

## Bush takes oath as 43rd President

*"Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because we believe in ourselves, but because we hold beliefs beyond ourselves.*

*When this spirit of citizenship is missing, no government program can replace it. When this spirit is present, no wrong can stand against it."*

President George W. Bush, Inaugural Address



By Mike Allen and Edward Walsh  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — George Walker Bush was sworn in as the nation's 43rd president Saturday and, with a call for compassion and civility in public life, pledged to "work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity."

The solemn, tradition-bound ceremony transferring power unfolded beneath gray skies on a raw January day as the 54-year-old former Texas governor, his eyes misty with tears, took the oath of office that had been administered 12 years earlier to his father, former president George Bush, who looked on proudly.

Weaving some of the themes and issues that he invoked during his campaign through his 14-minute inaugural address, Bush called on Americans to be "citizens, not spectators" and promised "to bring the values of our history to the care of our times."

The day was filled with emotion for the Bush family and its supporters, and Bush struggled not to reveal the deep feelings of the moment. A tear rolled from his eyes after the oath was administered by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and, a second time, at the conclusion of his speech, when he hugged his father.

On the nearby rain-soaked streets of Washington, there were also vivid reminders of the raw emotions that were stirred by the heated campaign and the marathon count of votes in Florida that finally gave Bush the presidency. Thousands of sign-waving protesters, some chanting "Hail to the Thief," roamed the streets, which were patrolled by about 7,000 officers from more than a dozen law enforcement agen-

cies. But at the Capitol, the ceremony proceeded smoothly as first Dick Cheney took the oath of office as vice president, and Bush, his voice firm, recited the hallowed words promising to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Vice President Al Gore, defeated by Bush in a bitter contest decided by the Supreme Court, glumly faced Bush on the West Portico of the Capitol. Outgoing President Bill Clinton, the man who ousted the new president's father from the White House in 1992, and the outgoing first lady and new Democratic senator from New York, Hillary Rodham Clinton, sat near the elder Bush and his wife, Barbara.

Bush was accompanied by his wife, Laura, and their twin, 19-year-old daughters, Barbara and Jenna, and Cheney by his wife, Lynne, and their daughters, Elizabeth and Mary. In addition to Bush's parents, the ceremony was attended by former president Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn.

Bush's daughters held back when their parents went up for the oath-taking. Clinton and Gore motioned to them to go up to the podium, and Clinton helped position them behind their mother.

Before Bush had even left the Capitol, he signed papers formally nominating his Cabinet members, and the Senate quickly confirmed seven of them with a single voice vote during an unusual Saturday session. Bush, following a tactic of former president Ronald Reagan, sought to undo many of Clinton's 11th-hour regulations and executive orders by suspending their publication in the Federal Register,

which is required for them to take effect.

The soon to be president and vice president and their wives began the day at a prayer service at St. John's Church, across Lafayette Park from the White House. They then went to the White House, where they were greeted by Clinton, Gore and their wives.

"Good morning, senator," Laura Bush said to her predecessor as first lady.

Throughout the morning and into the early afternoon, Clinton appeared to be almost buoyant. Before the arrival of the Bushes at the White House, the outgoing president and first lady were spotted dancing in the foyer of the executive mansion.

On his way to the Clintons' new residence in New York, Clinton made a final stop and speech to his aides and supporters at Andrews Air Force Base. "I left the White House," he said, "but I'm still here."

But the day belonged to Bush, who began his speech by thanking Clinton "for his service to our country" and Gore "for a contest conducted with spirit and ended with grace."

After Bush took the oath, three officials briskly removed rain covers from the TelePrompTer equipment, as if unwrapping a fresh new oratory. Bush spoke with a confidence and precision that had so often eluded him on the campaign trail and in his occasional public appearances since Election Day.

In the short, thematic address, Bush mentioned a number of issues that he stressed during the campaign. He pledged to "reclaim America's schools, before ignorance and apathy claim more lives," to reform Social Security

country's military capability and "confront weapons of mass destruction," a reference to his plan to deploy a ballistic missile defense system.

"The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake, America remains engaged in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom," Bush said in the only section of the speech that dealt with foreign policy. "We will defend our allies and our interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations, we will speak for the values that gave our nation birth."

But Bush's main theme centered on his pledge to conduct himself with "civility, courage, compassion and character," each word an echo from his campaign and its aftermath, as he explicitly appealed to those who did not support him, including the 90 percent of African American voters who backed Gore.

"While many of our citizens prosper, others doubt the promise, even the justice, of our own country," said Bush, who wore a dark overcoat against the day's chill. "The ambitions of some Americans are limited by failing schools, and hidden prejudice, and the circumstances of their birth. And sometimes our differences run so deep it seems we share a continent but not a country."

"We do not accept this and will not allow it." Since Election Day, Bush, who lost the popular vote to Gore and won a narrow electoral college majority only after a bitter series of legal disputes that was finally settled by the Supreme Court, has often spoken of civility and his de-

termination to unite the country.

"Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment," he said Saturday. "It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. And this commitment, if we keep it, is a way to shared accomplishment."

Bush said courage was necessary even in a time of peace and prosperity. "We must show courage in a time of blessing," he said, "by confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations."

Bush portrayed himself during the campaign as a "compassionate conservative" and he invoked that theme again Saturday, including his call to make more use of "faith based" private efforts to improve social conditions. "Compassion is the work of a nation, not just a government," he said.

He also raised the theme of "character," which during the campaign Bush used implicitly to contrast himself with Clinton's personal scandals. "America, at its best, is a place where personal responsibility is valued and expected," he said.

Bush added: "What you do is as important as anything government does. I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your nation beginning with your neighbor. I ask you to be citizens: citizens, not spectators."

In taking the oath of office, Bush joined John Quincy Adams as only the second man to follow his father into the presidency. His father was the first man to see his son sworn in as president since Joseph Kennedy witnessed the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy in 1961.

### A Bush beginning at White House

by Jura Koncius  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Like certain members of his Cabinet, the rug that President George W. Bush chose for the makeover of his Oval Office has previous White House experience.

The \$49,625 terra-cotta and greenish-gray oval wool rug originally was commissioned in 1988 for President Reagan by Los Angeles decorator Ted Graber. Although Bush wanted a fresh look for the newly vacated power office, there wasn't time to do much between the swearing-in ceremony and the last float of the inaugural parade. As the Clinton furnishings were trucked off to storage, the floors were buffed, and White House staffers installed new artwork as well as two white sofas to replace Clinton's red-striped ones.

The Reagan rug reportedly took Stark Carpet Co. two years to design and produce, and was used for just over a year. It was mothballed by the current president's father soon after he moved into the Oval Office in 1989. (Historical footnote: Dubya passed over Papa's own \$28,500 "Bush blue" Oval Office carpet by designer Mark Hampton.) The Reagan rug measures 23 by 31 feet and has a four-foot center medallion of the presidential seal and an 18-inch border. Both the Reagan and Bush rugs were paid for by private donors.

No word on whether Bush plans to commission his own rug. The Oval Office decor is still a work-in-progress. According to a White House press spokesman, more changes were being made this week. We'll keep you posted.

### Time to accept Bush's legitimacy?

Chicago Tribune Editorial  
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Sane Americans may be occupied this week debating how the Super Bowl will turn out, but a small group of vocal political partisans is obsessed with the outcome of a different contest: last year's presidential race.

They claim George W. Bush stole the election and that his presidency is irredeemably tainted. Mass e-mails sent out by attack teams portray this election as "the worst political fraud" in American history.

Last week, President Clinton poured fuel on the flames by commenting that campaign manager Bill Daley "did a brilliant job in leading Vice President Gore to victory." According to the incumbent, Bush is ascending to the Oval Of-

fice only because he got the Supreme Court "to stop the vote in order to change the outcome."

Even before he takes the oath, Bush finds himself subject to the kind of poisonous vilification that has afflicted Clinton for more than eight years. Most people didn't think issues like Clinton's youthful draft record and his relationship with Gennifer Flowers were relevant to his performance, but a few right-wingers raised them repeatedly, with little effect except to sour Americans on political discourse.

Some advice for those Americans who feel bitter about the fact that Bush will become the 43rd president on Saturday: Put it behind you.

Maybe if we were to count some of the Florida ballots according to rules tailor-made to help the vice president, as the Gore team pro-

posed, you'd find him with the most votes in that state, which would have put him on top in the Electoral College. Maybe if there were no snafus involving minority voters, Gore would have done better. This election exposed voting problems that need to be addressed.

But the electoral and legal system, imperfections and all, produced an outcome that is clear and final.

Is that outcome entitled to respect? Of course it is — as Bush's opponents would be the first to agree if the courts and election officials had ruled in their favor.

Neither this nor any other country has a flawless method for electing leaders. What the United States has, though, is the rule of law. It functioned reasonably well in the trying circumstances of this election, and it produced a victor whom

all Americans should accept. At a Martin Luther King Jr. Day event, former King aide and U.N. ambassador Andrew Young urged an end to fighting over the election: "It's time for us to realize that George Walker Bush is our president."

Those who question Bush's approach are entitled to lobby against his proposals and mobilize against his Cabinet nominees. But the fights ought to be about issues that affect real people.

The only thing likely to be achieved by questioning Bush's right to hold office is to convince ordinary citizens that today's politics is just a cynical game of search and destroy. Both sides ought to see that if we keep going in that direction, everyone will lose.