as 2003, a routine federal inspection still gave conditions at Grove Parc a score of 82 on a 100-point scale." By 2005 that had dropped to 56. Finally in 2006 Grove Parc received 11 out of 100. Jarrett's only comment about this gross mismanagement under her leadership was about how hard it is to manage something you don't own. Fn.7.

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