

20 OF THE ALL-TIME GREATEST FEDS

A guide to some of history's most illustrious civil servants.

By Charles S. Clark
and Caitlin Fairchild

Government may be facing some big challenges right now, but history shows that during times of crisis, great public servants have stepped forward to show tremendous leadership. *Government Executive* consulted with the National Academy of Public Administration and the Partnership for Public Service to produce a list of notable civil servants leading up to the 21st century. The selections were, by necessity, based on subjective criteria. But they make an inspiring gallery.

RALPH BUNCHE

(1904-1971)

Diplomat and civil rights leader who brokered the 1948 armistice between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. He was the first nonwhite to win the Nobel Peace Prize. During World War II he served in the Office of Strategic Services, War Department and State Department, where he focused on colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. Also helped plan creation of United Nations.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL

(1946-)

Foreign Service officer who sounded the alarm about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Served as deputy assistant secretary of State for African affairs, 1993-1996. In 1998 as ambassador to Kenya, she was injured by an al Qaeda bomb in Nairobi. Later appeared on national TV to reassure Kenyans angry about delays in search-and-rescue operations due to evidence-gathering.

ALAN K. "SCOTTY" CAMPBELL

(1924-1998)

Academic dean who became the first director of the Office of Personnel Management. Known as the architect of the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, which reinforced merit system principles and brought private sector management approaches to government. Chaired the Civil Service Commission for the first two years of the Carter administration.

WILBUR COHEN

(1913-1987)

Academic dubbed "The Man Who Built Medicare," he joined the Franklin Roosevelt administration in the 1930s and helped draft the Social Security Act. Appointed by President Kennedy as an assistant secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson promoted him to HEW undersecretary.

DAVID O. "DOC" COOKE

(1920-2002)

Known as the "Mayor of the Pentagon," he served 12 Defense secretaries over 44 years as a civilian administrator, from 1958 until his death in a car accident in 2002. He was the department's highest-ranking career civil servant as director of administration and management and head of Washington Headquarters Services.

CHARLES DAWES

(1865-1951)

Banker who became the first director of the Bureau of the Budget under President Harding. Before serving as vice president under President Coolidge, he was comptroller of the currency under President McKinley and general purchasing agent for the American Expeditionary Force during World War I. Co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for the Dawes Plan for German war reparations. President Hoover appointed him ambassador to Great Britain and later head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

ROBERT W. KELLEY/GETTY IMAGES



Ralph Bunche
brokered armistice
in Palestine in 1948.



Theodore Roosevelt spearheaded civil service merit system.

ALLEN DULLES
(1893-1969)

Diplomat, lawyer and banker who became the first civilian and longest-serving CIA director. Served in the military and with the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, helping negotiate unconditional capitulation of German troops in Italy. Helped draft the 1947 National Security Act, which created the CIA. Member of the Warren Commission, which probed the assassination of President Kennedy.

LAWRENCE EAGLEBURGER
(1930-2011)

Only Foreign Service officer to become secretary of State (for 42 days in 1992-1993). Worked directly for Presidents George H.W. Bush, Reagan, Ford and Nixon. Served on the National Security Council under Walt Rostow and Henry Kissinger, and was second-in-command under Secretary of State James Baker. President Carter named him ambassador to Yugoslavia.

ANTHONY FAUCI
(1940-)

Immunologist who helped pioneer treatment and vaccine for AIDS. Since 1984, he has headed the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, where he administers key research into sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illnesses from potential agents of bioterrorism. White House adviser on global AIDS issues.

ERNIE FITZGERALD
(1926-)

Father of whistleblower movement. In 1968, he reported a \$2.3 billion cost overrun in the Lockheed C-5A transport plane. Testified, against Air Force advice, before Congress’ Joint Economic Committee. President Nixon directed Defense Secretary Melvin Laird to fire him. His case helped lead to whistleblower protections in the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act and 1989 Whistleblower Protection Act.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

LESLIE GROVES
(1896-1970)

Supervised construction of the Pentagon in the early years of World War II and directed the Manhattan Project, which created the atomic bomb. A lieutenant general in the Army Corps of Engineers, he oversaw numerous construction projects. He handed the Manhattan Project over to the Atomic Energy Commission in 1947, when he became chief of the Army’s Special Weapons Project, which determined military handling of nuclear weapons.

HAROLD ICKES
(1874-1952)

A powerful Interior secretary throughout FDR’s administration, he managed key components of the New Deal. He oversaw the Public Works Administration to create jobs while building the National Park Service and addressing concerns of Native Americans. Also administered fuel resources during World War II, and his anti-corruption crusade earned him the nickname “Honest Harold.”

DWIGHT INK
(1922-)

Known as “Mr. Implementation,” Ink held positions in every administration from Eisenhower to Reagan. Helped establish the Environmental Protection Agency and the Housing and Urban Development Department. Was instrumental in launching the war on poverty in the 1960s. Served as acting director of the General Services Administration

under President Ford and helped implement civil service reform during the Carter administration.

MONTGOMERY MEIGS
(1816-1892)

Engineer who served as quartermaster general for the Union during the Civil War and presided over the creation of Arlington National Cemetery. Was involved in construction of the Capitol dome, War Department building, Washington Aqueduct, Hall of Records and Pension Office Building.

CONSTANCE BERRY NEWMAN
(1935-)

Director of the Office of Personnel Management under President George H. W. Bush who earned seven presidential appointments. Became assistant secretary of State for African affairs in 2004. Having begun federal career as a secretary at Interior Department in 1962, she was appointed by President Nixon as director of VISTA and later



Constance Berry Newman led African affairs at State.

as a commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Was assistant secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and in the 1990s was undersecretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

WILLIAM PERRY
(1927-)

Defense secretary under the Clinton administration known as “the GI’s secretary” for his support of military housing and health care. Pushed a comprehensive acquisition strategy and embraced “preventive defense” strategy aimed at keeping threats at bay. Also served as undersecretary of Defense for research and engineering, helping develop stealth aircraft technology.

ALICE RIVLIN
(1931-)

Fiscal and monetary policy expert who was founding director of the Congressional Budget Office. Also served as director of the Office of Management and Budget under President Clinton and later vice

chairwoman of the Federal Reserve. During the District of Columbia’s financial crisis in late 1990s, she chaired the Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
(1858-1919)

Spearheaded introduction of the merit system in the civil service years before becoming president. Appointed a member of the Civil Service Commission in 1889 by President Benjamin Harrison and later became its commissioner. Named assistant Navy secretary before his famous exploits as a Rough Rider in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. In 1900, won election as vice president to President McKinley, whom he succeeded following McKinley’s assassination in 1901.

ELMER STAATS
(1914-2011)

Shaped the Government Accountability Office (then known as the General Accounting Office) over four presidential administrations. In a career spanning 50 years, he worked in the Bureau of the Budget beginning under FDR in 1939. After several promotions, he became comptroller general in 1966.

JAMES WEBB
(1906-1992)

Manager of the moon landing, he headed NASA from 1961 to 1968. Previously directed the Bureau of the Budget under President Truman and then served as undersecretary of State. NASA recently named a powerful telescope for him.