

## **THE DIFFERENCE IS LEADERSHIP** The Presidents of The United States

Born out of conflict and revolution, war and threats of war, from economic chaos to world financial leader, our nation from its very beginning was built, created and sustained on a single uncompromising premise----**Freedom**

- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom to Assemble
- Freedom to bear Arms
- Freedom of the Press
- Freedom of Choice
- Freedom to pursue one's dreams
- Freedom, Freedom, Freedom.....

And the men who led the way in perpetuating our Freedom.

Eleven score and eight years ago our Forefathers with deeply divided loyalties declared their freedom from the Crown of England and embarked upon a lonely and uncertain journey. And as we look back one can easily conclude, that history has dealt with us kindly. So much so, it begs the question, Why? How? Because, as we take an introspective look at the Global landscape today we are witnesses that Governments and the form of Government are changing rapidly, unrest and instability in some regions of the globe constantly threaten world peace and in this world where the destiny of the Haves & Have Nots is so inextricably intertwined that even an economic hiccup can upset the balance of power.

How have we done it? How has a nation of immigrants, a cesspool of ideologies, a connected conglomeration of overlapping boundaries, a society endeared to the concept of ....Of The People, By The People, For The People and guided by the results of a simple Majority or Plurality---How have we survived and thrived for over 200 years.

I suggest that to a great degree.....“The Difference is Leadership”

So in this Presidential Election Year when so much emphasis is placed on our Leadership or the need to change our Leadership it seems altogether fitting that we take a brief glance backward at some of those mortal imperfect beings whom have aided in shaping the fibers in our tapestry and preserving our Freedoms.

I have chosen to briefly focus on our first Seven Presidents, for whether Federalist, Republican, Democrat, Democratic-Republican, Whig or independent our Presidents have distinguished themselves through the preservation of our freedoms and the integrity of the office of the President of The United States.

Descriptions of their styles of leadership, character and demeanor ranged from Integrity, Remarkable, Eloquent, old and worn, Quiet and Dignified, accomplished linguist, powerful leader to defiant and explosive.

**George Washington:** George Washington's Integrity set a pattern for all other Presidents to follow.  
1789-1797

On April 30, 1789, George Washington, standing on the balcony of Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York, took his oath of office as the first President of the United States. "As the first of every thing, in our situation will serve to establish a Precedent," he wrote James Madison, "it is devoutly wished on my part, that these precedents may be fixed on true principles."

Born 1732, the son of a Virginia Planter, Washington pursued two intertwined interests: Military Arts and Western Expansion. Although often described as Moderate he voiced firm resistance to British regulations and restrictions. In May of 1775 in Philadelphia, Washington was elected commander in chief of the Continental Army. Our declaration of independence soon followed and war was imminent. Finally after six grueling years- in 1781 - with the aid of French Allies Washington forced the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

When the New Constitution was ratified replacing the Articles of Confederation - The Electoral College unanimously elected Washington President in 1789.

Washington was careful not to infringe upon the policy making powers he felt the Constitution gave Congress. The determination of Foreign Policy became his dominant concern. To his disappointment, two parties were developing by the end of his first term.

In his farewell address, he urged his countrymen to forswear excessive Party Spirit and geographical distinctions. In foreign affairs, he warned against long-term alliances. Died December 14, 1799 @ 67.

**John Adams,** A shaper of the Revolution, saved his Nation from war with France.  
1797-1801

Learned and thoughtful, John Adams was more remarkable as a political philosopher than as a politician. "People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity," he said, doubtless thinking of his own as well as the American experience.

Harvard-educated, Adams became identified with the patriot cause very early. During the Revolutionary war he served in France and Holland in diplomatic roles, and helped negotiate the treaty of peace.

Adam's two terms as Vice President under Washington were frustrating experiences for a man of his vigor, intellect, and vanity. He complained to his wife Abigail, "**My country has in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived.**"

Adams took office in 1797 as the second President of the United States and was immediately confronted with the war between France and Britain which was causing great difficulties for the U. S. on the high seas. When the French refused to receive an American envoy except they pay a substantial bribe, Adams & Congress printed the insult which was dubbed the XYZ affair. This helped to bolster public support and soon congress appropriated funds to strengthen America's warship presence on the

high seas.

On November 1, 1800, just before the election, Adams arrived in the new Capital City to take up his residence in the White House. On his second evening in its damp, unfinished rooms, he wrote his wife, "Before I end my letter, I pray Heaven to bestow the best of Blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise Men ever rule under this roof."

Adams was defeated by Thomas Jefferson in whom he harbored a deep and abiding hatred.

On July 4, 1826 from his farm in Quincy, Massachusetts, he whispered his last words, "Thomas Jefferson survives." But Jefferson had died at Monticello a few hours earlier.

Age: 91

**Thomas Jefferson**, gained the immense Louisiana Territory for the Infant Republic.  
1801-1809

A powerful advocate of liberty, Jefferson was opposed to a strong centralized government and championed states rights. Jefferson was eloquent as a correspondent, but he was no public speaker. As the "silent member" of the congress, Jefferson at 33, drafted the Declaration of Independence.

As a reluctant candidate for President in 1796, Jefferson came within three votes of election. Through a flaw in the Constitution, he became Vice President, although an opponent of President Adams.

When Jefferson assumed the Presidency in 1801, the crisis with France had passed. He slashed Army and Navy expenditures, cut the budget, eliminated the unpopular tax on whiskey in the west, yet reduced the national debt by a third.

In 1803 Jefferson suppressed his qualms over constitutionality when he had the opportunity to acquire the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon. Jefferson immediately commissioned the famed Lewis and Clark expedition, which event is universally associated as the catalyst for America's westward expansion.

During his second term Jefferson was increasingly Preoccupied with keeping the nation from involvement in the Napoleonic Wars.

After his second term, Jefferson retired to Monticello to ponder such projects as his grand designs for the University of Virginia.

Died July 4, 1826 - 83

**James Madison**, "Father of Constitution," led the inconclusive War of 1812.  
1809-1817

Madison made a major contribution to the ratification of the Constitution by writing, with Alexander

Hamilton and John Jay, the Federalist essays. In later years, when he was referred to as the “**Father of the Constitution.**” Madison protested that the document was not “the off-spring of a single brain,” but “the work of many heads and many hands.” In congress, he helped frame the Bill of Rights and enact the first revenue legislation.

At his inauguration, James Madison, a small man, appeared old and worn; Washington Irvin described him as, “But a withered little apple-john.” But whatever his deficiencies in charm, Madison’s buxom wife Dolley compensated for them with her warmth and gaiety. She was the toast of Washington.

In the first year of Madison’s administration, the United States prohibited trade with Britain and France.

Continued impressments of American seamen by the British and the seizure of cargoes compelled Madison to ask congress for a declaration of war on June 1, 1812. The young nation was not prepared to fight, its forces took a severe trouncing. The Brits entered Washington in 1814 and set fire to the White House and the Capitol.

However a few notable naval and military victories, climaxed by General Andrew Jackson’s triumph at New Orleans, brought the war to an inglorious end and preserved the fragile union.

In a note opened after his death in 1836, Madison stated, “**The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated.**”

Died 1836 - 85

**James Monroe**, declared the Americas no longer subject to European Colonization.  
1817-1825

Described as tall and well formed. His dress plain and in the old style. His manner was quiet and dignified. James Monroe’s ambition and energy together with the backing of President Madison, made him the Republican choice for the Presidency in 1816. With little Federalist opposition, he easily won re-election in 1820.

Early in his administration, Monroe undertook a goodwill tour. At Boston, his visit was hailed as the beginning of an “**Era of Good Feelings.**” Unfortunately those “good feelings” did not endure. The people of Missouri’s application for statehood and the question of Slave or Free threatened to divide the country.

The Missouri Compromise bill resolved the struggle, pairing Missouri as a slave state with Maine, a free state, and barring slavery north and west of Missouri forever.

In foreign affairs Monroe proclaimed the fundamental policy that bears his name, (The Monroe Doctrine) responding to the threat that the more conservative governments in Europe might try to aid Spain in winning back her former Latin American Colonies.

“**The American continents,**” Monroe Stated, “**by the free and independent condition which they**

**have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power.”**

Died 1831 - 73

**John Quincy Adams**, the only son of a President to serve as President until Bush took office in 2001  
1825-1829

Serving under President Monroe, Adams was one of America's great Secretaries of State, arranging with England for the joint occupation of the Oregon Country, obtaining from Spain the cession of the Floridas, and formulating with the President the Monroe Doctrine.

In the Presidential election of 1824 although Andrew Jackson swept the popular vote hands down, however, no candidate had a majority of electoral votes, the election was decided among the top three by the House of Representatives. Henry Clay through his support to Adams who was ultimately confirmed.

During his first Annual Message Adams proclaimed a spectacular national program. He proposed that the Federal Government bring the sections together with a network of highways and canals, and that it develop and conserve the public domain, using funds from the sale of public lands. In 1828, he broke ground for the 185-mile C & O Canal.

Adams also urged the United States to take a lead in the development of the arts and sciences through the establishment of a national university, the financing of scientific expeditions, and the erection of an observatory. His critics declared such measures transcended constitutional limitations.

After his defeat in the campaign of 1828 Adams soon returned to the House of Representatives in 1830 as a Powerful Leader. Above all, he fought against circumscription of Civil Liberties.

In 1836 southern Congressmen passed a "Gag Rule" providing that the House automatically table petitions against slavery. Adams tirelessly fought the rule for eight years until finally he obtained its repeal.

In 1848, he collapsed on the floor of the House from a stroke and was carried to the Speaker's Room, where two days later he died. To the end, "**Old Man Eloquent**" had fought for what he considered right.

Died 1848 - 81

**Andrew Jackson**, first frontier President, came to office with great popular support.  
1829-1837

Dubbed as Old Hickory.

More nearly than any of his predecessors, Andrew Jackson was elected by popular vote; as president he sought to act as the direct representative of the common man. Fiercely jealous of his honor, he engaged in brawls, and in a duel killed a man who cast an unjustified slur on his wife Rachel.

A major general in the war of 1812, Jackson became a national hero when he defeated the British at New Orleans.

In his first Annual Message to Congress, Jackson recommended eliminating the Electoral College. He also tried to democratize Federal Officeholding. Already state machines were built on patronage, and a New York Senator openly proclaimed "that to the victors belong the spoils...."

As national politics polarized around Jackson and his opposition, two parties grew out of the old Republican Party-the democratic Republicans, or Democrats, adhering to Jackson, and the National Republicans, of Whigs, opposing him. So determined was Jackson's opponents that hostile cartoonists portrayed him as King Andrew I.

Behind their accusations lay the fact that Jackson, unlike previous Presidents, did not defer to Congress in policy-making but used his power of veto and his party leadership to assume command.

Jackson was well known for his aggressive, combative style. In one well documented battle he vetoed the Re-Charter Bill for the second bank of the United States, because he considered it a Government sponsored monopoly and charged the bank with undue economic privilege.

His views won approval from the American electorate; in 1832 he polled more than 56 percent of the popular vote and almost five times as many electoral votes as Clay.

Jackson was succeeded in 1841 by his favorite choice, Martin Van Buren. He retired to the Hermitage where he died in 1845.

Age 78

**So how have we done it? How have we survived and thrived for over 200 challenging years? The Difference is in our Leadership.....and an unwavering Belief and Commitment to our form of Government.**

**From Washington to Monroe to Jackson to Lincoln to Roosevelt to Wilson To Eisenhower to Kennedy to Ragan to George Bush.....in spite of any human limitations our Commanders in Chief have been unquestionably committed to preserving the Blessings of Liberty.**

**We have so much for which to be thankful....as we briefly reviewed some of the challenges of our early fathers, there are many similarities even today which must be balanced....**

**Our Party System  
Disputes over States Rights  
Election Results**

**The electoral College  
Global Instability  
The Power struggle between the branches of Government**

**But the real distinguishing truth is that.....Government of the People, By the People, For the People really does work**

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” 1776**

**“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” 1787**

**Why?**

**The Difference is our Leadership.....Yesterday, Today and with God’s Blessings for Evermore!!**

**I’m Proud To Be an American**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendell J. ...". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.