Biden relishes moment as new vice president

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WASHINGTON — Joe Biden stepped out on Pennsylvania Avenue and walked the majority of the inaugural parade route Tuesday, soaking up the love.

With the U.S. Capitol as his backdrop, the newly minted vice president of the United States blew kisses at the crowd and beamed as they shouted "Joe, Joe, Joe!"

He raised his hands, prompting more cheers, and pointed and waved up high and down low. He spotted a Delaware flag hanging from a balcony and, with arms outstretched, gave the shouting crowd a special thumbs up.

Smiling and waving he had by his side his wife, Jill, and his daughters, Ashley, and sons Hunter and Beau, on leave from his service with the Delaware National Guard in Iraq.

Leaving behind a warm vice presidential limousine, they braved the freezing temperatures, walking past the White House toward the Eisenhower Executive Office Building — Biden's new office — clearly enjoying every moment.

"I've covered nine of these," said Greg Matheson, a photographer for M&I Photo News. "I've never seen anyone walk this far on the parade route!"

Biden will freely admit he "very much wanted to be president." But as the former senior senator from Delaware took his oath of office Tuesday, it seemed the fitting capstone to his career.

For Biden, who first went to Washington as a senator in 1973 to fight for civil rights, his new position beside Barack Obama, the first African-American president, brings him full circle.

Gerald Herbert Biden, 66, was sworn in first by Justice John Paul Stevens, becoming the first vice president from Delaware.