



THE HONORABLE GEORGE H. W. BUSH
June 12, 1924 – November 30, 2018

George Herbert Walker Bush, World War II naval aviator, Texas oil pioneer, and 41st President of the United States of America, died November 30, 2018. He was 94 years old and is survived by five children and their spouses, 17 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and two siblings. He was preceded in death by his wife of 73 years, Barbara; his second child, Pauline Robinson “Robin” Bush; and his brothers Prescott and “Bucky”.

Mr. Bush was elected president on November 8, 1988, sworn in on January 20, 1989, and served until January 20, 1993. During his term in office, a revolution of human liberty swept the globe, emancipating tens of millions of people and unleashing a series of transformative events: freedom prevailed in the Cold War as the Soviet Union imploded; the [Berlin Wall “fell”](#) and [Germany united](#) within NATO following 45 years of postwar division; and from Eastern Europe to the Baltic states to Latin America to the former Soviet republics, many liberal democracies supplanted totalitarian regimes. During this “historic period of cooperation” as he called it, President Bush worked with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and other key global figures to [end the Cold War peacefully](#) and usher in a new geopolitical era marked by political self-determination, the spread of market capitalism, and the opening of closed economies.

In August of 1990, after Iraqi troops under dictator Saddam Hussein invaded neighboring Kuwait, President Bush forged a coalition of 32 disparate nations to [restore Kuwaiti sovereignty](#) and uphold international law. He subsequently used the political capital gained from that decisive victory to convene the [Madrid Peace Conference](#) in 1991, bringing Israel and its Arab neighbors together in face-to-face discussions for the first time.

President Bush also drastically reduced the threat of nuclear attack by signing [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties](#) (START) in 1991 and 1993, and negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement ([NAFTA](#)) in 1992 that President Clinton later signed into law. He ordered military operations in [Panama](#) in December of 1989 to [restore democracy](#) and bring an international drug trafficker to justice; and in [Somalia](#) in December of 1992 to re-open food supply lines shut by feuding warlords that had precipitated a famine.

Mr. Bush was the first sitting vice president elected to the presidency since Martin van Buren in 1837, and only the second American president elected to serve a full term without Party control in either chamber of Congress. Nevertheless, on July 26, 1990, President Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, which among other accomplishments eliminated the barriers

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to employment, public accommodations, and transportation services for some 43 million citizens with disabilities. Later that same year, he signed the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, which guided America's environmental policy for more than two decades. The [education summit](#) Mr. Bush hosted in 1989 with all 50 U.S. governors at the University of Virginia helped to spur a national reform movement. The 1990 budget agreement he signed codified into law real caps on discretionary spending by Congress while cutting the deficit by historic levels.

As president, Mr. Bush launched his "Points of Light" initiative to promote volunteerism and community service across America, and during his term in office he named 1,020 Daily Points of Light hailing from all 50 states. Long before he entered the political arena, however, he demonstrated his belief that "there could be no definition of a successful life that does not include service to others." While at Yale, for example, he helped lead an annual charity fund drive that benefited the [United Negro College Fund](#). In 1953, he helped establish the [YMCA in Midland](#), Texas and served as chairman of the founding board. The Bushes also started the Bright Star Foundation to support cancer research following the death of their three year-old daughter, Robin, from leukemia on October 12, 1953.

After leaving the White House, President Bush chaired the Board of Visitors at the University of Texas' [M.D. Anderson Cancer Center](#) from 2001 to 2003, as well as the [National Constitution Center](#) from 2006 to 2008. Together with his wife, Barbara, Mr. Bush served as honorary co-chair of [C-Change](#) – a collaborative group of key cancer leaders from government, business, and nonprofit sectors who are committed to eliminate cancer as a major public health problem. He also served as honorary chair of the Points of Light Foundation and the World Golf Foundation's [First Tee](#) program from 1997 to 2011.

Of special note was his [partnership](#) with his successor, President Bill Clinton, to spearhead public awareness and financial relief efforts for victims of the 2004 [Indian Ocean Tsunami](#), Hurricanes [Katrina](#) and Rita in 2005, and Hurricane [Ike](#) in 2008. In 2005, President Bush accepted an appointment from United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as [Special Envoy](#) for the South Asian Earthquake Disaster following a devastating earthquake in Pakistan that claimed nearly 75,000 lives. He also teamed up with former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama to launch the [One America Appeal](#) that raised over \$41 million in relief funds after the 2017 hurricane season devastated large swaths of Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On September 1, 1997, the George [Bush School](#) of Government and Public Service opened on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, followed two months later – on [November 6, 1997](#) – by the adjoining George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Both institutions thrived with the active involvement of President and Mrs. Bush, who kept an apartment on campus and were regular fixtures at "Aggie" athletic events. Outside his family, President Bush considered the Bush School, which educates and prepares principled leaders for public service, his most important legacy.

In 1998, President Bush and his former national security advisor, Gen. Brent Scowcroft, co-authored [A World Transformed](#) about the four major foreign policy challenges confronting Bush administration: the Tiananmen Square uprising in China; the collapse of the Soviet Union; the

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reunification of Germany; and the liberation of Kuwait. In 1999 and again in 2013, President Bush released All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings, a collection of letters written throughout his life. In 2008, scholar Jeffrey Engel published President Bush's diary written during his time in China under the title, The China Diary of George H.W. Bush — The Making of a Global President. Mr. Bush and his family also cooperated fully with his daughter, Doro Bush Koch, on her book My Father, My President: A Personal Account of the Life of George H. W. Bush. Finally, then-Vice President Bush published his autobiography, Looking Forward, in 1987 and dedicated it “To my mother and father, whose values lit the way.”

President Bush received numerous honorary degrees and, after leaving the presidency, was awarded high honors from such nations as Kuwait, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Nicaragua, Poland, the Czech Republic and Saudi Arabia. The Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in northern Virginia, Intercontinental Airport in Houston, and several elementary and high schools in Texas were named for the former president. The USS George H. W. Bush, which is the tenth and last of the Navy's Nimitz-class supercarriers, was commissioned on January 10, 2009 at Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia and has deployed around the world in support of America's foreign policy objectives. Finally, on February 15, 2011, President Bush accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama during a White House ceremony.

George Bush's career in elective politics began in February of 1963, when he was elected chairman of the Harris County Republican Party following the resignation of his predecessor, James Bertron. After losing his first campaign for the United States Senate in 1964, he was elected in 1966 to the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas' 7th Congressional District and served two terms. Mr. Bush accepted a series of senior-level appointments following a second unsuccessful try for the Senate in 1970: U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (1971); Chairman of the Republican National Committee (1973); Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in China (1974); and Director of Central Intelligence (1976).

“There were always doubts at the beginning whether he (Bush) was up to these jobs,” *New York Times* columnist Scotty Reston opined in 1979, reflecting on this flurry of presidential appointments, “but applause for his record at the end.”

In 1980, Mr. Bush lost his first bid for the Republican presidential nomination to former California Governor Ronald Reagan, but accepted a spot on the GOP national ticket and served as the 43rd Vice President of the United States from 1981 to 1989. In that position, Mr. Bush managed federal deregulation and anti-drug efforts, and headed the Reagan administrations' effort to combat terrorism. In foreign policy, President Reagan dispatched Vice President Bush at a pivotal and contentious time to help manage negotiations with key NATO allies leading to the deployment of Pershing II missiles in West Germany – a critical turning point in the Cold War.

Flying from Texas to Washington, DC following the assassination attempt on President Reagan on March 30, 1981, Vice President Bush rejected a suggestion that he chopper directly from Andrews Air Force Base to the White House. “Only the president lands on the South Lawn,” he said, concerned about the worrisome impact such an irregular sight might have.

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In 1988, Vice President Bush prevailed over a crowded GOP primary field to gain the [Republican nomination](#) for president and, with Senator Dan Quayle of Indiana as his running mate, defeated Democrats Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts and Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas in the general election. That year, the Bush-Quayle ticket claimed over 53 percent of the popular vote en route to winning 40 states and 426 electoral votes. Mr. Bush was 64 years old when he took the Oath of Office on January 20, 1989.

Born on [June 12, 1924](#) in Milton, Massachusetts, George Bush admired his parents, Prescott and Dorothy, and credited them for the enduring lessons that shaped his life. “My parents were my most important role models,” he later confided. “My dad stood for something and believed in giving back. My mother taught us fundamental things: ‘Don’t brag.’ ‘Think of the other guy.’ ‘Be kind to people.’ The things they taught me served me in good stead all the way through my presidency.” Early in life he was nicknamed “Poppy” after his maternal grandfather, George Herbert Walker, whose sobriquet was “Pop.”

Following grade school, George Bush attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. In the aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Secretary of War Henry Stimson encouraged the 1942 graduating class at Phillips to forego military service and enter college. Young George, instead, enlisted in the [U.S. Navy](#) on his 18th birthday (June 12, 1942) and flew torpedo bombers off the *USS San Jacinto* in the Pacific. He was shot down on September 2, 1944 while completing a mission over Chi Chi Jima Island and, tragically, lost his two crewmen William “Ted” White and John Delaney. By the time he was honorably discharged in September of 1945, Lieutenant Junior Grade Bush had logged 1,228 hours of flight time, 126 carrier landings and 58 combat missions. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the U.S. Navy Air Medal with two gold stars. Mr. Bush later credited his Navy service with “making a man out of a scared little kid,” introducing him to shipmates from all walks of life, and informing his decision-making as commander-in-chief.

After becoming secretly engaged in 1943 to the “first girl I ever kissed,” the returning war veteran [married Barbara Pierce](#) in Rye, New York on January 6, 1945. The newlyweds welcomed their first child, George Walker Bush, on July 6, 1946 while the elder George [attended Yale](#) University. There, he also played baseball in the first two College World Series and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in economics. In June of 1948, the young Bush family moved to Odessa in West Texas where Mr. Bush began making his way in the [oil business](#). One of his companies, Zapata, eventually became the oil behemoth Pennzoil Corporation, but long beforehand Mr. Bush had split off and launched a subsidiary, Zapata Off-shore Co., that pioneered in offshore drilling with operations in the Gulf of Mexico, Brunei, Venezuela, the Sea of Japan and the Persian Gulf. Moving to Houston in August of 1959, the Bushes joined St. Martin’s Episcopal Church where Mr. Bush served as a vestryman from 1965 to 1968.

Together, President and Mrs. Bush had six children – George W., Robin, John “Jeb”, Neil, Marvin, Dorothy “Doro” – along with 17 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Their oldest son, George W., served as the 46th Texas Governor from 1995 to 2000 and as the 43rd President of the United States of America from 2001 to 2009. Their son Jeb, meanwhile, served as the 43rd Governor of Florida from 1999 to 2007. President Bush took great pride that his children and, later, his grandchildren were active in their communities helping others.

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President Bush, or “41” as he was informally known after George W. was elected president, loved nothing more than fishing and spending time with his family in Maine – where he also reveled in driving his motorboat at high speeds and entertaining an endless procession of guests. He made seven post-presidential parachute jumps, the most recent of which took place at St. Ann’s Episcopal Church near his seaside home in Maine on June 12, 2014 to mark his 90th birthday. Mr. Bush considered Houston, Texas his home – and Walker’s Point, the family home in Kennebunkport, Maine where he spent a part of every summer except 1944 (when he was serving in World War II), as his “anchor to windward.”

“Now that my political days are over,” he said the day his presidential library was opened in 1997, “I can honestly say that the three most rewarding titles bestowed upon me are the three that I’ve got left: a husband, a father and a granddad.” George Herbert Walker Bush prized loyalty and duty and was devoted to his faith, his remarkable wife and family, his countless friends, and the country he served always to the best of his ability. Despite the rancor and cynicism that occasionally engulfed politics during his lifetime, he considered public service a noble calling.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University at <http://bush.tamu.edu>. Individuals who wish to honor President Bush by dedicating a day to serving others may find guidance and local opportunities at www.pointsoflight.org.

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