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Local inauguration celebration draws more than 300

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The Houston Ballroom inauguration party was full of all the excitement and none of the uncertainty that shrouded a similar crowd on election day at Kite's Bar and Grille. Riley County Democrats played host to a turnout of more than 300 Manhattan residents who enjoyed Kite's catering, a silent auction and an informal awards ceremony for outstanding Riley County Democratic volunteers while honoring the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

"I never thought this day would come," said Bernard Pitts, assistant vice president of student life and executive director of the K-State Student Union. "He was destined for this. He showed everyone could get together and focus and get the job done."

Pitts attended the event with his wife Candi Hironaka, who attended the Union celebration earlier that day, said they decided the \$30 per person cover charge was worth celebrating with friends.

"It's important to be with other people to share this significant moment," said Hironaka, associate director of the school of leadership. "You get to see this slice of the Manhattan community, which I feel is very inclusive."

Cassandra Cuppy, fifth year in marketing and management said she voted for Obama but is a



Sara Manco

Manhattan residents Amber Ross and Kimberly Turnage pose with a cutout of President Obama at the Manhattan Democrat's Inauguration Ball on Tuesday night. Members of the community came together to celebrate the inauguration of our 44th president.

registered independent.

"I couldn't make it to D.C. so this is the second best place to be," Cuppy said while looking over auction items. "I wanted to be part of something historic."

State Representative Sydney Carlin agreed that the venue was the second-best place to be that night, and that she also celebrated earlier that day with the Democratic caucus and legislature.

"We all got teary eyed watching the swearing in," Carlin said. "There was so much excitement. We stood when they sang the Star-Spangled Banner."

Carlin recognized the significance of the event in conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which was Monday.

"The whole experience of watching the MLK speeches and how his leadership transcends today was so powerful. The fact that 60 years ago he might not have been served in a restaraunt and is now taking the oath of office really challenged us to reclaim America and make us a leader in the world again. I know he will give us the tools to do that," Carlin said.

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