



Going Home To Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961-1969

David Eisenhower , Julie Nixon Eisenhower (With)

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When President Dwight Eisenhower left Washington, D.C., at the end of his second term, he retired to a farm in historic Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, that he had bought a decade earlier. Living on the farm with the former president and his wife, Mamie, were his son, daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren, the oldest of whom, David, was just entering his teens. In this engaging and fascinating memoir, David Eisenhower—whose previous book about his grandfather, *Eisenhower at War, 1943–1945*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize—provides a uniquely intimate account of the final years of the former president and general, one of the giants of the twentieth century.

In *Going Home to Glory*, Dwight Eisenhower emerges as both a beloved and forbidding figure. He was eager to advise, instruct, and assist his young grandson, but as a general of the army and president, he held to the highest imaginable standards. At the same time, Eisenhower was trying to define a new political role for himself. Ostensibly the leader of the Republican party, he was prepared to counsel his successor, John F. Kennedy, who sought instead to break with Eisenhower's policies. (In contrast, Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, would eagerly seek Eisenhower's advice.) As the tumultuous 1960s dawned, with assassinations, riots, and the deeply divisive war in Vietnam, plus a Republican nominee for president in 1964 whom Eisenhower considered unqualified, the former president tried to chart the correct course for himself, his party, and the country. Meanwhile, the past continued to pull on him as he wrote his memoirs, and publishers and broadcasters asked him to reminisce about his wartime experiences.

When his grandfather took him on a post-presidential tour of Europe, David saw firsthand the esteem with which monarchs, prime ministers, and the people of Europe held the wartime hero. Then as later, David was under the watchful eye of a grandfather who had little understanding of or patience with the emerging rock 'n' roll generation. But even as David went off to boarding school and college, grandfather and grandson remained close, visiting and corresponding frequently. David and Julie Nixon's romance brought the two families together, and Eisenhower strongly endorsed his former vice-president's successful run for the presidency in 1968.

With a grandson's love and devotion but with a historian's candor and insight, David Eisenhower has written a remarkable book about the final years of a great American whose stature continues to grow.

Going Home To Glory: A Memoir of Life with Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961-1969 **Details**

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Aaron Million says

Personal and revealing look at Dwight Eisenhower's post-presidential years by one of the few who could intimately tell it. David Eisenhower was Dwight's grandson, and spent a good deal of time with the former President following the latter's retirement to his farm in Gettysburg, PA. He was also Richard Nixon's son-in-law, marrying Nixon's daughter, Julie, in 1968. Obviously, this is a personal reminiscence, but David is a professional writer and historian; Julie is as well. Thus, the quality of this work is much higher than it would be otherwise.

David does a nice job of balancing two competing feelings throughout this book: the professional desire to be accurate and fair, while also remaining personal as he is writing about his grandfather - someone whom he was neither intimately close to nor estranged and distant from. Actually, judging by how most of Eisenhower's relationships went, his relationship with David probably could be considered quite close. David writes of both men's usually unsuccessful attempts to become closer. These efforts would usually be spoiled either by David's maturation from a young boy into a college-age youth who had other interests (racing his car, goofing off with friends, dating Julie Nixon) or by Eisenhower's cold and forbidding remoteness that even forced his wife, Mamie, to remark to David that she didn't think that anyone ever really knew Eisenhower.

As a result, we do not get a fawning portrait of the General (Eisenhower preferred to be called this), although David does seem to be more than generous in his assessment of Eisenhower's record on Civil Rights during the 1950s. But at the same time he does speak fondly of Eisenhower, and relates personal stories that only he could: such as the time Eisenhower "fired" him from painting the fence at his Gettysburg farm only to later "rehire" him that same day. Or the times when Eisenhower would make David drive him into town to run errands; David would leave Ike parked in his Plymouth Valiant while he ran into the drugstore. Can you imagine what people thought when they walked by and saw arguably the most famous American of his time just sitting in a car waiting for his grandson?

One theme that does run throughout the book is Eisenhower's precarious health. While still active when he left office, everyone around him was concerned about how much activity he could stand due to the health problems that he suffered while President. Eisenhower was quite active until late 1965, when he suffered a major heart attack. This really set him back, and although he did recover enough to not be an invalid, he was never at full health again. Throughout the late 1960s, he continued to experience heart problems, and ultimately these forced him to spend the last eleven months of his life in Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. David keeps the story together: he details his concern and worry about his grandfather as he moves closer to death while at the same time not getting overly sentimental about it. I would not call it a moving portrait per se, but I certainly felt sad when I reached the part where Eisenhower died. David succeeds in providing a proper mixture of both stoicism in the face of adversity and human sorrow at the death of a loved one. In doing so, he keeps a wider focus by detailing how the world viewed Eisenhower as moved toward the end of his life.

Especially noteworthy are Richard Nixon's reflections on his last extended talk with Eisenhower in 1967, although they spoke many more times before Eisenhower died. However, curiously, David does not mention the final few times that the two spoke - after Nixon had been inaugurated as President. He also makes no comment about Nixon's reaction upon hearing the news of his death, and Eisenhower's funeral is dispensed

with in a somewhat perfunctory fashion which is at odds with the rest of the book. Perhaps he sees no reason to dwell on that, preferring instead to remember when Eisenhower was alive.

Grade: A-

Tim Chavel says

This book is written by Dwight Eisenhower's grandson, David, and his wife, Julie Nixon Eisenhower (Richard Nixon's daughter). I bought this book at Borders Going-Out-Of-Business sale for \$1.00. What a great buy it was. Many fascinating things I learned. After JFK was elected President Eisenhower and Kennedy communicated often. Eisenhower wanted to be called General instead of President in his private life and JFK agreed to give him the fifth star to make him a five star general. After JFK's assassination LBJ and Eisenhower shared many ideas. According to the book LBJ many times came to Eisenhower for advise. Eisenhower believed that America should not spend a great deal of money of defense in times of peace. Living in Gettysburg he became active in a Presbyterian church. The pastor ask him to speak to the church on the role of morality and politics. His speech to the church was a very conservative view on how the government should not close the door on faith. He was very disappointed in the Supreme Courts decision to take "God" out of the schools. The thing that was most surprising to me was how a former Republican President was so involved talking to and giving advise to to Democratic Presidents.

A few quotes from the book below are ones that were thought provoking to me:

When the federal government begins to fund education, he (Eisenhower) argued, educational institutions will find they cannot live without the assistance they receive. Then, he added with dark emphasis, the government eventually tells educators what to do. Elise [Scharf, one of the leading families of Gettysburg] agreed. Whether for good purposes or for evil purposes, Eisenhower continued, the ability to control education has the potential to be used to promote mind control and that should be enough to recommend against letting any such thing take root. She agreed again. This man is wonderful, she thought. p. 11

The delighted crowd roared approval in learning the secret of the Eisenhower grin - that it was a gesture of determination, a reflex to being outwitted or overpowered. "If you see someone irritating you, just grin," Eisenhower said. "You haven't smiled when you've gotten up because once in a while they throw a haymaker at you. So what! You don't win a campaign in one battle. You win a campaign by sticking ever lastingly at it, with the kind of attitude that is the attitude of a victor." p. 89

A letter Eisenhower wrote to David (david was away at school):

Around here here does not seem to be developing much enthusiasm about the political campaign. I suppose that is because there is no President to be elected this year. If this is so, the reason seems to be faulty indeed. Too many of us are allowing too much authority and responsibility for our lives to become concentrated in Washington. I think it is just as important to develop enthusiasm for the election of a proper city council, a county board of commissioners, or statewide governor and legislature as it is to get the right man in the Presidency. Indeed, if we had better and stronger government at lower levels we would do much to reduce the risk that one day we are going to be governed by an entrenched and organized bureaucracy. pp. 198-199

Another letter written by Eisenhower to David:

"Always take your job seriously," he said repeatedly, "but never yourself." The words were those of his mentor, Fox Conner. "The years ahead of you might be the most important of your life," Granddad told me.

"Don't be afraid to reach above yourself, to associate yourself with people you know are better than you are in some respects - some call it apple polishing, but it's really the only way you learn anything in this world."
p. 253

If you enjoy learning about famous people from an insider, then this is an excellent book for you!

Barbara says

This is an excellent book! There hasn't been a good book written about Dwight Eisenhower's post-presidential years, and David Eisenhower/Julie Nixon Eisenhower have written a heartwarming, historical, and personal book about a WWII hero, great President, and loving grandfather.

Janelle says

I've always felt honored to have met Mamie Eisenhower before she passed away while I was an Gettysburg College undergrad. I've become somewhat of a fan of David Eisenhower through his work with Institute for Public Service at the Annenberg Center. This is the first of his books that I've read. He paints a realistic portrait of his grandfather, warts and all, and gives his own accounts of the history of America that he experienced. You better believe I'll read his next installment of his account of his grandfather's life.

Judy says

An affectionate look at President Dwight Eisenhower after he left the White House in January 1961 and went into retirement at his farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. As David Eisenhower notes, former presidents have to carve out their own roles in retirement. The Kennedy administration increasingly tried to distance itself from the Eisenhower administration, while, ironically, President Lyndon Johnson often turned to Eisenhower for advice and counsel after becoming president in late 1963. In 1964, Eisenhower felt that Barry Goldwater was unqualified to be the Republican candidate for President and was only a lukewarm campaigner. The Eisenhower and Nixon families were brought closer together--Eisenhower often held Nixon at arm's length when Nixon served as his Vice-President--when David Eisenhower married Julie Eisenhower just after the 1968 election. This book combines an examination of Eisenhower's views of politics and current events during the turbulent 1960s with a grandson's relationship with a loving, but exacting, grandfather.

Harley says

An excellent memoir by the grandson of General Dwight D. Eisenhower about the last years of President Eisenhower's life and his relationship with his grandson. I found it interesting that Lyndon Johnson relied for Eisenhower for support and council and that he spent considerable time visiting Eisenhower in the hospital in

1968 and 1969. The book is based on David's memories and the interviews with many people who knew his grandfather. This is the first book that I have read about the life of Dwight D. Eisenhower and I found it a valuable introduction.

Kaye says

Very interesting account of Eisenhower's life after he left office. I admired him from his war years, but didn't know much about his years in office and after. I remember seeing him in Detroit when he was running for president.

This book written by his grandson David is very well written.

Alan Kaplan says

Poignant book about the final years of Eisenhower as told by his grandson, David Eisenhower. You remember David Eisenhower, he married Nixon's daughter, Julie, and the presidential retreat in the Maryland mountains is named for him. Eisenhower is sometimes the forgotten president. He followed the unpredictable Harry Truman and he was followed by the charismatic JFK. Eisenhower is dismissed by many historians as a do nothing president, but anyone interested in history should read this book. Very well told by his grandson, and by my definition of a great biography, you are sad when Eisenhower dies. Going Home to Glory only covers the years of 1961 - 1969 when Eisenhower moved to Gettysburg, and his grandson had the most contact with him.

Gerry says

I read this book no less than three times after reading it once. Not immediately but I found myself going back to it in between my other books. The post President life of Ike and David and Julie's recollection is nothing less than personable and endearing. Ike was a great President, worked from the middle and achieved a lot for the economy and landscape of the American small business man and woman. Either way I found this insightful, telling, and I felt as though I was on the inner circle of family events by the descriptive method that David and Julie used within the pages. The assassination of JFK and the effect it had on David is telling of the type of person he truly is; interesting we read of the last time Truman and Ike would meet while at the Blair House having a drink before heading over to Arlington Nat'l Cemetery for the burial of JFK.

A wonderful book, not a boring page exists within and Ike was a man of his word, work, and efforts for a stronger America.

Gary Null says

This could be the story of just about any young man reminiscing about his grandfather, except that when his grandfather comes to visit him at boarding school, the grandfather arrives by helicopter and goes first to the headmaster's residence before visiting the dorm. That's because his grandfather just happened to be a former President and the army general who led the Normandy invasion of Europe during WWII.

The story begins January 20, 1961, just as former President Dwight D. Eisenhower leaves office, turns the reins of power over to John F. Kennedy, and heads into retirement on a farm near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Young David Eisenhower spends a lot of time at the farm, both working and getting better acquainted with his famous, and sometimes intimidating, grandfather.

The behind-the-scenes tidbits are fascinating. Like the descriptions of the Kennedys redecorating the White House for the change of power; the locations and positioning of former Presidents' portraits reflect the favoritism of the new occupants.

After the Bay of Pigs disaster where former Cuban exiles attempted to take back their homeland, but were defeated, the blame game commenced. The Kennedy administration tried to claim the plan was a holdover from the Eisenhower administration; but Eisenhower explained that the operation was changed significantly enough that the new administration "owned" it.

Topics in the book range from the mundane to the serious. We get to learn Eisenhower's recipe for his favorite barbeque sauce. We learn about his competitiveness at bridge and golf. And, we get some glimpses into his military service and his Presidency.

One of Eisenhower's hobbies was oil painting and he would often give his paintings away to family and friends. One of young David's favorite paintings was of himself golfing using special youth-length clubs that were designed specifically for him by the golfing legend Bobby Jones. (Young David Eisenhower often rubbed elbows with famous people; to him it was commonplace.)

We get to see the former general as a person, not just an icon. As he was preparing to deliver a eulogy at Winston Churchill's funeral in 1965, the accomplished orator practiced in front of a mirror and worried about whether he would be able to deliver the eulogy well enough.

The book contains a good balance between the human side and the political side of Eisenhower. Well-respected by many members of both major parties, Eisenhower was often consulted by sitting Presidents and other politicians, both Republican and Democrat.

Near the end of his days, as Eisenhower was convalescing in Walter Reed Hospital, one of the last political

appearances he made was a televised endorsement of Richard Nixon for President in 1968. Nixon had been Eisenhower's vice president for eight years. It's probably fortunate that Eisenhower didn't live to see what a shambles Nixon would make of his Presidency.

David Eisenhower had previously researched his grandfather's military career for an earlier book, *Eisenhower at War, 1943-1945*. This book focuses more on the personal side of General Eisenhower, but also includes a good dose of the political workings of the era.

Personal recollections, aided by extensive research and personal interviews, make this a very interesting read.

Lee says

While I've read several Eisenhower bios, I don't think one has covered his retirement and death in as much detail.

I learned about his behind-the-scenes attempt to play Republican party leader during the 1964 and 1968 Presidential elections.

David Eisenhower's courtship of Julie Nixon, and how it played against this backdrop, was something of a bonus.

Gary Schantz says

I have read many books about the Presidents (as anyone who looks at my bookshelf can see) and I am always looking for books that don't point me in a specific direction as most of them tend to do. Either the president was an ego-maniac, vastly intelligent, paranoid, flawless, etc. This book doesn't really get into personalities (which was one of Eisenhower's signature traits) even though it is written by his grandson and grand-daughter-in-law who certainly had quite a history to draw from when writing this book.

This book tells of the time of Eisenhower's post-presidency years from 1961 until his death in 1969. The post-presidencies are the years that don't often get written about for whatever reason.

For me, I find these years to be the most interesting because once someone is no longer president because of a failed re-election campaign, decision not to seek another term, died while in office or served two-consecutive terms...how does this person pursue the rest of their life?

In this case, it seemed that Eisenhower served as President *de facto* throughout the terms of Kennedy and Johnson as well as a mentor for Nixon. While the book doesn't go so far as to state that Eisenhower's point-

of-view influenced how those three men carried out their duties as president, it does discuss how all of them kept coming back to him for one reason or another.

It might even be fair to say that Eisenhower (if he had been a bit younger and healthier) might have been a factor in the outcome of the Vietnam War. I doubt he would have made it a point to publicly speak out against any sitting president but I doubt he would have held his tongue in the shawdows considering his military credentials.

In the end, I came away having learned that the perception that "he never actually did anything other than play golf" was just that...a perception. Eisenhower was a man who served his country for 54 years from 1915 until 1969.

Marilyn says

This was a timely book to read and what life is like after you leave the White House. The much beloved only grandson of Dwight Eisenhower, David tells this wonderful personal tale of how hard it is for someone else to make all those tough decisions and live again outside the spotlight. As I was quite young when he was president, I do not remember much about General Eisenhower as he preferred to be called instead of Mr. President. Fun little quirks about the man never brought to us back then in the news. A different time and place some 55 years ago. Kennedy and Johnson were lucky to have his wisdom. I loved it. David is an excellent writer and brought the man to life.

Julie says

I think Julie Nixon Eisenhower is underrated as an author & editor. I had a little interest in this book that her husband, David, wrote until I noticed her name on the spine as well. While "Going Home to Glory" is mostly David Eisenhower's work, I felt I could really tell where Julie's input was used and her diary excerpts were some of the most interesting sections (along with General Eisenhower's). To tout another of her books, her biography of her mother was really wonderful.

When it comes to content, I immediately started drawing parallels between Eisenhower and Bush and between Kennedy and Obama in terms of how each succeeding President treated his predecessor and vice-versa. This was especially interesting since I very recently read/listened to Jacqueline Kennedy's assessment of the Eisenhowers. Eisenhower's thoughts on Vietnam and the use of the military still ring true today, 40 years later and it was interesting last night, watching the news regarding the Iowa caucuses, hearing the General being quoted.

Anyone with an interest in post-World War II politics, Eisenhower or what Presidents do after their term of office would be well served to give this short book a read.

Cheri says

What a great book...very personal view into Eisenhower's later years with his grandson, David.

