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bush chronology

1940s

- 1941** George H.W. Bush meets Barbara Pierce at a Christmas dance in Greenwich, CT.
- June 12, 1942** George H.W. Bush graduates from Andover and enlists in the U.S. Navy. He serves on active duty from August 1942 to September 1945.
- September 2, 1944** George H.W. Bush's plane is shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire over the Pacific Ocean and he is rescued by the submarine USS Finback.
- January 6, 1945** George and Barbara Bush are married.
- July 6, 1946** George Walker Bush is born in New Haven, CT, where his father was attending Yale University.
- Spring 1948** George Sr. moves his family to Midland, Texas after graduation in order to make his fortune in the oil business.
 - "A Philosophy With Roots in Conservative Texas Soil"
- December 20, 1949** Pauline Robinson "Robin" Bush is born.

1950s

- 1950s** George W. attends Sam Houston Elementary School and San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas.
 - Click here to read FRONTLINE'S interviews with George W.'s childhood friends, [Randall Roden](#) and [Doug Hannah](#)

Prescott Bush, George Sr.'s father, wins a special election to

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1952 fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat from Connecticut.

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FRONTLINE on 

**February
11, 1953**

John Ellis "Jeb" Bush is born.



Robin Bush dies. She had been diagnosed with advanced leukemia several months earlier and was treated at Memorial Sloan-Kettering cancer hospital in New York City.

**Oct. 11,
1953**

- [Childhood friend Randall Roden tells FRONTLINE about the effect of Robin's death on young George.](#)
- [Click here to read more on how Robin's death forged a close bond between Barbara Bush and George W.](#)

1955 Neil Mallon Bush is born.

1956 Marvin Pierce Bush is born.

1959 The Bush family moves to Houston in order to further George Sr.'s business and political prospects.

**August
1959**

Dorothy Walker Bush is born.

**August
1959**

George W. attends the private Kinkaid School in Houston. He was very popular and remembered for his love of sports.

o 1960s

1961-1964

George W. attends Andover, where his father had been a legendary student leader and athlete. Nicknamed "Lip," George W. was known across campus for his extracurricular activities as a cheerleader and organizer of an intramural stickball league.

- [Click here to read Clay Johnson's memories of George W. at Andover.](#)
- ["Earning A's in People Skills at Andover"](#)

**Summer
1964**

George W. works on his father's Senate campaign. George Sr. is overwhelmingly defeated after being portrayed by his opponent as a carpetbagger and a member of the Northeastern elitist establishment.

George W. attends Yale University, the alma mater of his father, grandfather and several uncles. He majored in history

- but again was better known for his extracurricular activities, including the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and the Skull and Bones secret society.
- [In an interview with FRONTLINE, Clay Johnson shares memories of George W. at Yale.](#)
 - ["Ally of an Older Generation Amid the Tumult of the 60s"](#)
- 1964-1968**
- 1966** George Sr. easily wins the race for U.S. House of Representatives from Texas's Seventh District.
- December 1966** George W. is arrested and charged with disorderly conduct resulting from a college prank of stealing a Christmas wreath from a downtown store. The charges were later dismissed.
- December 1966** George W. becomes engaged to Cathryn Wolfman, a friend from Houston. The two eventually drift apart and the engagement is called off in 1968.
- May 27, 1968** George W. enlists in the 147th Fighter Group with the Texas Air National Guard. When asked why he wanted to enlist George replied, "I want to be a fighter pilot because my father was." His unit was referred to as the "Champagne Unit" because it included the sons of future Senator Lloyd Bentsen and Governor John Connally.
- [Click here to read about the controversy over whether George W. received special treatment in enlisting in the Texas National Guard.](#)
- June 9, 1968** George W. graduates from Yale.
- September 1968** After completing basic training George W. is put on inactive duty status so he could work on the Florida Senate campaign of Edward J. Gurney.
- November 1968** George W. is sent to National Guard flight training at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Georgia.
- December 1969** George W. receives his National Guard wings and is assigned to Ellington Air Force Base. [Click here to read Doug Hannah's memories of George W.'s National Guard years.](#)

○ 1970s

George W. splits his time between his National Guard duties and working on his father's second campaign for the U.S.

- 1970** Senate. Despite support from President Nixon, George Sr. again faced accusations of carpetbagging and was defeated by Lloyd Bentsen.
- Summer 1970** George W. graduates from Combat Crew Training School, but still flies weekend shifts for the National Guard. He moves into the Chateaux Dijon apartment complex in Houston and spends the next few years of his life working a series of jobs in politics and business.
- "After Yale, Bush Ambles Amiably into his Future"
- Fall 1970** George W. applies to University of Texas Law School and is rejected.
- 1971** George Sr. is named U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.
- 1971** George W. takes a job for nine months as a management trainee with Stratford of Texas, an agricultural and ranching company.
- 1972** George W. works as political director on William M. "Red" Blount's losing Senate campaign in Alabama and serves with the 187th Tactical Reconnaissance Group in Montgomery. During the summer Bush attends the GOP National Convention in Miami with his father.
- 1973** George Sr. becomes Chairman of the Republican National Committee
1973 - George W. works for nine months as a counselor at the Professional United Leadership League (PULL), a program designed to offer mentors from professional sports leagues to Houston's inner-city children. He is discharged from the National Guard in order to enter Harvard Business School.
- 1973-1975** George W. attends Harvard Business School. During the politically charged environment of the Watergate years, Bush was notably anti-political. To escape liberal anti-Nixon Cambridge, Bush spent much of his spare time with his relatives in the Northeast.
- September 1974** George Sr. named Chief of U.S. Liaison Office to China.
- 1975** George W. returns to Midland with money left over from his education trust fund and starts to work in the oil business. He begins as a freelance "landman," a middleman who researched land titles for potential oil prospects and attempted to lease the land on behalf of an oil company.

- 1976** George Sr. appointed Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.
- September 4, 1976** George W. is arrested in Kennebunkport, Maine for operating under the influence. He pleaded guilty, paid a \$150 fine and had his driving privileges suspended.
- July 1977** Upon the retirement of Texas Representative George Mahon, George W. makes an impulsive decision to run for Congress. He runs as a traditional conservative, opposed to big government, particularly Carter's attempts to control natural gas prices.
- [In an interview with FRONTLINE, Bush cousin John Ellis shares his views on why George W. ran for congress.](#)
- August 1977** George W. is introduced to Laura Welch, an elementary school librarian and Midland native at a friend's barbecue. The two marry three months later, on November 5, 1977 at the First United Methodist Church in Midland.
- June 1978** George W. beats Jim Reese, the mayor of Odessa, in the Republican primary. Reese, who had been endorsed by Ronald Reagan, campaigns against George W. as a "liberal Northeast Republican" riding on his father's coattails. George Sr., who was then jockeying for the 1980 GOP presidential nomination, did not campaign in the race at his son's request.
- November 1978** Although outspent by 25%, Democrat Kent Hance wins 53% of the vote to Bush's 47%. During the campaign Hance contrasted his Texas roots and education to Bush's years at Andover, Yale, and Harvard and questioned the extent to which Bush's campaign contributions came from outside the district.
- ["Learning How to Run--A West Texas Stumble"](#)
 - [Click here for additional reporting on Bush's 1978 campaign.](#)
- March 1979** George W.'s Arbusto Oil company begins active operations. The company had been incorporated in June 1977 so Bush could use it as a credential in his congressional campaign. Although the Bush name attracted many investors, most lost money due to Arbusto's average performance.

○ 1980s

July 1980

A surprised George Bush Sr. accepts Ronald Reagan's offer of the vice presidency at the GOP National Convention in Detroit. The Republican ticket wins the presidential contest in November.

· [In an interview with FRONTLINE, Doug Hannah comments on how George W.'s life changed when his father became vice president.](#)

November 25, 1981

George W. and Laura's twin daughters Barbara Pierce Bush and Jenna Welch Bush are born.

January 1982

Arbusto Oil is renamed the Bush Exploration Company. Bush took the company public and received a \$1 million investment from Philip A. Uzielli, a New York investor who had attended Princeton with James Baker. Over the next two years, Bush found it increasingly difficult to find investors in the oil business.

· [Click here to read more about Bush's years in the oil industry.](#)

February 29, 1984

Bush Exploration Company merges with Spectrum 7 and George W. is named chairman and CEO of the new company.

Summer 1985

George W. meets with Billy Graham at the Bush family retreat in Kennebunkport, Maine. Although he had become more attentive to religion after the birth of his daughters, Bush became increasingly serious about his faith after talking with Graham.

· [Click here to read an interview with Doug Wead about Bush and religion.](#)

July 1986

George W. drinks too much while celebrating their collective 40th birthdays with friends at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs. Waking up the next morning with a hangover, he pledged never to drink again and claims not to have touched alcohol since.

· ["How Bush Came to Tame His Inner Scamp"](#)
· [Click here to read more about Bush's decision to give up alcohol.](#)

September 1986

Spectrum 7 is bought by Harken Oil and Gas. George W. becomes a high profile board member and consultant to the company.

George W. moves his family to Washington DC in order to work on his father's presidential campaign. While his main role was that of "loyalty enforcer," he was also important in efforts to court and maintain relationships with Christian

- April 1987** conservatives.
- In interviews with FRONTLINE [Jim Pinkerton](#) and [Mary Matalin](#) -both advisors to his father-- discuss George W.'s role in Bush Sr.'s 1988 presidential campaign.
 - ["For Bush, Thrill Was in Father's Chase"](#)
- November 1988** George Sr. is elected president. George W. serves as the head of the "Scrub Team," a group of Bush advisers deciding who would get jobs in the White House.
- December 1988** George W. moves his family back to Dallas.
- April 21, 1989** A group of investors assembled by George W. buys the Texas Rangers from Bush family friend Eddie Chiles for \$75 million. George W. is chosen to serve as the managing general partner--the public face for the team.
- [In an interview with FRONTLINE, former Texas Rangers General Manager Tom Grieve offers his assessment of Bush's management role with the Rangers.](#)
- August 1, 1989** George W. announces in a speech to a Dallas lawyers' association that he will not run for governor in 1990.

o 1990s

- June 22, 1990** George W. sells 2/3 of his stake in Harken at 2.5 times the original value of the stock, netting \$848,560 two weeks before Harken announces a disastrous quarterly report. In April 1991 the Securities and Exchange Commission claims that George W. had filed notice of his sale of the Harken stock eight months after federal law required him to do so. Bush insists he filed the proper paperwork and that it had been lost by the SEC. In October 1993, Bush releases a letter from the SEC saying "the investigation has been terminated as to the conduct of Mr. Bush and at this time, no enforcement action is contemplated."
- January 1991** The residents of Arlington, Texas approve a controversial referendum to raise \$135 million through a half-penny sales tax in order to finance a new ballpark for the Rangers. George W. served as the chief public salesman of the deal and the Ballpark in Arlington opened in April 1994.
- [Click here to learn more about how Bush's role as a Rangers owner helped pave the way for his gubernatorial campaign.](#)
 - ["Road to Politics Ran Through Texas Ballpark"](#)
- George Sr. loses his presidential reelection bid to Bill Clinton. Because of his responsibilities with the Rangers,

- 1992** George W. did not play a major role in the campaign. Click here for Mary Matalin's analysis of how the 1992 election affected George W.
- 1993** George W. announces he will challenge the popular Texas governor Ann Richards in the 1994 gubernatorial race. With the 1992 election, George W. was finally able to escape his father's shadow and as owner of the Rangers he had developed a significant public persona in Texas. Bush runs on the issues of decentralizing public education, toughening the juvenile justice system, and reforming the tort and welfare systems.
- [Click here to read more about Bush's decision to run for governor.](#)
- October 1994** George W. holds a secret meeting with Democratic Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock to win Bullock's confidence and support.
- November 1994** After winning endorsements from the Houston Chronicle and Dallas Morning News, George W. defeats Ann Richards in the gubernatorial election with 53% of the vote. As governor he concentrates on his campaign platform, leading to welfare cuts, stricter penalties for juvenile crimes, and reduced damages in personal injury lawsuits. Bush is known for his ability to build consensus between Republicans and Democrats. After winning the election he withdraws from running the Rangers' daily operations.
- [Click here to read a Washington Post series on Bush's gubernatorial record.](#)
- 1997** Bush introduces a sweeping tax reform plan in Texas, including proposals to cut property taxes but raise sales and business taxes so that the state would pay a higher percentage of education funding. Although the end result would have been a net tax cut, it was opposed by many Republicans and defeated in the Texas legislature.
- February 3, 1998** Under national scrutiny, George W. declines to issue a thirty-day reprieve for convicted murderer and born-again Christian Karla Faye Tucker.
- 1998** George W. and his partners sell the Rangers and Bush earns \$14.9 million.
- November 3, 1998** George W. is reelected as governor. His opponent, Garry Mauro, a Texas land commissioner, runs against Bush's environmental record. Bush wins 69% of the vote, including 65% of the women's vote, 27% of the African-American vote, and 49% of the Latino vote.

**March 2,
1999**

George W. announces the formation of a presidential exploratory committee. He raises a record \$36.3 million during the first six months of 1999.

○ 2000

**January
24, 2000**

George W. wins the Iowa caucus.

**February
2000**

George W. loses the New Hampshire primary to Arizona Senator John McCain, but bounces back with a strong victory in South Carolina. In March, McCain suspends his presidential campaign.

**July 25,
2000**

George W. selects Dick Cheney as his running mate.

**August 3,
2000**

George W. Bush accepts the Republican presidential nomination.

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