

1988 in the United States

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Events from the year **1988 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: William Rehnquist (Wisconsin)
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: Jim Wright (D-Texas)
- Senate Majority Leader: Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia)
- Congress: 100th

Governors and Lieutenant Governors

Governors

- Governor of Alabama: H. Guy Hunt (Republican)
- Governor of Alaska: Steve Cowper (Democratic)
- Governor of Arizona: Evan Mecham (Republican) (until April 4), Rose Mofford (Democratic) (starting April 4)
- Governor of Arkansas: Bill Clinton (Democratic)
- Governor of California: George Deukmejian (Republican)
- Governor of Colorado: Roy Romer (Democratic)
- Governor of Connecticut: William A O'Neill (Democratic)
- Governor of Delaware: Michael Castle (Republican)
- Governor of Florida: Bob Martinez (Republican)
- Governor of Georgia: Joe Frank Harris (Democratic)
- Governor of Hawaii: John D. Waihee III (Democratic)
- Governor of Idaho: Cecil D. Andrus (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: Mike Hayden (Republican)
- Governor of Kentucky: Wallace G. Wilkinson (Democratic)
- Governor of Louisiana: Edwin W. Edwards (Democratic) (until March 14), Buddy Roemer (Democratic)/(Republican) (starting March 14)
- Governor of Maine: John R. McKernan, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of Maryland: William Donald Schaefer (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) (until January 12), Ray Mabus (Democratic) (starting January 12)
- Governor of Missouri: John Ashcroft (Republican)
- Governor of Montana: Ted Schwinden (Democratic)
- Governor of Nebraska: Kay A. Orr (Republican)
- 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: Garrey Carruthers (Republican)
- 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: Henry Bellmon (Republican)
- Governor of Oregon: Neil Goldschmidt (Democratic)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: Robert P. Casey (Democratic)
- Governor of Rhode Island: Edward D. DiPrete (Republican)
- Governor of South Carolina: Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of South Dakota: George S. Mickelson (Republican)
- Governor of Tennessee: Ned McWherter (Democratic)
- Governor of Texas: Bill Clements (Republican)
- Governor of Utah: Norman H. Bangerter (Republican)

- Governor of Vermont: Madeleine M. Kunin (Democratic)
- Governor of Virginia: Gerald L. Baliles (Democratic)
- Governor of Washington: Booth Gardner (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Arch A. Moore, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Tommy Thompson (Republican)
- Governor of Wyoming: Mike Sullivan (Democratic)

Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Jim Folsom, Jr. (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: Mike Callihan (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: Joseph J. Fauliso (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: Shien Biau Woo (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Florida: Bobby Brantley (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Georgia: Zell Miller (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii: Ben Cayetano (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: Butch Otter (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: George H. Ryan (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana: John Mutz (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Jo Ann Zimmerman (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Jack D. Walker (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Brereton Jones (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Robert "Bobby" Freeman (Democratic) (until March 14), Paul Hardy (Republican) (starting March 14)
- Lieutenant Governor of Maryland: Melvin A. Steinberg (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Evelyn Murphy (Democratic)
- 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: William E. Nichol (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Bob Miller (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Jack L. Stahl (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: Stan Lundine (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Robert B. Jordan, III (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Lloyd Omdahl (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: Paul R. Leonard (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: Robert S. Kerr III (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania: Mark Singel (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Richard A. Licht (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Nick Theodore (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Walter Dale Miller (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)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: Howard Dean (Democratic) ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Douglas Wilder (Democratic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Washington: John Cherberg (Democratic) ▪ Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: Scott McCallum (Republican) |
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Events

January

- January 1 – Michael Dell launched Dell Computer company.
- January 1 – The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is established, creating the largest Lutheran denomination in the United States.
- January 2 – Michigan State Spartans football team wins the Rose Bowl Game against USC Trojans.
- January 25 – U.S. Vice President George H. W. Bush and CBS News anchor Dan Rather clash over Bush's role in the Iran-Contra scandal, during a contentious television interview.
- January 29 – The Midwest Classic Conference, a U.S. college athletic conference, is formed.

February

- February 3 – The Democratic-controlled United States House of Representatives rejects President Ronald Reagan's request for \$36.25 million to support the Nicaraguan Contras.
- February 12 – Anthony M. Kennedy is appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States.
- February 16 – Gunman Richard Farley kills 7 people inside his former place of work, ESL Incorporated in Sunnyvale, California. He had been stalking coworker Laura Black who still worked there, however she survived the shooting. Farley is currently on death row.
- February 17 – U.S. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Higgins, serving with a United Nations group monitoring a truce in southern Lebanon, is kidnapped (he is later killed by his captors).
- February 24 – *Hustler Magazine v. Falwell*: The Supreme Court of the United States sides with *Hustler* magazine by overturning a lower court decision to award Jerry Falwell \$200,000 for defamation.

March

- March 8
 - Two U.S. Army helicopters collide in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, killing 17 servicemen.
 - U.S. presidential candidate George Herbert Walker Bush defeats Robert Dole in numerous Republican primaries and caucuses on "Super Tuesday". The bipartisan primary/caucus calendar, designed by Democrats to help solidify their own nominee early, backfires when none of the 6 competing candidates are able to break out of the pack in the day's Democratic contests. Jesse Jackson, however, wins several Southern state primaries.
- March 13 – Following the Deaf President Now protests, Gallaudet University selects I. King Jordan as the first Deaf president in its history.
- March 16
 - First RepublicBank of Texas fails and enters FDIC receivership, the second largest FDIC assisted bank failure up to that point.
 - Iran-Contra Affair: Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and Vice Admiral John Poindexter are indicted on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States.
- March 26 – U.S. presidential candidate Jesse Jackson defeats Michael Dukakis in the Michigan Democratic caucuses, becoming the temporary front-runner for the party's nomination. Richard

Gephardt withdraws his candidacy after his campaign speeches against imported automobiles fail to earn him much support in Detroit.

April

- April – The Unemployment Rate drops to 5.4%, the lowest since June 1974
- April 4 – Governor Evan Mecham of Arizona is convicted in his impeachment trial and removed from office.
- April 5 – Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis wins the Wisconsin Democratic presidential primary.
- April 11 – *The Last Emperor* (directed by Bernardo Bertolucci) wins nine Oscars.
- April 12 – Former pop singer Sonny Bono is elected mayor of Palm Springs, California.
- April 14 – The USS *Samuel B. Roberts* strikes a naval mine in the Persian Gulf, while deployed on Operation Earnest Will, during the Tanker War phase of the Iran–Iraq War.
- April 18 – The United States Navy retaliates for the *Roberts* mining with Operation Praying Mantis, in a day of strikes against Iranian oil platforms and naval vessels.

May

- May 4 – PEPCON disaster in Henderson, Nevada: A major explosion at an industrial solid-fuel rocket plant causes damage extending up to 10 miles away, including Las Vegas's McCarran International Airport.
- May 14 – Bus collision near Carrollton, Kentucky: A drunk driver going the wrong way on Interstate 71, hits a converted school bus carrying a church youth group from Radcliff, Kentucky. The resulting fire kills 27, making it tied for 1st in the U.S. for most fatalities involving 2 vehicles to the present day. Coincidentally, the other 2-vehicle accident involving a bus that also killed 27 occurred in Prestonsburg, Kentucky 30 years prior.
- May 16
 - A report by U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop states that the addictive properties of nicotine are similar to those of heroin and cocaine.
 - *California v. Greenwood*: The U.S. Supreme Court rules that police officers do not need a search warrant to search through discarded garbage.
- May 27 – Microsoft releases Windows 2.1
- May 31 – U.S. President Ronald Reagan addresses 600 Moscow State University students, during his visit to the Soviet Union.

June

- June – November – Wildfires spread through Yellowstone
- June 1 – The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, banning intermediate-range missiles in the United States and the Soviet Union, comes into effect.
- June 28 – Four workers are asphyxiated at a metal-plating plant in Auburn, Indiana, in the worst confined-space industrial accident in U.S. history (a fifth victim dies two days later).
- June 29 – *Morrison v. Olson*: The United States Supreme Court upholds the law allowing special prosecutors to investigate suspected crimes by executive branch officials.



June – November:
Yellowstone fires
of 1988

July

- July 3 – Iran Air Flight 655 is shot down by a missile launched from the USS *Vincennes*.
- July 6 – The first reported medical waste on beaches in the Greater New York area (including hypodermic needles and syringes possibly infected with the AIDS virus) washes ashore on Long Island. Subsequent medical waste discoveries on beaches in Coney Island, Brooklyn and in Monmouth County, New Jersey force the closure of numerous New York–area beaches in the middle of one of the hottest summers on record in the American Northeast.
- July 14 – Volkswagen closes its Westmoreland Assembly Plant after 10 years of operation (the first factory built by a non-American automaker in the U.S.).
- July 20 – The Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia nominates Michael Dukakis for U.S. President and Lloyd Bentsen for Vice President.
- July 26 – The Death of Tate Rowland leads way to publicized rumors of a Satanic cult in the rural community of Childress, Texas.

August

- August 6–7 – Tompkins Square Park Police Riot in New York City: A riot erupts in Tompkins Square Park when police attempt to enforce a newly passed curfew for the park. Bystanders, artists, residents, homeless people and political activists are caught up in the police action which takes place during the night of August 6 and into the early morning of August 7.
- August 9 – Wrigley Field has its first night game of baseball, ending long opposition to lights at the field.
- August 17 – Pakistani President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphel, are killed in a plane crash near Bhawalpur.
- August 18 – The Republican National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana nominates George H. W. Bush for U.S. President and Dan Quayle for Vice President.

September

- September 5 – With US\$2 billion in federal aid, the Robert M. Bass Group agrees to buy the U.S.'s largest thrift, American Savings and Loan Association.^[1]
- September 15 – Nicholas F. Brady is sworn in as the new Secretary of Treasury, succeeding James Baker.
- September 17 – October 2 – The United States participated in the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea and ranked 3rd brought home with 36 gold, 31 silver and 27 bronze medals for a total of 94 medals behind the Soviet Union in first place and East Germany in second.
- September 29
 - STS-26: NASA resumes space shuttle flights, grounded after the Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster, with Space Shuttle *Discovery*.
 - The Space Shuttle *Discovery* goes back into orbit putting the US back into the Space Race, it deployed the TDRS-C satellite into orbit.



September 29:
STS-26, "Return
to Flight"

October

- October 3 – STS-26 lands at Edwards Air Force Base in California after four days of its successful maiden flight and satellite deployment.
- October 5 – In Omaha, Nebraska, in the only vice presidential debate of the 1988 U.S. presidential election, the Republican vice presidential nominee, Senator Dan Quayle of Indiana, insists he has as much experience in government as John F. Kennedy did when he sought the presidency in 1960. His Democratic opponent, Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, replies, "Senator, I knew Jack

Kennedy. I served with Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy." The audience response to Sen. Bentsen's remark is overwhelmingly positive.

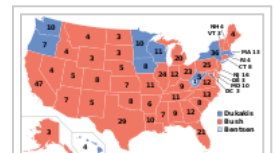
- October 13 – In the second U.S. presidential debate, held by U.C.L.A., the Democratic party nominee, Michael Dukakis, is asked by journalist Bernard Shaw of CNN if he would support the death penalty if his wife, "Kitty", were to be raped and murdered. Gov. Dukakis' reply, voicing his opposition to capital punishment in any and all circumstances, is later said to have been a major reason for the eventual failure of his campaign for the White House.
- October 15 – Kirk Gibson hits a dramatic home run to win Game 1 of the World Series for the Los Angeles Dodgers, over the Oakland Athletics, by a score of 5–4.
- October 27 – Ronald Reagan decides to tear down the new U.S. Embassy in Moscow because of Soviet listening devices in the building structure.
- October 30 – Philip Morris buys Kraft Foods for US\$13.1 billion.^[2]



September 29:
The TDRS is prepared for deployment.

November

- November – The Unemployment Rate drops to 5.3%, the lowest since May 1974
- November 2 – The Morris worm, the first computer worm distributed via the Internet, written by Robert Tappan Morris, is launched from MIT.
- November 8 – United States presidential election, 1988: George H. W. Bush is elected over Michael Dukakis.
- November 11 – In Sacramento, California, police find a body buried in the lawn of 60-year-old boardinghouse landlady Dorothea Puente (7 bodies are eventually found and Puente is convicted of 3 murders and sentenced to life in prison).
- November 13 – Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian law student in Portland, Oregon is beaten to death by members of the Neo-Nazi group East Side White Pride.
- November 18 – War on Drugs: U.S. President Ronald Reagan signs a bill providing the death penalty for murderous drug traffickers.
- November 21 – Ted Turner officially buys Jim Crockett Promotions, known as NWA Crockett, and turns it into World Championship Wrestling (WCW).
- November 22 – In Palmdale, California, the first prototype B-2 Spirit stealth bomber is revealed.
- November 30 – Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. buys RJR Nabisco for US\$25.07 billion in the biggest leveraged buyout deal of all time.



November 8:
George H. W. Bush elected President

December

- December 1 – The first World AIDS Day is observed.
- December 9 – The last Dodge Aries and Plymouth Reliant roll off the assembly line in a Chrysler factory.
- December 12 – Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev begins an official visit to the United States.^[3]
- December 14 – After Yasir Arafat renounces violence, the US says it will open dialogue with the PLO.
- December 16 – Perennial U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche is convicted of mail fraud.
- December 19 – Gorbachev cuts short his visit to the United States and returns home to the Soviet Union, as thousands of people have died in an earthquake in Armenia.^[4]

- December 21 – Pan Am Flight 103 is destroyed by a bomb over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people, including 178 U.S. Citizens.

Ongoing

- Cold War (1945–1991)

Births

- February 20 – Kealoha Pilaes, American football player
- March 14 – Stephen Curry, basketball player
- May 10 – Mat Franco, magician
- May 11 – Jeremy Maclin, American football player
- May 23 – Zachary Wohlman, boxer
- June 6 – Gideon Glick, actor and singer
- June 2 – Joe Lefeged, American football player
- June 23 (approximate date) – Air Buddy, dog actor (died 1998)
- July 6 – Brittany Underwood, actress and singer
- July 19 - Shane Dawson, Internet personality, actor, comedian, director, author
- July 28
 - Ayla Brown, basketball player and singer
 - Greg Hardy, American football player
- August 27 – Alexa Vega, actress and singer
- September 10 – Jared Lee Loughner, spree killer (2011 Tucson shooting, killed six)
- September 29 – Kevin Durant, basketball player
- November 6 – Emma Stone, actress
- November 14 – Michael Cox, American football running back

Deaths

- January 5 – Pete Maravich, basketball player (born 1947)
- January 11 – Isidor Isaac Rabi, physicist, winner of Nobel Prize in Physics in 1944 for invention of the atomic beam magnetic resonance method of measuring magnetic properties of atoms and molecules (born 1898 in Poland)
- February 3 – Robert Duncan, poet (born 1919)
- February 14 – Frederick Loewe, composer (born 1901 in Berlin)
- February 15 – Richard Feynman, theoretical physicist, winner of Nobel Prize in Physics in 1965 for work on quantum electrodynamics (born 1918)
- March 7
 - Edmund Berkeley, computer scientist (born 1909)
 - Divine, drag singer and character actor (born 1945)
 - Robert Livingston, screen actor (born 1904)
- April 25 – Valerie Solanas, radical feminist, attempted murderer of Andy Warhol (died 1936)
- May 8
 - Robert A. Heinlein science fiction author (born 1907)
 - Ruby M. Rouss, WAC and first female President of the Virgin Islands Legislature (born 1921)
- May 30 – Ella Raines, screen actress (born 1920)
- June 10 – Louis L'Amour, western novelist (born 1908)
- July 12 – Joshua Logan, stage and film writer (born 1908)
- July 25 – Judith Barsi, actress and murder victim (born 1978)

- August 8 – Alan Napier, actor (born 1903 in the United Kingdom)
- August 21 – Ray Eames, architect and designer, partner of Charles Eames (born 1912)
- August 28 – Max Shulman, novelist, short-story writer and dramatist (born 1919)
- September 1 – Luis Walter Alvarez, experimental physicist, winner of Nobel Prize in Physics in 1968 for bubble chamber research into particle physics (born 1911)
- September 28 – Charles Addams, cartoonist (born 1912)
- October 31 – John Houseman, screen actor-producer (born 1902 in Romania)
- November 25 – Alphaeus Philemon Cole, portrait artist, engraver and supercentenarian (born 1876)
- December 6 – Roy Orbison, rock singer-songwriter and guitarist (born 1936)
- December 26 – Glenn McCarthy, oil tycoon and businessman (born 1907)
- December 27
 - Hal Ashby, film director (born 1929)
 - Jess Oppenheimer, radio and television producer (born 1913)
- December 30 – Isamu Noguchi, artist and landscape architect (born 1904)

See also

- 1988 North American drought
- 1988 in American television
- List of American films of 1988

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External links

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