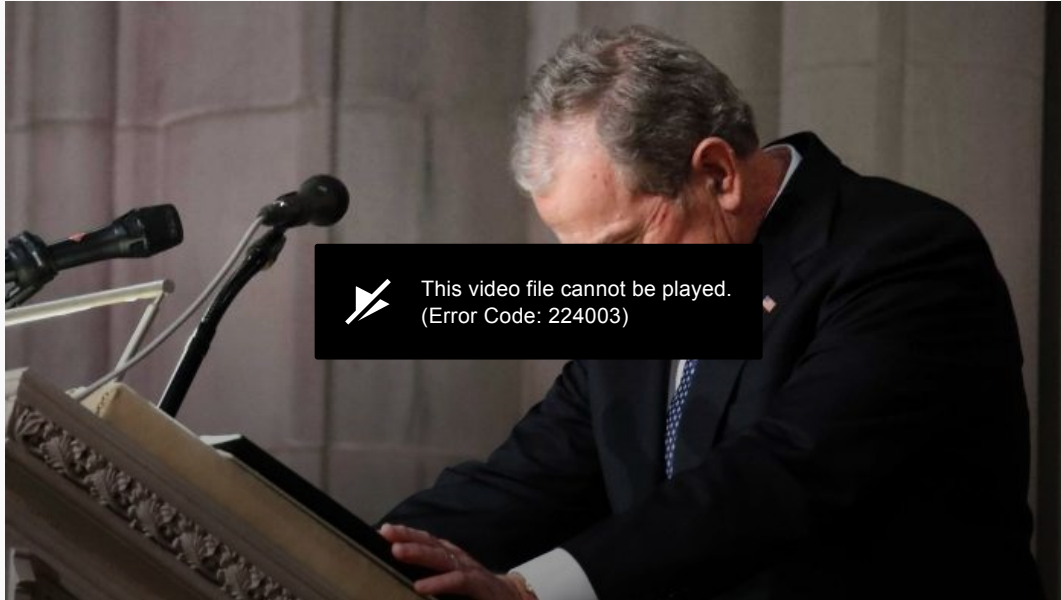


# George HW Bush hailed at funeral as soldier-statesman, master of civility

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**VIDEO:** [George W Bush broke down briefly during his eulogy](#) (Photo: Reuters/Sarah Silbiger) (ABC News)

The late president George HW Bush has been remembered at his state funeral as a World War II hero, Cold War veteran and commander-in-chief of a United States victory against Iraq who went on to represent a bygone era of civility in American politics.

An unusual bipartisan spirit was on display at the service at the Washington National Cathedral, with both Republican and Democratic politicians gathering to honour a former president who called for a "kinder, gentler" nation.

Mr Bush, the 41st US president, [died last week in Texas, aged 94](#).

George W Bush [broke down briefly at the end of his eulogy](#) while invoking the daughter his parents lost when she was three and his mother, Barbara, who died in April.

He said he took comfort in knowing, "Dad is hugging Robin and holding Mum's hand again".

"To us, his was the brightest of a thousand points of light."

[For all the sombre tributes](#) to the late president's [public service and strength of character](#), laughter filled the cathedral time after time.



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**VIDEO:** [Donald Trump and former presidents attend the service for George HW Bush](#) (ABC News)

The late president's eulogists — son included — noted Mr Bush's tendency to tangle his words and show his goofy side.

Mr Bush was America's last great soldier-statesman, Jon Meacham, a presidential biographer, said in a eulogy.

"He stood in the breach in the Cold War against totalitarianism. He stood in the breach in Washington against unthinking partisanship," he said.

Canadian former prime minister Brian Mulroney also lauded Mr Bush's role in navigating the end of the Cold War and helping the tricky reunification of Germany.

"When George Bush was president of the United States of America, every single head of government in the world knew that they were dealing with a gentleman, a genuine leader, one who was distinguished, resolute and brave," he said.



**PHOTO:** [George HW Bush's remains are transported from the US Capitol to the National Cathedral](#). (Reuters: Sarah Silbiger)

Mr Bush put together a US-led international coalition that ousted invading Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War.

The late president, in office from 1989 to 1993, [has been remembered as a patrician figure who represented a bygone era of civility in American politics](#).

He was voted out of office in part for failing to connect with ordinary Americans during an economic recession.

But his reputation for moderation and politeness has shone more brightly in recent years in light of the divisiveness and anger in the US that accompanied the rise of President Donald Trump.

## Partisan differences set aside



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PHOTO: The casket of George HW Bush is carried past former US presidents and a current one. (Reuters: Kevin Lamarque)

Washington's current political feuds were briefly set aside in honour of the late president, a naval aviator who was shot down over the Pacific Ocean in World War II, and former head of the CIA.

Mr Trump shook hands with his predecessor, former president Barack Obama, who he has often sharply criticised, as he took his seat at the cathedral.

Democratic former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, Mr Trump's 2016 election opponent, and her husband Bill Clinton shared the front pew with Mr Obama, Mr Trump and their spouses.

Mr Trump, a Republican like Mr Bush, infuriated the late president by attacking his sons, former president George W Bush and Jeb Bush, one of Mr Trump's rivals in the 2016 Republican primary campaign.

"Looking forward to being with the Bush family. This is not a funeral, this is a day of celebration for a great man who has led a long and distinguished life. He will be missed!" Mr Trump tweeted.

The Trumps spent about 20 minutes visiting with the Bush family on Tuesday.

Mr Trump closed the Federal Government on Wednesday to mark a day of mourning for Mr Bush, and several US financial exchanges were closed.

The guest list included Britain's Prince Charles and leaders of Germany, Jordan, Australia and Poland, along with a host of former world leaders, such as former British prime minister John Major, who was in office during Mr Bush's term.

Hundreds of people lined Pennsylvania Avenue in downtown Washington to watch a hearse drive Mr Bush's coffin from Capitol Hill, [where he had lain in state since Monday night](#), toward the cathedral on Wednesday morning (local time).

[Thousands of people had filed past Mr Bush's body to pay their respects](#) in the Capitol Rotunda.

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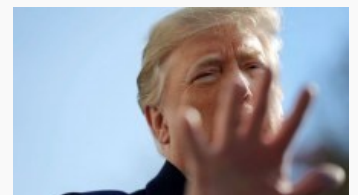
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