

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



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Some thoughts today on President George HW Bush, and perhaps something we can take forward to improve our own lives, I'm Jerry Roberts and that's today, on The Extra Point.

George Bush, our 41st president was the last in the Oval Office from what we call The Greatest Generation. He was a Navy pilot in World War 2 and flew many combat missions.

He was the ultimate political insider. Elected to Congress, United Nations representative, chairman of the Republican Party, special envoy to China, director of the CIA, vice-president and president. He had a resume unlike anyone else to ever occupy the White House.

Succeeding Ronald Reagan was tough and America didn't receive Bush as warmly. He separated from the extreme far right of the Republican party and its economic approach, the trickle down theory. He called it "voodoo economics" and that raised eyebrows. He campaigned on no new taxes ("read my lips"), then realized he had to — which was a major factor in his unsuccessful bid for reelection.

He presided over the end of the cold war and him being a person of restraint likely benefited America and the rest of the world. When the Berlin Wall was taken down he didn't make it a massive celebration, which helped Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev to save face.

Bush saw the larger picture. The Soviet Union was losing influence and eventually would split up, and by not giving Russian hardliners anything to use against Gorbachev he didn't inadvertently create a backlash that would result in new problems. He knew that victory in itself was enough. Embarrassing the other guy was pointless, and we all can learn from that.

He refused to kill Saddam Hussein in the first war on Iraqi soil because he said, "What then?"

He saw a big problem in disrupting the Middle East. His successors obviously didn't agree, including his son the 43rd president, and it's hard to say that Middle Eastern policy over the past two decades has made the world a better or safer place.

He also had his share of detractors. Critics said he lied to create a reason for the war in Iraq, and that there were numerous coverups in his administration. Prior to his death, social media and YouTube, were not kind to 41. I'll leave it at that.

George HW Bush said of himself, "I'm a man who sees life in terms of missions — missions defined and missions completed."

I always try to find a connection that you and I can make to improve our lives. What can we take away from his public demeanor?

He came off as a quiet, humble man, who could make fun of himself. You never saw ego plays. Those who knew him said he was a great listener. He made friends across the aisle and he didn't try to beat down or destroy opponents. He didn't come out in criticism of Bill Clinton. It wasn't his style. And then there was the constant public display of affection for the love of his life, his wife Barbara.

Regardless of what our personal political choices may be, I think we can all connect with him on those things.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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