

1986 in the United States

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Events from the year **1986 in the United States**.

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Incumbents

Federal Government

- President: Ronald Reagan (R-California)
- Vice President: George H. W. Bush (R-Texas)
- Chief Justice: Warren E. Burger (Minnesota) (until September 26), William Rehnquist (Wisconsin) (starting September 26)
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: Tip O'Neill (D-Massachusetts)
- Senate Majority Leader: Bob Dole (R-Kansas)
- Congress: 99th

Governors and Lieutenant Governors

Governors

- Governor of Alabama: George Wallace (Democratic)
- Governor of Alaska: Bill Sheffield (Democratic) (until December 1), Steve Cowper (Democratic) (starting December 1)
- Governor of Arizona: Bruce Babbitt (Democratic)
- Governor of Arkansas: Bill Clinton (Democratic)
- Governor of California: George Deukmejian (Republican)
- Governor of Colorado: Richard Lamm (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: William A O'Neill (Democratic)
- Governor of Delaware: Michael Castle (Republican)
- Governor of Florida: Bob Graham (Democratic)
- Governor of Georgia: Joe Frank Harris (Democratic)
- Governor of Hawaii: George Ariyoshi (Democratic) (until December 1), John D. Waihee III (Democratic) (starting December 1)
- Governor of Idaho: John V. Evans (Democratic)
- Governor of Illinois: James R. Thompson (Republican)
- Governor of Indiana: Robert D. Orr (Republican)
- Governor of Iowa: Terry E. Branstad (Republican)
- Governor of Kansas: John W. Carlin (Democratic)
- Governor of Kentucky: Martha Layne Collins (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Edwin W. Edwards (Democratic)
- Governor of Maine: Joseph E. Brennan (Democratic)
- Governor of Maryland: Harry R. Hughes (Democratic)
- Governor of Massachusetts: Michael Dukakis (Democratic)
- Governor of Michigan: James Blanchard (Democratic)
- Governor of Minnesota: Rudy Perpich (Democratic)
- Governor of Mississippi: William Allain (Democratic)
- Governor of Missouri: John Ashcroft (Republican)
- Governor of Montana: Ted Schwinden (Democratic)
- Governor of Nebraska: Bob Kerrey (Democratic)
- Governor of Nevada: Richard Bryan (Democratic)
- Governor of New Hampshire: John H. Sununu (Republican)
- Governor of New Jersey: Thomas Kean (Republican)
- Governor of New Mexico: Toney Anaya (Democratic)
- Governor of New York: Mario Cuomo (Democratic)
- Governor of North Carolina: James G. Martin (Republican)
- Governor of North Dakota: George A. Sinner (Democratic)
- Governor of Ohio: Dick Celeste (Democratic)
- Governor of Oklahoma: George Nigh (Democratic)
- Governor of Oregon: Victor G. Atiyeh (Republican)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: Dick Thornburgh (Republican)
- Governor of Rhode Island: Edward D. DiPrete (Republican)
- Governor of South Carolina: Richard Riley (Democratic)
- Governor of South Dakota: William J. Janklow (Republican)
- Governor of Tennessee: Lamar Alexander (Republican)
- Governor of Texas: Mark White (Democratic)
- Governor of Utah: Norman H. Bangerter (Republican)

- Governor of Vermont: Madeleine M. Kunin (Democratic)
- Governor of Virginia: Chuck Robb (Democratic) (until January 18), Gerald L. Baliles (Democratic) (starting January 18)
- Governor of Washington: Booth Gardner (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Arch A. Moore, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Tony Earl (Democratic)
- Governor of Wyoming: Edgar J. Herschler (Democratic)

Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Bill Baxley (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Alaska: Stephen McAlpine (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: Winston Bryant (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: Leo T. McCarthy (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Nancy E. Dick (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: Joseph J. Fauliso (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: Shien Biau Woo (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Florida: Wayne Mixson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Georgia: Zell Miller (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii: John D. Waihee III (Democratic) (until December 2), Ben Cayetano (Democratic) (starting December 2)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: David H. Leroy (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: George H. Ryan (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: John Mutz (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Robert T. Anderson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Thomas R. Docking (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Steve Beshear (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Robert "Bobby" Freeman (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Maryland: J. Joseph Curran (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: vacant
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan: Martha W. Griffiths (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: Marlene Johnson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Brad Dye (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: Harriett Woods (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: George Turman (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Donald F. McGinley (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Bob Cashell (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Mike Runnels (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: vacant
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Robert B. Jordan, III (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Ruth Meiers (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: Richard A. Licht (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Michael R. Daniel (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: W. Val Oveson (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: Peter Plympton Smith (Republican)

- Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Richard Joseph Davis (Democratic) (until January 18), Douglas Wilder (Democratic) (starting January 18)
- Lieutenant Governor of Washington: John Cherberg (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: James T. Flynn (Democratic)

Events

January

- January 12 – *STS-61-C*: Space Shuttle *Columbia* is launched with the first Hispanic-American astronaut, Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz.
- January 20 – The first federal Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., is observed.
- January 24 – The Voyager 2 space probe makes its first encounter with Uranus.
- January 26 – Super Bowl XX: The Chicago Bears defeat the New England Patriots 46–10 at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- January 28
 - *STS-51-L*: Space Shuttle *Challenger* disintegrates 73 seconds after launch, killing the crew of 7 astronauts, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe (see Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster).
 - President Ronald Reagan postpones for one week the State of the Union address that had been scheduled for the evening and instead addresses the nation on the *Challenger* disaster.



January 28: Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster

February

- February 19 – After waiting 37 years, the United States Senate approves a treaty outlawing genocide.
- February 25 – People Power Revolution: President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines goes into exile in Hawaii after 20 years of rule; Corazon Aquino becomes the first Filipino woman president, first as an interim president. Salvador Laurel becomes her Vice President.
- February 27 – The United States Senate allows its debates to be televised on a trial basis.

March

- March 9 – United States Navy divers find the largely intact but heavily damaged crew compartment of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*; the bodies of all seven astronauts are still inside.
- March 25 – The 58th Academy Awards are held in Los Angeles, California, with *Out of Africa* winning Best Picture.
- March 26 – An article in the *New York Times* charges that Kurt Waldheim, former United Nations Secretary General and candidate for president of Austria, may have been involved in Nazi war crimes during World War II.

April

- April 4 – Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc. is founded at University of Iowa.
- April 5 – 1986 Berlin discotheque bombing: The West Berlin discothèque, a known hangout for United States soldiers, is bombed, killing 3 and injuring 230; Libya is held responsible.

- April 15 – Operation El Dorado Canyon: At least 15 people die after United States planes bomb targets in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, and the Benghazi region
- April 17 – British journalist John McCarthy is kidnapped in Beirut (released in August 1991) – 3 others are found dead; Revolutionary Cells (RZ) claims responsibility in retaliation for the U.S. bombing of Libya.
- April 29 – Roger Clemens sets the record for the most strikeouts in a 9-inning MLB game, striking out 20 batters.

May

- May 16 – *Top Gun*, an action film featuring naval aviation and starring Tom Cruise, Anthony Edwards, Val Kilmer and Kelly McGillis, debuts in cinemas. It goes on to become the highest-grossing film of the year, netting nearly \$177 million in America alone.^[1]
- May 25 – Hands Across America: At least 5,000,000 people form a human chain from New York City to Long Beach, California, to raise money to fight hunger and homelessness.



May 25: Hands Across America

June

- June 4 – Jonathan Pollard pleads guilty to espionage for selling top secret United States military intelligence to Israel.
- June 8 – The Boston Celtics defeat the Houston Rockets in 6 games to win the NBA Championship.
- June 9 – The Rogers Commission releases its report on the Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster.
- June 19 – American college basketball player Len Bias suffers a fatal cardiac arrhythmia from a cocaine overdose less than 48 hours after being selected 2nd overall by the Boston Celtics in the 1986 NBA Draft.

July

- July 5 – The Statue of Liberty is reopened to the public after an extensive refurbishing.
- July 18 – This unusual slow moving Four of the tornadoes were rated F4, two of which hit in Fridley, Minnesota. In Brooklyn Park, two cars were flipped and 17 properties were damaged. In Coon Rapids, eighteen properties were damaged.

August

- August 6 – In Louisville, Kentucky, William J. Schroeder, the second artificial heart recipient, dies after 620 days.
- August 20 – In Edmond, Oklahoma, United States Postal Service employee Patrick Sherrill guns down 14 of his co-workers before committing suicide.
- August 31
 - Aeroméxico Flight 498, a Douglas DC-9, collides with a Piper PA-28 over Cerritos, California, killing 67 on both aircraft and 15 on the ground.
 - The cargo ship *Khian Sea* departs from the docks of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, carrying 14,000 tons of toxic waste. It wanders the seas for the next 16 months trying to find a place to dump its cargo.

October

- October 1 – U.S. President Ronald Reagan signs the Goldwater-Nichols Act into law, making official the largest reorganization of the United States Department of Defense since the Air Force was made a separate branch of service in 1947.
- October 9 – United States District Court Judge Harry E. Claiborne becomes the fifth federal official to be removed from office through impeachment.
- October 11 – Cold War: Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev meet in Reykjavík, Iceland, to continue discussions about scaling back their intermediate missile arsenals in Europe (the talks break down in failure).
- October 22 – In New York City, WNBC Radio's traffic helicopter crashes into the Hudson River, killing traffic reporter Jane Dornacker. The last words heard on-the-air were Dornacker's screams of terror, "Hit the water! Hit the water! Hit the water!"
- October 27 – World Series: The New York Mets defeat the Boston Red Sox in 7 games. This is the second world series title in the Mets franchise. It is also remembered for Game 6, when Bill Buckner lets an easy ground ball hit by Mookie Wilson roll through his legs, letting the Mets win and pull even with the Red Sox in the series.
- October 28 – The centennial of the Statue of Liberty's dedication is celebrated in New York Harbor.

November

- November 3 – Iran–Contra affair: The Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa* reports that the United States has been selling weapons to Iran in secret, in order to secure the release of 7 American hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon.
- November 4 – Democrats regain control of the United States Senate for the first time in 6 years. In California, Chief Justice Rose Bird and two colleagues are removed by voters from the Supreme Court of California for opposing capital punishment.
- November 21 – Iran-Contra Affair: National Security Council member Oliver North and his secretary, Fawn Hall, start shredding documents implicating them in selling weapons to Iran and channeling the proceeds to help fund the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.
- November 22 – Mike Tyson wins his first world boxing title by defeating Trevor Berbick in Las Vegas.
- November 25 – Iran-Contra Affair: U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese announces that profits from covert weapons sales to Iran were illegally diverted to the anti-communist Contra rebels in Nicaragua.
- November 26 – Iran-Contra Affair: U.S. President Ronald Reagan announces that as of December 1 former Senator John Tower, former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, and former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft will serve as members of the Special Review Board looking into the scandal (they became known as the Tower Commission). Reagan denies involvement in the scandal.

December

- December- The Unemployment Rate drops to 6.6%, the lowest since March 1980.
- December 20 – Three African Americans are assaulted by a group of white teens in the Howard Beach neighborhood of Queens, New York. One of the victims, Michael Griffith, is run over and killed by a motorist while attempting to flee the attackers.
- December 26 – After 35 years on the airwaves and holding the title of longest-running non-news program on network television, NBC airs the final episode of daytime drama *Search for Tomorrow*.
- December 31 – A fire at the Dupont Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, kills 97 and injures 140.

Ongoing

- Cold War (1945–1991)
- Iran–Contra affair (1985–1987)

Births

- January 4 – Steve Slaton, American football player
- January 5 – J. P. Arencibia, American baseball player
- January 20 – Derek Fathauer, golfer
- February 1 – Lauren Conrad, TV personality, fashion designer, and author
- February 4 – Vin Gerard, wrestler
- March 16 – Alexandra Daddario, actress
- March 28 – Lady Gaga, pop singer and songwriter
- April 3 – Amanda Bynes, actress
- May 9 – Grace Gummer, actress
- May 16 – Megan Fox, actress and model
- May 17 – Tahj Mowry, actor
- June 2 – Curtis Lofton, American football player
- June 6 – Justin Allgaier, American race car driver
- June 11 – Shia LaBeouf, American actor
- June 13 – Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, actresses and fashion designers
- June 27 – Drake Bell, actor, singer-songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist
- July 2 – Lindsay Lohan, actress, pop singer and model
- July 17 – Brando Eaton, American actor
- August 5 – Paula Creamer, golfer
- August 29 – Lea Michelle, actress
- September 3 – Shaun White, professional snowboarder
- October 22 – Kyle Gallner, actor
- November 1 – Penn Badgley, actor
- November 8 – Aaron Swartz, computer programmer and internet activist (d. 2013)
- November 10 – Josh Peck, actor, voice actor, comedian
- November 15 – Coye Francies, American football player
- December 8 – Kate Voegelé, musician, and actress

Full date unknown

- Andrea Lo, Internet entrepreneur

Deaths

- January 28 – crew of the Space Shuttle *Challenger* on mission STS-51-L:

Gregory Jarvis – astronaut and engineer (b. 1944)

Christa McAuliffe – school teacher (b. 1948)

Ronald E. McNair – astronaut and physicist (b. 1950)

Ellison Onizuka – astronaut (b. 1946)

Judith Resnik – astronaut and engineer (b. 1949)

Francis R. Scobee – astronaut (b. 1939)

Michael J. Smith – astronaut (b. 1945)

- February 11 – Frank Herbert, writer (b. 1920)
- March 6 – Georgia O'Keefe, American artist (b. 1887)
- March 28 – Virginia Gilmore, actress and wife of Yul Brynner (b. 1919)
- March 30 – James Cagney, actor (b. 1899)
- July 3 – Rudy Vallée, radio show host, bandleader, singer, actor (b. 1901)
- September 27 – Cliff Burton, former Metallica bassist (b. 1962)

See also

- 1986 in American television
- List of American films of 1986

References

1. "Top Gun: By The Numbers". ByTheNumbers.com. Retrieved June 12, 2011.

External links

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