Following is information about Harry Truman to help you gain an understanding and perspective of his life and achievements. After the milestones is a study guide produced by The Kansas City Repertory Theatre for their production of "Give 'Em Hell Harry." We appreciate their cooperation, and would like to cite Melinda McCrary and Laura Muir from their staff for their help. For more information on the Kansas City Rep, and their plays and programs, visit kcrep.org.

HARRY TRUMAN MILESTONES

YOUTH

- 1884 Born May 8, Lamar, Missouri, a farm community 120 miles south of Kansas City.
- 1890 The Truman family moves to Independence, Missouri.
- 1901 Harry graduates high school. Foregoes college to help support family.
- 1906 Leaves a well-paying blank clerkship in Kansas City to work family farm.

From MILITARY SERVICE to LOCAL POLITICS

- 1917 Distinguishes himself in combat as Captain of artillery in National Guard Unit in France.
- 1919 Marries Elizabeth (Bess) Wallace, his childhood sweetheart.
- He and Eddie Jacobson's Kansas City haberdashery store fails in a recession. With help of the Kansas City Pendergast machine, wins election as eastern district judge of Jackson county.
- 1926 Wins election as county's presiding judge.

THE NATIONAL STAGE

- 1934 Wins election to the United States Senate.
- 1940 Wins reelection to the Senate.
 - Establishes national reputation chairing "Truman Committee," investigating war profiteering. Credited with saving the government \$15 billion (in 1940 dollars.).
- 1944 Chosen as Franklin Roosevelt's running mate, elected vice president.

THE PRESIDENCY

1945 On April 12, Roosevelt's death elevates Truman to the presidency.

In May, German surrenders.

In July, he meets with Churchill and Stalin in Potsdam.

August, orders the use of atomic weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing Japan's surrender.

POST-WAR PRESIDENCY

1946 George Kennan's "long telegram" warns against Soviet dangers In March, in a speech in Missouri, Churchill describes an Iron Curtain

separating Europe.

Trying to restore health to the post-war economy, he threatens to draft

All railroad employees into the Army to avert a strike. A settlement is reached.

1947 In response to mounting pressure about domestic Communist subversion,

Truman sets up a Federal Employees Loyalty and Security program.

In March, the Truman Doctrine is announced, helping Greece and Turkey fight Communist subversion.

He declares support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

1948 Announces Fair Deal, including a civil rights bill enforcing equal rights for blacks.

Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and then blockade of West Berlin moves

Truman to initiate a Berlin airlift.

Truman recognizes state of Israel.

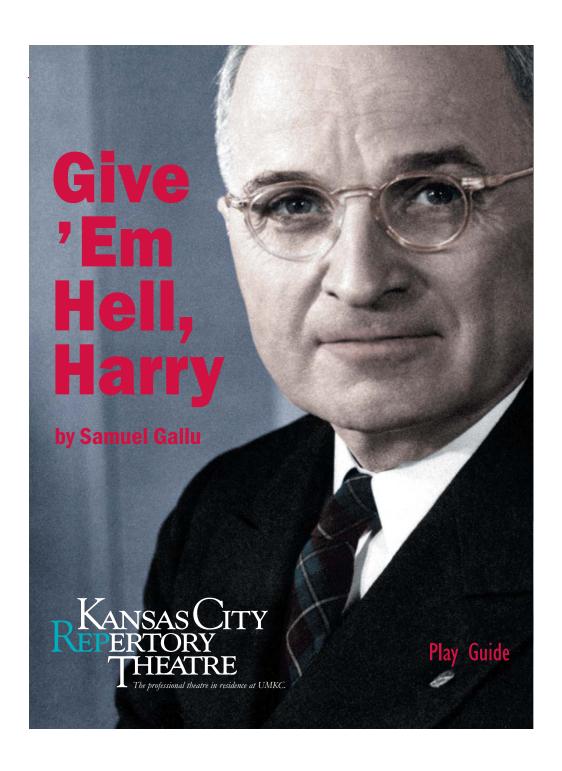
His brilliant campaign upsets predictions that Thomas Dewer would take back the White House for Republicans.

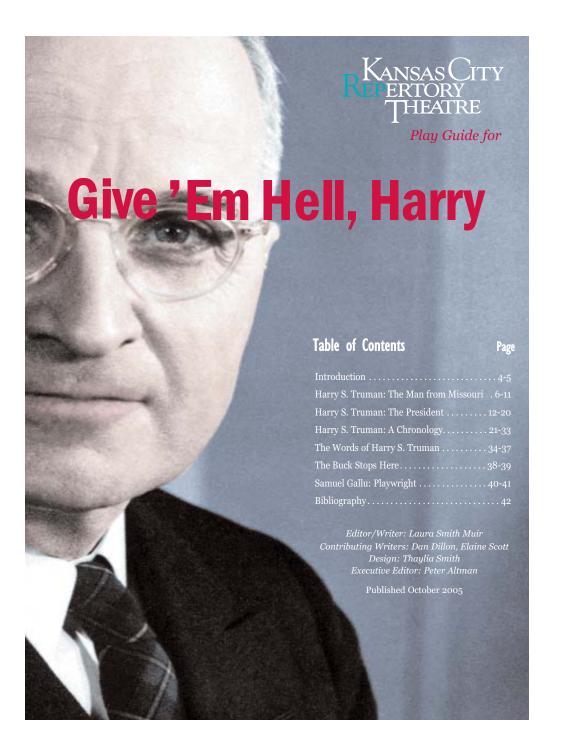
PRESIDENCY, FIRST-ELECTED TERM

- 1949 Communist dangers at home (the Alger Hiss case) and abroad (Soviets detonate an atomic bomb and Communists are victorious over Nationalists in China.
 - Truman agrees to U.S. leadership of NATO.
- 1950 Instructs defense officials to proceed with development of hydrogen bombs. Senator Joseph McCarthy accuses State Department officials of Communist subversion.
 - North Korea attacks South Korea. Truman commits troops.
 - General Douglas MacArthur beats back North Koreans with landing at Inchon.
 - Truman meets MacArthur on Wake Island, and gives him permission to cross the 38th parallel to destroy the Communist regime.
 - In November, Chinese invade North Korea and drives U.S. forces below the 38th parallel.
- As fighting in Korea becomes a stalemate, MacArthur's public demands for a more aggressive strategy lead Truman to dismiss him.
- 1952 Truman attempts to seize steel mills to head off a strike, which the Supreme Court rules is unconstitutional. With public approval at low levels, he announces he will not run for another term.

RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE

- 1953 As Dwight Eisenhower is sworn in, and Republicans take control of the White House and both houses of Congress, Truman returns to Independence.
- 1957 Opening of the Truman Library.
- 1972 Dies on December 26, at the age of eighty-eight.





Give 'Em Hell, Harry





hrough a series of political positions and judgeships, Harry S. Truman rose from local politician to U.S. Senator to Vice President, and finally to serve as the country's 33rd President. Although famous the world over for his integrity and leadership during a time of world crisis, Truman is considered by the people of Independence

and Kansas City to have been a plainspoken neighbor who happened to be a world leader and a man who preferred being with his family in their Independence home to any other place in the world, including the White House.

In Robert H. Ferrell's book *The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman*, the historian quotes Truman as saying about Independence, "I've been taking my walks around the city and passing places that bring back wonderful recollections...What a pleasure to be back here at home--once more a free and independent citizen of the gateway city of the old Great West."

When Samuel Gallu wrote his one-actor



Citizen Harry Truman walks to the voting booth with a friend,
April 10, 1956 in Independence, Missouri.

play Give 'Em Hell, Harry in 1975, he dedicated it to Truman's only child, his daughter Margaret Truman Daniel. She and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton were hosts for the play's premiere at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 17 of that same year. In attendance were President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford and members of the Cabinet, the Congress, the Diplomatic Corps, and other dignitaries. The actor James Whitmore portrayed Truman in that production and also in a subsequent film for which he received an Oscar nomination for best actor.

Kansas City Repertory Theatre's production of *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* about the colorful reminiscences of the life and presidency of Harry Truman is a tribute to our hometown legend. It is also the first time a Kansas City actor has



Actor James Whitmore portrays Harry Truman in the premiere of "Give 'Em Hell, Harry" at Ford's Theatre in 1975.

portrayed Truman in a local production staged by a professional theatre.

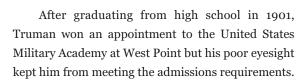
Harry S. Truman

The Man from Missouri



arry S. Truman was one of the most pivotal and influential figures in 20th century world politics, and continues to be recognized for both his leadership at the end of World War II and for his determination to reestablish the post-war economies of the U.S., the war torn countries of Europe, and Japan.

Truman was born on May 8, 1884, in Lamar, Missouri, the first child of John and Martha Ellen Truman. When he was six years old, his parents moved the family, which by that time included two more children, John and Mary Jane, to Independence, Missouri, where he would spend the majority of his formative years.



Disappointed, he left Independence for Kansas City where for the next five years he was employed in a variety of jobs — as a bottle washer in a drug store, in the mailroom of *The Kansas City Star*, as a clerk in a bank, and as a timekeeper with a railroad construction crew. During this time he also joined the U.S. National Guard and studied law for two years at the Kansas City Law School, now a part of the University of Missouri—Kansas City. Frustrated with being unable to find a meaningful occupation in the city, Truman returned to his father's farm in Independence and worked the land for the



Harry Truman at infancy in 1884. Courtesy of the Truman Library.

next decade there and also in Grandview, Missouri. Truman never



Harry Truman served as Captain of the 129 Field Artillery in France during WWI.

completed his college degree and he would be the last U.S. president with only a high school diploma.

In 1917, the
United States was
entrenched in
World War I and
Truman's
National Guard
artillery unit was
called for duty in

France. Before being shipped overseas, he was sent to Fort Sill in Oklahoma to run the camp canteen. There, he met Sergeant Eddie Jacobson and enlisted his help to run the camp commissary. After the war, Jacobson would become Truman's business partner in a haberdashery in Kansas City.

In France during the final years of the Great War, Truman, though modest and unassuming, proved to be a steady and resourceful leader. He participated in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives in 1918, showing great consideration for the members of his battery, which won him their allegiance and admiration. In the heat of battle, he once famously said to his combat unit, "Right now, I'm where I want to be, in command of this battery. I'd rather be here than President of the United States." Truman's commanding officers also recognized his aptitude for leadership and toward the end of the war promoted him to the



The front of Truman & Jacobson, 104 W. 12th Street, circa 1922.

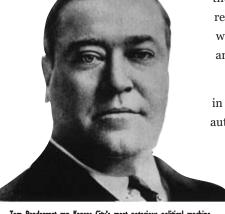
rank of captain. He would ultimately rise to the rank of colonel in the National Guard. After the Armistice, Truman returned to Independence where he married his childhood sweetheart, Bess Wallace, on June 28, 1919. The couple had one child, a daughter Mary Margaret, who was born on February 24, 1924. Not wanting to return to farming, Truman and his army buddy opened Truman & Jacobson, a haberdashery located at 104 W. 12th in Kansas City in a building now occupied by the Hotel Phillips. The store prospered for a few years but went bankrupt during the economic slowdown of 1921, when farm prices fell sharply, forcing the store to close. Truman was left with debts totaling about \$20,000, but he refused to file for bankruptcy. Instead, he spent the next ten years paying back his creditors. He was a firm believer that the conservative economic policies of Republican President Warren G. Harding and Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon were to blame for the troubles of America's economy and their adverse effect on his business.

After the failure of his shop, Truman contacted Tom Pendergast, the boss of the Jackson County Democratic machine that ruled Kansas City politics. A shrewd assayer of many political aspirants' vote-getting potential, Pendergast regarded Truman as having solid political assets: he was a church going Baptist, had both Masonic affiliation and American Legion connections, and had a strong war record. With Pendergast's endorsement, Truman ran for and was elected in 1922 to serve as county judge for Jackson County, an administrative position that

did not require legal or judicial credentials. He was

defeated when he ran for a second term in 1924, the only election he would ever lose, but remained active in local politics. In 1926 he was elected presiding judge of Jackson County and held that office until 1935.

The two elected positions Truman held in Jackson County carried no real judicial authority; as judge he supervised the letting of contracts for road construction and levying taxes. Nevertheless, Truman was intent on living up to his title, and so he re-enrolled at the Kansas City Law School, taking classes at night between 1923 and 1925.



Tom Pendergast ran Kansas City's most notorious political machine.

oss Tom...hand picked Harry Truman to be his candidate for the eastern judgeship.

Despite his early association with the Pendergast political machine, whose corruption was widely recognized, Truman established a reputation for fair dealing that was rarely if ever questioned. As presiding judge, he was considered to be honest and efficient, delivering to the county a sensible network of roads and other public projects of value.

In 1934, Truman made a successful bid for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Accounts differ as to how he was motivated to seek this higher office. One version of the story has Truman asking Pendergast for a higher paying job that paid about \$25,000 a year, much more than the salary of a presiding judge. According to this story, Pendergast refused, claiming that Truman did not have the necessary qualifications for such a lucrative position and instead offered him the candidacy for U.S. Senator, an office which at that time paid \$9,000 annually. Another, more credible story has Truman being urged by friends to run, with Pendergast agreeing to support him, as his doing so would buttress his own less-than-sterling reputation by linking him with a man

had a widespread who reputation for personal integrity. Truman aligned himself with President Roosevelt's New Deal policies and defeated the incumbent Republican Roscoe Patterson by a 20 percent margin. Truman's first term as a U.S. senator from Missouri was not highlighted by any marked accomplishments; he supported Roosevelt's agenda and he served effectively on the committee responsible for investigating railroads.



Senator Harry Truman (far left) with Tom Pendergast at the 1936 Democratic Convention in Philadelphia.



Tom Pendergast and wife Sara in 1936 at a Kansas City night club.

In 1940, it was widely predicted that Truman would be defeated in his attempts to return to the Senate for a second term. Two years earlier, back in Missouri, Pendergast had been convicted of income tax evasion and sentenced to prison, and more than 250 of his stalwarts were convicted of various crimes, including voter fraud. It was believed that Truman couldn't be reelected with the Pendergast machine discredited and almost entirely dismantled; however, Truman not only survived the primaries, he won re-election with slightly more than 51 percent of the vote.

While his foes routinely made political hay out his affiliation with the Pendergast machine, Truman never attempted to conceal the fact that it

was Pendergast who helped him get his start in politics. Keeping his views on the ethics of machine politics open and frank, he once declared that "there was nothing wrong with my relations with the Pendergast machine. Every Democratic politician, including myself, went to Tom Pendergast for support." Truman famously attended Pendergast's funeral in late

January 1945.

During his second term in the Senate, Truman gained national recognition for his leadership on the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, better known as the Truman Committee. By the time the U.S. had entered the second world war, Truman had grown increasingly concerned that there was an abundance of graft and waste in the letting and fulfillment of national defense contracts. He introduced a resolution calling for a special committee to formally investigate the national defense program. Upon the Senate's approval, Truman was named chairman of that committee and

he voting booth is the most valuable piece of real estate in the United States of America. " -- Harry S. Truman

proceeded to discover and eliminate corruption and inefficiency from virtually

every aspect of the defense program.

Truman became a champion of the American taxpayer and the U.S. armed forces when the Truman committee reported that just 100 companies were routinely winning 70 percent of all war contracts, while some 175,000 smaller competitors, some of them located in Missouri, had only been awarded 30 percent. The committee also leveled criticism against contractors' exorbitant pricing and the government's willing acceptance of it. According to some estimates,

Truman and his committee members helped the government save \$200 million in the construction of military bases and installations alone. The total savings realized for the war effort has been estimated at more than \$3 billion.

Throughout his tenure as chairman of the committee, Truman developed a reputation as a strong leader with the ability to build consensus among the



Missouri Senator Harry S. Truman accepting the vice-presidential nomination as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's running mate at the 1944 Democratic National Convention.

panel's bipartisan members; never once during the committee's existence was a minority report issued. His non-partisan approach to the monumental task of improving the national defense program attracted widespread public admiration and reinforced his stature as a figure of national and political importance. Based on that success, Truman was nominated as Roosevelt's running mate at the 1944 Democratic national convention.

Harry S. Truman



The President

n the presidential election of November 7, 1944, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, although in frail health, won a majority of votes in 36 of the 48 United States and won an unprecendented fourth term as president. With that definitive victory, Harry S. Truman ascended to the office of the vice presidency. Less than half a year later, Roosevelt died and Truman became president.

The five months during which Truman served as vice president were a period of transition. Having been outspoken about and accomplished at the affairs of the nation as a senator, Truman struggled to adjust to the relative idleness and impotence of his new vice presidential office. To satisfy his yearning for a more hands-on role, he kept his former chambers in the Capitol and maintained frequent contact with members of the Senate.

A Swift Promotion

On April 12, 1945, upon the sudden death of Roosevelt, then Vice President Truman was thrust into the role of chief executive of the country and commander-in-chief of its armed forces. It was a time when much of the world was engaged in one of the most far-reaching and deadliest wars in history.

When Truman was sworn in as thirty-third president, the U.S., Great Britain and Russia had already made great strides toward defeating the axis powers in World War II. Germany was on the verge of defeat, and allied troops in the Pacific theater were advancing on Tokyo's doorstep. On May 8, just 30 days after his swearing-in and on his sixty-first birthday, Truman announced the end of the war in Europe: V-E Day.

With final allied victory approaching, the gravest issues facing the President were not just military ones but also involved the restoring of peace and strategic alliances, particularly the participation of the U.S. in a newly formed world security organization called the United s you know, I was Vice-President from January 20 to April 12, 1945. I was at Cabinet meetings and saw Roosevelt once or twice in those months...he never did talk to me about the war, or about foreign affairs or what he had in mind for peace after the war."

-- Excerpt from Harry Truman's letters to his wife Bess

Nations, and the challenge of converting industry to meet peacetime needs in order to maintain full employment of America's workforce which would soon include veterans returning home.

Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb

Before Truman was able to set his mind completely on those national priorities, however, victory in the Pacific had to be completed. Hard fought battles -- especially at Tarawa, Iwo Jima and Okinawa -- had caused a Japanese retreat, but Truman was determined to bring about the unconditional surrender of Japan. Military advisors reported that at least one million American troops would be needed to defeat the Japanese on their home territory and of these million soldiers as many as 250,000 could end up as casualties. Truman then asked how many enemy soldiers would be killed with

the atom bomb, which had been under top-secret development for years and which he only in mid-1945 learned had become operational, and was told several tens of thousands. Truman asserted that he felt better killing perhaps 60,000 Japanese than having 250,000 American causalties. The fateful decision was made.

Truman's decision to use the atom bomb to end the war was meticulously measured and diligently executed. A committee was formed, led by Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, whose purpose was to study, plan, test and finally detonate nuclear weaponry for the express purpose of ending World War II. The bomb's effectiveness was estimated and measured from varying heights, public statements were drafted to be released after its use, a

provision for the ongoing acquisition of the bomb's components of uranium and thorium was made, and locations and dates for the attack were established. The committee decided that the Japanese should not receive any warning and that civilian areas should absolutely be avoided.

Truman, though resolved to follow through, reflected often on the awesomeness of using the atom bomb to end the war in the Pacific. He knew that the events he was causing to unfold and their consequences should not be considered simply in terms of their military implications, but as a new relationship of man to the universe. While the advances in nuclear weaponry had been fostered by the pressures of war, Truman realized that a decision to use atomic weapons had far reaching implications beyond the present conflict. He believed that the power he was unleashing upon the world would need to be controlled to ensure future peace, rather than act as a menace to civilization.

have to make it perfectly plain to them [Russia and Great Britain] at least once a day that so far as this President is concerned Santa Claus is dead and that my first interest is the U.S.A..."

-- Excerpt from Harry Truman's letters to his wife Bess

Truman's words, "We must, once and for all...prove by our acts conclusively that right has might," would soon echo horrifically across the Pacific Ocean. After the first successful test of the atom bomb on July 16 near Alamogordo, New Mexico, Truman, in his Potsdam declaration on July 26, gave Japan a chance to end the war by surrender. Japan refused, and the plan to end the war destructively and decisively was set into motion.

Nuclear weapons have been detonated only twice in the history of warfare, both times by the United States in those waning days of World War II. The morning of August 6, 1945, brought unbridled fire and near complete destruction to the Japanese city of Hiroshima, a major supply and logistics base for the Japanese military. The atomic bomb, "harnessing the basic power of the universe" according to Truman, that was dropped on the city instantly killed some 70,000 people and sentenced a great many more to die as a result of cancers caused by nuclear radiation.

Three days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped over Nagasaki, Japan, a city whose main industry was shipbuilding and the place of origin of many warships used by the Japanese Navy. Though this second bomb was more powerful than the first, it exacted about half the number of human casualties due to Nagasaki's somewhat protective hilly terrain. The immediate death toll in Nagasaki is estimated at 40,000 people.

Japan surrendered at noon local time on August 15, 1945. What has come to be known as V-J Day is sometimes commemorated on August 14 in the United

States, because the news of the surrender broke on that date in the U.S. The armistice ending World War II in the Pacific, a document prepared by the United States War Department, set out in just eight paragraphs the complete capitulation of Japan.

The Fair Deal Emerges

Not long after the war ended, Truman turned his attention squarely to national affairs and presented to Congress a 21-point domestic agenda, proposing the expansion of Social Security, a full-employment program, and a permanent Fair Employment Practices Act aimed at ending discriminatory employment practices. The body of proposals, Truman wrote, "symbolizes for me my assumption of the office of President in my own right." In early 1948, he furthered his domestic policy reforms and submitted a civil rights agenda to

" Stimson and I are in accord...the target will be a

purely military one and we will issue a warning statement asking the Japanese to surrender and save lives. I'm sure they will not do it, but we will have given them the chance."

-- Excerpt from Harry Truman's letters to his wife Bess

Congress that called for creating several federal offices devoted to issues such as voting rights and additional fair employment practices. In that same year, he

issued an executive order racially integrating the U.S. Armed Services. Many of his proposed civil rights reforms would come to fruition only a decade or more after he left office.

Truman spent much effort during his first term as president strengthening the United Nations, curtailing the spread of communism and developing the Marshall Plan. Named for Secretary of State George Marshall, the Marshall plan provided more than \$13 billion in aid for the reconstruction of Europe following the war and is now considered to have been a great success of America's foreign policy and one of Truman's most constructive legacies. Its effectiveness provided a strong impetus for the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 and for today's European Union.

As effective as the Marshall Plan and much more swift was the Berlin airlift

en make history and not the other way around...Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

-- Harry S. Truman

of 1948-49. In June 1948, the Soviet Union attempted to control all of the German capital of Berlin which had been divided after the war into east and west zones, the east controlled by the Soviet Union and the west controlled by allied forces. By cutting surface traffic to and from the parts of the city of West Berlin occupied by the allies, the Russians hoped to deprive most Berliners of food and other necessary commodities. The Truman administration responded with a continual airlift that brought supplies into the city of West Berlin for twenty-

one months, through the end of May 1949. Worn down by the blockade's success, the Soviet government was compelled to completely abandon its efforts.

The 1948 U.S. Election

Spirits in the Democratic Party were low leading up the 1948 election campaign in the United States. Republicans held control of both houses of

Congress and a majority of state governorships. Furthermore, despite many of Truman's policies and programs having grown



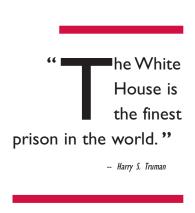
increasingly liberal after the war, leftleaning Democrats had split off to revive the Progressive Party nominate and Henry Wallace as its presidential pick. Further weakening the Democrats, those

who objected to Truman's civil rights platform formed another splinter party called the States Rights Party, commonly known as the "Dixiecrats." South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond, who had led a major walkout on July 12 at the 1948 Democratic Party Convention in Philadelphia, became that party's presidential nominee.

General Dwight Eisenhower, a popular war hero and political moderate, was heavily courted by the GOP to be their presidential candidate, but he declined the opportunity. The Republicans ultimately chose Thomas Dewey, the Governor of New York and a veteran of the 1944 presidential election. He had performed surprisingly well against FDR and was therefore expected to easily beat the relatively less popular Truman. Indeed, the certainty of a Dewey victory was widely accepted among the public and the press. *The New York Times* ran a headline claiming that "Thomas E. Dewey's Election as President is a Foregone Conclusion."

In the end, the 1948 victory of Truman over Dewey turned out to be one of the greatest political upsets in American history. Thurmond's Dixiecrats took away much of Truman's support in the south, and Wallace lured away about 2.5 percent of the votes that

Truman would otherwise have received. But thanks to his ability to capture the swing states of Ohio, California, and Illinois -- all three of which he won by less than one percent of the vote -- Truman emerged the victor. On election night, a radio commentator pointed out that Truman had an early



lead but predicted that "he cannot win." And though a now infamous *Chicago Tribune* post-election headline read "Dewey Defeats Truman," Dewey, who carried much of New England and a number of the central plains states, conceded defeat the next morning. Truman had secured 49.5 percent of the popular vote to Dewey's 45.1 percent.

The Fair Deal

To herald his second term as president, Truman raised the partisan stakes in his State of the Union address on January 5, 1949, in which he asked for a vigorously progressive program that became known as the Fair Deal, inspired by Roosevelt's New Deal. Truman believed that the federal government should guarantee economic opportunity and social stability for all, he advocated for universal health insurance, an increase in the minimum wage, the repeal of the Taft-Hartley labor act, and federal aid to education, and he asserted that all Americans should be guaranteed equal rights under the law. The 81st Congress would end up passing some of his proposed legislation except, most notably, his national health insurance plan. Other actions took many more years.

Combating Communism

Soon after establishing this renewed focus on domestic policy, Truman was forced by events to shift much of his energy back to international affairs as the Cold War and conflict in Korea began to escalate. In mid-1949, the Chinese nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan, leaving the mainland under Communist control. On September 23 of that same year, Truman's administration announced that there was evidence that the Soviet Union had tested its first atomic bomb.

The containment of Communism was a major aim of Truman during his second term in office. In June of 1950, he ordered U.S. air and sea forces to aid South Korean troops in resisting invasion by Communist forces of North Korea, signaling America's entry into what would become, by turns, a violent conflict and a protracted geo-political stalemate. When General Douglas MacArthur advocated directly confronting and defeating the Chinese who had come to the aid of the North Koreans, as well as expanding

hose who want the Government to regulate matters of the mind and spirit are like men who are so afraid of being murdered that they commit suicide to avoid assassination." - Harry S. Truman

America's military presence to unify the Korean peninsula, Truman countered the general's suggestions, fearing that American forces would become mired in Asia, Russia would become free to exploit new opportunities in Europe, and another world war might result. MacArthur publicly criticized the administration's

military and foreign policies, and Truman removed him from command on April 11, 1951, thereby reaffirming longtime American belief in the subordination of the military to civilian officials.

Truman's clash with MacArthur and his decision not to risk major conflict with China and perhaps Russia spurred broad dissatisfaction with his administration. Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin, attempted to undermine Truman's credibility by conducting aggressive campaigns against officials in the president's administration, especially in the State Department, who McCarthy accused of being Communists or Communist sympathizers.

Return to Independence

Dispirited by fear of China, an emerging
Sino-Soviet partnership, and a bloated U.S.
defense budget that had quadrupled in eighteen
months, Truman announced on March 29,
1952, that he had decided not to run for
reelection. He finished out his second term and threw his support
behind Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic nominee for president.

On January 20, 1953, Truman attended the presidential inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and then left by train for his home in Independence, Missouri. Truman made the most of his post-presidential years, making speeches, traveling and writing his memoirs in two volumes: *Year of Decisions* was published in 1955, and *Years of Trial and Hope* appeared the following year. He spent nearly his entire post-presidency in and around Independence, establishing his presidential library there in 1957. Truman died of heart failure on December 26, 1972 at the age of eighty-eight and is buried at the Truman Library.

"he people of the United States love and voted for Harry Truman, not because he gave them hell -but because he gave them hope."

-- President Lyndon Johnson at a ceremony commemorating

the signing of the Medicare Bill in 1966.

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)



A Chronology

Life Before the Presidency, 1884-1945

Harry S. Truman is born to John and Martha Ellen Truman on May 8 in Lamar, Missouri.

1890

The Truman family moves to 619 South Crysler Avenue in Independence, Missouri. Six-year-old Harry meets Bess Wallace, his future wife, for the first time in a Sunday school class at First Presbyterian Church.

1900

Aged sixteen, Truman serves as a page at the Democratic National Convention held in Kansas City and hears presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan.

1901

Truman graduates from Independence High School and attends Spalding's Commercial College in Kansas City.

1903-05

Truman works in Kansas City for the National Bank of Commerce and Union National Bank.

1905-11

He enlists and serves in the Missouri National Guard. He is soon promoted to corporal.



The parents of Harry Truman, John and Martha Ellen Truman.

"t seems like there was always somebody for supper."

-- Harry S. Truman

1910

Truman begins to court Bess Wallace.

1914

The future president's father John Truman dies on November 2. Truman begins serving the remainder of his father's term as road overseer in Washington Township, Missouri.

1916

Truman invests \$5,000 in an oil lands brokerage business, later named the Morgan Oil and Refining Company; his investment breaks even just before the company is dissolved in 1919.

1917

On June 22, Truman re-enlists in Battery D, 2nd Field Artillery, Missouri National Guard and is commissioned a First Lieutenant. In August, the regiment mobilizes for Federal Service and moves to Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma, where it is redesignated the 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division.

1918

On April 13, Truman arrives in Brest, France and shortly thereafter he is promoted to the rank of captain. On July 11, he is assigned to command Battery D of the 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division. In September of that year, he is engaged in his first combat operation in the Vosges Mountains in eastern France.

1919

Truman marries his childhood sweetheart Bess (Elizabeth Virginia Wallace) on June 28 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Independence. The

"Being too good is apt to be uninteresting."

-- Harry S. Truman



Harry as First Lieutenant in Battery D, 129th Field Artillary, circa 1917.



Harry and Bess Truman on their wedding day, June 28, 1919.

couple move into the residence of his mother-in-law Madge Gates Wallace.

In November, Truman and Edward Jacobson open a men's

haberdashery store at 104 West 12th Street in Kansas City.

1922

The haberdashery business fails, but Truman refuses to file bankruptcy and in the ensuing fifteen years, he pays off his share of the debt. " n my Sunday school class there was a beautiful little girl with golden curls. I was smitten at once and still am." -- Harry S. Truman

With the endorsement of Jackson County Democratic Party leader Tom Pendergast, Truman is elected eastern judge on the Jackson County Court.

1923-25

Truman attends night classes at the Kansas City School of Law.

1924

Truman is defeated for reelection as eastern judge, the only election he will ever lose. He becomes a founder of the Community Savings and Loan Association in Independence and serves as its general manager until 1932.

1926

Truman is elected presiding judge of the Jackson County Court and subsequently serves two four-year terms, from 1927-35.



Harry Truman poses at the Truman & Jacobson Haberdashery on 104 W. 12th Street in Kansas City in 1919. The business closes in 1922.

1928-31

Truman leads two successful bond issue campaigns for about \$10 million to build 224 miles of paved highways in the county and additional funds for a county hospital.

Continuing work to develop the infrastructure of Jackson County, Truman completes the road system, builds a new courthouse and jail in Kansas City, remodels the Independence courthouse, and constructs a detention home.

1934

Truman files as a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate and wins the August Democratic primary. On November 6, he defeats incumbent Republican Roscoe C. Patterson.

1935

appreciate the honor

which you have just

conferred upon me. I

accept the nomination."

On January 3, Truman is sworn in as U.S. Senator, and subsequently is assigned to the Appropriations Committee and the Interstate Commerce Committee. His first bill is



Truman campaigns in Thayer,

the " can't tell you how very much l committee. 1937

-- Harry S. Truman

introduced on May 15 and aims to provide insurance by Farm Credit Administration of mortgages on farm property. It dies in

Truman is named vicechairman of a subcommittee of the Interstate Commerce Committee to investigate American railroad finances.

1939

Truman co-introduces a bill to place railroads under the regulation of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

1940

Truman launches his Senate reelection campaign on June 15 in Sedalia, Missouri. On November 5, he wins reelection.

1941-42

Upon Truman's recommendation, the Senate creates a Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, called the Truman Committee. Truman, the committee's chairman, helps induce President Roosevelt to replace the Office of Production Management with a new, more powerful War Production Board.

1943

The Truman Committee is credited with saving the government up to \$11 billion. Truman's picture later appears on the cover of *Time* magazine.



Truman is named *Time* magazine's Man of the Year, December 31, 1945.

1944

ou can always amend a big plan, but you can never expand a little one. I don't believe in little plans...but plans big enough to meet a situation which we can't possibly foresee now."

-- Harry S. Truman

Truman's daughter Margaret christens the battleship *USS Missouri*.

At the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on July 2, Truman is nominated for the office of Vice President, and shortly thereafter he meets with his running mate, President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He launches his Vice Presidential campaign at his birthplace, Lamar, Missouri.

Roosevelt and Truman are elected President and Vice President of the United States on November 7.

1945

On January 20, Truman is sworn in as Vice President in an inauguration ceremony at the White House. Nine days later, he attends the funeral of Tom Pendergast in Kansas City.



Accompanied by his family, Truman takes the oath of office after Franklin D. Roosevelt's sudden death.

The Presidency, 1945-49

On April 12, upon the death of President Roosevelt, Truman is sworn in as the 33rd President of the United States. Later that month, he announces the creation of the charter for a new world organization called the United Nations.

At 9 am on May 8, the President announces the end of World War II in Europe (V-E Day). He attends the

Potsdam Conference July 17-August 2 to discuss post-war treatment of Germany and Europe. The conference is also attended by Joseph Stalin, Premier of Russia, and Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain who on July 29 is replaced as Prime Minister by Clement Attlee.

On August 6, the United States drops the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. A second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki on August 9. At 7 pm on August 14, President Truman announces the surrender of Japan

(V-J Day). On November 15, Truman issues a joint statement with Prime Ministers Attlee of the United Kingdom and MacKenzie King of Canada calling for the formation of a United Nations Atomic Energy Commission.

1946

On May 24, Truman announces that he will end a strike by railroad trainmen and engineers by the following day, which he achieves.

He attends the May 29 graduation exercises of his daughter Margaret at George Washington University, on which occasion he receives an honorary degree.



Truman announces to the White House Press Corps the surrender of Japan, ending World War II in the Pacific.

On December 31, he signs a proclamation officially declaring the end of hostilities for World War II.

1947

On March 12, he requests and receives an appropriation for \$400 million to fight the spread of communism in Greece and Turkey (the Truman Doctrine). That same month, he orders a loyalty investigation of all U.S. federal government employees.

Truman vetoes the Taft-Hartley Bill (Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947) on the grounds that it is discriminatory against labor. The bill is passed by Congress on June 23, over the presidential veto.

On July 26, Truman signs the National Security Act of 1947, unifying the armed forces into one department, a measure he has long advocated. The Act also establishes the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council.

The President attends the funeral of his mother Martha Ellen Truman on July 28 in Grandview, Missouri.

1948

In February, Truman sends a message to Congress asking for civil rights legislation to secure the rights of the country's minority groups.

He implements the Marshall Plan calling for U.S. aid to European recovery.

"xperience has shown how deeply the seeds of war are planted by economic rivalry and social injustice." - Harry S. Truman

On May 10, the President orders the army to operate U.S. railroads to forestall a nationwide railroad strike.

A president either is constantly on

top of events or, if he

hesitates, events will soon

be on top of him. I never

felt that I could let up for

a moment. " -- Harry S. Truman

On May 14, the United States officially recognizes the new state of Israel.

The President signs the Displaced Persons Act on June 25, authorizing admission into the U.S. of 205,000 European displaced persons over the next two years. The next day, he orders the Berlin airlift, with the British, in answer to Russia's blockade of the portion of that city occupied by the Western powers. The blockade will last until September 1949.

On July 15, Truman is nominated as Democratic candidate for president on the first ballot of the



Harry S. Truman on a "whistle stop" campaign tour.

Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. He immediately calls a special session of Congress for July 26 to act on housing, civil rights, and price controls. Congress adjourns on August 7, having enacted

practically no legislation.

In September and October, Truman makes his first "whistle stop" campaign trip throughout much of the country, except the

South. He travels about 22,000 miles and makes 275 speeches, centering his attack on the "do nothing 80th Congress". He is elected to a second term as President on November 2, contrary to the forecasts of newspapers and poll takers, who had almost unanimously predicted his defeat by Republican Thomas E. Dewey.

The Presidency, 1949-53 1949

Truman's January 5 State of the Union message asks for a progressive new program called the Fair Deal, inspired by Roosevelt's New Deal.



This now famous photograph shows Truman holding an edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, which has erroneously announced his presidential defeat.

On January 19, Dwight D. Eisenhower is appointed Supreme Allied Commander of Europe.

On January 20, Truman is inaugurated as President for a second term.

On July 15, he signs the Housing Act, establishing a national housing policy and providing for federal aid to build low-cost

housing projects and to clear away slums.

On September 23, Truman announces that there is evidence of a Russian atomic explosion.

1950

On January 31, Truman reveals that he has ordered the Atomic Energy Commission to develop a hydrogen bomb.

On June 26, the President orders U.S. air and sea forces to aid South Korean troops in resisting Communist forces of North Korea which had invaded South Korea the day before. Four days later, with the support of the U.N. Security Council, he orders the movement of American ground forces in Japan to Korea and sends the navy to blockade the Korean coast. General Douglas MacArthur is put in charge of all U.N. troops in the area.

On July 19, Truman asks Congress for additional money to support the Korean "police action."

On November 1, two Puerto Rican nationalists make an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the President.

On December 6, Truman writes a personal letter to *Washington Post* music critic Paul Hume, assailing him for his "lousy review" of a recital given by daughter Margaret. The President's strong language arouses public controversy, but the majority of the mail is in his favor.

Following the move by U.N. forces to take over most of North Korea, Communist China enters the Korean conflict on November 6.

On December 16, President Truman proclaims a state of national emergency in Korea.

1951

The President relieves MacArthur of his posts as commander of American and U.N. forces in the Far East for making statements critical of U.S. policies.



America was built on courage, imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand. "

-- Harry S. Truman

On September 8, the official Japanese Peace Treaty is signed in San Francisco by delegates from forty-eight countries. Russia and her satellites refuse to participate.

1952

On January 2, in response to charges of inefficiency and corruption in the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the President submits a plan to reorganize that agency.

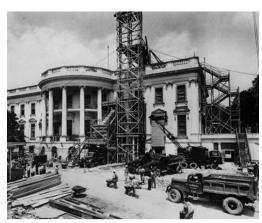
On January 5-9, Truman meets in Washington with Winston Churchill, recently again elected prime minister of Great Britain, and other British and American officials concerning problems in Europe and the Middle and Far East.



MacArthur and Truman discuss the invasion of South Korea.

On March 27, Truman moves back into the White House following almost four years of rebuilding and renovating of the presidential residence. During this period, he has lived at Blair House, the official government guest house in Washington.

At the March 29 Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, the President announces he will not run for reelection.



In 1952, renovation and reconstruction of the White House was completed. Two
new levels were added below ground and, at Truman's request, a balcony
was added to the south portico.

On April 15, Truman signs the ratification of a peace treaty with Japan and defense treaties with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines.

On June 14 in Groton, Connecticut, Truman lays the keel of the *USS Nautilus*, the world's first atomic powered submarine.

Following the Republican victory in the November 4 election, President Truman invites President-elect General Dwight D. Eisenhower to the White House the next day to discuss the transition between administrations.

After the Presidency, 1953-72 1953-55

Harry Truman works on his memoirs, the first volume of which, *Year of Decisions*, is published in November 1955. The second volume, *Years of Trial and Hope*, will appear the following year.



Margaret Truman weds
E. Clifton Daniel on April 21, 1956.

1955

On May 8, Truman's seventy-first birthday, ground is broken for the construction of a privately financed Harry S. Truman Library building in Independence.

1956

The Trumans' daughter Margaret is married to E. Clifton Daniel, Jr., a well-known New York newspaperman, in Trinity Episcopal Church in Independence, where President and Mrs. Truman were married.

Former President and Mrs. Truman tour Europe where they meet with European leaders, including Winston Churchill and Pope Pius XII, and receive numerous honors.

1957

The Harry S. Truman Library in Independence is dedicated on July 6,

becoming the second presidential library to be part of the National Archives and Records Service.

1958

On April 19, Truman participates in the dedication of his birthplace in Lamar, Missouri.



The front entrance of the Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

1960

Truman publishes *Mr. Citizen*, a book about his post presidential experiences. From October 8-November 4, he campaigns across the country on behalf of presidential candidate John F. Kennedy.

1961

Truman and his wife and daughter are guests in the White House on January 20, inauguration day, their first visit there in eight years.

1963

On November 26, Truman attends the funeral of President Kennedy.

1965

Truman becomes the first former president to address the U.S. Senate while it is in a formal session. The occasion is his eightieth birthday on May 8.

On July 30, Truman participates in the ceremony at the Truman Library during which President Johnson signs the bill



President Johnson flips through the pages of the Medicare bill as former President Truman displays the signing pens. Photo courtesy of LBJ Presidential Library.

" r. President, I am glad to have lived

this long and to witness today the signing of the Medicare bill which puts this Nation right where it needs to be..."

-- Harry S. Truman

creating Medicare, an event that Truman describes as a "profound personal experience for me." Mr. and Mrs. Truman receive Medicare registration cards numbers one and two in January 1966.

1966

Truman makes his last appearance as a speaker at the eighth

annual July 4 celebration on the grounds of the Truman Library. As a result of illness, he has discontinued trips to his office at the Library.

1968

On October 12, President Johnson travels to the Truman home in Independence to sign a bill designating October 24 of that year as U.N. Day, noting Truman's part in creating the United Nations organization in 1945.

1969

President and Mrs. Nixon visit the Trumans on March 21 and present to the Library a Steinway piano that had been in the White House during Truman's presidency.

1971

Truman tours the Truman Library for the last time on December 21. With him are his wife Bess, daughter Margaret, and son-in-law E. Clifton Daniel. They view the film $For\ All\ the\ People\ -$ a new motion picture designed for the orientation of museum visitors.

1972

Harry S. Truman dies on December 26, at the age of eighty-eight. His body is interred in the courtyard of the Truman Library on December 28.

1982

On October 18, Bess Truman dies at the age of ninety-seven. Her funeral services are held October 21 in Trinity Episcopal Church in Independence where she and her husband were married sixty-three years earlier. Her body is interred next to his at the Truman Library.



Harry and Bess Truman are buried side by side at the Truman Library.

be buried out here. I like the idea because I may just want to get up some day and stroll into

my office. " -- Harry S. Truman

-- This chronology was adapted from material provided by the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library.

The Words of Harry S. Truman



Wit and Wisdom

e must build a new world, a far better world - one in which the eternal dignity of man is respected.

I have read your lousy review of Margaret's concert. I've come to the conclusion that you are an eight ulcer man on a four ulcer job. Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes and perhaps a supporter below.

I remember when I first came to Washington. For the first six months you wonder how the hell you ever got here. For the next six months you wonder how the hell the rest of them ever got here.

The only things worth learning are the things you learn after you know it all.

t's a recession when your neighbor loses his job; it's a depression when you lose yours."

-- Harry S. Truman

Well, I wouldn't say that I was in the great class, but I had a great time while I was trying to be great. You know that being an American is more than a matter of where your parents came from. It is a belief that all men are created free and equal and that everyone deserves an even break.

You can never get all the facts from just one newspaper, and unless you have all the facts, you cannot make proper judgements about what is going on.

The President is always abused. If he isn't, he isn't doing anything.

When even one American - who has done nothing wrong - is forced by fear to shut his mind and close his mouth - then all Americans are in peril.

Experience has shown how deeply the seeds of war are planted by economic rivalry and social injustice.

Most of the problems a President has to face have their roots in the past.

" always remember an epitaph which is in the cemetery at Tombstone, Arizona. It says: 'Here lies Jack Williams. He done his damnedest.' I think that is the greatest epitaph a man can have -- When he gives everything that is in him to do the job he has before him. That is all you can ask of him and that is what I have tried to do."

-- Harry S. Truman

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.

Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

We shall never be able to remove suspicion and fear as potential causes of war until communication is permitted to flow, free and open, across international boundaries.

The reward of suffering is experience.

If you can't convince them, confuse them.

In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves. Self-discipline with all of them came first.

wish I could stay longer...but I have to get back to Washington to veto some more bills. "

-- Harry S. Truman

A president either is constantly on top of events or, if he hesitates, events will soon be on top of him. I never felt that I could let up for a moment.

Any man who has had the job I've had and didn't have a sense of humor wouldn't still be here.

How do you live a long life? "Take a two-mile walk every morning before breakfast." America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

ou may invite the entire 35th

Division to our wedding if you want to. I guess it's going to be yours as well as mine. We might as well have the church full while we are at it. " -- Harry S. Truman

There's one way to confront tough issues, and that's head on, and the hell with the consequences.

I can see the old Chesapeake and Potomac Canal going across the Washington Monument grounds, barges anchoring west of the Monument. I can see old John Quincy Adams going swimming in it and getting his clothes stolen by an angry woman who wanted a job. The old guy did not have my guards or it wouldn't have happened. Then I wake up, go upstairs and go to work and contemplate the prison life of a president. What the hell!

I never saw myself as president. I was just in the right place at the wrong time.

No man can get rich in politics unless he's a crook. It can't be done.

I don't give them Hell. I just tell the truth about them and they think it's Hell.

"The Buck Stops Here"



Background

he sign "The Buck Stops Here" that was on President Truman's desk in his White House office was made in the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma. Fred M. Canfil, then United States Marshal for the Western District of Missouri and a friend of Mr. Truman, saw a similar sign while

visiting the Reformatory and asked the Warden if a sign like it could be made for President Truman. The sign was made and mailed to the President on October 2, 1945.



Approximately 2-1/2 inches by 13 inches in size and mounted on walnut base, the painted glass sign has the words "I'm From Missouri" on the reverse side. It appeared at different times on his desk until late in his administration.

The saying "the buck stops here" derives from the slang expression "pass the buck" which means passing responsibility on to someone else. The latter expression is said to have originated with the game of poker, in which a marker or counter, frequently in frontier days a knife with a buckhorn handle, was used to indicate the person whose turn it was to deal. If the player did not wish to deal he could pass the responsibility by passing the "buck," as the counter came to be called, to the next player.

On more than one occasion President Truman referred to the desk sign in public statements. For example, in an address at the National War College on December 19, 1952, Mr. Truman said, "You know, it's easy for the Monday morning quarterback to say what the coach should have done, after the game is over. But when the decision is up before you — and on my desk I have a motto which says "The Buck Stops Here' — the decision has to be made." In his farewell address to the American people given in January 1953, President Truman referred to this concept very specifically in asserting that, "The President—whoever he is—has to decide. He can't pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That's his job."

The sign has been displayed at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library since 1957.

— The Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri

Samuel Gallu



Playwright

Samuel Gallu was a playwright, fiction writer, television and radio producer, singer and a stage and screen artist. He best exhibited his talent of interweaving historical and political themes in his best known work of *Give 'Em Hell, Harry*, written in 1975 in which Harry Truman reminisces about his life and presidency, and *The World Turned Upside Down*, a 1976 bicentennial drama commissioned by the city of Philadelphia. The actor James Whitmore won an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his portrayal of Truman in Gallu's screen adaptation of *Give 'Em Hell, Harry*. Gallu also wrote a one-actor show for Ernest Borgnine entitled *Wait Until I Make You an Offer You Can't Refuse*. His other plays were *Churchill, The Bold Conspiracy* and *Author, Author*.

In addition to writing for the theatre, Gallu wrote and directed four films including *Theatre of Death* with Christopher Lee, and he produced 274 television programs including "Navy Log" and "Border Patrol," and produced the radio programs "Sam Spade" and "The FBI in Peace and War." His novel *The Emperor* is an historical work about Romanian royalty. Gallu was also an operatic tenor who performed as a soloist with the NBC Symphony, under the direction of Arturo Toscanini.

Gallu earned several degrees from Pennsylvania State University and from Columbia University in New York City, and a Ph.D. from Boston College. At Penn State he helped establish the School of Communications and he served there as an adjunct professor, received a Distinguished Alumni Award, and was honored as an Alumni Fellow.

The Career of Samuel Gallu

Plays

Churchhill

The Bold Conspiracy
Author, Author
The World Turned Upside Down
Give 'Em Hell, Harry
Wait Until I Make You an Offer You Can't Refuse

Screenplays

The Man Outside
The Limbo Line
Give 'Em Hell, Harry

Television Productions

"Navy Log", "Border Patrol", "Behind Closed Doors" and "Blue Angels"

Radio Productions
"Sam Spade" and "The FBI in Peace and War"

Nonfiction

The Emperor

Musical Performances
Soloist with the NBC Symphony

As an academician and a theatre professional, Gallu influenced the careers of some of America's most outstanding talent including Fred Waring, Cyrus Vance, Herman Wouk, James Tobin and Shelly Winters.

Harry S. Truman



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 3.html



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