

## Ronald Wilson Reagan

40th President of the United States, 1981-1989

On February 6, 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan was born to Nelle and John Reagan in Tampico, Illinois. His nickname was "Dutch" which stayed with him most of his life. He attended high school in nearby Dixon and then worked his way through Eureka College. In high school, he was employed as a lifeguard at Lowell Park in Dixon where, in the next seven summers, he was credited with saving 77 lives. He was also elected Student Body President in 1926. At Eureka College he studied economics and sociology, played on the football team, and acted in school plays. Upon graduation he became a radio sports announcer. A screen test in 1937 won him a contract in Hollywood as an actor. During the next two decades he appeared in 53 films.

With his first marriage to Jane Wyman he had two children, Maureen and Michael. In 1952 he married Nancy Davis, who was also an actress, and had two children, Patricia Ann and Ronald Prescott.

As president of the Screen Actors Guild, Regan became involved in disputes over the issues of Communism in the film industry. During this time his political views shifted from liberalism to conservatism. He toured the country as a television host, becoming a spokesman for conservatism. In 1966 he was elected Governor of California by a margin of a million votes and was reelected in 1970.



President Ronald Reagan and wife Nancy

Ronald Reagan won the Republican Presidential nomination in 1980 and chose as his running mate former Texas Congressman and United Nations Ambassador George Bush. Voters who were troubled by inflation and by a year long confinement of American in Iran swept the Republican ticket into office. Reagan won 489 electoral votes to 49 for President Jimmy Carter.

On January 20, 1981, Reagan took office. Only 69 days later he was shot by a would be assassin but quickly recovered and returned to duty. His grace and sense of humor during the dangerous incident caused his popularity to soar.

Dealing skillfully with Congress, Reagan obtained legislation to stimulate economic growth, curb inflation, increase employment, and strengthen national defense. He embarked upon a course of cutting taxes and Government spending, refusing to deviate from it when the strengthening of defense forces led to a large deficit.

A renewal of national self-confidence by 1984 helped Reagan and Bush win a second term of office. In 1986 Reagan obtained an overhaul of the income tax code, which eliminated many deductions and exempted millions of people with low incomes. At the end of his administration the nation was enjoying its longest recorded period of peacetime prosperity without recession or depression.

In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve "peace through strength." During his two terms he increased defense spending 35 percent but sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Reagan declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub.

By ordering naval escorts in the Persian Gulf, he maintained the free flow of oil during the Iran-Iraq War.

Overall, the Reagan years saw a restoration of prosperity, and pursuing the goal of peace through strength.



*"The house we hope to build is not for my generation but for yours. It is your future that matters. And I hope that when you are my age, you will be able to say as I have been able to say: We lived in freedom. We lived lives that were a statement, not an apology."*

**Ronald Reagan  
Stamp  
First Date  
Of Issue was  
February 9,  
2005**

