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## Review of *The Leadership of George Bush: An Insider's View of the Forty-First President*. By Roman Popadiuk

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**The Leadership of George Bush: An Insider's View of the Forty-First President.** By Roman Popadiuk. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009. xvii + 227 pp. Photographs, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth.

Roman Popadiuk had close and steady access to George H.W. Bush for most of his presidency. He served as the president's deputy assistant and press secretary for foreign affairs and was later appointed U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. He is now the Executive Director of the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation.

Popadiuk presents Bush 41 through varied lenses: his early life, leadership principles, public messaging, diplomacy, working with congress, and the 1992 campaign. Through a collection of anecdotes on each topic, the reader gets a sense of the president's values and his management style. According to Popadiuk, Bush's guiding values are his Episcopalian faith, his devotion to his family, and the importance of friendship. Barbara Bush explains that, for her husband, "it is better to have a friend than an enemy."

In terms of Bush's leadership, Popadiuk explains that Bush 41 is guided by the importance of standing up for your beliefs, telling the truth, being loyal, communicating

well, sharing the credit, and showing your human side. Contrary to prevailing notions of what went wrong for Bush in the 1992 election, Popadiuk blames the campaign staff for the loss, noting that Bush's anxiety during the campaign "pointed to the general lack of coordination and planning that seemed to grip the campaign."

The chapter on Bush's early adult life focuses primarily on the Great Plains. As a teenager attending Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, he was deeply impressed by Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Instead of going straight to Yale after prep school, he joined the U.S. Navy and became their youngest pilot. Bush was shot down over the Pacific, earning him three Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross. "After the war, Bush was determined, despite the privilege from which he came, to build his own life and shape his own future." So he moved from New England to West Texas. The young Bush couple initially toyed with the idea of becoming farmers after reading Louis Bromfield's novel, *The Farm*, but instead pursued oil exploration. Barbara Bush recalls their move to Texas as "an adventure," and Bush 41 considers himself a Texan to this day.

*The Leadership of George Bush* is infused with a sentimentality exemplified by the book's opening statement describing the Bushes' emotional response to Bush 43's election to the presidency: "George Bush sat straight up, his back rigid but his chest heaving slightly as he sought to hold back tears. Barbara Bush sat quietly, unmoving, a glint of satisfaction and pride sparkling in her eyes." Despite the author's proximity and long-time affiliation, the book provides scant new information about Bush 41's presidency, mostly because the author fails to connect it with larger literatures on presidential leadership and executive management. Instead, it is a rosy peek at Bush 41 from a loyal subject still enamored with his former boss. **Caroline Heldman**, *Politics Department, Occidental College*.