

2003 in the United States

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Events from the year **2003 in the United States**.

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Incumbents

Federal Government

- President: George W. Bush (R-Texas)
- Vice President: Dick Cheney (R-Wyoming)
- Chief Justice: William Rehnquist (Wisconsin) ^[1]
- Speaker of the House of Representatives: Dennis Hastert (R-Illinois)
- Senate Majority Leader: Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota) (until January 3), Bill Frist (R-Tennessee) (starting January 3)
- Congress: 107th (until January 3), 108th (starting January 3)

Governors and Lieutenant Governors

Governors

- Governor of Alabama: Don Siegelman (Democratic) (until January 20), Bob Riley (Republican) (starting January 20)
- Governor of Alaska: Frank Murkowski (Republican)
- Governor of Arizona: Jane Dee Hull (Republican) (until January 6), Janet Napolitano (Democratic) (starting January 6)
- Governor of Arkansas: Mike Huckabee (Republican)
- Governor of California: Gray Davis (Democratic) (until November 17), Arnold Schwarzenegger (Republican) (starting November 17)
- Governor of Colorado: Bill Owens (Republican)
- Governor of Connecticut: John G. Rowland (Republican)
- Governor of Delaware: Ruth Ann Minner (Democratic)
- Governor of Florida: Jeb Bush (Republican)
- Governor of Georgia: Roy Barnes (Democratic) (until January 13), Sonny Perdue (Republican) (starting January 13)
- Governor of Hawaii: Linda Lingle (Republican)
- Governor of Idaho: Dirk Kempthorne (Republican)
- Governor of Illinois: George Ryan (Republican) (until January 13), Rod Blagojevich (Democratic) (starting January 13)
- Governor of Indiana: Frank O'Bannon (Democratic) (until September 13), Joe Kernan (Democratic) (starting September 13)
- Governor of Iowa: Tom Vilsack (Democratic)
- Governor of Kansas: Bill Graves (Republican) (until January 13), Kathleen Sebelius (Democratic) (starting January 13)
- Governor of Kentucky: Paul E. Patton (Democratic) (until December 9), Ernie Fletcher (Republican) (starting December 9)
- Governor of Louisiana: Murphy J. Foster, Jr. (Republican)
- Governor of Maine: Angus King (Independent) (until January 8), John Baldacci (Democratic) (starting January 8)
- Governor of Maryland: Parris N. Glendening (Democratic) (until January 15), Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. (Republican) (starting January 15)
- Governor of Massachusetts: Jane Swift (Republican) (until January 2), Mitt Romney (Republican) (starting January 2)
- Governor of Michigan: John Engler (Republican) (until January 1), Jennifer Granholm (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Governor of Minnesota: Jesse Ventura (Independence) (until January 6), Tim Pawlenty (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Governor of Mississippi: Ronnie Musgrove (Democratic)
- Governor of Missouri: Bob Holden (Democratic)
- Governor of Montana: Judy Martz (Republican)
- Governor of Nebraska: Mike Johanns (Republican)
- Governor of Nevada: Kenny Guinn (Republican)
- Governor of New Hampshire: Jeanne Shaheen (Democratic) (until January 9), Craig Benson (Republican) (starting January 9)
- Governor of New Jersey: Jim McGreevey (Democratic)
- Governor of New Mexico: Gary Johnson (Republican) (until January 1), Bill Richardson (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Governor of New York: George Pataki (Republican)
- Governor of North Carolina: Mike Easley (Democratic)
- Governor of North Dakota: John Hoeven (Republican)
- Governor of Ohio: Bob Taft (Republican)
- Governor of Oklahoma: Frank Keating (Republican) (until January 13), Brad Henry (Democratic) (starting January 13)

- Governor of Oregon: John Kitzhaber (Democratic) (until January 13), Ted Kulongoski (Democratic) (starting January 13)
- Governor of Pennsylvania: Mark S. Schweiker (Republican) (until January 21), Ed Rendell (Democratic) (starting January 21)
- Governor of Rhode Island: Lincoln C. Almond (Republican) (until January 7), Donald Carcieri (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Governor of South Carolina: Jim Hodges (Democratic) (until January 15), Mark Sanford (Republican) (starting January 15)
- Governor of South Dakota: William J. Janklow (Republican) (until January 7), Mike Rounds (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Governor of Tennessee: Don Sundquist (Republican) (until January 18), Phil Bredesen (Democratic) (starting January 18)
- Governor of Texas: Rick Perry (Republican)
- Governor of Utah: Mike Leavitt (Republican) (until November 5), Olene S. Walker (Republican) (starting November 5)
- Governor of Vermont: Howard Dean (Democratic) (until January 9), Jim Douglas (Republican) (starting January 9)
- Governor of Virginia: Mark Warner (Democratic)
- Governor of Washington: Gary Locke (Democratic)
- Governor of West Virginia: Bob Wise (Democratic)
- Governor of Wisconsin: Scott McCallum (Republican) (until January 6), Jim Doyle (Democratic) (starting January 6)
- Governor of Wyoming: Jim Geringer (Republican) (until January 6), Dave Freudenthal (Democratic) (starting January 6)

Lieutenant Governors

- Lieutenant Governor of Alabama: Steve Windom (Republican) (until January 20), Lucy Baxley (Democratic) (starting January 20)
- Lieutenant Governor of Alaska: Loren Leman (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas: Winthrop Paul Rockefeller (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of California: Cruz Bustamante (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Colorado: Joe Rogers (Republican) (until January 14), Jane E. Norton (Republican) (starting January 14)
- Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut: Jodi Rell (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Delaware: John Carney (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Florida: Frank Brogan (Republican) (until March 3), Toni Jennings (Republican) (starting March 3)
- Lieutenant Governor of Georgia: Mark Taylor (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii: Duke Aiona (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Idaho: Jack Riggs (Republican) (until January 6), Jim Risch (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Lieutenant Governor of Illinois: Corinne Wood (Republican) (until January 13), Pat Quinn (Democratic) (starting January 13)
- Lieutenant Governor of Indiana:
 - until September 13: Joe E. Kernan (Democratic)
 - September 13-October 20: vacant
 - starting October 20: Kathy Davis (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Iowa: Sally Pederson (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kansas: Gary Sherrer (Republican) (until January 13), John E. Moore (Democratic) (starting January 13)
- Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky: Steve Henry (Democratic) (until December 9), Steve Pence (Republican) (starting December 9)
- Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana: Kathleen Blanco (Democratic)

- Lieutenant Governor of Maryland: Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (Democratic) (until January 15), Michael Steele (Republican) (starting January 15)
- Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts: Jane Swift (Republican) (until January 2), Kerry Healey (Republican) (starting January 2)
- Lieutenant Governor of Michigan: Dick Posthumus (Republican) (until January 1), John D. Cherry (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota: Mae Schunk (Independence) (until January 6), Carol Molnau (Republican) (starting January 6)
- Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi: Amy Tuck (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Missouri: Joe Maxwell (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Montana: Karl Ohs (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska: Dave Heineman (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Nevada: Lorraine Hunt (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico: Walter Dwight Bradley (Republican) (until January 1), Diane Denish (Democratic) (starting January 1)
- Lieutenant Governor of New York: Mary Donohue (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina: Bev Perdue (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of North Dakota: Jack Dalrymple (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Ohio: vacant (until January 13), Jennette Bradley (Republican) (starting January 13)
- Lieutenant Governor of Oklahoma: Mary Fallin (Republican)
- Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania: Robert Jubelirer (Republican) (until January 21), Catherine Baker Knoll (Democratic) (starting January 21)
- Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island: Charles J. Fogarty (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina: Bob Peeler (Republican) (until January 15), André Bauer (Republican) (starting January 15)
- Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota: Carole Hillard (Republican) (until January 7), Dennis Daugaard (Republican) (starting January 7)
- Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee: John S. Wilder (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Texas: Bill Ratliff (Republican) (until January 21), David Dewhurst (Republican) (starting January 21)
- Lieutenant Governor of Utah: Olene S. Walker (Republican) (until November 5), Gayle McKeachnie (Republican) (starting November 5)
- Lieutenant Governor of Vermont: Doug Racine (Democratic) (until January 9), Brian Dubie (Republican) (starting January 9)
- Lieutenant Governor of Virginia: Tim Kaine (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Washington: Brad Owen (Democratic)
- Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin: Margaret A. Farrow (Republican) (until January 6), Barbara Lawton (Democratic) (starting January 6)

Events

January

- January – Sky marshals introduced on US airlines in an attempt to prevent hijackings.^[2]
- January 3
 - The 108th United States Congress is sworn in, including incoming freshmen Senators Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), John Sununu (R-NH), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Norm Coleman (R-MN), and Mark Pryor (D-AR).
 - The Ohio State University defeats the University of Miami in double-overtime in the Fiesta Bowl, 31–24, for the national Bowl Championship Series (BCS) title.

- January 8 – US Airways Express Flight 5481 crashes at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, North Carolina, killing all 21 people aboard.
- January 15 – *Eldred v. Ashcroft*: The Supreme Court of the United States allows the extension of copyright terms in the U.S.
- January 16 – STS-107: Space Shuttle Columbia is launched on what turns out to be its last flight.
- January 23 – The last signal is received from NASA's Pioneer 10 spacecraft, some 7.5 billion miles from Earth.
- January 24 – The new United States Department of Homeland Security begins operation.
- January 25 – An international group of volunteers leaves London for Baghdad to act as voluntary human shields, hoping to avert a U.S. invasion.
- January 26 – Super Bowl XXXVII: The Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeat the Oakland Raiders 48–21.
- January 30 – Iraq disarmament crisis: The leaders of the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain release a statement (*The Letter of the Eight*) demonstrating support for the United States' plans to invade Iraq.

February

- February 1 – STS-107: Space Shuttle *Columbia* disintegrates over Texas upon re-entry, killing all 7 astronauts on board.^[2]
- February 3 – John W. Snow is sworn in as the new Secretary of Treasury, succeeding Paul O'Neill.
- February 5 – Iraq disarmament crisis: U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the UN Security Council on Iraq.
- February 7 – An unsuccessful attempt is made to contact Pioneer 10.
- February 20 – The Station nightclub fire in West Warwick, Rhode Island claims the lives of 100 people.



February 1: Space Shuttle *Columbia* is destroyed on re-entry

March

- March 1
 - The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the United States Customs Service, and the United States Secret Service move to the United States Department of Homeland Security.
 - The Turkish parliament vetoes U.S. troop access to airbases in Turkey in order to attack Iraq from the north. The Bush administration starts working on Plan B, namely attacking Iraq from the south, through the Persian Gulf.
- March 5 – *Lockyer v. Andrade, Ewing v. California*: In two separate opinions, the Supreme Court of the United States, by 5–4 margins, upholds California's "three strikes and you're out" law.
- March 11 – Iraq disarmament crisis: Iraqi fighters threaten two U.S. U-2 surveillance planes, on missions for U.N. weapons inspectors, forcing them to abort their mission and return to base.
- March 16 – Iraq disarmament crisis: The leaders of the United States, Britain, Portugal, and Spain meet at a summit in the Azores Islands. U.S. President Bush calls March 17 the "moment of truth", meaning that the "coalition of the willing" will make its final effort to extract a resolution from the U.N. Security Council, giving Iraq an ultimatum to disarm immediately or be disarmed by force.
- March 17 – Iraq disarmament crisis: U.S. President George W. Bush gives an ultimatum: Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and his sons must either leave Iraq, or face military action at a time of the U.S.'s choosing.
- March 18
 - FBI agents raid the corporate headquarters of HealthSouth Corporation in Birmingham, Alabama, on suspicion of massive corporate fraud led by the company's top executives.
 - About \$1 billion is taken from Iraq's Central Bank by Saddam Hussein and his family, just hours before the United States begins bombing Iraq.^[3]

- March 19 – The first American bombs drop on Baghdad after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his sons do not comply with U.S. President George W. Bush's 48-hour mandate demanding their exit from Iraq.
- March 20 – The US-led Iraq War begins.^[2]
- March 22 – The United States and the United Kingdom begin their shock and awe campaign, with a massive air strike on military targets in Baghdad.
- March 23
 - Hasan Akbar, a Muslim soldier with the 101st Airborne, kills two fellow soldiers in a grenade attack at Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait.
 - The 75th Academy Awards ceremony, hosted by Steve Martin, is held at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood. *Chicago* wins Best Picture.
- March 30 – Meigs Field Airport in Chicago, Illinois, is demolished overnight.

April

- April 3 – U.S. forces seize control of Saddam International Airport, changing the airport's name to Baghdad International Airport.
- April 3–12 – Iraq War: US forces defeat the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Republican Guard in the Battle of Baghdad.
- April 9 – Iraq War: U.S. forces seize control of Baghdad, ending the regime of Saddam Hussein.
- April 13
 - Iraq War: Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit falls to US forces.
 - President George W. Bush accuses Syria of possessing chemical weapons.^[2]
- April 21 – Retired U.S. Army General Jay Garner becomes Interim Civil Administrator of Iraq.
- April 29 – Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld confirms that US troops will be withdrawn from Saudi Arabia where they have been stationed since the 1991 Gulf War.^[2]



April 9: M1A1 Abrams pose for a photo under the "Hands of Victory" in Ceremony Square, Baghdad, Iraq.

May

- May 1 – U. S. president George W. Bush lands on the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*, where he gives a speech announcing the end of major combat in the 2003 Invasion of Iraq.^[2] A banner behind him declares "Mission Accomplished".
- May 3 – The Old Man of the Mountain, a rock formation in New Hampshire, crumbles after heavy rain.
- May 4 – Top Thrill Dragster opens in Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio as the world's tallest, fastest roller coaster.
- May 4–10 – A major severe weather outbreak spawns more tornadoes than any week in U.S. history; 393 tornadoes are reported in 19 states.
- May 23 – Dewey, the first deer cloned by scientists at Texas A&M University, is born.
- May 25 – After docking in Miami at 05:00, the *SS Norway* (old *SS France*) is severely damaged by a boiler explosion at 06:30, that kills seven, and injures 17 crew members. A few weeks later it is announced by Norwegian Cruise Line that she will never sail again as a commercial ocean liner.
- May 28 – President George W. Bush authorizes \$350 billion worth of tax cuts over 10 years.^[2]
- May 31 – Eric Rudolph, suspected in the Centennial Olympic Park bombing in 1996, is captured in Murphy, North Carolina.



May 1: President George W. Bush's Mission Accomplished Speech

June

- June – As a result of the early 2000s recession, as well as the jobless recovery that followed, unemployment peaks at 6.3%, the highest since April 1994.
- June 4 – Martha Stewart and her broker are indicted for using privileged investment information and then obstructing a federal investigation. Stewart also resigns as chairperson and chief executive officer of *Martha Stewart Living*.
- June 19 – The US Census Bureau announces that with 37 million, Hispanics constitute the largest minority in the USA (compared with 36 million African Americans).^[4]
- June 22 – The largest hailstone ever recorded falls in Aurora, Nebraska.
- June 23 – *Grutter v. Bollinger*: The Supreme Court of the United States upholds affirmative action in university admissions.
- June 26
 - A senior Department of State chemical and biological weapons expert testifies to the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee that he was pressured to modify intelligence reports about Iraq.^[2]
 - *Lawrence v. Texas*: The U.S. Supreme Court declares sodomy laws unconstitutional.
- June 29 – A balcony collapse in Chicago kills 13.
- June 30 – In Irvine, California, Joseph Hunter Parker kills two Albertsons employees with a sword, before being shot to death by the police.

July

- July 8 – Douglas Williams goes on a shooting rampage in a Lockheed Martin plant in Meridian, Mississippi, killing 6 and injuring 8 before committing suicide.
- July 14 – CIA leak scandal: *Washington Post* columnist Robert Novak publishes the name of Valerie Plame, blowing her cover as a CIA operative.
- July 22 – Uday and Qusay Hussein, sons of Saddam Hussein, are killed by the U.S. military in Iraq, after being tipped off by an informant.
- July 26 – The electorate of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma approves a new constitution re-designating the tribe "Cherokee Nation" without "of Oklahoma" and specifically disenfranchising the Cherokee Freedmen.

August

- August 14 – A widespread power outage affects the northeastern United States and South-Central Canada.
- August 25 – The Spitzer Space Telescope was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, during Delta II.
- August 28 – Brian Douglas Wells, a pizza delivery man in Erie, Pennsylvania, is killed after a bomb fastened around his neck explodes. Wells was forced to rob a bank with the bomb collar on before it was detonated remotely.

September

- September 7 – President Bush announces a request for \$87 billion from Congress for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.^[2]
- September 17 – President Bush concedes there is no evidence linking Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to the September 11, 2001 attacks.^[2]

- September 18 – Hurricane Isabel makes landfall as a Category 2 Hurricane on North Carolina's Outer Banks. It directly kills 16 people in the Mid–Atlantic area.

October

- October 7 – 2003 California recall: Voters recall Governor Gray Davis from office and elect actor Arnold Schwarzenegger to succeed him.
- October 9 – The redesigned \$20 bill is first released, containing many new security features not found in older bills.
- October 10 – Facing an investigation surrounding allegations of illegal drug use, American right-wing radio host Rush Limbaugh publicly admits that he is addicted to prescription pain killers, and will seek treatment.
- October 15 – The 2003 Staten Island Ferry crash kills 11 after one of its ferries slams into a pier.
- October 25
 - The Florida Marlins defeat the New York Yankees to win their second World Series title.
 - The Cedar Fire begins in San Diego County, burning 280,000 acres (1,100 km²), 2,232 homes and killing 14.

November

- November 18
 - The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, rules anti-same-sex marriage laws unconstitutional in Massachusetts.
 - U.S. President George W. Bush makes a state visit to London in the midst of massive protests.
- November 20 – Iraq War: End of Operation Iron Hammer, an attempt to end the Iraq insurgency.^[2]

December

- December 1 – Boeing chairman and CEO Phil Condit resigns unexpectedly. He is replaced by Lewis Platt as non-executive chairman and Harry Stonecipher as president and CEO.
- December 13 – Iraq War: End of Operation Red Dawn resulting in the capture of Saddam Hussein in Tikrit.^[2]
- December 22 – The 6.6 Mw San Simeon earthquake shook the central coast of California with a maximum Mercalli intensity of VIII (*Severe*), leaving 2 dead and 40 injured, and causing \$250–300 million in damage.
- December 24
 - At the request of the U.S. Embassy in Paris, the French Government orders Air France to cancel several flights between France and the U.S. in response to terrorist concerns.
 - A BSE (mad cow disease) outbreak in Washington State is announced. Several countries including Brazil, Australia and Taiwan ban the import of beef from the United States.
- December 31 – British Airways Flight 223, a Boeing 747-400 flying from London Heathrow to Washington Dulles, is held for security checks after landing in Washington, DC due to intelligence suggesting a terrorist threat.^[5]

Ongoing

- Iraqi no-fly zones (1991–2003)
- War in Afghanistan (2001–present)

- Iraq War (2003–2011)

Births

- February 14 – Sayeed Shahidi, actor and model
- April 9 – Awonder Liang, chess player
- April 16 – Alina Foley, actress
- May 18 – James and Lukas Rodriguez, actors
- June 24 – Marcus Fiesel, murder victim (d. 2006)
- July 5 – Terrell Ransom, Jr., actor and model
- August 18 – Max Charles, actor
- August 26 – Emma Rayne Lyle, actress
- August 28 – Quvenzhané Wallis, actress
- December 5 – Logan Robot Gladden, musician

Full date unknown

- Anastasia and Tatiana Dogaru, conjoined twins
- Maxwell Huckabee, actor
- Samantha Gordon, football player

Deaths

January

- January 3 – Sid Gillman, American football player, coach and executive (b. 1911)
- January 11 – Richard Simmons, actor (b. 1913)
- January 12 – Dean Amadon, ornithologist (b. 1912)
- January 15 – Doris Fisher, singer and songwriter (b. 1915)
- January 17 – Richard Crenna, actor (b. 1926)
- January 20
 - Al Hirschfeld, cartoonist (b. 1903)
 - Craig Kelly, snowboarder (b. 1966)
- January 23 – Nell Carter, singer and actress (b. 1948)
- January 29 – Frank Moss, United States Senator from Utah from 1959 till 1977. (b. 1911)

February

- February 1 – crew of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* on mission STS-107:

Michael P. Anderson, astronaut (b. 1959)
David M. Brown, astronaut and physician (b. 1956)
Kalpana Chawla, India-born American astronaut and aerospace engineer (b. 1961)
Laurel Clark, astronaut and physician (b. 1961)
Rick Husband, commander astronaut (b. 1957)
William McCool, astronaut (b. 1961)

- February 2 – Lou Harrison, composer (b. 1917)
- February 10
 - Edgar de Evia, Mexican-born American photographer (b. 1910)
 - Ron Ziegler, White House Press Secretary (b. 1939)
 - "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig, wrestler (b. 1958)
- February 16 – Eleanor "Sis" Daley, wife of Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley (b. 1907)
- February 19 – Johnny PayCheck, singer and songwriter (b. 1938)

- February 20 – Orville Freeman, 29th Governor of Minnesota from 1955 till 1959. (b. 1918)
- February 27 – Fred Rogers, educator, minister, songwriter, writer, and television host. (b. 1928)

March

- March 2 – Hank Ballard, singer and songwriter (b. 1927)
- March 20 – Sailor Art Thomas, American bodybuilder and wrestler (b. 1924)
- March 12 – Lynne Thigpen, actress (b. 1948)
- March 22 – Milton G. Henschel, minister and executive (b. 1920)
- March 26 – Daniel Patrick Moynihan, United States Senator from New York from 1977 till 2001. (b. 1926)
- March 30 – Michael Jeter, actor (b. 1952)

April

- April 17
 - Robert Atkins, physician (b. 1930)
 - Paul Getty, American-born British philanthropist (b. 1932)
 - Earl King, singer, songwriter, and guitarist (b. 1934)
- April 20 – Ruth Hale, writer and actress (b. 1908)
- April 21 – Nina Simone, singer, songwriter, pianist, arranger, and civil rights activist, died in Carry-le-Rouet, Bouches-du-Rhône, France (b. 1933)
- April 26 – Peter Stone, screenwriter (b. 1930)

May

- May 1 – Elizabeth Hulette, wrestling manager and valet (b. 1960)
- May 3 – Suzy Parker, model and actress (b. 1932)
- May 9
 - Carmen Filpi, American actor (b. 1923)
 - Russell B. Long, United States Senator from Louisiana from 1948 till 1987. (b. 1918)
- May 14 – Robert Stack, actor and television host (b. 1919)

- May 15 – June Carter Cash, singer, dancer, songwriter, actress, comedian, writer, and wife of Johnny Cash (b. 1929)
- May 17 – Pop Ivy, American-Canadian football player and coach (b. 1916)
- May 26 – Kathleen Winsor, writer (b. 1919)
- May 28 – Martha Scott, actress (b. 1912)

June

- June 2
 - Burke Marshall, federal civil rights lawyer (b. 1922)
 - "Classy" Freddy Blassie, wrestler and manager (b. 1918)
- June 6 – Ken Grimwood, writer (b. 1944)
- June 10 – Donald Regan, 66th United States Secretary of the Treasury from 1981 till 1985. (b. 1918)
- June 11 – David Brinkley, television journalist (b. 1920)
- June 12 – Gregory Peck, actor (b. 1916)
- June 14 – Jimmy Knepper, musician (b. 1927)
- June 18 – Larry Doby, American baseball player and manager (b. 1923)
- June 21 – Leon Uris, writer (b. 1924)
- June 23 – Maynard Jackson, mayor of Atlanta, Georgia from 1974 till 1982 and from 1990 till 1994. (b. 1938)
- June 25 – Lester Maddox, 75th Governor of Georgia from 1967 till 1971. (b. 1915)
- June 26 – Strom Thurmond, 103rd Governor of South Carolina from 1947 till 1951 and United States Senator from South Carolina from 1954 till 1956 and from 1956 till 2003. (b. 1902)
- June 29 – Katharine Hepburn, actress (b. 1907)
- June 30 – Buddy Hackett, comedian and actor (b. 1924)

July

- July 1 – Herbie Mann, musician (b. 1930)
- July 4 – Barry White, singer and songwriter (b. 1944)
- July 6 – Buddy Ebsen, actor and dancer (b. 1908)
- July 12 – Benny Carter, musician (b. 1907)

- July 15 – Tex Schramm, American football executive (b. 1920)
- July 16 – Carol Shields, American-born Canadian writer (b. 1935)
- July 17 – Rosalyn Tureck, pianist and harpsichordist (b. 1913)
- July 27 – Bob Hope, British-born American actor, singer, dancer, and comedian (b. 1903)
- July 30 – Sam Phillips, record producer (b. 1923)

August

- August 4 – Frederick Chapman Robbins, Nobel pediatrician and virologist (b. 1916)
- August 9 – Gregory Hines, actor, singer, dancer, and choreographer (b. 1946)
- August 23 – Bobby Bonds, American baseball player (b. 1946)
- August 28 – Brian Douglas Wells, criminal and murder victim (b. 1956)
- August 30 – Charles Bronson, actor and husband of Jill Ireland (b. 1921)

September

- September 1 – John Gould, humorist, essayist, and columnist (b. 1908)
- September 3 – Ma Dunjing, Chinese General, died in Los Angeles, California (b. 1910)
- September 6 – Harry Goz, actor (b. 1932)
- September 7 – Warren Zevon, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1947)
- September 9 – Larry Hovis, actor (b. 1936)
- September 11 – John Ritter, actor and comedian (b. 1948)
- September 12 – Johnny Cash, singer, songwriter, musician, and actor (b. 1932)
- September 13 – Frank O'Bannon, 47th Governor of Indiana from 1997 till 2003. (b. 1930)
- September 14 – John Serry, Sr., musician (b. 1915)
- September 16 – Sheb Wooley, actor, singer, and songwriter (b. 1921)
- September 22 – Gordon Jump, actor (b. 1932)
- September 25 – George Plimpton, journalist, writer, and actor (b. 1927)
- September 27 – Donald O'Connor, actor, singer, and dancer (b. 1925)

- September 28 – Althea Gibson, tennis player (b. 1927)

October

- October 3 – William Steig, cartoonist, illustrator, and writer (b. 1907)
- October 5
 - Neil Postman, writer, media theorist, and cultural critic (b. 1931)
 - Timothy Treadwell, bear enthusiast, environmentalist, amateur naturalist, eco-warrior and documentary film maker (b. 1957)
- October 7 – Ellen Cannon Reed, witch and writer (b. 1943)
- October 10 – Eugene Istomin, pianist (b. 1925)
- October 12 – Willie Shoemaker, jockey (b. 1931)
- October 20 – Jack Elam, actor (b. 1920)
- October 21
 - Fred Berry, actor (b. 1951)
 - Elliott Smith, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1969)
- October 22 – Tony Renna, race car driver (b. 1976)
- October 25 – Robert Strassburg, conductor, composer, musicologist, and music educator (b. 1915)
- October 29 – Hal Clement, writer (b. 1922)
- October 31 – Richard Neustadt, political scientist (b. 1919)

November

- November 5
 - Dorothy Fay, actress and wife of Tex Ritter (b. 1915)
 - Bobby Hatfield, singer (b. 1940)
- November 6 – Spider Jorgensen, American baseball player and coach (b. 1919)
- November 9 – Art Carney, actor (b. 1918)
- November 10 – Irv Kupcinec, columnist and television personality (b. 1912)
- November 12
 - Jonathan Brandis, actor, director, and screenwriter (b. 1976)
 - Kay E. Kuter, actor (b. 1925)
 - Penny Singleton, actress (b. 1908)

- November 13 – Kellie Waymire, actress (b. 1967)
- November 14 – Gene Anthony Ray, actor, dancer, and choreographer (b. 1962)
- November 15
 - Dorothy Loudon, actress and singer (b. 1925)
 - Laurence Tisch, businessman, co-founded the Loews Corporation (b. 1923)
 - Speedy West, guitarist and producer (b. 1924)
- November 18 – Michael Kamen, composer, conductor, and songwriter, died in London, United Kingdom (b. 1948)
- November 20 – Jim Siedow, actor (b. 1920)
- November 26 – Soulja Slim, rapper, songwriter, and murder victim (b. 1977)
- November 30 – Gertrude Ederle, swimmer (b. 1905)
- December 7
 - Carl F. H. Henry, theologian and publisher (b. 1913)
 - Azie Taylor Morton, 36th Treasurer of the United States from 1977 till 1981. (b. 1936)
- December 9 – Paul Simon, United States Senator from Illinois from 1985 till 1997. (b. 1928)
- December 13 – William Roth, United States Senator from Delaware from 1971 till 2001. (b. 1921)
- December 14 – Jeanne Crain, actress (b. 1925)
- December 15 – George Fisher, political cartoonist (b. 1923)
- December 16 – Gary Stewart, singer, songwriter, and musician (b. 1944)
- December 17 – Otto Graham, American football player and coach (b. 1921)
- December 19 – Hope Lange, actress and wife of Don Murray and Alan J. Pakula (b. 1933)
- December 22 – Dave Dudley, singer (b. 1928)
- December 29 – Earl Hindman, actor (b. 1942)
- December 30 – John Gregory Dunne, writer, screenwriter, literary critic, and journalist (b. 1932)

December

- December 4 – Iggy Katona, race car driver (b. 1916)

See also

- 2003 in American television
- List of American films of 2003

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