



**All the Best Podcast**  
**Episode 1: “My Father, My President”**  
*Featuring Daughter of George H. W. Bush, Doro Bush Koch*

Dorothy: December 20th, 1993. Dear Doro, I hope the attached will pay for whatever electronic wonders or cuddly beasts that Santa brings your way. It comes with a heart full of love. I expect when Christmas Day, comes I will shed a tear for I will miss you very much. Your mother will tell me to stop that. Maybe she won't because she feels the same way, but it will give us great joy thinking of you with Bobby's wonderful family there at your neat house on Christmas Eve.

You see, we love Bobby like our own and that he has made you so happy says it all as far as I'm concerned. I had lunch with a good friend today. He wanted me to write op-ed pieces. He wanted me to answer critics and to set the record straight. I told him I have no interest in that. I don't want a seat at the head table or to go on "60 Minutes" or to be honored someplace. I want simply to be with my sons and my daughter and their spouses. I want to hug them and their kids. I want to revel in their joys. And when they get hurt, I wanna hold them and tell them, "It's okay. It won't hurt anymore."

Have a merry Christmas, Pastor [SP]. I hope you know...I'm sure you know that I love you more than ton can tell. Devotedly, dad.

George: At first place, I believe that character is a part of being president.

Barbara: And life really must have joy.

Sam: This is "All the Best", the official podcast of the George and Barbara Bush Foundation. I'm your host, Sam LeBlond, one of their many grandchildren. Here we celebrate the legacy of these two incredible Americans through friends, family and the foundation. This is "All the Best."

George: I remember something my dad taught me. He said, "Write your mother, serve your country." And he said, "Tell the truth." And I tried to do that in public life. All through it.

Barbara: You are a human being first and those human connections with children, with friends are the most important investments you will ever make.

George: We stand tonight before a new world of hope and possibilities for our children, a world we could not have contemplated a few years ago.

Sam: On behalf of our family and the George and Barbara Bush Foundation, this is "All the Best".

Sam: Today it is my honor to have my mother, Doro Bush Koch.

Dorothy: Thank you.

Sam: Mom, you have a unique perspective as being the daughter and the sister of two former U.S. presidents. What do you take away from watching those two closely from the sidelines?

Dorothy: You know, growing up I knew that my father could do anything because he was my dad and I adored him. So when he became president, I was surprised at first that maybe he was running for president but I always knew he could be a president because he was my dad. He could do anything.

Sam: Did you always think that about George W.?

Dorothy: Well, maybe not because he was my brother. He was my oldest brother, and he and I are 13 years apart. I don't think I ever thought he would be president but of course once he became president, in such a historic time...his presidency changed on 9/11 and he was the right man for that time in history. And so I can't compare them because I just think comparing is a bad idea. But I can tell you that both of them were probably the greatest presidents our country will ever have. And of course I'm biased. But I believe it to be true.

Sam: But with your unique perspective, you used a lot of the knowledge that you gained through those times to write a book about gampy.

Dorothy: Yes.

Sam: "My Father, My President", it ranks in the annals of great English literature. In 2006, you wrote that book and where do you think that book will

fit into gampy's legacy? And then a related question. Who's gonna play me in the movie?

Dorothy: Somebody with a very large head will be playing you. But "My Father, My President" was not my idea. It was actually dad's idea. He called me one day and he said, you know, "I'm not writing my own memoirs," but Patty Presock, who was his administrative assistant, had all these personal files. Dad said, "She's put them aside for you someday. No one else has seen them. She put them aside in case you ever wanted to write a book." And he said, "I'm just throwing it out there. You certainly don't have to but if you want to, they're there." And he said, "Think about it." So I hung up the phone. I thought, "What the heck? I don't even know the first thing about writing a book." But I remember calling my sister-in-law, Trisha, and saying, "Okay." You know, and she's like, "Of course we can write a book. I'll help you. I'll be your research assistant." And so that's how the project began. Dad never wrote his own memoirs because he never wanted to talk about himself. Of course other great biographies have come out about dad and John Meacham, presidential historian which of course I'm not. But the perspective of "My Father, My President" was from a daughter's perspective because no one knows a person like their daughter does. Presidential historians are great. They know history. I of course am not a presidential historian, but I knew my dad in a way that nobody else would know him.

And so that's how that book came about. It was one of the greatest honors of my life to write that book because I was able to work with dad, at not quite the end of his life but in a time in his life when he could remember everything. And we'd be working on Desert Storm and we'd say, you know, "I wonder what happened here." And then I'm like, "Wait a minute. I'll call dad and I'll ask him."

Sam: That's great.

Dorothy: And what dad couldn't remember, mom did. And so it was a fun project.

Sam: That is fun and I remember you and Trisha locked away doing interviews and paper stacked to the ceiling. So with those interviews I know you got to interview a lot of people in gampy's life. Who's your favorite interview?

Dorothy: I think we did over a 125 interviews and we interviewed world leaders like Brian Mulroney from Canada, President Gorbachev, etc., etc. And then we interviewed a lot of dad's colleagues, people that worked with him or knew him well. And then we interviewed personal friends. Some of the most fun

interviews were for example the nurses at the White House because dad loved the nurses at the White House. And they had a Roger Whittaker fan club because when dad would go in for his, you know, "Oh, his shoulders." You know, they'd give him a little shoulder massage and they'd put on Roger Whittaker. So they started this fan club and that was a lot of fun to talk to them. But I think my favorite interview was with Geraldine Ferraro and Michael Dukakis, because I didn't know what to expect and if they would even talk to me. And so they could not have been more gracious. And one of the things I learned from writing that book and interviewing people is that no matter what people thought of dad, everyone liked him as a person and understood the integrity and the goodness of dad. And so Michael Dukakis and Geraldine Ferraro really loved dad and admired him even though, you know, they went through a lot running against each other.

Sam: In the research I know you did a 125 interviews and you uncovered so many new things that maybe we hadn't heard before. Is there anything that you learned that surprised you?

Dorothy: You know, honestly, nothing really surprised me because with dad, what you see is what you get. Some funny things about mom maybe. Some comments that she made, some drivebys that I'd never heard that people would report. But I always would tell people, "If mom didn't make a choice comment that was directed at you, she probably didn't care very much about you." But no, dad was so consistently himself and genuine and authentic that there was really no surprises. He was the master of the small gesture. He was the guy that always did the little thing that would mean so much to people. Writing the note or making the call or giving a little something. Always a gesture of kindness. And that was a consistent theme.

Sam: You mentioned ganny and one thing that ganny was so passionate about was family literacy. For years, you worked with ganny on her Family Literacy Foundation. Of course she would never brag about all that she did to help improve literacy rates across the country because the first thing she would probably say is, "We have a long way to go still." But having worked so closely with her and now co-chairing the National Foundation, what is ganny's legacy as it relates to family literacy?

Dorothy: So I'm the honorary chair of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and we're celebrating this year our 30th anniversary. What is so notable about mom and literacy is that she believed that if every person could read, write and comprehend that every other problem in the world would be solvable, that so many people are held back and so many people when they can't read, life can spiral and become more difficult.

So mom's legacy with family literacy is she is the person that's on the tip of everyone's tongue when they think of literacy. Mom took on the cause of literacy when she was First Lady and kept it as her cause for the rest of her life.

Sam: Do you remember that decision for ganny when gampy became president about championing literacy and having that as her cause?

Dorothy: Well, she thought about it long and hard and tried to think of how she could improve the lives of others and she brought together leaders in the literacy field, and had them go around and talk about the problems when people can't read, the problems when a person can't fill out a job application or when someone can't read a label on a medicine bottle. All of those things. It was then that she was convinced that literacy would be her cause.

Sam: It's amazing how many different ways literacy can affect someone in their life and I think ganny had the large vision that solving, not necessarily a small problem, but it can affect so many different people from so many different places and so much work has been done but I think there's a lot of work to be done.

Dorothy: There is so much more that could be done because 36 million Americans still can't read. Obviously there's a lot that needs to be done. We're bringing the foundation into the next century by incorporating technology and using all kinds of new methods. We wanna meet people where they are. Everybody, no matter what income level has a phone these days. And so we've launched an enormous XPRIZE which is where you take a big, bold idea, a big, bold issue like teaching people to read and in our case, the contest is to come up with an app on a phone. So we have sponsors because we have big dollar prizes for this. So it's a contest. It's a competition to come up with innovative ways to teach people to read on their phone.

So we're doing all kinds of new things like that. And we just had a big summit where we gathered all the other people in the world of literacy and we were talking ideas of how we can eradicate illiteracy across America.

Sam: What a way to cap off a 30th year for the foundation. I think the next 30 years is gonna be crucial, and I know that you guys are working on so many different things including technology advancements to get younger people involved in literacy and I think that's great.

You've been asked many times, mom, what it was like to grow up in a big, competitive, supportive and politically active family. How would you describe it for our listeners?

Dorothy: I'm the youngest. I have four older brothers and honestly it was hell at first. Mainly because my brothers would...you know, they teased me and were not happy with the princess that arrived. My brother, Marvin, especially used to give me a really hard time. But the good thing about that is that now he feels terrible about it so he's so nice to me. Like very, very nice to me. I feel like the luckiest person in the world to have four older brothers.

Yes, our family was very competitive growing up and it's still very competitive as you know, Sam. We are constantly having tournaments and pickle ball tournaments now are big. And on the weekends we're still gathering whoever's around to play pickle ball.

Sam: Do you wanna mentioned the pickle ball tournament that happened this summer in Kennebunkport and it was around your birthday?

Dorothy: It was actually on my birthday. It was the Second Annual Doro Bush Koch Pickle Ball Tournament and it's a much coveted tournament. Everybody wants to be in it.

Sam: My partner this year was George W. and we had an extensive pregame session to kinda figure out who to hit it at and how to advance. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

Dorothy: No. but it's all in good fun. Dad taught us with competition comes good sportsmanship. So everybody's always a good sport.

Sam: Since we mentioned Kennebunkport, I know it's such a special place for our family and you in particular. You spend every summer there in a great house called The Bungalow. This summer was a little bit different though. I think gampy had been to Walker's Point for 93 of his 94 years of his life and this was the first year in a long time since World War II where he hasn't been there for the summer. What was that like? You were there all summer. I know I was up a little bit but you were there all summer. How was that this year without gampy and ganny?

Dorothy: You know, I was anticipating a very sad summer. I went up there thinking it's going to be dreary and it ended up to be joyful. The reason is everybody came. My brothers were there. All my nieces and nephews and children were in and out. My brother, George, for the first time had his own

home in Kennebunkport. He was always sort of a guest in mom and dad's house. And so they brought mom and dad's house back to life, which really meant a lot to me and to everybody else because we just didn't know what to expect. And George was a great leader of the point. He marched around welcoming everybody and making sure everybody was having a good time and that meant a lot. And I'm his direct neighbor. I live in the house that belonged to my father's mother, your great-grandmother, my grandmother.

Sam: Your namesake.

Dorothy: Yes, my namesake. She was Dorothy Walker Bush and I'm Dorothy Walker Bush, now Koch. And so rather than use the cellphone and text me, George would walk outside and yell my name, "Dottie." He calls me Dottie, "Come here." You know? So that was a lot of fun. It was great actually. And I talked to George and I said, you know, "Why do you think it was such a joyful summer?" And he and I talked about the summer before and the summer before and before that, before that. We were always on high alert. Mom was not feeling well or dad was rushing to the hospital. And so that made a difference to know that they're together and we weren't worried about them anymore.

Sam: I was up a couple of times but it was an amazing summer up in Maine and, you know, George W., to your point, really did bring the big house as we called it, to life because, you know, growing up, gampy and ganny were, you know...for me, so larger than life figures. But the one constant was you could go to Walker's Point in Kennebunkport and go to the big house right through the front door and it'd just be filled with kids and guests and love and laughter. And we hadn't gotten away from that in years past but to your point, it's always been such a hit or miss with the health, and this is the first summer in a while where we've been able to really breathe and get back to what I think Walker's Point is really all about and it's family and laughter and love. So thanks for sharing that and I can't wait for next year. Hopefully George will be there in full force for the full summer like he was this year. That was so much fun.

Mom, one of the main themes on this "All the Best" podcast is service. Service in any form. Not just elective office. What have you learned from your own experience when it comes to helping others?

Dorothy: Well, I learned from dad that no successful life does not include service to others. I grew up with that adage. But I just know that you can't be happy if you don't think about the other guy, if you don't find a way to help others because that's where the true joy comes. I know that in my life, I'm very active at the National Cathedral. I just know that I need that to be joyful.

Sam: You pulled that from gampy. Where did gampy get that?

Dorothy: I think my grandmother, dad's mom, was a huge influence in his life. She taught him so much about thinking of others. In fact, she hated it when her kids would talk about themselves. So that was a struggle for dad when he was running for president. You have to talk about all your good qualities and why you should be president.

Sam: What did great ganny say? No one likes a...

Dorothy: The great I am.

Sam: Yes, I am or braggadocio.

Dorothy: Or a braggadocio. Dad learned a lot of that from his mother but I also think he learned about public service from his father, you know, and that public service is a noble calling was definitely something that came from his father, who served in the town hall meetings in Greenwich, Connecticut and eventually in the United States Senate.

Sam: Mom, I'd like to pivot to your work in health and wellness. You are totally devoted to the mind, body and soul movement with your company BB&R. Can you tell us how you got involved in that space and what you are doing with BB&R today to further that movement?

Dorothy: Our company...I work with my sister-in-law, Trisha Koch.

Sam: The researcher?

Dorothy: My researcher for the book. We work together.

Sam: It worked out.

Dorothy: On a lot of different projects and I'm lucky because she's somebody that I can work with and we are simpatico in all the things that we do together. And she happens to be my sister-in-law which is a lot of fun. She went and got her holistic health counseling degree about 20 years ago and she would talk to me about nutrition. And I found it fascinating. At that time, our political life was happening in the Bush family. So she taught me about something called mindfulness. And I really took to that because it was something I realized I needed in my life. I was having crazy thoughts in my head and I wasn't sure how to manage that. And so she taught me that paying attention on purpose in the present moment, non-judgmentally was something called mindfulness. It

was a tool or a technique I could use on the campaign trail, or when I was watching the news and the press were saying something that I knew wasn't true. So I began to study that and so then our company started organically. We would do workshops in our homes and then we moved to schools and did some lunch and learns in corporations, and then eventually ended up with this big conference which we recently had. And it's a yearly conference at Georgetown where we educate and inspire people to take better care of their health and the health of those they love.

Sam: It was a great conference this year and it is every year. I've been lucky enough to have been asked to volunteer every year so I'm very excited to be a part of that.

Dorothy: You are lucky, Sam.

Sam: I feel like I'm one of the staples to the conference. I'm working the doors and getting the speakers to and from, but every year there's always one or two things I can take away and institute in my own life that can make me healthier or happier or more mindful. That's amazing work that you and Trisha are doing and I look forward to next year's conference. Hopefully you'll ask me to come back and help out again.

Dorothy: Yes, you're a very good volunteer, Sam. You're definitely invited.

Sam: So we talked about your work with family literacy and your work at BB&R. You're not doing anything else, are you? I think so. You have your own terrific podcast called "Health Gig". I don't wanna cross promote too much as we have two podcasts in the same household now so...

Dorothy: It's very competitive.

Sam: Yeah, so we'll be looking at all the results and the followers and all that kinda stuff but it'll be an awkward Christmas dinner.

Dorothy: No.

Sam: No, it won't be. Who's your co-host in "Health Gig"?

Dorothy: Trisha Koch.

Sam: Wow. I could've guessed.

Dorothy: Yes. "Health Gig" is an extension of the conference where we are able to reach even more people. We interview cultural leaders in the health and wellness arena and well known people not necessarily in the health and wellness world about what makes them healthy, their health journeys. Because we're all individuals and we're all unique and so everyone has a different journey to their health or things that they do for their minds and their bodies and their spirit.

So it's really interesting.

Sam: So it's a way kinda for you to connect throughout the year for everyone who's at the conference or anybody who's learning about wellness through your group. You can kind of have that voice. I know that you and Trisha do a great job of covering a bevy of different topics. I mean, it's not just mindfulness, right? It's not just diet.

Dorothy: It's everything. It's what makes you healthy and happy. And for some people it can be journaling or for other people it can be spending time with family and being in nature or...

Sam: Watching the Redskins.

Dorothy: Singing.

Sam: No.

Dorothy: Watching the Redskins.

Sam: Not these days, it's not really.

Dorothy: No, that's not very healthy right now. But it could be.

Sam: And finally, mom, our family has been blessed with so many special opportunities over the years such as being at the White House or Christmases at Camp David. Are there any memories that stand out to you?

Dorothy: There are so many. To be able to witness history from the front row has been very special, but meeting so many leaders from all over the world, to be able to have lunch with the queen, to meet the pope. Those have all been remarkable experiences. Dad included us in so many things and so we were so lucky. One thing that was pretty remarkable is that I'm the only person to have ever been married at Camp David.

Sam: Yeah. Of course.

Dorothy: And that's a little piece of history that I hold. And I was always so worried because I thought, "Oh, I'll never be able to go back to visit the church where I was married." But lo and behold, George W. Bush become the 43rd President of the United States and when he was president, he loved having his family around and Marvin and I especially because we're local, would spend a lot of weekends up there. And I was able to worship and visit the church where I was married, where you were in the wedding and you held...

Sam: I was?

Dorothy: Rabbit ears over every single picture we tried to take.

Sam: That doesn't sound like me.

Dorothy: That sounds completely like you. But just spending time with dad when he was president and being able to be sort of family and not anything else, being there for him was a great privilege.

Sam: He had a really special gift because I've interviewed some of my cousins and some of your brothers and everybody says he made them feel special. How did he do that with all the stuff that he's done? I mean, everybody knows the amazing resume and he's flying overseas and meetings left and right. How did he make time for everybody?

Dorothy: Well, because I think dad was a great leader but he led with love and he just knew that the littlest things could make the biggest difference in people's lives. So he always took the time to greet someone or give a hug or make them know their name. And all of those little things were the things that made a big difference I think.

Sam: Mom, thank you so much for coming on with me for "All the Best". I love you.

Dorothy: I love you, Sam.

Sam: I'll see you at Christmas. Don't bring all the podcast numbers because I don't wanna have to go head to head.

Dorothy: I'm gonna see you before Christmas because we live in the same town.

Sam: Oh, yeah, that too.

Dorothy: We'll see how the numbers go.

Sam: Well, after this one, we're gonna skyrocket to the top. I love you, mom. Thanks for being on.

Dorothy: Love you too.

Sam: I'm Sam LeBlond reminding you to listen, share and subscribe to "All the Best" on Apple Podcast, Spotify and everywhere great podcasts are found. Thank you for joining me as we celebrate all the best.

[music]

Barbara: Both George and I believe that while the White House is important, the country's future is in your house, every house, all over America.

George: Preparedness, strength, decency and honor, courage, sacrifice, the willingness to fight, even die for one's country. America, the land of the free and the brave.

And God bless the United States of America, the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

END

