



# **Jumping The Aisle: How I Became a Black Republican in the Age of Obama, Volume I: Essays (Volume 1)**

*Oliver McGee*

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Progressives fulfilled the hopes of a dozen generations by electing on November 4, 2008 into office the first African American president of the United States. That was the day that — after a lifetime as a progressive — Oliver McGee knew he was openly moving towards becoming a contrarian of the party. He was joining the leagues of generations of Americans who had jumped the aisle and become Republicans. As the party that traditionally and historically embraced conservative ideals, a dominant military complex, and a healthy free-markets competitive system that fueled technological innovation and capitalism, Oliver McGee foresaw the Obama era as a return to government of "hand-outs," "hold-outs," and "heavy-hands" against American free enterprise. This is not to say that the government does not have a role to play alongside churches, charities, and philanthropy in helping those in need. Forasmuch as we all believe, let us give aid and protection to the persecuted, no matter whence or from where they come. Notwithstanding, McGee saw this sweeping new issued-based regulatory change in Washington as one that would set our liberties, efficiencies, and democracy back instead of propelling them forward. This is also not to say that Republicans have all the ideas and answers and are not without responsibility and accountability likewise. Still, the framework upon which the Republican platform is built, in his opinion, is the type of structure we need for a more production-oriented strategy — moving forward united as a country — that is increasingly becoming divided under heavy debt, downgraded sovereignty, and stressed national income. Oliver McGee was an advisor to President Bill Clinton, as the former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Transportation, and a devoted moderate Democrat, who would have been a natural choice to play a role in the Obama White House — but then, something incredible happened. Concerned with issues that he finds are hurling the country into a dangerous morass and malaise, this mechanical engineering professor and expert in jet propulsion — who has studied business, law, and technology at Harvard, MIT, Georgia Tech, Stanford, Wharton, the University of Chicago, University of Cambridge, Ohio State, and The Aspen Institute — approaches political and economic issues in the same manner he addresses everyday scientific questions. He has come up with empirical and anecdotal indications for why our political leaders and present-day policies are doing more harm than good for the struggling country. McGee also found himself to be a somewhat lone voice among blacks. While 95% of black Americans were voting in 2008 for the first black president — some 7% more than the 88% that voted in 2004 for Senator John Kerry (D-MA) — many because they wanted to make history — McGee was warning that sometimes going against the grain of the electorate is warranted. It was also not an easy tide to swim against his family and friends back in 2008, who were rallying behind the hopes and promises of the Obama era. His progressive colleagues did not know what to make of him jumping the aisle, even suggesting what they thought of his decision as pure folly. But, he hung on to his evolving principles and drafted them in “Jumping the Aisle — How I Became a Black Republican in the Age of Obama.” Where he calls for a choice to speak to, listen for, and vote with your own mind — not just your past loyalty to a party or to a history. Inside he puts forth what continues to be our country’s extraordinary outlook on getting to America’s Tercentennial. “Jumping the Aisle” takes a thoughtful, penetrating, and sometimes lighthearted approach to what appears these days to be difficult conversations and subjects, the same way his lectures on jet propulsion have been hailed by students for making “rocket science” understandable and fun for everyone (yes, fun!!!).

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