

The Trump Card

Donald Trump and His Run for the Presidency

Donald Trump is uniquely driven. His insatiable drive for money is only matched by his unquenchable drive for publicity. Eccentric and abrasive to the extreme, he constantly boasts that he is the symbol of success; a clever businessman who never suffers defeat. Now, after years of seeking to have his name associated with virtually every major skyscraper around the globe, he has decided to have his name decorate the White House. And polls show that there is a chance he may become the next President of the United States. World—look out!

• *Yakov M. Wagschal*



From the minute billionaire Donald Trump entered the race for the Republican presidential nomination on June 16, he dropped one bombshell after another. In the political arena for all of 10 minutes, he shook up the race on a scale that would have been considered impossible just a few weeks ago. The Republican establishment is tearing its hair out, but there is little else it can do.

Over a matter of mere weeks, Trump declared Mexican immigrants to be criminals; that he will build the “best and largest” wall between Mexico and the United States—which he will force Mexico to pay for; he has announced that he has a “secret way” to bring down ISIS and ridiculed them for having the audacity to build a hotel: “Can you believe it? ISIS is building a hotel. They’re in competition with me now.” Trump declared that he “defeats China all the time,” and promised to initiate a currency war against the Asian economic superpower; he even threatened to place tariffs on products imported from China.

He has unleashed such a series of outlandish statements in such a short time that were he to become president, the US would immediately find itself at war with half of its allies. Even more so, Trump managed to alienate members of his own political party, including prominent Republican John McCain. Trump called McCain’s supporters “crazies” and said that he was “not a war hero,” later explaining that “he [McCain] was a war hero [only] because he was captured.” In another incident, he gave out the private cell phone number of Senator Lindsey Graham, a fellow GOP presidential candidate, during a speech in South Carolina.

Several of his business partners, including large media corporations, have severed their ties with him as a result of his shenanigans. By one estimate these lost contracts have already cost Trump close to \$100 million! For the moment, Trump is laughing at his critics. He plans to make more money by suing some of the companies for breaking contracts and keeping deposits that others paid him, including one firm that rented a ballroom at one of his hotels: “I will keep

their very substantial deposit and rent the ballroom to someone else that night—in other words, two fees instead of one.”

At the same time, to everyone’s utter amazement, Trump’s popularity as measured by public opinion polls has skyrocketed. He is now consistently ranked the top candidate in overall Republican primary surveys!

In actuality, this is not the first time that Trump’s name has emerged as a presidential candidate. He has been running for president, albeit unofficially, for many years. What has changed now is that, after suggesting it for so many years, he felt the media no longer believed he would actually run. To disprove them, he declared his candidacy.

No one can deny that Donald Trump is a smart businessman who built his personal fortune using his flair for publicity. So much so that use of his name, or Trump branding, has developed into a multi-million dollar business in its own right. At the same time, he has actually declared bankruptcy four times.

Through all his ups and downs, he has always emerged with his head held high and new profits in his hands. One of the ways he has done so is through arguably his most outstanding talent, his flamboyant mouth. What the media considers Trump’s weaknesses are actually his strengths. This is true when it comes to politics as well; all of the scandalous remarks he let slip in the last few months should have shelved his candidacy long ago. But with Trump, everything is counterintuitive—each scandal has only increased his popularity.

From Military Academy to Grand Hyatt

Donald John Trump was born in New York City one year after World War II ended. His grandfather, Frederick Trump (formerly Friedrich Drumpf), emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1885, and became a naturalized United States citizen in 1892. The Trump family’s German roots caused their neighbors to view them with suspicion during the war years.



Donald Trump announces his candidacy for president.



The oddest president in American history?

Donald was not the oldest child in the family, but early on it became apparent that his unique daring and ambition—in Jewish terminology, *chutzpah*—would lead him somewhere unique. When Donald was 13, his father enrolled him in the New York Military Academy hoping that the regimen of military life would transform his undisciplined son. Although Donald excelled at his studies and athletics, and became student leader at a surprisingly young age, he could not adjust to the strict discipline. At 18, he left to study business and finance. Four years later, in 1968, he graduated from Pennsylvania University where he took classes at the prestigious Wharton School of Business.

During Donald’s summer break, while still busy with his studies, Donald’s father drafted him to work for The Trump Organization, a moderately successful real estate company opened by the elder Trump. Donald was slowly drawn more and more into the business. Once he completed his studies, he threw himself entirely into expanding the organization and persuaded his father to grow his prosaic Brooklyn real-estate conglomerate into a gold-plated palace empire in Manhattan.

The Trump Organization owned a number of apartment buildings in New York, but in the highly regulated real estate market of the time they were bringing in

moderate income at best. The young Trump, with his inborn ambition and business acumen, saw a golden opportunity nonetheless. He convinced his father to allow him to take out large loans using those buildings as collateral in order to build up the family business.

From the beginning, Donald Trump craved attention. He was already dreaming of having the family name featured on tall buildings around the globe. Later in life he once recounted that when he was 15 his father took him to a ceremony for the opening of the Verrazano Bridge. He listened to the speeches from politicians who had fought *against* the project for years and now took credit for it. At the same time,



While Donald was in his youth, being unruly and often undisciplined, his father enrolled him in the New York Military Academy.