Obama writes children's picture book

Jocelyn Noveck
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK —He's the leader of the free world, and he's won a Nobel Peace Prize. But only now, by one measure, is Barack Obama finally truly famous:

He's written a children's book.

With "Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters," a picture book for readers three and up that hit bookstores Tuesday (it was announced in September), the president joins a long list of famous folk who've penned children's books: Madonna, John Travolta, Katie Couric, Will Smith, Paul McCartney, Whoopi Goldberg, Jamie Lee Curtis, Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld, Steve Martin and John Lithgow.

Even Obama's current secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton, wrote one — when she was first lady, a book of children's letters to White House pets. The late Ted Kennedy wrote about Washington as viewed by his dog. On the other side of the political spectrum, conservative commentator Glenn Beck published a Christmas picture book last year, and Lynne Cheney has written several children's books.

Obama, who is donating his proceeds to a scholarship fund for children of disabled and fallen soldiers, isn't even the only president to pen a children's book. Theodore Roosevelt and Jimmy Carter wrote books for young people, and John F. Kennedy had a young readers edition of his "Profiles in Courage."

Obama actually wrote "Of Thee I Sing" in 2008, after he was elected but before taking office, publishers said in September.

It is illustrated by Loren Long, whose many credits include writing and illustrating the children's stories "Otis" and "Drummer Boy."

The book, published by Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, was already selling well Tuesday. It was No. 3 on Amazon.com's children's best-seller list, and No. 15 on the site's overall list.

But Obama, whose previous works are million sellers ("The Audacity of Hope" and the memoir "Dreams From My Father"), wasn't the top-ranked presidential author on the overall list: George W. Bush's "Decision Points" was No. 1.

On the cover of "Of Thee I Sing" is a whimsical drawing of Malia and Sasha, skipping along with Bo, their beloved dog.

"Have I told you lately how wonderful you are?" the book begins. It proceeds to celebrate 13 American heroes and heroines.

"Have I told you that you are creative?" Obama asks, before describing painter Georgia O'Keeffe, who "helped us see big beauty in what was small."

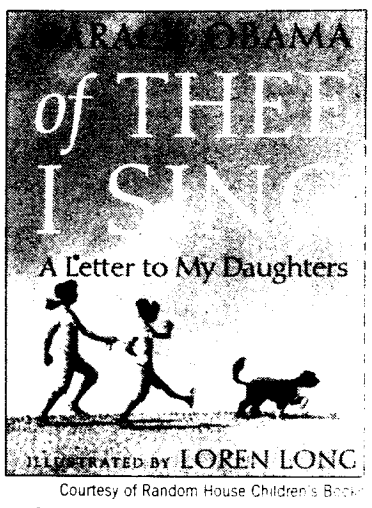
Albert Einstein, Obama writes, "turned pictures in his mind into great advances in science." Jackie Robinson, the pioneering black major league baseball player, "showed us all how to turn fear to respect and respect to love."

Sioux leader Sitting Bull, he writes, "healed broken hearts and broken promises." Singer Billie Holiday "sang beautiful blues to the world."

Hellen Keller "taught us to look at and listen to each other." Maya Lin designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial "to thank the many who fought for equality." Jane Addams, the social reformer and philanthropist, "opened doors and gave people hope."

Also honored is Martin Luther King Jr., who "gave us a dream that all races and creeds would walk hand in hand," and astronaut Neil Armstrong, whose lunar leaps "made us brave enough to take our own big, bold strides." Cesar Chavez "showed farmworkers their own power when they felt they had none."

Finally there are two former presidents: Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.



Courtesy of Random House Children's Books

"Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters," by Barack Obama, hit bookstores Tuesday.

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Weds, Nov. 17 @ 7PM vs. Ohio State
Fri, Nov. 19th @ 7PM vs. Northwestern
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HOROSCOPES

By Jacqueline Bigar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010

This year you are focusing on the strength of your word, and on your power to follow through to completion. In order to do this, you might need to step through your share of hoops as the unexpected rises out of your daily life. [illegible] Many opportunities will appeal because of your newfound precision and dedication. If you are single, be wary of romance until spring, when it is more likely to be long-term. Still, really get to know someone before deciding if this is it. If you are attached, you might be more romantic than in many years. As a result, your special attention tends to heat up the love temperature. ARIES reads you cold.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic, 4-Positive, 3-Average, 2-So-so, 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Pressure builds. You are on top of your game. Be sensitive to a curmudgeonly boss or higher-up. Don't look at the situation as power and control games, but rather as insecurity. Avoid playing into this person's "stuff." Tonight. Everything works out fine.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★ Take your time moving a project forward. In fact, backtracking might be wise in order to determine if everything is in order. Confusion surrounds a partnership for now, but that could change. Learn the power of the waiting game. Tonight. Vanish for some much-needed private time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You are direct and know what you want to do. Stay in touch with your feelings and avoid the [illegible] that tends to happen. [illegible] Tonight. Where the action is.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Focus on each job and accomplish every one you must. Realize that you need to move a project forward. Remain optimistic and detached, despite a lingering feeling that something could go wrong. Evaluate what is happening clearly. Tonight. Do what your gut says.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Work is a team to accomplish much more of what you want. Though you could be tired of the same issue by now, it's still real. You must proceed. A fair exchange could help you relax and allow more of your innate creativity to bubble forth. Tonight. Let your hair down.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Defer to others and relate on a one-on-one level. If you understand what is happening within a key relationship or friendship, open up talks. Let go of financial tension. Allow greater give-and-take, and don't judge others so much. They are processing. Tonight. Visit with a favorite person.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Others seem to have a clear sense of direction and what they expect. You could be dragging your heels, not exactly sure about what feels right. Communication sizzles with a touch of sarcasm. Tonight. Sort through offers, deciding not to be alone.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ News that is forthcoming could leave you flat. Give yourself time to process and get to the bottom of a problem. Opt not to commit to an expenditure [illegible]

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ [illegible]

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Listen to your [illegible] about it. Easy to make [illegible] shoulder and [illegible]. Look [illegible] social life be [illegible] a state of [illegible] when you're upset. Be [illegible] game.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Talk through a problem. Do allow this issue to be [illegible] and willingness to look at [illegible] and yet another approach. Pressure builds in an unprecedented manner. You will want to take action. Tonight. Where the action is.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Your instincts [illegible] money matter. Your doubts [illegible] problems and draw out [illegible] to come into play. You know [illegible] of what is going on than you [illegible]. A boss sympathizes, but [illegible] you. Tonight. A must appearance.

BORN TODAY
Actor Danny DeVito (1944), director Martin Scorsese (1942), actress Lauren Hutton (1943)

* * *

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com

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