

# Biography



Level 10

## George W. Bush – Raising the Bar

George W. Bush once said, “I never dreamed about being president. When I was growing up, I wanted to be Willie Mays.”<sup>1</sup> Little did he know, nearly fifty years later, he would run for the highest office in the nation. How could this young boy from Texas who dreamed of baseball, grow up to be one of the most powerful people in the world?

The opening quotation effectively interests the reader.

Born right after World War Two, in 1946, George Walker Bush is the son of George Herbert Walker Bush and Barbara Pierce Bush. George Bush is the oldest of six children.

When George was two, his family moved from Connecticut to Midland, Texas. One year later, his sister, Pauline Robinson Bush was born. Her nick-name was Robin. George’s family was enjoying life in Midland, Texas, when tragedy struck. Robin died of leukemia in 1952. She was only three years old.

During his high school years, George played football, baseball, and was on the cheerleading squad for his high school. In keeping with recent family tradition, George Bush was the third generation to attend Yale. He attended Harvard as well.

George Bush moved from Harvard to Midland in 1975. He felt much more relaxed in Midland than on the college campus because there was an anti-Republican sentiment seeping through the walls of Harvard. Of course, this was awkward for George because his father supported President Nixon, a Republican.

As a young man, he was somewhat irresponsible, too. For instance, while he was at Yale, his grades weren’t his main focus. He concentrated more on things like card games that lasted into the

1 Beatrice Gormley, *President George W. Bush Our Forty-third President* (New York: Aladdin, 2001) Back Cover.



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night and parties. Back in Midland, his sense of house keeping reflected his life at Yale. For instance, instead of repairing his broken bed frame, he simply held it together with a necktie. He became addicted to drinking, which led to alcoholism. Despite his lifestyle, he managed to meet someone, his future wife, Laura Welch.

Laura Welch and George Bush met at their friend's house. Laura was George's complete opposite. She was a quiet, well-mannered elementary school librarian. He was a loud, rambunctious oil entrepreneur. It must have been "love at first sight" for them, because only three months later, they surprised everyone by marrying! "Bush was exactly the kind of guy librarians would tell to shut up in the library," remarked a Texas journalist.<sup>2</sup>

In 1981, something wonderful happened in the Bush family. Laura and George had twins, Jenna and Barbara Bush. George and Laura enjoyed feeding them together. In the mornings, they would each feed their twins with a bottle while reading newspapers in bed.

George came from a long line of politicians, so it seemed natural that he wanted to get into politics himself. A couple of months before George and Laura were married he began his campaign for a seat in Congress. To their disappointment, Bush lost the race. Just a couple years later, in 1979, his father, George H. W. Bush, announced that he wanted to run for President of the United States in 1980. He lost the nomination to Ronald Reagan, but was asked to be Reagan's running mate. In the 1980 elections, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush were elected to the White House.

In 1988 George H. W. Bush ran for and was elected president. As President, Bush fought and ended Operation Desert Storm in just a couple days. When he ran for President again in 1992,

This is good background that helps explain where Bush came from, and why he was interested in the presidency.

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2 Gormley 89.



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This is a good brief summary of Bush's governorship, which was a major step on the way to the presidency.

America elected Bill Clinton, his Democratic opponent, to the White House, instead of Bush.

In 1994 George W. Bush ran for Governor of Texas, against liberal Ann Richards. Many people thought that he would lose the race, but he surprised those people and won! As Governor, he gave local schools more authority on what they taught, and he changed regulations in order to boost private charities support of welfare. He reformed welfare so that everyone who could work was required to, instead of living on welfare. He also toughened juvenile punishment for crime. Then, a wild and crazy idea crossed George's mind. He was going to run for President of the United States.

At one time he had wanted a baseball career, but now he was raising the bar. He wanted to run for President, and his running mate would be Dick Cheney. He ran against Al Gore, Clinton's Vice President, and the election was historic. There was a great deal of confusion because one state, Florida, couldn't figure out to whom her votes belonged. First people thought Gore won. Then people thought Bush won, and Gore telephoned Bush and conceded. Just a short time later, Gore retracted his concession.<sup>3</sup> Gore then demanded that the votes in Florida be re-counted by hand. Both Gore and Bush filed lawsuits about the "hand-count" and the U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled that no more counts could take place. Finally, after 36 days, Bush came out the winner of the 2000 Presidential election.

Everything changed on September 11, 2001, for Bush and the world. Two planes crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City. Another plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, as well. And yet another plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. These attacks were organized by Al Qaeda, a terrorist group. After the attacks, President George W. Bush warned the world, "Either you

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<sup>3</sup> Carole Marsh, *The Here and Now Reproducible Book of George W. Bush America's Newest President and His White House Family* (Gallopade International, 2001) 29.



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are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” Neutrality was not possible.<sup>4</sup>

These four planes changed the course of history. President Bush declared the War on Terror less than a year after he was inaugurated. Will it ever end? Nobody knows.

In his 2000 inaugural speech, George W. Bush said, “The presidency is more than an honor. It is more than an office. It is a charge to keep, and I will give it my all.”<sup>5</sup> Will the history books one day document him as a president who did indeed give it his all? Only time will tell.

Since Bush is still alive and president, the conclusion is rightly somewhat open-ended. It could have presented a bit more analysis of Bush’s presidency up to that point, though.

**Bibliography**

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Gallopade International, 2001.

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4 Joy Hakim, *All The People 1946-2001* (New York: Oxford, 2003) 238.

5 Gormley 160.



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