

1980 in the United States

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Events from the year **1980 in the United States**.

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Incumbents

Federal Government

- President: Jimmy Carter (D-Georgia)
- Vice President: Walter Mondale (D-Minnesota)
- Chief Justice: Warren E. Burger (Minnesota)
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: Tip O'Neill (D-Massachusetts)
- Senate Majority Leader: Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia)
- Congress: 96th

Governors and Lieutenant Governors

Governors

- Governor of Alabama: Fob James (Democratic)
- Governor of Alaska: Jay Hammond (Republican)
- Governor of Arizona: Bruce Babbitt (Democratic)
- Governor of Arkansas: Bill Clinton (Democratic)
- Governor of California: Jerry Brown (Democratic)
- Governor of Colorado: Richard Lamm (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: Ella T. Grasso (Democratic) (until December 31), William A. O'Neill (Democratic) (starting December 31)
- Governor of Delaware: Pierre S. du Pont, IV (Republican)
- Governor of Florida: Bob Graham (Democratic)
- Governor of Georgia: George Busbee (Democratic)
- Governor of Hawaii: George Ariyoshi (Democratic)
- Governor of Idaho: John V. Evans (Democratic)
- Governor of Illinois: James R. Thompson (Republican)
- Governor of Indiana: Otis R. Bowen (Republican)
- Governor of Iowa: Robert D. Ray (Republican)
- Governor of Kansas: John W. Carlin (Democratic)
- Governor of Kentucky: John Y. Brown, Jr. (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Edwin W. Edwards (Democratic) (until March 10), David C. Treen (Republican) (starting March 10)
- Governor of Maine: Joseph E. Brennan (Democratic)
- Governor of Maryland: Harry R. Hughes (Democratic)
- Governor of Massachusetts: Edward J. King (Democratic)
- Governor of Michigan: William Milliken (Republican)
- Governor of Minnesota: Al Quie (Republican)
- Governor of Mississippi: Cliff Finch (Democratic) (until January 22), William Winter (Democratic) (starting January 22)
- Governor of Missouri: Joseph P. Teasdale (Democratic)
- Governor of Montana: Thomas Lee Judge (Democratic)
- Governor of Nebraska: Charles Thone (Republican)
- Governor of Nevada: Robert List (Republican)
- Governor of New Hampshire: Hugh J. Gallen (Democratic)
- Governor of New Jersey: Brendan Byrne (Democratic)
- Governor of New Mexico: Bruce King (Democratic)
- Governor of New York: Hugh Carey (Democratic)
- Governor of North Carolina: Jim Hunt (Democratic)
- Governor of North Dakota: Arthur A. Link (Democratic)
- Governor of Ohio: Jim Rhodes (Republican)
- Governor of Oklahoma: George Nigh (Democratic)
- Governor of Oregon: Victor G. Atiyeh (Republican)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: Dick Thornburgh (Republican)
- Governor of Rhode Island: J. Joseph Garrahy (Democratic)
- Governor of South Carolina: Richard Riley (Democratic)
- Governor of South Dakota: William J. Janklow (Republican)
- Governor of Tennessee: Lamar Alexander (Republican)
- Governor of Texas: Bill Clements (Republican)
- Governor of Utah: Scott M. Matheson (Democratic)

- Governor of Vermont: Richard A. Snelling (Republican)
- Governor of Virginia: John N. Dalton (Republican)
- Governor of Washington: Dixy Lee Ray (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Jay Rockefeller (Democratic)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Lee S. Dreyfus (Republican)
- Governor of Wyoming: Edgar J. Herschler (Democratic)

Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: George McMillan (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Alaska: Terry Miller (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: Joe Purcell (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: Mike Curb (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Nancy E. Dick (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: William A. O'Neill (Democratic) (until December 31), Joseph J. Fauliso (Democratic) (starting December 31)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: James D. McGinnis (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Florida: Wayne Mixson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Georgia: Zell Miller (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii: Jean King (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: Phil Batt (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: Dave O'Neal (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: Robert D. Orr (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Terry E. Branstad (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Paul V. Dugan (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Martha Layne Collins (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Jimmy Fitzmorris (Democratic) (until March 10), Bobby Freeman (Democratic) (starting March 10)
- Lieutenant Governor of Maryland: Samuel Bogley (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Thomas P. O'Neill III (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan: James H. Brickley (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: Lou Wangberg (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Evelyn Gandy (Democratic) (until January 22), Brad Dye (Democratic) (starting January 22)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: William C. Phelps (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: Ted Schwinden (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Roland A. Luedtke (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Myron E. Leavitt (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Roberto Mondragón (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: Mario Cuomo (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: James C. Green (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Wayne G. Sanstead (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: vacant
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: Spencer Bernard (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania: William Scranton, III (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Thomas R. DiLuglio (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Nancy Stevenson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Lowell C. Hansen II (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee: John S. Wilder (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Texas: William P. Hobby, Jr. (Democratic)

- Lieutenant Governor of Utah: David Smith Monson (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: Madeleine M. Kunin (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Chuck Robb (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Washington: John Cherberg (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: Russell A. Olson (Republican)

Events

January

- January 1 – The comic strip *The Far Side* debuts in newspapers.
- January – The United States enters a minor recession spawned by the 1979 oil crisis; The Unemployment Rate rises to 6.3%.
- January 4 – U.S. President Jimmy Carter proclaims a grain embargo against the USSR with the support of the European Commission.
- January 6 – Global Positioning System time epoch begins at 00:00 UTC.
- January 7 – U.S. President Jimmy Carter signs legislation approving \$1.5 billion in loan guarantees to bail out the Chrysler Corporation.
- January 20 – Super Bowl XIV: The Pittsburgh Steelers become the first NFL franchise to win four Super Bowls, defeating the Los Angeles Rams 31–19 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.
- January 24 – The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific railroad is ordered liquidated due to bankruptcy, and debt owed to creditors.
- January 27 – Canadian caper: Six United States diplomats, posing as Canadians, manage to escape from Tehran, Iran as they board a flight to Zürich, Switzerland.



January 27: The Canadian Caper rescues six hostages from Iran

February

- February 2–3 – The New Mexico State Penitentiary Riot takes place; 33 inmates are killed and more than 100 inmates injured.
- February 2 – Abscam: FBI personnel target members of the Congress of the United States in a sting operation.
- February 13 – The XIII Winter Olympics open in Lake Placid, New York.
- February 22 – The United States Olympic Hockey Team defeats the Soviet Union in the semifinals of the Winter Olympics, in the *Miracle on Ice*.



February 13: The Winter Olympics open in Lake Placid

March

- March 1 – The *Voyager 1* probe confirms the existence of Janus, a moon of Saturn.
- March 21
 - Mafioso Angelo Bruno is assassinated in Philadelphia.
 - U.S. President Jimmy Carter announces that the United States will boycott the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.
- March 22 – The Georgia Guidestones are erected in Elbert County, Georgia.
- March 27 – The Silver Thursday market crash occurs.
- March 31 – Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad operates its final train.

April

- April 1 – New York City's Transport Workers Union Local 100 goes on strike, which continues for 11 days.
- April 7 – The United States severs diplomatic relations with Iran and imposes economic sanctions, following the taking of American hostages on November 4, 1979.
- April 15 – A mass exodus of Cubans to the United States known as the Mariel boatlift begins. It ends on October 31 by agreement between the two countries.
- April 21 – Rosie Ruiz wins the Boston Marathon, but is later exposed as a fraud and stripped of her award.
- April 24–25 – Operation Eagle Claw, a commando mission in Iran to rescue American embassy hostages, is aborted after mechanical problems ground the rescue helicopters. Eight United States troops are killed in a mid-air collision during the failed operation.
- April 24 – Pennsylvania Lottery Scandal: the Pennsylvania Lottery is rigged by six men including the host of the live TV drawing, Nick Perry.



April 15: The Mariel boatlift begins



April 24–25: Operation Eagle Claw fails to rescue the hostages in Iran

May

- May 7 – Paul Geidel, convicted of second-degree murder in 1911, is released from prison in Beacon, New York, after 68 years and 245 days (the longest-ever time served by an inmate).
- May 9
 - James Alexander George Smith "Jags" McCartney the Turks and Caicos Islands' first Chief Minister, was killed in a plane crash over New Jersey.
 - In Florida, the Liberian freighter *Summit Venture* hits the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay, sending 35 people (most of whom were in a bus) to a watery death as a 1,400-foot section of the bridge collapses.
- May 11 – Mobster Henry Hill is arrested for drug possession.
- May 16 – The Department of Education begins operations.
- May 17 – A Miami, Florida court acquits four white police officers of killing Arthur McDuffie, a black insurance executive, provoking three days of race riots.
- May 18 – Mount St. Helens erupts in Washington, killing 57 and causing US\$3 billion in damage.
- May 21 – *The Empire Strikes Back* is released.
- May 22 – *Pac-Man*, the best-selling arcade game of all time, is released.
- May 24
 - The New York Islanders win their first Stanley Cup, from a goal by Bobby Nystrom in overtime of game six of the Stanley Cup playoffs' final round.
 - The International Court of Justice calls for the release of U.S. Embassy hostages in Tehran.
- May 25 – Indianapolis 500: Johnny Rutherford wins for a third time in car owner Jim Hall's revolutionary ground effect Chaparral car; the victory is Hall's second as an owner.
- May 29 – Vernon Jordan is shot and critically injured in an assassination attempt in Fort Wayne, Indiana by Joseph Paul Franklin (the first major news story for CNN).



May 18: Mount St. Helens erupts

June

- June – The 1980 recession ends.

- June 1 – The Cable News Network (CNN) is officially launched.
- June 3
 - U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy wins several primaries, including California, on 'Super Tuesday', but not enough to overtake President Jimmy Carter for the Democratic Party nomination.
 - A series of deadly tornadoes strikes Grand Island, Nebraska, causing over US\$300 million in damage, killing five people and injuring over 250.
- June 9 – In Los Angeles, comedian Richard Pryor is badly burned trying to freebase cocaine.
- June 10 – A Unabomber bomb injures United Airlines president Percy Wood in Lake Forest, Illinois.
- June 20 – Augusta AVA becomes the first federally recognized American Viticultural Area.
- June 23 – September 6 – The 1980 United States heat wave claims 1,700 lives.
- June 27 – U.S. President Jimmy Carter signs Proclamation 4771, requiring 19- and 20-year-old males to register for a peacetime military draft, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

July

- July – The Unemployment Rate peaks at 7.8%, the highest in four years.
- July 15 – A severe and destructive thunderstorm strikes four counties in western Wisconsin, including the city of Eau Claire. It causes over US\$250 million in damage, and one person is killed.
- July 16 – Former California Governor and actor Ronald Reagan is nominated for U.S. President, at the Republican National Convention in Detroit, Michigan. Influenced by the Religious Right, the convention also drops its long standing support for the Equal Rights Amendment, dismaying moderate Republicans.



July 16: Reagan is nominated as the Republican candidate for President

August

- August 10 – Hurricane Allen, after becoming a Category 5 storm and the strongest hurricane of the season, hits southeastern Texas as a Category 3.
- August 14
 - U.S. President Jimmy Carter defeats Senator Ted Kennedy to win renomination, at the 1980 Democratic National Convention in New York City.
 - Actress Dorothy Stratten is murdered in Los Angeles in the south of California, apparently raped and shot by her estranged husband Paul Snider before he killed himself.

September

- September 5 – William Reeves joins The Graphics Group.
- September 18–19 – 1980 Damascus Titan missile explosion: Liquid fuel in an LGM-25C Titan II intercontinental ballistic missile explodes at a missile launch facility north of Damascus, Arkansas.
- September 19 – The Robert Redford-directed film *Ordinary People*, based on the novel by Judith Guest, premieres. Redford's directorial debut later wins him his first Oscar, and wins three other Academy Awards, and five Golden Globe awards.
- September 29 – The *Washington Post* publishes Janet Cooke's story of Jimmy, an 8-year-old heroin addict (later proven to be fabricated).
- September 30 – Digital Equipment Corporation, Intel and Xerox introduce the DIX standard for Ethernet, which is the first implementation outside of Xerox, and the first to support 10 Mbit/s speeds.

October

- October 14 – The Staggers Rail Act is enacted, deregulating American railroads.
- October 15 – James Hoskins forces his way into WCPO's television studio in Cincinnati, holding nine employees hostage for several hours before releasing them and taking his own life.
- October 21 – World Series: The Philadelphia Phillies beat the Kansas City Royals 4–2 in game 6.
- October 28 – U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan debate in Cleveland, Ohio. Reagan's genial, witty performance causes him to overtake Carter in the polls.

November

- November 4 – United States presidential election, 1980: Republican challenger and former Governor Ronald Reagan of California defeats incumbent Democratic President Jimmy Carter, exactly one year after the beginning of the Iran hostage crisis.
- November 10 – November 12 – Voyager program: The NASA space probe *Voyager I* makes its closest approach to Saturn, when it flies within 77,000 miles of the planet's cloud-tops and sends the first high resolution images of the world back to scientists on Earth.
- November 20 – A Texaco oil rig breaks through to a mine under Lake Peigneur.
- November 21
 - Millions of viewers tune into the U.S. soap opera *Dallas* to learn who shot lead character J. R. Ewing. The "Who shot J. R.?" event is a national obsession.
 - MGM Grand fire: A fire at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas Strip kills 85 people.



November 4:
Reagan defeats
Carter in a
landslide

December

- December 8
 - John Lennon is shot and killed by Mark David Chapman in front of The Dakota apartment building in New York City.
 - The comic strip *Bloom County* debuts in newspapers.
- December 11 – CERCLA is enacted by the U.S. Congress.
- December 26 – Richard Chase, the "Vampire of Sacramento," kills himself by overdose on San Quentin prison death row.



December 8: The
Dakota, where
John Lennon was
shot

Ongoing

- Cold War (1945–1991)
- 1970s energy crisis (1973–1980)
- Iran hostage crisis (1979–1981)

Births

- January 5 – Bennie Joppru, American football player
- January 17 – Zooey Deschanel, actress and musician
- January 29 – Jason James Richter, actor
- February 25 – Chris & Christy Knowings, twin actors
- March 2 – Edmund McMillen, video game designer
- March 26 – Son Ho-young, singer in (g.o.d).
- April 20 – Chris Duffy, baseball player

- June 17 – Venus Williams, tennis player
- July 7
 - Michelle Kwan, figure skater
 - Deidre Downs, American model and physician, Miss America 2005
- July 21 – Justin Griffith, American football player
- August 16 – Ryan Hanigan, baseball player
- August 26 – Macaulay Culkin, actor
- September 3 – Caleb Miller, American football player
- November 12 – Trent Acid, wrestler (d. 2010)
- November 15 – Ace Young, singer-songwriter and actor
- November 21 – Tim Lambesis, musician
- November 25 – Nick Swisher, baseball player

Deaths

- June 1 – Rube Marquard, baseball player and manager (b. 1886)
- August 14
 - Dorothy Stratten, Canadian model, actress, and murder victim, died in Los Angeles, California (b. 1960)
 - Paul Snider, Canadian murderer, died in Los Angeles, California (b. 1951)
- October 28 – Leon Janney, actor (b. 1917)
- November 7 – Steve McQueen, actor (b. 1930)
- November 29 – Dorothy Day, journalist and social activist (b. 1897)
- December 8 – John Lennon, British musician, singer, songwriter, and murder victim, died in New York City (b. 1940)
- December 26 – Richard Chase, serial killer (b. 1950)

See also

- 1980 in American television
- List of American films of 1980

External links

-  Media related to 1980 in the United States at Wikimedia Commons

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