

# PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES

# GEORGE H.W. BUSH

**President No.:** 41 | **Born:** 1924 | **Died:** 2018 | **Served:** 1989-1993

On November 30, 2018, America somberly said goodbye to a national hero. George H.W. Bush was a World War II veteran, both vice president, president and activist after leaving office. While he only served one term, he strove to handle foreign affairs during a trying time in our country's history.

George Herbert Walker Bush served in the Navy during World War II from 1942 to September 1945. It was 1943 when he earned the illustrious role as the youngest pilot in that branch of military. His heroism garnered him the Distinguished Flying Cross after his plane was shot down by Japanese military.

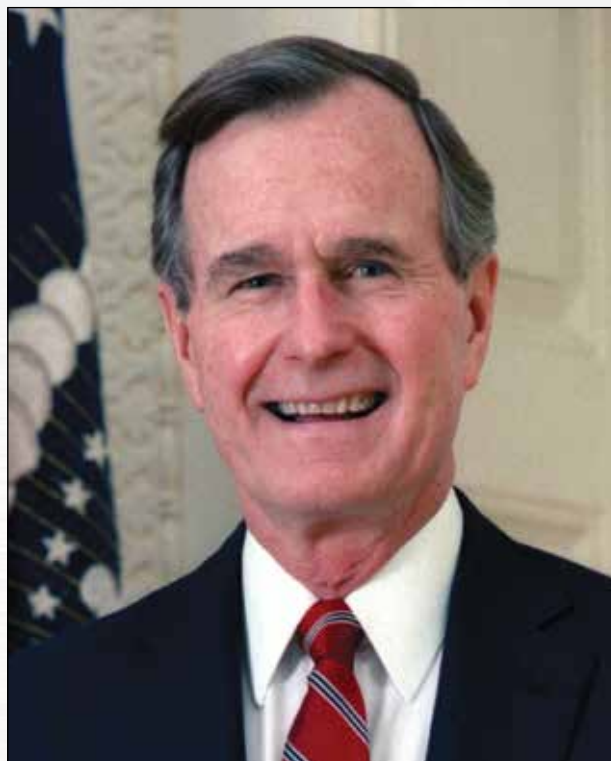
After an honorable discharge from the military, Bush attended Yale University, where he completed an undergraduate degree in economics.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Bush didn't rush into politics after graduation. In fact, he moved his family to reside in Odessa, Texas, where he became a clerk for an oil company. His experience with petroleum propelled him to begin an oil development company with a friend.

The operation was such a success that it quickly merged with another group that developed offshore-drilling equipment. He would later be the acting president of the subsidiary.

His connections to the oil industry



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eventually led to Bush becoming the Republican Party chairman in Harris County, Texas, and his political career began. After an unsuccessful campaign for a U.S. Senate seat in 1964, he secured a seat as a member of the U.S. House of

Representatives in 1966.

In 1970, after falling short for a Senate seat for the second time, he was nominated the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. This experience in foreign affairs would be highlighted throughout his presidency.

In 1980, Bush lost the Republican presidential nomination to Ronald Reagan but was chosen as his running mate and served as vice president for two terms.

## MAJOR POLICY

Bush became the United States President after winning the 1988 election. He was the first vice president to win the top seat since 1837.

Bush was heralded as a worldwide hero after responding to countries under attack or despair from unruly dictators. Only months into his presidency, he oversaw the U.S. military's attempt to remove Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega.

Many consider his coalition against Iraqi President Saddam Hussain's invasion of the oil-rich country of Kuwait as his greatest accomplishment.

# JOHN ADAMS

**President No. 2** | **Born:** 1735 | **Died:** 1826 | **Served:** 1797-1801

**J**ohn Adams is one of the nation's founding fathers and served as the country's first vice president before officially taking the highest seat. Public service was important to him, as he served on at least 90 committees during the country's blossoming stages.

Adams and Thomas Jefferson famously disagreed and battled for different visions of the nation. The two eventually calmed their competitiveness and became friends after office, leading to a friendship shared through letters.

The last remaining founding fathers passed away hours apart from each other on July 4, 1826. It is widely reported that Adams uttered, "Thomas Jefferson still lives," before taking his last breath, unknowing that Jefferson had already perished.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Adams graduated from Harvard University where he earned a master's degree in law and was admitted to the bar. One notable case he represented was related to the Boston Massacre, where British soldiers were on trial for the murders of civilians. His argument led six of the eight accused to be acquitted. The case showed the world of his compassion and courage to



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ensure everyone receives a fair trial.

He was a major critic of taxes and tariffs imposed by Great Britain and its influence over colonial America.

This led him to speak out against the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend

Acts of 1767. Even with his opposition, he became the United States' first ambassador to Britain, before lobbying for the role as vice president, under George Washington.

## MAJOR POLICY

When Adams entered office in 1797, Britain and France were already at war. Under Washington, the country remained neutral, but tensions had escalated leading to a negative impact on American trade.

After being unable to achieve negotiations with France in 1797, the United States entered a naval war until 1800 before a peace treaty was signed.

Before leaving office, he appointed John Marshall as the Chief Justice of the U.S. This proved to be an important piece of American history, as Marshall had a significant role in developing the American judiciary as an independent branch of the government we know today.

# HARRY S. TRUMAN

**President No. 33 | Born: 1884 | Died: 1972 | Served: 1945-1953**

**H**arry S. Truman earned the reputation of being fiscally responsible and an important defender of the rights for American citizens. His professional and personal outlook led to Franklin Roosevelt's offer of the vice presidency for his campaign in 1944. After reluctantly accepting the candidacy, Truman would later become one of the most impactful presidents in American history.

As World War I began, Truman was two years older than the draft-age limit. He volunteered for the National Guard and became a key to success for the 129th Field Artillery. He was quickly promoted to captain and leader of one of the most famous groups in World War I history, Battery D.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

After serving in the military, Harry S. Truman returned home and opened a hat business in Kansas City.

The country was reeling at the time, and the business ultimately closed in 1922. Truman was faced with \$20,000 of debt but refused to accept bankruptcy and instead repaid what he owed over the next 15 years. This decision would later add to his reputation as a responsible leader.

Truman would campaign for the role of a presiding judge in Jackson County in 1926. He held this chair until he set his sights on the United States Senate, where he won a seat in 1934.

In his first term, he served on the Senate



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Appropriations Committee, where he was responsible for directing tax money to support Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal projects.

He faced controversy as Democratic boss Thomas Pendergast was convicted of tax evasion and voter fraud. It was a popular opinion that Truman's close relation-

ship with the leader would cause him to lose his reelection in 1940. However, his commitment to serving as an ethical and honest representative would propel him to his second term.

## MAJOR POLICY

Truman was vice president to FDR until Roosevelt's sudden death in 1945. He then stepped in as president, guiding a country in turmoil.

During his first six months as commander in chief, he announced the Germans' surrender and made the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ultimately ending World War II.

President Truman was soon tasked with involving America in the Korean War in 1950, where he feared another world war could occur.

After the presidency, Truman retired to his hometown of Independence, Mo., where he lived out his days writing memoirs until his death in 1972.

# ULYSSES S. GRANT

**President No. 18** | **Born:** 1822 | **Died:** 1885 | **Served:** 1869-1877

**U**lysses S. Grant was an important leader during the American Civil War. He was appointed as commander of all Union armies by Abraham Lincoln. Born to a family in the tanning industry, Grant decided against joining the business and instead entered the United States Military Academy at the age of 17.

After graduating in 1843, he planned to resign from the military after his four years of duty were complete. However, during this period he was deployed to partake in the Mexican-American War.

Serving as quartermaster, he was tasked with overseeing the movement of supplies. Grant would eventually return to civilian life in 1854, until an unwarranted attack by the Confederate Army would reignite his patriotism and passion to serve.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

In 1861, his efforts to volunteer in the military were approved with the blessing of an Illinois congressman. He led his team through major victories during the American Civil War.

**September 1861:** Grant's army would take control of Paducah, Ky. This small town was located at the confluence of the Tennessee and the Ohio rivers and remained a crucial location for Union supplies throughout the war.

**February 1862:** Considered the earliest significant victories for the Union, through joint operations with the U.S. Navy,



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ground forces seized Fort Henry and Fort Donelson.

**March 1864-April 1865:** A new strategy initiated troops to track and eliminate

Robert E Lee's Army. It was April 9, 1865, when Lee surrendered, and the Civil War ended with a peace agreement.

## MAJOR POLICY

Grant would continue his celebrated military career until 1869, when he took over as president at the age of 46. As the youngest person in office until that point, he:

- Encouraged the ratification of the 15th Amendment, which allowed voting for men of different race, color or previous servitude;
- Approved of the U.S. Department of Justice, which remains responsible for enforcement and administration of justice in the U.S.; and
- Established an Act of Congress that led to the development of the nation's first national park — Yellowstone.

After his presidency, Grant wrote short memoirs about his life and worked with his friend, Mark Twain, to publish his work. Unfortunately, he passed away at the age of 63 while his stories were being published.

# MILLARD FILLMORE

**President No. 13** | **Born:** 1800 | **Died:** 1874 | **Served:** 1850-1853

**M**illard Fillmore was born into poverty to a family living in a log cabin, in 1800. He would later be thrust into the presidency after the sudden death of his predecessor. During his time in office, he was responsible for one of the largest treaties in American history.

As a young man, Fillmore became obsessed with learning, sometimes stealing books to increase his knowledge. He lacked much formal education until the age of 18 yet managed to secure a position in a law office. By the year 1823, he was fully admitted to the New York bar.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Fillmore's first step in his political career began in 1828, when he served on the New York state assembly. One of his major focal points at this time was eliminating the issue of debtor imprisonment.

He was familiar with the hardships of poverty and worked to pass laws to eliminate such harsh punishments.

His passion for the citizens in his district was quickly recognized and acknowledged when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1832. He would serve four terms in Congress but declined another election in 1843 to begin a campaign for governor of New York.

While he ultimately lost this election, he found himself serving as comptroller



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of New York, when he was handpicked for the vice presidency position under Zachary Taylor.

The duo was tasked with sectional tensions over slavery and its growth in western territories, becoming a major issue in America. Legislation considered included a series of resolutions to reach a compromise and avoid a crisis between the North and South.

Before Taylor could reach an agree-

ment, he suddenly passed away after an Independence Day celebration in Washington, pushing Fillmore into the presidential position.

## MAJOR POLICY

Millard Fillmore was appointed president in 1850. Taylor's cabinet would soon resign, allowing the new leader to appoint his own staff. He publicly spoke of his approval of a solution to healing sectional differences, and the Compromise of 1850 was adopted. This gave states the choice to act as free states when joining the Union.

President Fillmore's greatest accomplishment was organizing a trade mission with Japan, which had been an isolated nation for the previous three centuries. While the Treaty of Kanagawa wasn't officially drafted until Fillmore was out of office, his persistence and strategy helped finalize Japan's first treaty with a Western nation.

Fillmore retired from politics after a failed campaign for presidency in 1856. He would die after suffering from a stroke in 1874.

# RUTHERFORD HAYES

**President No. 19** | **Born:** 1822 | **Died:** 1893 | **Served:** 1877-1881

**T**he future 19th president was born to a single mother in 1822. Rutherford Birchard Hayes' father passed away a mere two months before his birth. With the lessons he learned from being raised by his mother, he would serve distinguished legal and military careers before winning one of the most contested elections in American history.

After graduating as valedictorian from Kenyon College in 1842, Hayes would pursue a law degree from Harvard Law School. He achieved his goals three years later and eventually began his own practice in Lower Sandusky, Ohio.

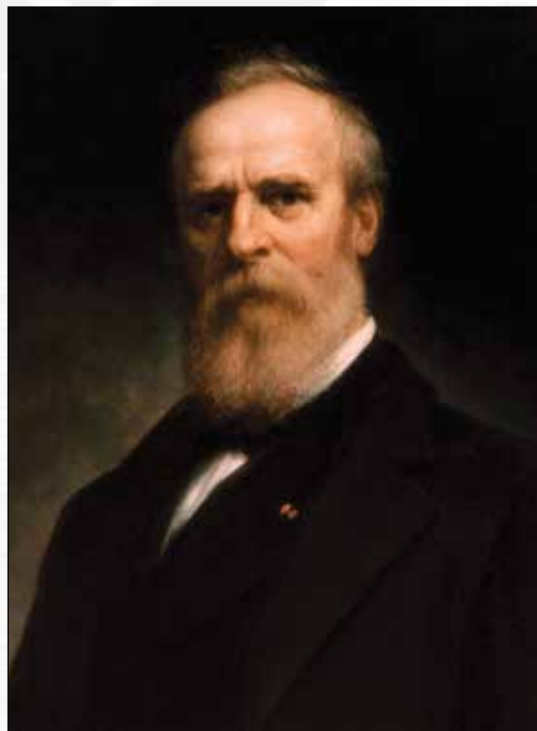
He saw the need to build his business and moved to a much busier area in Cincinnati. This move linked him with important Republicans due to his antislavery sentiments and incredible work ethic.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Hayes put aside his law career to fight during the Civil War, where he would rise to the rank of major general. Republicans soon approached him to run for a seat in the House of Representatives while still in the army.

He was easily victorious in his campaign and entered Congress in 1865, where he would serve for two years before resigning and accepting the role as governor in Ohio, which lasted three years.

In 1876, Hayes was selected to run



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for the presidency against Democrat opponent, Samuel Tilden. Initially, the vote showed Rutherford Hayes lost by a mere 250,000 votes. However, controversy soon arose with contested electoral-college votes from Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina.

In 1877, Congress held a commission and put the election in the hands of eight Republicans and seven Democrats. Hayes emerged the victor and quietly took the oath of office in March 1877 in the Red Room of the White House.

## MAJOR POLICY

With the victory, came the Compromise of 1877. It gave Southern Democrats at least one Cabinet post and a withdrawal of federal troops who oversaw the Reconstruction era in Louisiana and South Carolina.

While this was considered a step back in the strides for equal rights, Hayes remained vigilant in creating laws to protect black Americans.

Another challenge he faced was the Railroad Strike of 1877. Workers were walking from their posts to protest pay cuts. Riots ensued, and Hayes was tasked with deploying federal troops to calm the situation.

After his presidency, he advocated for children's literacy, equal rights and prison reform until his death in 1893.

# GROVER CLEVELAND

**President No.** 22 & 24 | **Born:** 1837 | **Died:** 1908 | **Served:** 1885-1889 & 1893-1897

**N**icknamed the “guardian president,” Grover Cleveland was known for using his veto power to strengthen the executive branch, protecting the integrity of offices he served. He is the only American President to serve two non-consecutive terms.

Cleveland was born in 1837 in Caldwell, N.J. His father was a Presbyterian minister, which kept them on the move to different posts throughout New York State. At the young age of 16, Grover Cleveland had to give up his education to support his family, after his father died. The knowledge he gained from working as a clerk and part-time law student would help him pass the bar exam in 1858.

## BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Cleveland became the assistant district attorney of Erie County, N.Y. in 1863. He would eventually change roles as the county sheriff from 1870 to 1873. His familiarity and reputation as a fair and honest man influenced his victory as mayor of Buffalo in 1881.

The very next year, he was elected governor of New York. Much like his time as mayor, he used his veto power frequently. This was a welcome action to the public as many were tired of the constant scandals involved in American politics.

His solid reputation was again acknowledged by Democrats seeking a



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candidate for the 1884 election. Cleveland won his push for presidency and became the 22nd chief executive.

## MAJOR POLICY

During Grover Cleveland's first term, he was praised for nullifying fraudulent grants to be used in Western public

lands and using the funds to protect the country's best interests.

He also was involved in developing the first regulatory agency in the country's history, the Interstate Commerce Commission. Another important movement he established was the Dawes General Allotment Act, which distributed Native American reservation land to tribe members.

During his bid for another term, Cleveland won in popular votes but ultimately lost the election due to the electoral college. It is thought that this was due to his opposition of a protective tariff that would cause an increase in taxes for American consumers.

In 1893, Grover Cleveland would retake the office and the country would endure the most severe depression the United States had experienced at the time. Another hurdle was the Pullman Strike, which was a widespread railroad strike and boycott. It led to the creation of Labor Day as a national holiday to honor the American labor movement.

After the presidency, Cleveland remained involved in politics until a heart attack took his life in 1908.