



A Charge to Keep

By George W. Bush, Karen Hughes

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In this political memoir, the governor of Texas and front-runner for president in the year 2000 tells us who he is and what he stands for. The George W. Bush who leaps off these pages has his father's energy, his mother's tart and honest wit, and his own irreverence and impatience. He has prospered as George and Barbara's boy -- "How can I deny it?" -- but has walked a very fine line between loyalty and independence.

He addresses the questions that may well decide who becomes the next president: crime, education, abortion, tax and tort reform, and the continuing battle "for the soul" of the Republican Party. He is, by no one's definition, a conventional candidate.

Will George W. Bush become the next president of the United States? A Charge to Keep will help the American public decide.

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Editorial Review

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The political biography, complete with life-altering turning points and a political philosophy for leading the United States into greatness, has become obligatory for those running for president--just one more thing to check off the "to do" list on the way to the Oval Office. *A Charge to Keep* is George W. Bush's offering: a light and breezy book mixing personal and political remembrances that proves heavy on chatty anecdotes and light on policy prescriptions. If you read the last chapter you'll sort of learn where George W. stands on most things, but still not really discern how he would actually run the country. There are no revelations, either personal or political: Bush's wild side and youthful indiscretions, like stealing a Christmas wreath from a New Haven hotel for his Yale fraternity, are touched on lightly when he discusses them at all. *A Charge to Keep* is so upbeat and positive, in describing the Houston woman to whom he was engaged in college and from whom he "gradually drifted apart," Bush says simply: "I still think the world of her, and our parting was friendly. We were very young, we lived in different places, and we gradually developed different lives."

George W. has been labeled a lightweight by some; *A Charge to Keep* will do nothing to dispel that notion. It features lots of Bush family memories and numerous mentions of George W.'s famous parents, including letters from his president father. George W. has followed closely in his father's footsteps, attending the same prep school and college. He even belonged to the same secret society at Yale, Skull and Bones. From college it was on to flight school and the Texas Air National Guard, Harvard Business School, and then (again, like his father) the Texas oil business and politics. George W. seems mostly in sync with his father on policy issues as well. "A thousand points of light" is transformed slightly to become "compassionate conservative," which pops up in the final chapter more than 10 times. Readers will come away knowing many of the experiences and events that have helped shaped George W., but his future is still an open book. --*Linda Killian*

From Library Journal

Despite the subtitle, this book, first published in 1999, does not include any report of the President's 2000 campaign nor the postelection drama of the Florida vote count. Typical of the books that presidential candidates write to introduce themselves to the American public and promote their campaigns, the narrative gives insight into the experiences that shaped Bush's life and his decision to run for president. Co-written with his communications director, Karen Hughes, the book stresses his educational reform successes as governor of Texas and describes faith-based programs supported by the state's agencies as examples of "compassionate conservatism." Bush also offers background and explanations for his decisions on several controversial issues, such as the death penalty and health-care reform. The overall tone of the book projects the "uniter not divider" image. Recommended for public libraries that do not own the 1999 edition. Jill Ortner, SUNY at Buffalo Libs.

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Review

...a puzzling exercise. It offers little more than his standard stump speech does to convey what a Bush presidency might be like. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Adam Clymer

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