

**WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO/ST. NORBERT COLLEGE
THE WISCONSIN SURVEY
FALL 1999**

TOPIC: 20th Century Retrospective and 21st Century Outlook

RELEASE DATE: November 3, 1999

SAMPLE SIZE: 403 Wisconsin Residents over the age of 18

MARGIN OF ERROR: +/-4.8

INTERVIEW DATES: October 11-24

MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

World War II	12.4%
Moon Landing	11.1%
Advent of Computers	6.7%
Clinton Impeachment	6.2%
JFK Assassination	4.7%
Fall of Communism	4.5%
Atomic Bomb Dropped	3.5%
Medical Advancements	2.7%
Vietnam War	2.2%
Civil Rights Movement	1.7%

INDIVIDUAL WHO MOST INFLUENCED THE HISTORY OF THE 20th CENTURY

Bill Clinton	12.9%
Adolf Hitler	11.9%
John F. Kennedy	9.9%
Franklin D. Roosevelt	8.9%
Martin Luther King Jr.	6.4%
Ronald Reagan	3.7%
Albert Einstein	2.2%
Winston Churchill	1.7%
Richard Nixon	1.7%
Harry Truman	1.5%
Mother Teresa	1.5%
Bill Gates	1.2%

VIEWS ON THE NEXT CENTURY

"I'm going to read you a list of events. For each event that I read please tell me if you think that event will or will not occur in the next century. First:"

	Will Occur	Will Not Occur	Not Sure
A cure for Cancer will be discovered	77%	22%	2%
A woman will be elected President of the United States.	83%	16%	1%
A nuclear war will occur	28%	69%	3%
The average person will be able to travel in space	53%	46%	1%
An African American will be elected President of the United States	79%	21%	<1%
A human being will be cloned	62%	36%	2%
The Social Security System will collapse	49%	49%	2%
Extraterrestrial life will be discovered	35%	61%	4%
An economic depression will occur	71%	28%	1%

SUMMARY

With the end of the 20th Century quickly approaching it is interesting to examine the views of Wisconsinites regarding the major events and individuals that shaped the past 100 years, and their beliefs about what will happen in the 21st Century. According to the most recent Wisconsin Public Radio/St. Norbert College "Wisconsin Survey", World War II and the landing of men on the moon stand out as the most important events of the last century, while Bill Clinton, Adolf Hitler, John F. Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt are listed as the 20th Century's most influential individuals. In addition, the state's citizens are generally optimistic about the outlook for the next century.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE 20th CENTURY

In looking back over the past century, Wisconsinites find World War II and the moon landing to stand out as the most important events in the last 100 years. Over 12% of respondents to this fall's Wisconsin Survey listed the global conflict of the early 1940s as the key event of the 20th Century, with 1969's Apollo 11 moon landing placing a close second with 11% of state residents identifying that event as the century's most important. The age of respondents had a major effect on which issue they identified, with

World War II the most identified event among individuals 65 and over, and the moon landing most commonly identified among individuals between the ages of 35 and 49.

The remainder of the ten most important events included technical advancements such as the advent of computers (6.7%) and medical breakthroughs (2.7%), major cultural and political transformations such as the fall of communism (4.5%) and the civil rights movement (1.7%), and war issues such as the use of the atomic bomb (3.5%) and the Vietnam conflict (2.2%). The impeachment of Bill Clinton ranked as the fourth most important event of the century, but was viewed very differently by varied age groups. While the impeachment was the most important issue for individuals 24 and under, only 2% of Wisconsinites over 50 listed it as the century's major event.

INDIVIDUALS WHO MOST INFLUENCED HISTORY IN THE 20th CENTURY

The results of the Wisconsin Survey indicate that four individuals stand out among state residents as the most influential of the last 100 years. Bill Clinton (12.9%), Adolf Hitler (11.9%), John Kennedy (9.9%) and Franklin Roosevelt (8.9%) were within the +/- 4.8 margin of error in this survey. As with the most important event of the century, the age of the respondent affects their views of the most influential individuals. While individuals under 34 find President Clinton to be the 20th Century's most influential person, their counterparts between 50 and 64 identified John Kennedy. For individuals over 65 Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the overwhelming choice as the most influential person of the century.

The remainder of the list of most influential individuals included United States Presidents Ronald Reagan (3.7%), Richard Nixon (1.7%), and Harry Truman (1.5%), civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (6.4%), British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill (1.7%), and Microsoft founder Bill Gates (1.2%). The only woman to be listed among the list of most influential was Mother Teresa of Calcutta who finished tied for ninth in the survey.

VIEWS ON THE 21st CENTURY

The Fall 1999 Wisconsin Survey examined the thoughts of state residents on the approaching 21st Century. The survey results indicate optimism in a number of areas, with concern in others. In terms of scientific advancements, 3 out of 4 respondents believe that a cure for cancer will be discovered in the next 100 years. In addition, almost 2 out of 3 expect a human being to be cloned sometime in the first century of the next millennium. In the area of space exploration only about 1 in 3 Wisconsinites anticipates the discovery of extra terrestrial life in the upcoming century, while over half (53%) expect the average person will be able to engage in space travel during the next 100 years.

In the world of politics, most Wisconsin residents expect the next century to bring the nation's first woman president as well as the first African American chief executive. Over 8 out of 10 people polled believe that their will be a woman elected to the presidency sometime in the 21st Century, with just under 8 in 10 expecting an African American to win the highest office in the land. State residents are perfectly split on the prospects for the Social Security system in the next century, with 49% expecting the system to collapse and 49% anticipating its survival. The views on Social Security's future are closely tied to the age of respondents, with younger individuals much more pessimistic about the government program's survival.

Finally, while most Wisconsinites believe there will be no nuclear war in the 21st Century, a majority does expect an economic depression will occur sometime in the upcoming century.

***Christopher P. Borick, Director
St. Norbert College Survey Center***