

Teachable MOMENTS

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Seventeen Years After the First, Second African American Governor Sworn In

To the Teacher

On January 4, 2007, Deval Patrick was sworn in as Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and became only the second African American governor in the nation. Douglas Wilder, former Governor of Virginia and the nation's first African American governor, watched as Patrick placed his hand on a Bible given to John Quincy Adams by survivors of the slave ship

Amistad. Wilder remarked that he was surprised that it had taken seventeen years for a second black governor to be elected. What an opportunity to engage middle school students in questions about equality and justice! Who are these two men? Where do they come from and what have they accomplished? Is this a sign of progress in issues of racial equity?



National Council for Social Studies Standards Addressed

Individual Development and Identity

Describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the interactions of individuals and social groups.

Civic Ideals and Practice

Examine the origins and continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law.

Locate, access, analyze, organize, and apply information about selected public issues—recognizing and explaining multiple points of view.

Suggestions for Using the Worksheets

- Print and copy information about the two men and the two states from the links on the next page to distribute to students, or let them do their own research online.
- Have students work in pairs to complete Worksheet 1—one student researching Patrick and Massachusetts, and the other Douglas and Virginia, or divide the class into two groups.
- Meet as a class or in small groups to confirm and discuss the factual information before proceeding to analysis and interpretation.
- Have students work individually or in pairs/small groups to complete the Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two men and their circumstances (Worksheet 2).
- Have students answer reflection questions (Worksheet 3) individually and then discuss as a class or in small groups.



Web Sites with Information About Deval Patrick

<http://www.devalpatrick.com/bio.cfm>

<http://news.bostonherald.com/localPolitics/view.bg?articleid=158826>

<http://news.bostonherald.com/localPolitics/view.bg?articleid=174968>

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-01-04-massachusetts-governor_x.htm?csp=34

<http://www.thebostonchannel.com/politics/10671605/detail.html>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6727728>

Web Sites with Information About L. Douglas Wilder

<http://www.vahistorical.org/sva2003/wilder.htm>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0852250.html>

<http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/biography.asp?bioindex=1072&category=politicalMakers>

http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/2595/America_elects_its_first_Black_governor

Web Sites with Information About Massachusetts

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cismaf/mf1c.htm#population>

Web Sites with Information About Virginia

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108283.html>

Seventeen Years After the First, Second African American Governor Sworn In

Worksheet 1: Biographical/Background Information

On January 4, 2007, Deval Patrick was sworn in as Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and became only the second African American governor in the nation. Douglas Wilder, former Governor of Virginia and the nation's first African American governor, watched as Patrick placed his hand on a Bible given to John Quincy Adams by survivors of the slave ship *Amistad*. Wilder remarked that he was surprised that it had taken seventeen years for a second black governor to be elected. Who are these two men? Where do they come from and what have they accomplished? Does Deval Patrick's achievement represent progress in issues of racial equality, or does the time that it has taken signal a lack of meaningful advancement?

Research Massachusetts and Virginia to complete the chart below.

	Massachusetts	Virginia
History of statehood		
Side in Civil War		
Population and % black		
State character/ notable features		

(continued)

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Worksheet 1: Biographical/Background Information, *continued*

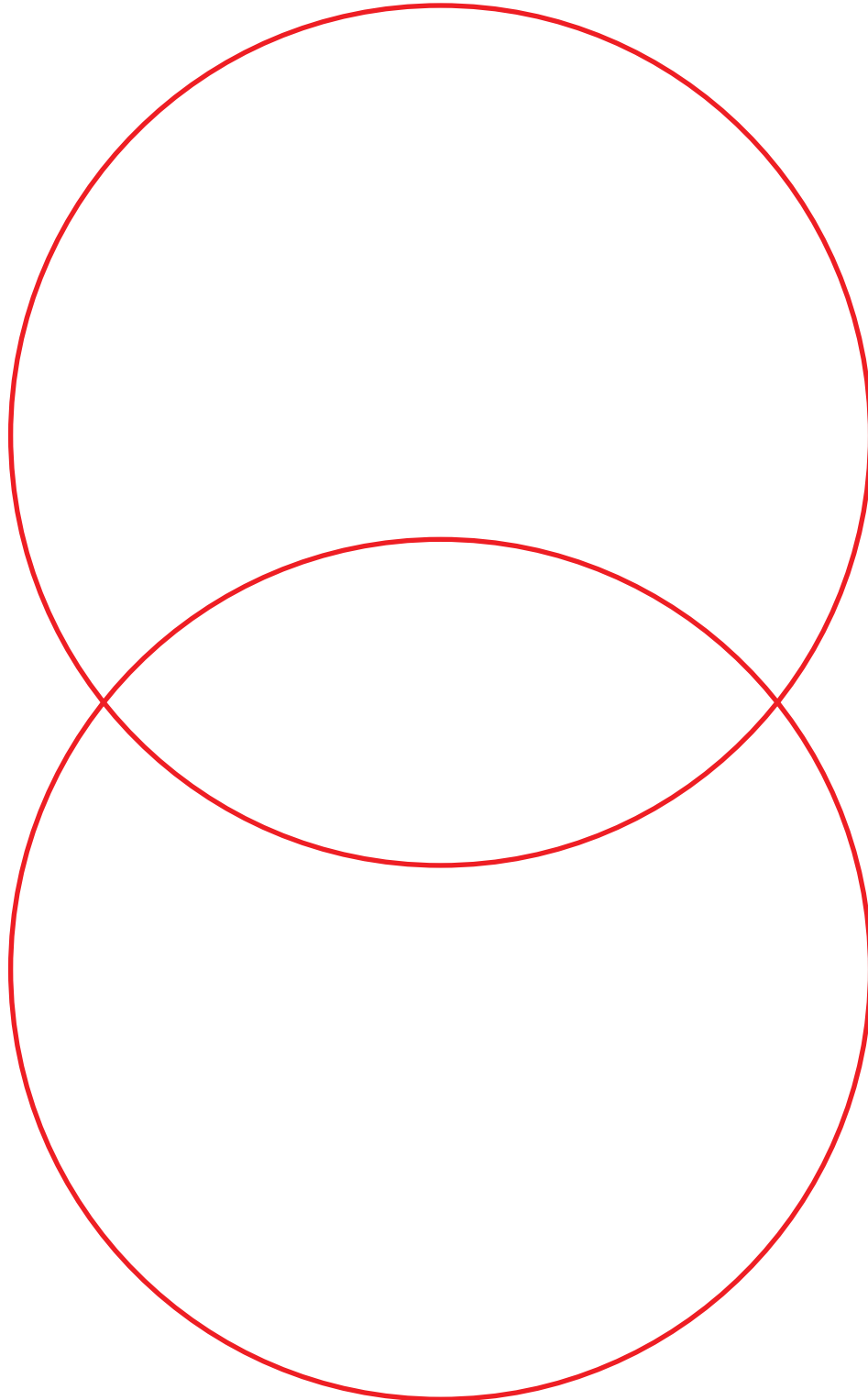
Research Wilder and Patrick to complete the chart below.

	L. Douglas Wilder	Deval Patrick
Birthplace		
Childhood and family circumstances		
Education		
Career		
Political career		
Political affiliation		
Key political issues		
Major accomplishments		

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Worksheet 2: Comparing and Contrasting African American Governors

Review the information in your Wilder/Patrick chart and complete the Venn diagram below to show the similarities and differences between the governors.



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Worksheet 3: Reflection Questions

Reflect on what you've learned about Deval Patrick and Douglas Wilder, and answer the following questions. Use specific examples to support your opinions.

1. What did you find most impressive about each man's life and career, and why were you impressed?
2. What surprised you about the two men, their lives, and their careers? Why were you surprised?
3. What do you think each man's greatest accomplishment has been? Why do you think it's his greatest accomplishment?
4. It took over 200 years for the United States to elect an African American governor, and another seventeen to elect another. Do you find this surprising or not surprising? Explain your thinking.

continued

Suggested Answers

Worksheet 1: Biographical/Background Information

Massachusetts

History of statehood

- Landing place of the *Mayflower*
- First Constitutional Convention
- Constitution ratified in 1780

Side in Civil War

North

Population and % black

6,349,097

5.4% black

State character/notable features

- Pilgrims
- Liberal

Virginia

History of statehood

- Founded in 1607; 1st permanent English settlement
- Entered the Union in 1788

Side in Civil War

South

Population and % black

7,078,515

19.6 % black

State character/notable features

- “Birthplace of presidents”
- Colonial capital
- Capitol of the Confederacy

L. Douglas Wilder

Birthplace

1931; Richmond, VA

Childhood and family circumstances

- Grandson of slaves
- Family of 8 children

Education

- Attended segregated schools, Virginia Union University, Howard University Law School (on GI Bill)

Career

- Served in army during Korean War
- Opened his own law firm in Richmond in 1959

Political career

- 1969 VA state senate

- 1985 VA Lt. Governor
- 1990 VA Governor
- 2004 Mayor of Richmond, VA

Political affiliation

- Democrat

Key political issues

- Balanced budget, gun control

Major accomplishments

- First African American legislature in Virginia
- First African American Governor in the United States
- New construction in VA colleges and universities, mental health facilities, and state parks

Deval Patrick

Birthplace

1956; South side of Chicago

Childhood and family circumstances

- Shared a single bedroom with his mother and sister
- Mother took him to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak

Education

- Won scholarship to Milton Academy through “A Better Chance”
- Went to Harvard University, the first in his family to go to college; then went to Harvard Law

Career

- Lived and worked in Africa for almost a year between college and law school
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- Clinton administration Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
- Private practice with large law firms and companies such as Coca-Cola

Political career

- Political appointee in Clinton Administration and on various task forces
- MA Governor’s race was his first run for elected office

Political affiliation

- Democrat

Key political issues

- Economy, healthcare, public education, energy independence and environmental stewardship, etc.

Major accomplishments

Just elected!

Suggested Answers, *continued*

Worksheet 2: Comparing and Contrasting African American Governors

Venn diagrams will vary. Sample answer:

Deval Patrick

- raised by a single parent
- from a small family
- won a scholarship to private school
- graduated from Harvard
- lived and worked in Africa
- first African American governor of Massachusetts

Both

- lawyer
- democrat
- first African American governor for his state

Douglas Wilder

- grandson of slaves
- from a large family
- attended segregated schools
- served in the Army
- opened own law firm
- first African American governor of Virginia

Worksheet 3: Reflection Questions

Answers will vary.