

Michelle Obama reunited with London schools to mark publication of two new editions of her bestselling memoir, *Becoming*

Thursday 1st April, London - Michelle Obama joined current and former students from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in Islington and Mulberry School for Girls in Tower Hamlets for a 60 minute conversation on Zoom on Wednesday afternoon, to celebrate the publication of the paperback and younger reader editions of her bestselling memoir BECOMING. In the conversation, Michelle Obama discussed mentorship, sisterhood, motivation and leadership, as well as the impact of COVID and the last year, with the young women. Michelle Obama told the participants: *'Conversations like these keep me optimistic. Meeting all of you, watching your growth..., you all give me hope. Listening to how thoughtful and insightful you are, how resilient and determined you've been, how strong and capable you are.'*

BBC One's The One Show will be airing an exclusive film about the event on the evening of Thursday 1st April.

A video of the full conversation between Michelle Obama and the students will then be released by Penguin on their YouTube channel at 7.30pm on Thursday evening. The event will also be shared with schools across the country by Penguin Talks, a programme of free, creative talks and curriculum packs for young people, which give them the opportunity to hear from a world-renowned thinker, writer or influential figure from Penguin's family of authors.

Michelle Obama has a lasting relationship with both schools. As she writes in BECOMING, she first visited Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in 2009 and has stayed in touch with the school ever since – in 2011, she took a group of the school's pupils to Oxford University when she gave a talk to Christ Church College, and in 2012 she welcomed pupils from Mulberry and EGA to the White House. In 2018, she returned to do another event at the school when she visited the UK for the hardback publication of her memoir.

In BECOMING, Michelle Obama said of her 2009 visit, *'I wasn't fully prepared, though, to feel what I did when I set foot inside Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School...They were me, as I'd once been. And I was them, as they could be. The energy I felt thrumming in the school had nothing to do with obstacles. It was the power of nine hundred girls striving...Looking up at the girls, I just began to talk, explaining though I had come from far away, carrying this strange title of First Lady of the United States, I was more like them than they knew.'*

Mrs Obama first visited Mulberry School for Girls in 2015 to launch her 'Let Girls Learn' campaign, speaking passionately about the importance of girls' education globally. This inspired Mulberry girls to join the movement and they established Global Girl Leading following Mrs Obama's invitation to them to visit her in the White House in the same year. Since then, Mulberry has stayed connected with Mrs Obama in many different ways, and is proud to continue its relationship with Mrs Obama's work for girls' education through the Girls' Opportunity Alliance.

Of the event, Sarah Beagley, Headteacher at EGA School said: *'Mrs Obama has been a part of EGA since her first visit 12 years ago, before our year seven students today were born. Since 2009 she has stayed true to her word, continuing to connect with us in multiple ways and remains a truly inspirational figure for generations of EGA students. Her story, her passion*

and her determination to make a difference to the lives of others resonates completely with the values of EGA and we are proud and delighted that she values her relationship with us as much as we do with her.'

And Dr Vanessa Ogden, CEO and Headteacher of Mulberry School for Girls, said: *'At Mulberry School for Girls, students past and present are so excited about the launch of Michelle Obama's book BECOMING, especially adapted for young readers. Childhood and adolescence are such a formative period. Learning from Mrs Obama – one of the greatest, most inspiring women of our time – could not be more important. Her use of her platform to drive change for girls is critical, breaking down barriers to education and building a sisterhood of young women advocating for each other. Mulberry is deeply grateful to Mrs Obama for her generosity and support for our girls, providing many opportunities for them to have a voice and inspiring them to found Global Girl Leading as a legacy of her relationship with us.'*

The hardcover release of BECOMING in 2018 was a global publishing event. Michelle Obama invited readers into her world for the first time, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, and from her time spent in the White House as First Lady of the United States to her transition back to life as a private citizen. Critically acclaimed for its striking candour and honesty, the book was selected as an Oprah's Book Club pick and received an NAACP Image Award, selling more than 15 million copies worldwide in all formats. The hardcover edition has appeared for more than 100 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The audiobook edition, read by Mrs. Obama, received the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album, and a documentary chronicling Mrs. Obama's unprecedented 34-city stadium book tour received international critical acclaim when it premiered on Netflix in May 2020.

We will share the full event link, as well as limited clips for media usage, at 7.30pm. When using the clips, please credit Michelle Obama/Penguin Random House UK.

For more information, please contact Poppy North (pnorth@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk) or Jane Gentle (jgentle@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk).