

A premier leadership scholar and an eighteenth-century expert define the special contributions and qualifications of our first president Revolutionary hero, founding president, and first citizen of the young republic, George Washington was the most illustrious public man of his time, a man whose image today is the result of the careful grooming of his public persona to include the themes of character, self-sacrifice, and destiny. As Washington sought to interpret the Constitution's assignment of powers to the executive branch and to establish precedent for future leaders, he relied on his key advisers and looked to form consensus as the guiding principle of government. His is a legacy of a successful experiment in collective leadership, great initiatives in establishing a strong executive branch, and the formulation of innovative and lasting economic and foreign policies. James MacGregor Burns and Susan Dunn also trace the arc of Washington's increasing dissatisfaction with public life and the seeds of dissent and political parties that, ironically, grew from his insistence on consensus. In this compelling and balanced biography, Burns and Dunn give us a rich portrait of the man behind the carefully crafted mythology.

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