



My Father, My President: A Personal Account of the Life of George H. W. Bush

Doro Bush Koch

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When George H. W. Bush asked Doro to write this memoir, she contacted hundreds of his friends and associates; conducted scores of interviews with dignitaries including Bill Clinton, Mikhail Gorbachev, and General Colin Powell; tapped the memories of family members, including her mother, her four brothers, and of course, her father himself; and collected information from the former president's never-before-released files. "Now for the first time, a complete portrait of George H. W. Bush emerges. Doro reveals her father as a young man courting his future wife, Barbara, and how the death of their first daughter brought them closer. Doro tells how they raised five children through much of her father's long and storied career in public service, and offers details about this tenures as head of the Republican National Committee during Watergate, ambassador to the U.N., America's liaison to China, and vice president for eight years under Ronald Reagan." "Doro also provides an insider's look at how the 41st president dealt with crises and challenges, all while keeping his humor and personality intact, and how he still does so while aiding victims of the 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. She shows how he felt when two of his sons entered politics - and when his eldest made it to the top - and sheds new light on his friendship with former rival Bill Clinton."--BOOK JACKET.

My Father, My President: A Personal Account of the Life of George H. W. Bush Details

Date : Published October 6th 2006 by Grand Central Publishing (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN : 9780446579902

Author : Doro Bush Koch

Format : Hardcover 608 pages

Genre : Biography, Politics, Presidents, Nonfiction



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Don says

Unsurprisingly partisan in some places, the book is still a fascinating look at the life of President George H. W. Bush. It contains unique first-hand insights on the life of President Bush (41) that could only be delivered by his daughter. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone looking to learn more about the Bush family and their family tradition of public service.

Lauren Glowacky says

I'm not going to lie...Bush 41 is my favorite President. He is such a like able man. This book, written by his daughter Doro, chronicles his life growing up, his service during WWII, being shot down in the Pacific and rescue. He came home, married his sweetheart, Barbara, and then started college, which he finished in 2 1/2 years. Instead of taking a job with his father on Wall St. (The easy option), he decided to strike out on his own and moved 2/3 of the way across the country and learn the oil business, starting at the bottom and working his way up. Bush 41 loves people, and felt comfortable socializing with people from all walks of life. The book tells of how he got started in politics at the local level and follows his career all the way to the White House and beyond. During his presidency, the Berlin Wall came down, the Cold War ended, Soviet leader Gorbachev became a good friend, Lech Walensa became leader of Poland, and Bush was on good terms with many world leaders. Previous to the White House, then Senator Bush sponsored the Americans with Disabilities Act. The most important thing to President Bush is family. His wife (January 2015 will mark their 70th Anniversary!), his five children, and 17 grandchildren.

Katie Burdett says

Loved this beautiful, thoughtful biography of a true American hero!

Kristal Cooper says

A collection of stories involving our 41st President, George H. W. Bush, compiled by his daughter and presented in chronological order. Because some are political anecdotes and others are personal, the segues are not always smooth. Though it's an interesting idea for a Presidential memoir, it feels very incomplete. It doesn't even begin to give you a history of this man or his time in our highest office. I'm giving it a higher than average rating because some of the stories are quite funny and I REALLY liked the parts where 41 himself reads from his diary and letters.

Kirk says

Picked this up when the kids and I went to Virginia with Steve and spent the day on the Geo. HW Bush CVN 76. His daughter Doro (the author) was there most of the day handing them out and autographing copies. When we were leaving the ship late that day, they had boxes of them left and I grabbed one. I read it about a month later, gained a new appreciation for GWHB. While I've never been a huge fan....I will say that he is far and away ten times the man his meatball son is, but of course that goes w/o saying..... anyway, it's not a bad read. I think any biography of a famous person is worthwhile, for perspective of another life.

Jas says

One of the better biographies of a politician. Written by his daughter with help from daughter-in-law. Lots of personal family stories. Really emphasizes his life outside of the Whitehouse also. How he interacted with family, friends, politicians and international operatives. I recommend this book.

Mmiller400m says

It's hard to keep my negative feelings for Bush 43 out of my review of this book but I'll try. I am glad that I got to learn more about this man and I think if the Republican party had more men like this today I'd still respect them and we'd be in a much better place as a nation today. I think Bush 41's personality and gentleness came through and I particularly liked reading about his post presidency. On the negative side I really disliked how much the author talked about herself. I could really care less about Doro and wish that that space wasted would have been used better. At one point she talked about giggling while looking at large bull penises in South America. That's just great. Thanks a lot for that. Aside from my disdain for his children I feel like Bush 41 was and is a great man.

Alisa Luciano says

This was a great book, full of the standard anecdotes and stories about President Bush, but with additional insights and a wonderfully warm, humorous and loving tone. His daughter does an excellent job infusing the personality of the family into stories that range from the personal to the political. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, tho long, it gives the reader a deeper appreciation of a great man and his family.

Mara says

When someone's daughter (yes, George H.W. Bush had a daughter- I was surprised too) writes a biography, you don't exactly expect it to be a hard-hitting examination of the good, bad and the ugly parts of their life. However, there is a genuine paucity of books on Bush 41 (the George Bushes took to calling each other 41 and 43 after the younger was elected president), so I thought, what they hey, I'll deal with a daughter's-eye-view, and just take it with a grain of salt. As a bonus, it was available through my library online; so I got to be both cheap *and* lazy about it.

Not having examined things too closely, I started off with the abridged version of the audiobook. I'm not a big fan of "abridgings," but the full version was checked out, and see above re. my laziness. Now you'll have

to trust me here when I promise you that I'm not being glib, but the abridged version of the audiobook was so full of the seemingly *least* interesting anecdotes that I actually thought there was a chance that there had been a mixup wherein someone was told to cut these five hours of the book, and there was some sort of confusion down in editing that resulted in those same five hours actually becoming the abridged audiobook. (Remember that thing where the pilots of the Asiana plane that crashed were reported as being named Sum Ting Wong and Wi Tu Lo? These things happen!)

As a show of good faith, I actually waited patiently, and submitted myself to the full, 25-hour, unabridged audiobook to see what was up. I should have been tipped off that things weren't going to go well when I realized that author, Doro Bush Koch, had narrated only the abridged version (Marianne Fraulo was the unabridged reader), which suggests that: **1.** Doro actually knew that those five hours were in the "keep" pile, and **2.** Even the author couldn't bear to sit through a full reading of the 900-page tome.

I'm trying to think of some good things to point out just to show I'm not totally cold-hearted. I found the fact that the Bushes had a daughter who died when she was three to be very sad. Forty-one reliving his Flyboys days by skydiving on his 85th birthday was pretty cool (and this story of his World War II experience was genuinely interesting).

Too much of this book just reeked of *poor me*. I get it, it's an emotional roller-coaster being a family member of a politician (Doro is the only person to have been alive as both the daughter and sister of a president in office- Nabby Adams died of breast cancer before John Quincy became POTUS). At the same time, political races can be nasty business, and if the candidate is personally attacked while in the fray, it's no exception.

I guess the anecdotes of Bush lending his raincoat to a shivering lady in China (I think), or becoming fundraising partners and golf buddies with Bill Clinton (aka 42, obviously) were nice enough. I always like learning about the behind-the-scenes details for events that were simplified and summed up in the headlines (e.g. Bush puking on the Japanese Prime Minister). That being said, this was just too much of too little.

Do with this information what you will, but do so at your own risk.

Joy says

There can never be too many books praising the Bush family since I'm a big fan. This was history from a daughter's perspective, with lots of insider info on family life as well as public life.

Jennifer says

This was probably one of the most enjoyable reads in my book journey through the presidents. Even though it is lovingly written by George H. W.'s daughter, Doro, it is surprisingly candid and fairly balanced (I thought).

George Bush 41's life is refreshing to read about - he is a true gentleman, a man of humility and grace, a person who truly cares about helping and serving others. He is also extremely devoted and connected to his

family members. It was so touching to read the letters he has written to his children, grandchildren, and other family members. Even when president, he still made time for even the smallest members of the family.

President Bush 41 was probably the kindest president we have ever had. He was also probably the best at not letting the immense power of the presidency get to his head. My hat's off to him.

Mary Naylor says

I love anything by the Bush women. This is a light look at George Bush through the eyes of his daughter.

Jeanette says

Almost a five. Because I listened, rather than read, in the audio version, it was more than intriguing. Never boring. Barb, Doro, Dad all played their voice parts, but it is primarily Doro as the narrator to all she remembers. The young years of moving, changing jobs, and vast family changes including the death of their first daughter! Well, that made me tired just listening to all the roles and activities which this young married pair accomplished. The entire biography was excellent, but I especially liked the former President's sense of humor. Both in his own words and in the real life happenings told by Doro. As on the night that Reagan asked him to run as his V.P. and everyone in their suite and on their floor thought the opposite had occurred- because of his straight face. I especially appreciated George H. W.'s vocal assessments of those who served with him in so many different capacities. For instance, hearing about how Kissinger treated his staff and only lit up and became "warm" and brilliant when given the microphone.

This is really worth a listen. In his roles as Ambassador to China, V.P. and so many more before and beyond the Presidency- this man sure had experience. And is he tough and full of positive patience and tact too. AND smart! The kind of smart that pulled a Karl Rove out of group for mentorship. And who so fairly and accurately accesses so many of the movers and shakers of both parties or THIRD parties during his years of public service. IMHO, for instance, his is the closest to reality of the Nixon personality estimation, that I have yet heard.

Also, I learned that Doro Bush Koch is the only human woman since the founding of the USA that had a father and a brother both serve as Presidents in her own lifetime. The woman has a window, that's for sure and she did not skip the misfortunate times/associations nor mince words either. She seems like her Mother, being aware that she is what she is.

Stephanie Sheaffer says

This hefty book is 500+ pages, but it is surprisingly entertaining. I never once thought of giving it up.

Doro Bush Koch, George Bush's youngest daughter, writes a compelling narrative about her father. She does an excellent job of inserting personal stories and opinions, while also adding in interviews with siblings, cousins, colleagues, and political peers.

I have always admired George Bush from afar and this book served to confirm my "suspicion" that he is a

genuine, caring, and action-oriented person. So great that he went sky diving on his 80th birthday!

Jim Bowen says

One of my biggest grumbles with biographies is that I sometimes suspect that they aren't written with the reader in mind. The author does a lot of research, and almost seems to think "This book isn't the easiest read, but feel the weight" as he writes it.

There is no such problem with this book about George Bush Sr, which is written by his sole surviving daughter. She's clearly done some research, and has the advantage of having unprecedented access to a president and his private papers and diaries. She weaves this research into a chit-chatty, gossipy style book about Bush 41, and ensured that he is presented in a favorable light.

The book irritated me though for a number of reasons. Firstly, she doesn't really tell us anything anyone with an interest in politics probably didn't already know. This is a shame given the access she had. Secondly, skims over his early life and the period leading up to the end of the Vice-Presidency very quickly. In a 520 page book, all of that is dispensed with inside 200 pages. Thirdly, she shied away from the difficult questions. Iran-Contra is barely covered for example. I know it might be difficult to challenge your dad about certain things, but I think people have a right to know what he knew and when he knew it. Finally it's almost too chatty. I've never read a women's magazine, but part of me suspects that this is the sort of book that an author might write if it was aimed at readers of those sorts of magazine.

So all in all, I feel a little let down. she had all this access and didn't do a whole lot with it.

I know I shouldn't complain, I bitch when there's too much research and now I'm complaining when there's too little. It's just it's so conversational and chatty, that I feel almost dirty (or a traitor) for reading it.
