



Bicentennial Celebration of the Inauguration of George Washington

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the annals of every great nation, there are leaders whose legacy will endure through the ages. George Washington was one such leader.

As President, George Washington led our fledgling Nation through its first, and perhaps most difficult years by remaining faithful to the principles upon which it was founded. In so doing, he set standards that every President since has hoped to emulate. On April 30, 1989, we commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of his inauguration.

Revered for his leadership during the Revolutionary War, Washington was elected to office by a unanimous vote in 1788. He dutifully answered the call to serve his country as President even though it required a great personal sacrifice. He had served his country loyally for many years—first as a soldier, then as a statesman—and had looked forward to retirement at his beloved home, Mount Vernon. Nevertheless he was also thoroughly aware of the young Nation's vulnerability. Thus, the man who had helped the United States to gain independence from Great Britain now agreed to help give it a firm footing.

George Washington neither sought nor desired political power. His love was liberty, and his trust was in the American people. Washington believed that the American people were not only entitled to a system of self-government, but were also capable of keeping it. He also firmly believed that the form of democratic government he and the other Founding Fathers had conceived was both just and effective. "The Constitution," Washington avowed, "is the guide which I can never abandon."

On April 30, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated before a jubilant crowd at Federal Hall in New York City. After taking the oath of office, the new President kissed the Bible and the crowd thunderously voiced its approval. Joining this chorus in celebration were the exultant peals of the city's church bells.

By Senate Joint Resolution 92, the Congress has requested the President to issue a proclamation acknowledging the celebration of the bicentennial of President Washington's inauguration.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 30, 1989, as a day to celebrate the bicentennial of the inauguration of George Washington, and I join the Congress in inviting houses of worship to celebrate this anniversary by ringing bells or undertaking other appropriate activities at 12:00 noon (eastern daylight savings time) on April 30, 1989, and to continue, as a tribute to the first President of this Nation, such simultaneous ringing of bells for two full minutes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

George Bush