

Bush has support from dad

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Bush says son George was a "rambunctious" youngster who never gave his parents reason to believe he used drugs and is right not to answer further questions about the issue.

The elder Bush is not advising George W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign — "I don't want to always be in the game anymore." He also hopes Americans elect someone who can live up to "the very high standards" for the White House that Bush said Bill Clinton has failed to meet.

The former president, defeated by Clinton in 1992, discussed varied topics in a television interview from his family home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

A transcript was released before its scheduled broadcast tonight on the Fox News Channel show "The Edge with Paula Zahn."

"All this stuff about George's totally irresponsible past, we never saw it," the ex-president said. "Barbara and I never saw this. We knew he had some problems but — that he faced up to, but no different than most kids."

The younger Bush, the Republican governor of Texas, was "a rambunctious little guy," and his father recalled an episode when the youngster tried to hit him.

"I just held him at arm's length — he was about 9 — just flailing away at me," Bush said. "He didn't like some decision I had made, a leadership decision, I'm sure."

The younger Bush has acknowledged that at one time he drank heavily and that he made "mistakes" in his youth. No evidence or even credible allegation has been made that he ever used cocaine or any other illegal drug.

When pressed, he has said he had not used illegal drugs in the past 25 years.

His father said he is upset how the media have questioned his son about rumors of cocaine use and believes it is right for him not to answer more questions on the subject.

"I do feel strongly about that, about gotcha politics, about intrusiveness," Bush said. "And I think I'm very proud that he's with that position and let the voters decide."

The former president said he has not asked his son whether he ever used drugs.

"I wouldn't even consider to do that," Bush said. "I think what he's doing is correct, and he has my full support."

Barbara Bush said last month she and her husband never asked their eldest son if he used cocaine. "We had no need to," she said.

The former president said that while offering sympathy, he has tried to avoid giving political advice to his sons — even shying away from public comments on some topics lest his opinions cause them trouble. Another son, Jeb, is governor of Florida.

"I had my chance on those issues," Bush said. "I still read up everything,

try to stay up to date, but I don't — I don't want to always be in the game anymore."

He did discuss next year's presidential election in general terms: "I just hope and believe that the American people are going to want to see standards very high."

"I just have a great respect for the office itself. And I'm afraid President Clinton hasn't lived up to very high standards in that regard."

The former president has been working on a book of his letters, to be published in October and titled "All The Best."

It will include personal letters such as the ones he wrote to his family as a World War II Navy pilot. Others have historical significance — to the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping at the time of the Tiananmen Square massacre and a farewell when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev left office.

Grand Central closes after fire breaks out

■ **Blaze started in subway storage room; two treated for smoke inhalation.**

NEW YORK (AP) — Grand Central Terminal was evacuated Sunday and train service was halted because of smoke from a fire in a subway tunnel beneath the landmark. Two people were treated for smoke inhalation.

The fire started in a storage room on the Lexington Avenue subway line, said Assistant Fire Chief Frank Cruthers.

Smoke quickly spread upward through Grand Central's main terminal in mid-Manhattan and onto the street. The building was evacuated.

"Smoke got thick really fast," said Sam Southworth, who was on the subway station platform when the fire

broke out.

Service on the Lexington Avenue subway line along the East Side was suspended from 86th Street to the Brooklyn Bridge in lower Manhattan. Metro-North Commuter Railroad service, which runs from Grand Central to suburban Westchester County and Connecticut, was disrupted. Service was fully restored by Sunday afternoon.

Built in 1913, Grand Central was rededicated in 1998 after a \$200 million, 10-year renovation. It features soaring, vaulted windows, a colossal marble-floored concourse, grandiose stairways, chandeliers and sculpture inspired by Greek and Roman mythology. It is considered the finest example of Beaux Arts architecture in America.

There was no immediate indication whether it was affected by smoke from Sunday's fire.



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