



PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES



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George Washington

President No. 1

Born: 1732 **Died:** 1799

Served: 1789 to 1797

After a long military and political career, George Washington was looking to retire at the same time the nation was looking for leadership.

His direction during the Constitutional Convention in 1787, however, catapulted him into position as a front runner for the presidency. On the heels of the constitution being ratified, the electoral college unanimously elected Washington as the nation's first president.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Arguably as monumental as his presidential legacy, Washington built a reputation as an elite military leader, as well.

He was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in 1754 and fought many of the initial battles of what grew into the French and Indian War.

From 1759 to the outbreak of the American Revolution, Washington managed and maintained his personal land. He also married Martha Dandridge Custis and led a simple life.

As time went on, Washington began to feel exploited by British regulations on land management. When the Second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia in May 1775, Washington was elected commander in

chief of the Continental Army.

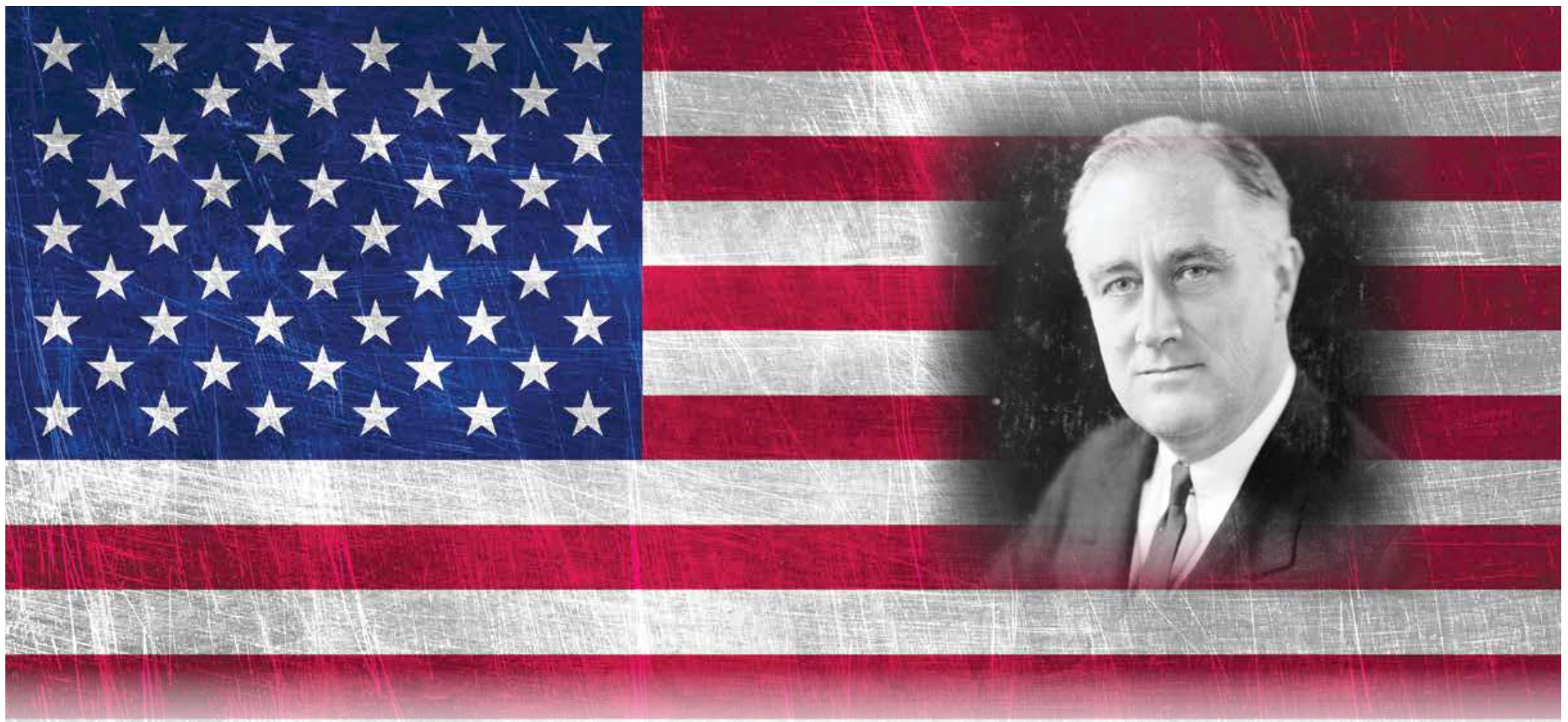
He led a grueling six-year barrage of battles until finally, in 1781 with the aid of French allies, he forced the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

MAJOR POLICY

Dealing with war and battles became an expertise of Washington's, even during his presidency. When the French Revolution led to a major war between France and England, Washington insisted on the U.S. remaining neutral.

Neutrality was important to Washington in many aspects of political leadership, and he urged his countrymen to avoid excessive party spirit or geographical restrictions. Despite his efforts, two parties were developing by the end of his first term.

Washington grew weary of the back and forth by the end of his second term and decided to retire. His rest was short-lived. He enjoyed less than three years of retirement, dying of a throat infection on Dec. 14, 1799.



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Franklin D. Roosevelt

President No. 32

Born: 1882 **Died:** 1945

Served: 1933 to 1945

“**T**he only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Those 10 words uttered at his inaugural address in a way defined Franklin D. Roosevelt’s entire presidency.

The nation’s 32nd president assumed power in the deepest valley of the Great Depression, and his message of hope and perseverance permeated the spirit of the American people.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Born in 1882 at Hyde Park, N.Y., Roosevelt attended Harvard University and Columbia Law School and married Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905.

Roosevelt won election to the New York Senate in 1910 and was appointed assistant secretary of the Navy by President Woodrow Wilson. By 1920, he was the Democratic nominee for vice president.

His rapid ascension up the political ladder came to a screeching halt when, in the summer of 1921, he was stricken with poliomyelitis. The condition required a long, hard fight to regain the use of his legs. Seven years later, Roosevelt became governor of New York.

MAJOR POLICY

Roosevelt was elected president in

November 1932 to the first of four terms. By March there were 13 million unemployed Americans and banks were closing at an alarming rate. His New Deal proposition was enacted by Congress as a sweeping program to bring recovery to business and agriculture.

As the nation slowly emerged from the Depression, Roosevelt was re-elected by a large margin. His collection of terms was punctuated when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and he spearheaded the organization of the nation’s resources for a global war.

With the foresight of the need for stronger relations between international powers, Roosevelt also laid the groundwork for the creation of the United Nations. He coined the organization’s name, which was first used in the Declaration by United Nations on Jan. 1, 1942, during the Second World War.

As the war drew to a close, Roosevelt’s health deteriorated. On April 12, 1945, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage, leaving behind a long history of service to his country and a reputation for swift, resolute action.



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Thomas Jefferson

President No. 3

Born: 1743 **Died:** 1826

Served: 1801 to 1809

A true advocate of liberty and justice for all, Thomas Jefferson proudly served as our nation's third president.

Known as the silent member of the Congress, Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence at the age of 33. In years following, he worked hard to make sure it was instituted across the nation and wrote a bill establishing religious freedom, enacted in 1786.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

This powerful pioneer of liberty was born in 1743 in Virginia, where he inherited about 5,000 acres of land. He studied at the College of William and Mary and then became an expert in the legal field before reluctantly becoming a presidential candidate in 1796.

That year, he came within three votes of election and became vice president to his opponent, John Adams, through a flaw in the Constitution. The year 1800 brought about even more controversy, as Republican electors cast a tie vote between Jefferson and Aaron Burr. The House of Representatives settled the tie in the favor of Jefferson, and the rest was history.

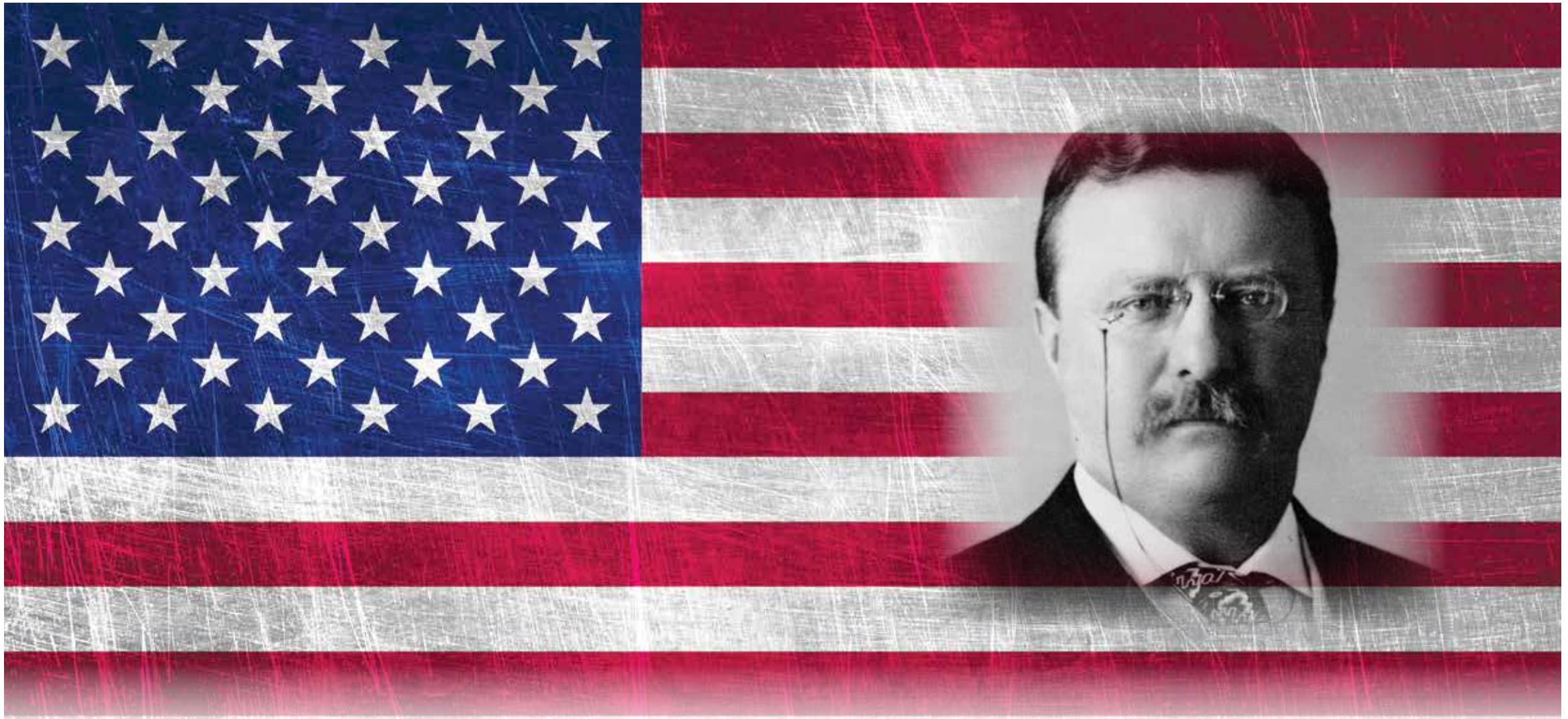
MAJOR POLICY

When Jefferson assumed the presidency, during peacetime, he quickly slashed Army and Navy expenditures, cut the budget and reduced the national debt by a third.

The greatest feat of his presidency — the Louisiana Purchase — occurred in 1803. Although the Constitution made no provision for the acquisition of new land, Jefferson worked out the \$15 million deal from Napoleon for one of the largest land deals in history (800,000 square miles).

Jefferson spent the majority of his second term devising ways to keep his nation out of the Napoleonic wars, which were spreading rapidly throughout Europe. In trying to remain neutral, Jefferson used economic threats and an embargo upon American shipping that ended up working against his nation's prosperity.

The embargo was lifted as Jefferson left office. He died on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, just a few hours before the passing of the nation's second president, John Adams.



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Theodore Roosevelt

President No. 26

Born: 1858 **Died:** 1919

Served: 1901 to 1909

Much like his distant relative, Franklin, who would later serve in the same position, Theodore Roosevelt was a passionate leader.

Due to his affluent upbringing in New York City, Roosevelt's youth differed greatly from those of the log cabin presidents who served before him. He was born in 1858 into a wealthy family but, like FDR, would battle much tragedy and major illness throughout his life.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

In 1884, Roosevelt's first wife, Alice Lee Roosevelt, and his mother died on the same day. Overcome with great sadness, he spent the next chapter of his life driving cattle and hunting big game on his ranch in the Badlands of the Dakota territory. He remarried in 1886 and became a lieutenant colonel of the Rough Rider Regiment during the Spanish-American War.

Roosevelt won as the Republican candidate for Governor in 1898, eventually becoming the vice president behind McKinley. When the president was assassinated, Roosevelt became the youngest leader in the nation's history at age 42.

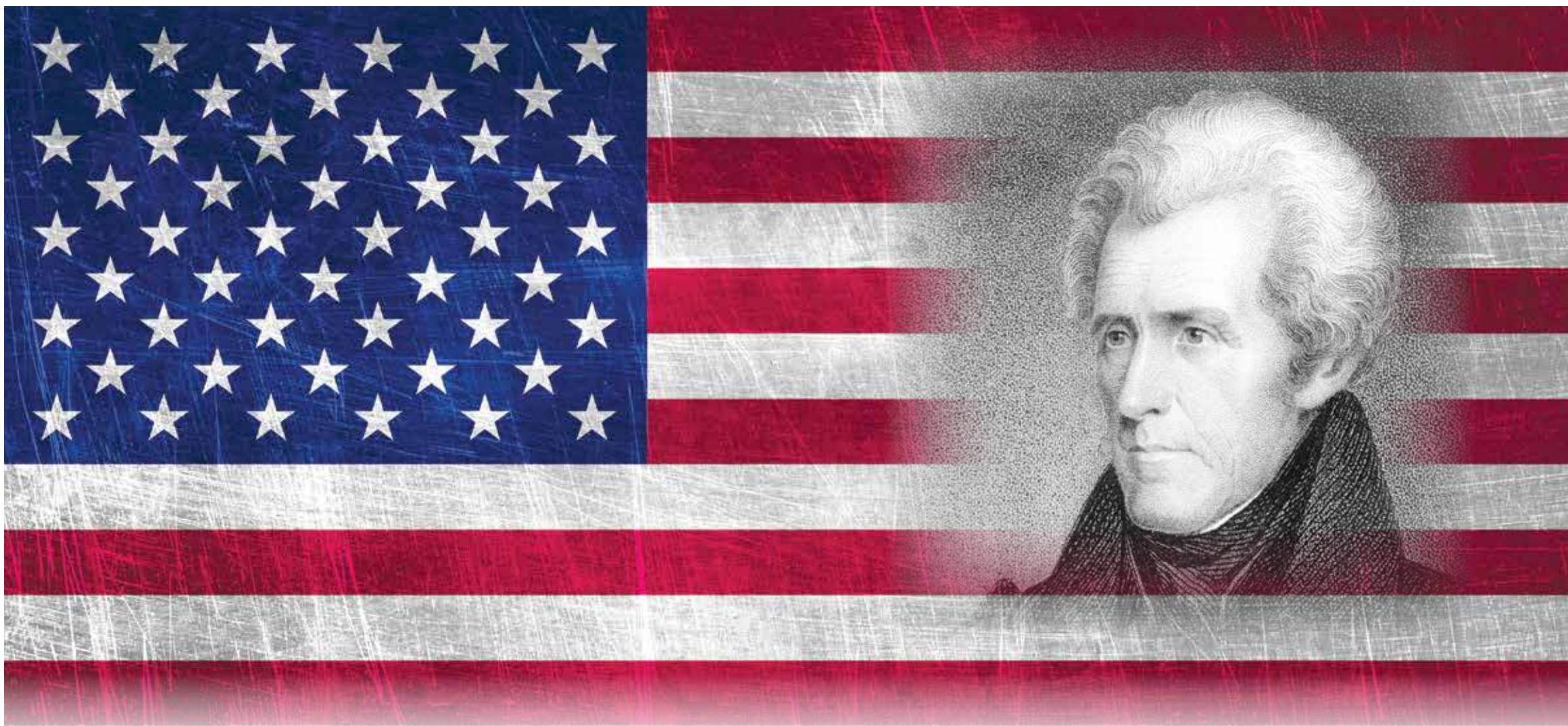
MAJOR POLICY

Roosevelt leveraged his age advantage to challenge Congress and the American public to take on progressive, strengthened reforms. One of his major impacts was ensuring the construction of the Panama Canal, driving the creation of a strategic shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific.

His policies were not only celebrated by the American population and business leaders but also by the international community. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the Russo-Japanese War and reached a gentleman's agreement on immigration with Japan.

Roosevelt was a conservationist, adding to the national forests in the West, reserving lands for public use and spearheading expansive irrigation projects.

Leaving the presidency in 1909, Roosevelt would eventually jump back into politics when he ran for president in 1912 on the Progressive ticket. While campaigning in Milwaukee, he was shot in the chest by a fanatic. He soon recovered. He died in 1919.



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Andrew Jackson

President No. 7

Born: 1767 **Died:** 1845

Served: 1829 to 1837

Hailed as “Old Hickory” for his easygoing, of-the-people demeanor, Andrew Jackson would become a national hero.

He is most known for founding the Democratic party, advocating for individual liberty and earning a reputation as the people’s president.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Jackson became an expert lawyer at a young age, overcoming a modest upbringing in the Carolinas with sporadic educational opportunities.

Even though he was refined in his understanding of the law, he also was known as hot tempered and quick to fight, even reportedly killing a man in a duel after his wife, Rachel, was disrespected.

Jackson built a mansion — the Hermitage — near Nashville — and became the first man from Tennessee to be elected to the House of Representatives. He also briefly served in the Senate.

A major general in the War of 1812, Jackson earned national hero status when he defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1814-1815.

MAJOR POLICY

As Jackson took over the presidency, major differences were forming in the conversation of neutrality in national politics. Two parties grew out of the old Republican Party, one of which was the Jackson-led Democrats. The National Republicans (or Whigs) opposed his policy, ideas and stance on how to effectively run a government.

Jackson was depicted as King Andrew I in cartoons and proclaimed an unfit leader by his opposition. Their claims centered on accusations of Jackson using his power of the veto and party leadership to make unilateral decisions without obeying checks and balances.

One of those actions came in 1833 when Jackson announced that the government would no longer use the Second Bank for the United States — the country’s national bank. He used his executive power to remove all federal funds from the bank. His actions and dissension thereafter became known as the Bank War.

“Old Hickory” retired to the Hermitage, where he died in June 1845.



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John F. Kennedy

President No. 35

Born: 1917 **Died:** 1963

Served: 1961 to 1963

Nov. 22, 1963 is still a date that rings loudly in the ears of many Americans who were alive to experience it.

It was the day that John Fitzgerald Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullets as his motorcade wound through Dallas, hardly 1,000 days into his presidency. Kennedy was the youngest man elected president. He was also the youngest to die.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Kennedy was born in Brookline, Mass., on May 29, 1917. He graduated from Harvard in 1940 and served in the Navy before becoming a charismatic Democratic congressman and senator.

He married Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953 and wrote "Profiles in Courage" two years later while recuperating from a back operation. The publication won the Pulitzer Prize in history.

In 1956, Kennedy almost gained the Democratic nomination for vice president and four years later was a first-ballot nominee for president. He beat out Republican candidate Richard Nixon to win the popular vote by a narrow margin, becoming the first Roman Catholic president.

MAJOR POLICY

"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask

what you can do for your country." This became one of the most memorable phrases uttered by Kennedy when he spoke it at his inaugural address.

He would excite many Americans through his policies, specifically ones focused on battling privation, poverty and the challenge of Communism.

Shortly after his inauguration, Kennedy ordered a band of Cuban exiles to invade their homeland in an attempt to overthrow the regime of Fidel Castro. The plan failed and worsened the already fractured relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

Kennedy also set his sights on another communist power: the Soviet Union. When the country renewed its campaign against West Berlin, Kennedy replied by increasing the nation's military strength.

The Russians later sought to install nuclear missiles in Cuba, an effort that influenced Kennedy to impose a quarantine on all offensive weapons in Cuba. While nuclear war seemed possible, the Russians eventually agreed to remove the missiles.

Kennedy was successful in contending that both sides had a vital interest in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and slowing the arms race. These efforts led to the test ban treaty of 1963.



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Harry Truman

President No. 33

Born: 1884 **Died:** 1972

Served: 1945 to 1953

Perhaps no president either before or after Harry Truman had more conflict hit his desk when he took over the oval office.

During his few weeks as vice president to Franklin Roosevelt, Truman reportedly scarcely saw the president and received no briefing on the development of the atomic bomb or the emerging dangers of Soviet Russia.

When he took over on April 12, 1945, he soon realized how much work had to be done to protect the American people and their pursuit of democracy.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Truman was born in Lamar, Mo., in 1884, and grew up in Independence to eventually prosper as a farmer.

He traveled to France during World War I as a captain in the Field Artillery and became active in the Democratic party upon his return. He was elected a judge of the Jackson County Court in 1922 and became a Senator in 1934.

MAJOR POLICY

As president, Truman made arguably some of the most crucial decisions in history. After a

plea to Japan to surrender, Truman ordered atomic bombs dropped on cities devoted to war work, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Japanese surrender quickly followed, and in June 1945, Truman witnessed the signing of the charter of the United Nations. The president carried out many of his predecessor's policies, but also became noted for conceptualizing some of his own.

Early in his presidency, he presented to Congress a 21-point program, proposing the expansion of Social Security, a full-employment program, a permanent Fair Employment Practices Act, and public housing and slum clearance. It became known as the Fair Deal.

As the Soviet Union pressured Turkey and threatened to take over Greece in 1947, Truman asked Congress to aid the two countries through a program called the Truman Doctrine. The adjacent Marshall Plan, named for his secretary of state, stimulated a comprehensive economic recovery in war-torn western Europe.

Deciding not to run again, Truman retired to Independence, where he died in 1972.