The steady leadership of George HW Bush: a review essay of Destiny and Power

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PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S UNSUCCESSFUL 1992 reelection campaign prompted extensive scrutiny of his single-term presidency for shortcomings that may have contributed to the loss. From the failure to keep his "no new taxes" pledge to perceived insufficient attention to domestic, particularly economic, concerns, the Bush presidency seemed likely to be viewed historically as one of modest success—in essence, a footnote to the legacy of Bush's transformational predecessor, Ronald Reagan.

More than two decades later, after the far more controversial presidency of George W. Bush (the 43rd U.S. presidency) and the failed presidential campaign of Jeb Bush, the first Bush presidency (the 41st U.S. presidency) is regarded more favorably by scholars and the American public. A 2014 Gallup poll found that 63 percent of Americans viewed Bush 41 favorably, second only to Bill Clinton, at 64 percent, among living presidents. (1) A survey from the same year of political scientists studying the American presidency identified Bush 41 as one of the most underrated presidents, along with Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. (2) Jon Meacham's new biography of the 41st presidency, Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush (3), bolsters this reevaluation, with a comprehensive study of George H.W. Bush's extensive political career, which included service in Congress, the United Nations, the Republican National Committee, the Foreign Service as envoy to China, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the White House for eight years as vice president before the presidency. In each of those positions, Bush's quiet leadership and diplomacy set the foundation for major policies enacted by more visible presidents.

As suggested by the book's title, Bush's career of leadership and public service in many respects fulfilled deeply held family expectations. The second of five children, Bush came from the economic elite, with both maternal and paternal family financial prosperity dating back to his grandparents. With their financial success came a belief in contributing to the community. As Meacham describes the Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century, when Bush's paternal grandfather built his fortune through railroads, "the pursuit of wealth was thus imbued with a sense of purpose" (p. 8). Growing up in New England, Bush followed the traditional path of his family's social circle, excelling in both academics and athletics and attending boarding school as a teenager. His college plans changed, however, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Just as his father had served as a field artillery officer in World War I, Bush decided to join the American fight in World War II, entering the U.S. Navy to become a pilot. He suffered injury when his plane was hit in the Pacific but soon returned to duty, earning numerous awards for his military service. (4)

Having met and married his wife, Barbara, during World War II, Bush matriculated at Yale University in the fall of 1945, 21 years old and determined to do well—and to do so quickly. His view was typical of his cohort; as Meacham writes,...
Meena Bose. Read more. Article. Hierarchy Again: On Accepting Limitations. April 1994 · Family Process. The fact that groups and organisations do not have to have leaders, or that isocratic organisations are possible, is usually ignored completely. The starting point for conventional analysis is that leaders exist, and they are important for effective organisational functioning. Read more. Article. Linking empowering leadership and employee creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, i August 2010 · Development and Learning in Organizations. X. Zhang. George HW Bush is a known evil pedophile, who ran a Congressional Blackmail Child Sex Ring during the 1980s known as “Operation Brownstone and Operation Brownstar”, and later to become known as “The Finders or The Franklin Coverup”. U.S. Vice President George HW Bush would sneak children over to Senator Barney Frank’s condo, known as a “Brownstone” to their famous cocktail parties, where U.S. Congressman and U.S. Senators — some willing and some unwilling participants — got a taste of the “Voodoo Drug” in their drink. To prove a case, you need one that was involved in an operation or a witness Destiny and Power book. Read 628 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. From Pulitzer Prize winner and #1 New York Times bestselling aut... In this highly educational biography of George H.W. Bush, Meacham offers the reader an insightful look into the life and times of the 41st President of the United States. While some depicted Bush as a man who had little leadership material because of his lack of an iron-clad set of beliefs, this compromising manner fostered the sort of compassionate persona that Bush never wanted to lose. With the power of a family foundation and the ability to compromise, Bush entered the world of politics well-armed for the trench battles ahead. It was George H.W. Bush who quietly but unmistakably laid the foundations for the 21st century, writes Jon Meacham. Meacham is the author of Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush. He wanted to go as soon as he heard. On the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, George Herbert Walker Bush—known as “Poppy” to family and friends—was walking on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, when word came of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was 17-and-a-half years old. He longed to defend his country—right then, right away, no waiting around.