

# Woodrow Wilson

28th U.S. President, Nobel Laureate (1856 – 1924)

Wilson was born in Virginia, graduated from Princeton in 1879, and received a doctorate in History from Johns Hopkins, the only President to earn a Ph.D. In 1885, he married Ellen Louis Axson, who died in 1914, during Wilson's first term. He is one of three presidents to be widowed while in office. The following year he married Edith Bolling Galt.

Wilson pursued an academic career, and in 1902, he became president of Princeton, where several of his major efforts at change ended in failures. He attempted to abolish upperclass eating clubs, a move that was fiercely opposed by one of the most powerful trustees MOSES TAYLOR PYNE. His plan to locate the proposed graduate building in the same area as the undergrad colleges was also fruitless when he was opposed by ANDREW FLEMING WEST, the influential Dean of the graduate school.

Disenchanted, he was persuaded to run for New Jersey governor, and he was elected in 1910. Two years later, he was nominated for President at the Democratic convention. With THEODORE ROOSEVELT and WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT dividing the Republican Party vote, Wilson was elected. Possibly scarred by his battles at Old Nassau, his two administrations were remarkably free of Centurions: NEWTON D. BAKER, Secretary of War, and FRANKLIN K. LANE, Secretary of the Interior, joined the club during Wilson's second term. Wilson was narrowly re-elected in 1916, partly due to his slogan "he kept us out of the war," but when Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare, he asked Congress to declare war on April 2, 1917.

After the Armistice in November 1918, Wilson went to Paris to help create the League of Nations and shape the Treaty of Versailles. For his efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919. But his dream of seeing the U.S. as part of the League of Nations was not to be as the Treaty failed in the Republican controlled Congress. Wilson collapsed with a debilitating stroke in 1919 and died in 1924 in Washington.

