

William Jefferson Blythe IV, the 42 United States president, is one of Arkansas most popular former residents. This man, who is currently known as Bill Clinton has made history in many ways. Bill is known for his great accomplishments as a politician. He is also the first president that was born after WWII.

William was born in Hope Arkansas on August 19, 1946. His mother Virginia Cassidy Blythe was widowed three months before the birth of her first child. Bills father was a traveling salesman and married at least three other times. However, Bill did not become aware of this or his half-brother and sister until he became president.

As a small child, his mother in Hope, Arkansas reared Clinton. At the age of one, his mother moved to New Orleans Louisiana. She remained there for two years studying to be a nurse anesthetist. During this time Bill was the responsibility of his maternal grandparents. Virginia Blythe, Williams mother, remarried when he was four years old. Her husband Roger Clinton from Hot Spring later became the owner of a car dealership in Bill's hometown. The three later moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas where Virginia and Roger gave birth to Roger Jr. in 1956.

Bill's family faced several problems while he was growing up. His stepfather was addicted to alcohol and gambling. On several occasions, Roger was known for losing family money. There were also times when Roger used his wife's earnings to support his habits. Bill and his mother was also the victim of abuse. Roger was known for physically abusing Virginia and verbally abusing Bill and Rodger Jr. These were trying times for Bill, who was very fond of his mother. Somehow, Bill managed to be courage's enough to stand up to his stepfather in order to protect his mother.

Bill was a student at a Roman Catholic school in Hot Springs, Arkansas. In high school,

William took the name of Clinton. Bill excelled as a student. He was very popular and was a member of several organizations and clubs. Clinton, a member of all state bands played the tenor saxophone. He once considered becoming a professional musician. However, his fate was sealed in 1963 when as an Art delegate of Boys Nation he met president John F. Kennedy. Boys Nation was a program sponsored by the American Legion that encouraged young people to study government. This Rose Garden encounters further sparked Clinton's interest in public service. After his graduation from high school in 1964, he was ready for college life. He attended Georgetown University in the District of Columbia until he graduated 1968. He obtained a degree in international affairs. He continued to excel in his studies and was elected class president as a freshman and sophomore. Bill was an ambitious student and a hard worker. He worked as an intern for the United States Co. on Foreign Relations as a junior and a senior in college. Clinton got a chance to work with one of his mentors J. William Fulbright; the chairperson of the Co. Fulbright was an Arkansas Democrat and a leading critic of the United States involvement in the Vietnam War.

Bill Clinton was also known for volunteering. Nearly a month before his graduation in 1968, Clinton was moved by the death of Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and the riots that followed his death. Clinton volunteered with the Red Cross where he took clothes and fed the riot victims.

Oxford University in England awarded Clinton with a scholarship in his senior year. Two years later Bill completed the graduate program at Oxford. However, this was not the end of his education. In 1970, Clinton enrolled at Yale where he sought a law degree. As a means of support, Clinton worked two to three jobs at a time, which also aid his

scholarship at the college. While at Oxford, he met another law student, Hillary Rodham from the Chicago area. The two dated for years and worked together. Together they worked on numerous campaigns and committees. In 1973 after his Yale graduation Clinton returned to Arkansas. He worked as a teacher at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. In October of 1975 Clinton and Rodham married. Nearly five years later they gave birth to their only daughter Chelsea Victoria Clinton.

Throughout the late sixties Clinton worked on a number of political projects with other Arkansas democrats He also worked with a U. S. Senate candidate from Connecticut. However, Clinton himself did not enter his first political race until 1974. Clinton ran against John Paul Hammer Schmidt for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. John was a well-known Republican Congressman. Although Clinton was defeated by Hammer Schmidt, he became popular statewide. The race between Clinton and Hammerschmidt was the closest in 26 years of Congressional elections. In 1976, Clinton ran for Arkansas Attorney General. Bill won the election after defeating two other democratic nominees because there was not a Republican candidate. He officially took office in January of 1977.

In 1978 when Arkansas' governor David Pryor ran for U.S. Senate, Clinton jumped at the opportunity and campaigned for governor. In his campaign, he vowed to improve Arkansas' school and create more jobs. Clinton was 32 when he won the election making him Arkansas' and the United States youngest governor. As governor, Clinton attempted to improve Highways in order to boost the economy but was limited by businesses such as banks, utility, and lumber companies. These organizations contributed to his defeat by White, a large corporate lawyer from Little Rock after serving one term. In 1984, Clinton

regained the role of governor. The term was now four years instead of two. This is when Clinton proved to be an excellent leader. His tactics helped to improve college entrance scores, and he started the eight grade basic skills testing program. He also went a step further and required teachers and school administrators to take and pass a basic knowledge test. In 1990, Arkansas' dropout rate dropped below the national average. After successfully completing all of his goals ahead of time, Clinton decided to run for President of the United States. As a result, he did not complete his four-year term. In 1992, Clinton defeated George Bush and Ross Perot with 43% of the popular vote.