

## GEORGE W. BUSH

**Name:** George Walker Bush

**Birth date:** July 6, 1946

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, Yale University, 1968; MBA, Harvard University, 1975

**Military Service:** Air National Guard, 1968-1973

**Career:** Founder/CEO of oil and gas company, 1975-1987; managing general partner, Texas Rangers baseball team, 1989-1998

**Elected office:** Texas governor, 1994-2000; U.S. president, elected 2000

**Family:** Wife, Laura; two daughters

**Quote:** "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them."

### Aiming for a second term

(CNN) -- President Bush entered the White House in the wake of the bitterly contested 2000 election but he heads into the 2004 campaign a markedly different candidate.

Instead of being a governor untested in national politics, Bush is an incumbent president who led the nation through the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and two subsequent wars. He also can claim domestic success with the passage of two tax cuts in two years and a version of his education plan. But after watching the elder Bush's 1992 re-election bid fail despite a post-1991 Gulf War approval rating above 90 percent, Bush and his Democratic challengers know a second term in the White House is never guaranteed.

In his 2000 campaign book, "A Charge To Keep," Bush made it clear that he did not intend to be a one-term president like his father. "I learned a great deal from my dad's presidency and campaigns," he wrote. "I learned you must spend political capital to earn it, or it withers and dies."

### An above-the-fray campaign

Bush took the first formal step in his re-election bid in May 2003 by filing with the Federal Election Commission, a move that allows him to start building his campaign structure and raising funds. His campaign raised more than \$34 million in the second quarter, which is more than the combined total raised by his potential Democratic opponents in the same time period.

For months, Bush tried to remain above the political fray, enjoy the benefits of being an uncontested incumbent and wait to formally declare his candidacy. Politics, Bush said at a news conference in July 2003, will come "later on." For now, "I will continue doing my job. And my job will be to work to make America more secure."

While Bush has mentioned national security as a priority in his re-election bid, he also has acknowledged that the economy needs attention. "The American people will decide whether or not I deserve a second term," Bush told reporters in May 2003. "In the meantime I am focusing my attention today on ... helping people find work. And that's where I'm going to be for a while."

Private-sector payrolls, measured on a year-over-year basis, fell for 20 months, the longest labor-market slump since World War II. The unemployment rate rose from 4 percent in 2000 when Bush took office to 6.2 percent in July 2003, the highest in nearly a decade. The numbers of jobless could make Bush potentially vulnerable on the economy, the same issue that helped then-Gov. Bill Clinton defeat his father.

Democrats in Congress have blamed rising deficits on Bush's tax cuts. The \$455 billion deficit in 2003 was a record in sheer dollar terms, though not as a percentage of the overall economy. But the president has insisted that the war on terrorism and Homeland Security needs, along with overspending by Congress, also have fueled the deficit.

Although he generally avoided talk of the 2004 election, Bush occasionally did show that he was focused on the race well before his campaign aired its first ads after Sen. John Kerry wrapped up the Democratic nomination in March. While vacationing at his Texas ranch in August 2003, Bush appeared irritated during a news conference by a reporter's suggestion that the California recall election was "the biggest political story in the country." "Isn't there, like, a presidential race coming up?" he said.

### **The road to the presidency**

For Bush, the road to the White House began in his adopted home state of Texas. Born in Connecticut, the oldest of four siblings, Bush moved to Texas with his family when he was two. His first bid for office was a congressional race in 1978. He lost to the incumbent. He returned to his oil businesses, but then the price of oil bottomed out in the early 1980s. Bush's company was rescued from financial ruin twice by mergers, the second time in 1986 by Harken Oil and Gas. The deal allowed Harken to purchase a company with some potential at a good price, plus put the son of the vice president on its board of directors.

After helping with his father's 1988 presidential campaign, Bush returned to Texas. In March 1989, he became part owner of the Texas Rangers, buying a 2 percent share for \$600,000 in borrowed money. He became the managing general partner, the front man for the team.

In 1994, he returned to politics, running for Texas governor against incumbent Ann Richards. She had memorably criticized his father at the 1992 Democratic National Convention with this line: "Poor old George. He can't help it. He was born with a silver foot in his mouth."

With his father's help, Bush raised more money than any candidate for any office in Texas history. He ran on a four-point program: education, juvenile justice, tort reform and welfare reform. Other items on the Bush agenda passed the conservative litmus test: making it legal to carry concealed weapons, supporting laws against sodomy and backing the death penalty.

Bush defeated Richards, a victory that coincided with the Republican takeover of Congress. He acted on all of his four campaign promises during his first term and when he won re-election in 1998 with 68 percent of the vote, talk of a run for the presidency was constant.

His baseball investment also paid off handsomely about that time. He placed his interest in the team in a trust during his first gubernatorial term. In 1998, Bush and his fellow partners sold the team, with Bush netting more than \$14 million.

Billing himself as a "compassionate conservative," Bush entered the presidential race in 1999, emphasizing tax cuts and changes in federal education policy. But a message wasn't the only thing Bush brought into the race. He had a record \$70 million in the bank before the first primary. Due to his prodigious fund-raising, Bush declined federal matching funds during the primary season -- a move which exempted him from spending limits imposed on candidates who accept matching funds.

His fund-raising advantage caused several of his opponents to drop out before the first primary. He eventually raised a record-setting \$193 million by the end of the campaign, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Arizona Sen. John McCain provided a fierce primary challenge in early 2000, but withdrew two days after a disappointing performance in the key March 7 primaries. Bush faced then-Vice President Al Gore in the general election, and the race went down the wire on Election Day, with Florida hanging in the balance.

After 36 contentious days of vote recounting and legal maneuvering in Florida, Bush won a 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended the recount ordered by the Florida Supreme Court. The decision effectively made him the president-elect.

### **The second Bush administration**

Once in office, Bush put aside the Florida controversy and pushed for the passage of his tax cut bill and education plan. He signed into law modified versions of both.

On foreign policy, he pursued a markedly different approach from his predecessor, staying out of the Middle East and rejecting a series of international agreements. Bush pulled out of the Kyoto global-warming treaty, a biological weapons agreement, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the International Criminal Court, and he withdrew the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a cornerstone of Cold War foreign policy.

Then the September 11 attacks transformed Bush's presidency. Both Democrats and Republicans praised Bush for his handling of the events and he made a well-received speech to Congress, notable for this blunt line: "Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done."

In 2002, Bush delivered his famous "axis of evil" speech, in which he labeled Iraq, Iran and North Korea as threats to the United States and the world. He lay to rest the Cold War doctrine of containment, replacing it with a new national security strategy of pre-emption, which holds that the United States must not let its enemies strike first. "After September 11, the doctrine of containment just doesn't hold any water, as far as I'm concerned," he said. "We must deal with threats before they hurt the American people again."

As 2002 ended, Bush appeared ready to test his new doctrine in Iraq. Despite the lack of international and U.N. support (but with the backing of Congress and a majority of the U.S. public), Bush launched a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Having seized control of Baghdad in April 2003, Bush declared an end to major combat in early May.

Yet as U.S. military personnel continue to die in Iraq and the cost of the rebuilding continues to escalate, Bush's challengers and critics have attempted to make Bush's handling of the war a campaign issue.