



PRESIDENT YOU

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PRESS RELEASE

President You
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Paperback, \$15.95

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President YOU? Kansas City Author's First Book Explores Citizenship and Change

(KANSAS CITY) What would *you* do if you were elected President? That's the dramatic question at the heart of Kansas City-area resident Tom Williams' book, *President You: How a Thoughtful Ordinary Citizen Could Change the Most Complex Government on Earth*, now available for purchase on Amazon.com and by order at area bookstores.

President You imagines a fictional president, Augustus Lincoln Treatise, who grapples with some very real challenges facing America today. "I wanted to explore actual issues in a detailed and accurate way, but without the heated partisan slant that drives most political discourse today. Ultimately, I found the best way to do both was merge a fiction narrative with nonfictional information," Williams says.

While *President You* is Williams' first book, it is one that has decades of experience behind it. Williams, who did his undergraduate work at the United States Military Academy at West Point, holds a *magna cum laude* Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Kentucky's Martin School of Public Policy and Administration. In addition to his work at both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, his career spanned service in the executive branches of federal, state, and county governments. Tom's education and professional career have given him a hands-on knowledge of how government works—and fails to work.

"I've always been fascinated by the challenges of American government and public policy," he says. "We're such a huge and complex nation. How do you identify and honor the needs of such a diverse population? What solutions accomplish the most good while involving the least disruption? How can individual citizen's best influence their government?"

President You opens as Augustus Treatise decides to run for president rather than enjoy the kind of relaxed retirement of which most Americans dream. He manages to overcome the doubts of his family and wins the national election. As president, he introduces bold new strategies to eliminate the national debt, clean up the country's water, create new jobs, and reduce traditional influence peddling. Even when some policy efforts do not prevail, his willingness to dismantle partisan boundaries and rethink outworn traditions revitalizes the presidency and the nation that it serves.

“Readers may agree or disagree with the issues President Treatise chooses to address and the way he tackles them,” Williams says. “I welcome that. I want to encourage questions and reflection, not to suggest that there’s a single valid approach.”

“Ultimately, I hope that *President You* affirms that ordinary citizens can have a profound impact on the life of our nation and, by extension, the world,” he adds. “We don’t actually need wealth, pre-existing power or extensive training to effect change. We just need a willingness to question, learn, think, and commit to taking action in whatever way feels most authentic to us.”

President You is available for [purchase on Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and by order at all bookstores.

With a presidential election year approaching fast and current news prompting Americans of all political persuasions to reflect with new urgency on how government should work, *President You* is a timely feature for both arts and opinion/political pages. Visit www.allwetpublishing.com for more information and contact Tom Williams at (913) 378-7044 or allwetpublishing@att.net to schedule an author interview.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

On retirement, most Americans hope to travel, pursue hobbies, dote on grandchildren, and just enjoy life. Augustus Lincoln Treatise has a different dream: to solve some of America's thorniest problems by becoming President of the United States.

Not surprisingly, his wife and grown children react to this dream with disbelief. Augustus' vision of change persuades them—and to everyone's surprise, he wins the national election.

As president, he introduces bold new strategies to eliminate the national debt and clean up the country's water, create new jobs and reduce traditional influence peddling. Many of his unexpected proposals prevail. Even when they don't, his willingness to dismantle partisan boundaries and rethink outworn traditions revitalizes the presidency and the nation it serves.

President You reaffirms that “ordinary” citizens can have a profound impact on the life of our nation and, by extension, the world. Whether or not you've ever wondered what you would do if *you* were President of the United States—and even if you disagree with some of Augustus' initiatives—*President You* will get you thinking about the role and responsibilities of national government, the issues that affect our collective and individual lives, and the power of each and every citizen to make enduring change.

President You couples an engaging fictional narrative with a factual and impeccably researched exploration of presidential decision-making, the legislative structure and process, and the challenges that face America today.

Offering bonus extras including a reference list and reader questions, it is ideal for both book-group discussion and individual reading.

BOOK EXCERPT

“Are you out of your ever-loving mind?” Angelica’s shocked voice rose above the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade broadcast. Her normally soft brown eyes, now intently focused on her husband, contained a hint of anger. “We were discussing retiring, traveling, doting on our grandchildren, enjoying life, reducing stress, making time for each other. You want to do what?”

“Run for president,” Augustus’ dry, chapped, downward-arched lips, with bits of skin starting to peel off, calmly reiterated.

“I think the cold weather has frozen your brain.”

That wintery Thursday had been excessively cold. Overnight a heavy frost had attached to everything in sight as though thousands of graffiti artisans had spray-painted white on all that could be seen. The muted light of dawn exposed an overcast sky, providing the snow-covered landscape a grayish hue. The air was laden with moisture; dampness soaked clear to the bone. A brisk north wind penetrated even the thickest clothing. Augustus had just completed shoveling the sidewalk and driveway when he uttered those three fateful words. This was the day their lives were about to metamorphose.

“Do you actually want to put our lives under the microscopes of government agencies, incessant intrusions by the press, and misrepresentations from political adversaries? Seriously?”

“Well, not really. But the country needs to change. And I think I’m the guy to do it. Besides, with my employment in government and your career in law enforcement, our lives are an open book as far as government is concerned. Plus, I have had media relations training and interactions with the press, and so have you. We both have had dealings with more demanding and better people than any number of politicians. And, in your case, some very not-so-nice people.”

Angelica was personable, outgoing, and extroverted—a stark contrast to her reserved husband—a bubbly woman who made friends easily. Thoughtful and caring, she would light up a room with her effervescent joy and laughter. She could banter and take a joke, was quick-witted, and often provided a clever retort before jokesters knew what hit them. An intuitive woman, she loved the “game” of verbal dueling and readily picked up on slights, undertone innuendo, and the subtle thoughts that eyes expressed and facial features told. Moreover, she had a “look.” That look that every man and husband knows. The “you went too far” and “don’t go there” look. She was in rare form that day.

“Augustus, if you want something to keep you busy in retirement, run for city council, town mayor, or the county board. Hell, even take a shot at the state legislature. But president—you’ve got to be kidding. Be realistic.”

“Look. You keep nagging me to stop yelling at the newspaper, talk radio, television, internet, and social media blogs.”

“Yes, but talking in your sleep or mumbling around the house about what you would do if you were made king is a far cry from actually being ruler.”

“I can do this. I have to try....”

TALKING WITH TOM WILLIAMS



Tom Williams has always been interested in American government, particularly the nature and history of the presidency. Throughout his life, he has served in the executive branches of federal, state, and county government giving him firsthand knowledge of how government works – or fails to work. His first book, *President You*, builds on that hands-on knowledge. Here, we talk with the author about the book and its creation.

The author's answers to these questions, as well as his comments in the Press Release included in this Media Kit, may be quoted without prior permission, but may not be revised or rephrased.

Q. What inspired you to write *President You*?

A. Disappointment in overly partisan congresses as well as divisive presidencies propelled me to pen *President You*. That, and my belief that politicians fail to provide citizens adequate information regarding public policy initiatives. The book was also inspired by something I remember my dad telling me: “Son, it is easy to complain. It is harder to develop solutions. And, harder still to present those solutions in some form of rational argument based on evidence.”

Q. Have you yourself served in a governmental role?

A. I've played a number of roles. For many years, I was employed as a county Emergency Manager, a supervisor in a state's Department of Social Services, and a federal government anti-terrorism contractor. (I've also served in the military, which is a government job in any important sense.) In addition to government positions, I worked in both the private and non-profit sector. Among other things, working in many different types of organizations and capacities has helped me understand how complex and difficult it can be to make change.

Q. What do you see as the book's core message?

A. I think it's all too easy today to feel that each individual can't do much to change our government. I hope that *President You* challenges that sense of powerlessness. As the subtitle—*How a Thoughtful Ordinary Citizen Could Change the Most Complex Government on Earth*—suggests, citizenship is tremendously powerful. Every citizen has a voice that can change the way our government operates through greater involvement in our democracy.

Specifically, we can learn more about the issues and cast our votes with greater knowledge and, perhaps, less emotion.

Q. Politics are, of course, highly partisan these days. Does President You take a specific party or ideological position?

A. *President You* shies away from a single ideology. Instead of any one dogmatic or partisan viewpoint, I wanted it to offer alternative perspectives with possible solutions. Many of those solutions are based on readily available information, so the reader is able to decide if the proposals of my fictional president align with his or her own beliefs or not. Among other things, I hope the book is a tool for generating thoughtful discussion on some of today's political issues.

Q. Though identified as nonfiction, the book makes use of a fictional narrative. That kind of hybrid isn't uncommon these days; what made you adopt it for this particular material?

A. The original draft read more like a government "white paper." Using a fictional president and some of the tools of fictional storytelling—scene setting and dialogue, for example—is more entertaining and, I believe, fosters greater reader involvement.

Q. The book includes succinct but detailed discussions of complex policy challenges. How did you research these issues, as well as the details of how the presidency and the federal government function.

A. As you note, *President You* has a lot of detailed information, and I really wanted to get it all right. The foundation was the civics education provided by my public schooling in grades kindergarten through twelve. To that, I added my experience in government and a review of published books on our political party system, public policy, etc. Reading and listening to politicians' promises and media reporting offered insights into particular issues and the way they are framed and explained. Finally, I used official government websites—as well as reputable websites on specialized subjects—to check, substantiate and enhance much of what I was writing. I say "reputable" websites because, of course, there is a lot of misinformation online. So it's important to make sure that one's sources are accurate and without hidden agendas.

Q. Your fictional president, Augustus Lincoln Treatise, has a very interesting name! What inspired you to choose those particular first, middle, and last names?

A. As Augustus's father mentions, I wanted a strong name that represented unconventional thinking. Both Augustus Caesar and Abraham Lincoln took bold actions that reoriented traditional mindsets in their respective nations and eras. In that regard, the book itself is a treatise.

Q. How did you go about imagining his life and character? Were there real figures from past or present that inspired some of the details, for example?

A. My wife Judy gave me one of the key elements. Following her recommendation, I tried to imagine the conversation any couple might have should one of them decide to compete for the presidency. Why might one of them wish to do so? Why might the other resist? That became the opening scene of *President You*. In later chapters, I included what could be the thoughts and feelings of children under similar circumstances—some supportive, some not. Those family interactions helped me firm up the character in my mind. Augustus wasn't modeled after any single person. He's a compilation of many facets of many people, from individuals I've known to public figures. And, to some degree, I think every author extracts aspects of his or her own life and incorporates those into their work.

Q. *How long did it take you to write the book?*

A. I began writing individual chapters in 2012 and assembled my first complete draft in 2016. After that, finishing the text was a matter of finalizing my research, reviewing and revising for maximum impact. Once the draft was largely complete, there was still considerable work to do...copy-editing, proofreading, and book design are fairly intricate tasks. In essence, it took almost seven years from start to finish but three years to complete once I had a first draft.

Q. *What made you decide to publish the book yourself rather than seek a traditional publisher?*

A. I know that this can be a complex question for some authors. For me, an unknown and first-time author, it was a simple cost-benefit analysis. The lengthy trial and error process of acquiring a literary agent and seeking a traditional publishing house felt both time-consuming and likely to delay the book longer than I liked. It just didn't mesh well with my other commitments and my sense that many of the book's issues were time-sensitive. Self-publishing was a better fit for me and for this particular subject.

Q. *What was the hardest part of writing the book?*

A. Dealing with potential future changes was probably the most complex aspect. The book involved creating a fictional president who faced challenges in the future—but of course; those difficulties were based on real current events, laws, and policies. It was difficult writing about what might occur given the potential for rapid change today. That is one of the secondary themes of *President You*: government changes the rules faster than individuals or organizations can determine the full impact of those changes.

Q. *What was the thing that surprised you most during the writing process?*

A. Each chapter was written based on my education, personal experiences, and beliefs. On a couple occasions, when I set about confirming my suppositions about an issue, I was surprised to learn my version of reality was, in fact, incorrect. That necessitated deleting or altering the approach to a chapter's subject matter.

Q. What piece of advice would you give to a writer just starting out?

A. Listen to your trusted inner circle of counselors. Don't be afraid to stand your ground in the face of criticism, yet understand that sometimes, you may need to change how you approach the subject you're writing about to better serve the reader. As a former boss advised, "Tom, there are many paths to success."

Q. Are you a reader? Are there a favorite few books you might recommend?

A. Given the focus on citizenship in *President You*, I'll start by sharing five books that I recommend every citizen read: *The Consent of the Governed* by John C. Livingston and Robert G. Thompson; *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine; *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville; *Proclaim Liberty...a Broken Bell Rings Freedom to the World* by Dr. Peter A. Lillback; and *Signing Their Rights Away: The Fame and Misfortune of the Men Who Signed The United States Constitution* by Denise Kiernan and Joseph D'Agnes. Together, these books offer a wide-ranging exploration of the nature of government and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Other books I enjoy reflect a wide variety of time periods and genres. *The Book of the Courtier* by Baldesar Castiglione, *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor, and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury are all favorites.

Q. How much of the character of Augustus Lincoln Treatise is based on yourself?

A. As I mentioned above, I believe authors inevitably imbue their characters with aspects of their own personality and life experience. Augustus is dissimilar to me in more ways than not, yet I'm sure we have common traits. For example, I think Augustus shares some of my stubbornness. When I feel that something is right or necessary, I can be pretty persistent, and he has that quality too.

Q: Are you an author who likes meeting readers?

A. While the writing process itself is necessarily solitary; I greatly enjoy the chance to talk with readers, as well as others as interested in the American presidency as I am. I schedule book talks and signings in the Kansas City area when possible—for information on upcoming events, check the Events page on my website at allwetpublishing.com—and I welcome the chance to speak to book clubs and other groups about the book and its topics, including citizenship and the presidency. Just use the form on the website's Contact page to reach me; you'll hear back from me promptly unless I'm traveling, which may slow my response somewhat.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Abbreviated: Tom Williams has always been fascinated by American politics and the methods congresses and presidents use to establish public policies in our democracy. His experiences in federal, state, and county government, as well as work in international charities, small businesses, and corporate America provides him a wide range of expertise on how political decisions impact everyday people. *President You* builds upon those life lessons. Tom achieved *magna cum laude* from the University of Kentucky's Martin School of Public Policy and Administration, which built upon his baccalaureate education from the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. He is a disabled veteran who now resides in Kansas with his wife, Judy, and their Maine Coon cat, Nora. He can be reached through his website, www.allwetpublishing.com.

Full: Tom Williams has always been fascinated by American government, particularly the nature and history of the presidency. In addition to his work for both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations of all sizes, he has served the executive branches of federal, state and county governments, giving him hands-on knowledge of how government works—or fails to work. Tom's first book, *President You*, builds on that firsthand experience, as well as on Tom's wide reading and research, in its depiction of a citizen president working to break through government logjams and improve American lives.

After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point, Tom was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. He later earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Kentucky's Martin School of Public Policy and Administration, from which he graduated with *magna cum laude* honors.

A disabled Army veteran, Tom has traveled through nearly three dozen countries on six continents, appeared on local television and radio programs, and conducted crisis management seminars in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Upon retirement, Tom finally had the time and opportunity to pursue a lifelong interest in writing. He has continued to travel widely and recently concluded a four-year exploration of his family's genealogy. Born in the Sandhills region of western Nebraska, Tom now lives in Kansas with his wife Judy and their silver-haired Maine Coon cat, "Nora." He can be reached through the Contact page of his website, www.allwetpublishing.com.

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