



All the Best Podcast
Episode 19: "Attitude of Gratitude"
Featuring Grandson of George H. W. Bush, Jeb Bush, Jr.

Jeb Jr.: "Dear Jeb, a trouble with old guys is they're inclined to live in the past. One of the things I often reminisce about my quieter moments are the days I've had fishing with you. As if yesterday, I can still see, even feel you chasing that large char down the Tree River jumping from slippery rock to slippery rock. I also vividly recall you sitting alone in that Alaska river on that big boulder watching the sockeye going past. There was a time in Islamorada when we both had permits on our line at the same time, and on and on it goes from happiness to happiness. I want you to read these two books and then as time goes by, fish as many of these salmon sites or bonefish sites as possible over your lifetime. When I go into heaven, take whatever fly rods or bait casters from our shed that you want. If you need them sooner, take them right now knowing that in doing so you'll be giving me great enduring pleasure. I love you, Jeb, and I hope you have a very Merry Christmas, Gampy."

Mr. Bush: In first place, I believe that character is a part of being president.

Mrs. Bush: 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."

Song: We're Mountaineers, volunteers
We're the tide that rolls, we're Seminoles
Yeah, we're one big country nation, that's right.

Mr. Bush: I remember something my dad told me. He said, "Write your mother, serve your country." And he said, "Tell the truth." And I've tried to do that in public life all through it.

Song: Yeah, we're one big country nation, that's right.

Mrs. Bush: You are a human being first. And those human connections with children, with friends are the most important investment you will ever make.

Mr. Bush: 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 Georgian and Barbara Bush Foundation, this is "All the Best."

Song: Yeah, we're one big country nation, that's right.

Sam: Welcome to "All the Best." Today I'm happy to be joined by my cousin Jeb Bush Jr. Jeb is currently the secretary of the board of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and a board member of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. He is the managing partner of Jeb Bush and Associates and has served on a number of boards and committees dealing with community outreach and philanthropy. We're very happy to have Jeb with us today. Jeb, how are you?

Jeb Jr.: Doing fantastic.

Sam: Jeb, I've asked this question to our other cousins. And I think it's an interesting point of reference. When did you first realize Gampy and Ganny maybe weren't your average grandparents?

Jeb Jr.: I guess it would probably be. You know, when I was younger, I was shipped off to boarding school and I thought one thing that was different is that I was getting letters from my grandparents. So both Gampy and Ganny used to write me while I was at boarding school. And it could have been maybe because I was getting trouble or had maybe a difficult time going through school, where I noticed there were other kids who weren't getting handwritten notes from their grandparents. I guess their care and their kindness and their focus on one of their many grandchildren I thought was pretty neat.

Sam: I think all of us had that same feeling, it was kind of a gift that they had to make every one of us feel special because you were getting letters, but guess what, they were also sending me letters too. Like you, I wasn't the best in school. And so I needed encouragement.

Jeb Jr.: Pretty special.

Sam: Gampy, of course, fished with tons of people throughout his life, including all of his grandkids. But you were blessed to have a number of wonderful experiences traveling the world and fishing with him. Would you share a few of those experiences?

Jeb Jr.: Yes. I mean, to your point, I was really lucky. I got to go fishing with Gampy all over the world. It just so happened when my parents were getting involved in politics in the early '90s, it was when Gampy was, you could say, maybe retired little earlier than expected. But knowing Gampy full of energy, loving to fish, loving to do all types of fun things, I just happen to be the guy around Walker's point at the time that was able to go on these incredible fishing trips for salmon for char. We had one trip where we went about half a mile south of the Arctic Circle up in the NWT to fish for char, which was incredible. What was really neat about fishing with Gampy is that, you know, you had this guy who had a lifetime of service where he lived all over the world and got to meet all these interesting people. And when he was done with public life, would go fishing with these guys, and I got to tag along, which is pretty neat. Guys like Johnny Morris and Andy Mills and Peter Pocklington, these fishing legends and the keys, and it was pretty special.

Sam: What was it about fishing the Gampy so loved?

Jeb Jr.: I think it was the piece. He used to joke with people that would be using spinning rods or heavy lures, he would kind of yell at them, "Oh, hey, meat hunter. What are you guys doing over there?" For him, I don't think he was necessarily looking for the pool [SP], as you would say, but I think he liked the calmness and the peace of being on rivers, being outdoors, I think he loved the environment. I think he really loved the camaraderie probably most of all, being with other friends and sitting around campfires and singing songs and doing things like that. Think he really enjoyed it.

Sam: You read a letter and talked about fishing, and you kind of taking up that mantle of fishing all these spots. Have you planned on kind of hitting some of these salmon and bonefish sites that he talked about in that letter in 2007?

Jeb Jr.: One really neat thing is they started George Bush bonefish, redfish tournament down at Cheeca Lodge in the Florida Keys, which Gampy did with one of his fishing buddies, Ted Williams. So they started that tournament up again, and they're raising money for veterans efforts here in South Florida. So I was able to attend one of those and it was well done, but they're just getting that tournament going again. So I'm excited about that.

Sam: Jeb, the main game of our podcast is service and serving others. Both your father and brother have served in elective office, but you've been very busy helping others without getting into politics, especially with the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Jeb Jr.: You know, a lot of folks don't realize there's 36 million Americans that have a difficult time reading. And so the foundation focuses on programming research, finding local partners that help with that challenge with adult literacy. There's been a lot of transitioning in the last year with the passing of Ganny. So we've been doing events around the country, we've been building out a board, we moved our headquarters to D.C., we brought in a new CEO, British Robinson, who's fantastic. Last fall, we had a tribute to Barbara Bush event at the Kennedy Center where we had all the former First Ladies there and it was fantastic.

Sam: Where are we in this fight that Ganny devoted so much time to help others learn to read?

Jeb Jr.: There's been great progress, but there's still a lot of work to do. I think part of the challenge is, you know, obviously, it's a big country. We know how to solve these problems. For example, through the foundation, we set up a partnership with the X Prize Foundation, which is a very progressive program out in California, but the idea was to reach out to all the entrepreneurs around the world to see if we could create an app to focus on literacy. After about four and a half years, we had several programs and several competitions to get to the best entrepreneur, best app and about \$10 million for the grand prize. So last year, we were able to announce a winner. And now it's about getting out there and executing on the vision and getting educated, if you will, on this technology that's out there. I think what Ganny really always wanted to do was to solve problems, especially when we know the solution of teaching people to read and write. So I think it's more focusing on executing her vision of educating folks.

Sam: Jeb, a lot of people look at our family and think there is some written or spoken rule that everyone must serve. But that's not so, is it?

Jeb Jr.: It's not so in the sense of running for public office. I think maybe the conception is that folks assume if you're Bush, you gotta go run for office. But if you look at the majority of our cousins, they are involved in public service, but not through publicly held office. So if you look at our cousin Lauren with FEED, she's helping raise money to feed kids in Africa. Barbara, she's focused on similar efforts in health care in Africa, Pierce ran Big Brothers, Big Sisters in Texas. I'm focused a lot on education. You're doing great things with the library and in D.C. I guess maybe George P. is the lone wolf out there so far in

terms of politics. But majority of us are trying to focus on improving the human condition, which doesn't necessarily mean running for elected office.

Sam: You and your beautiful bride, Sandra, who we love so much, have the distinction of giving birth to Gampy and Ganny's first great grandchild. What was that like for you and Sandra, and for Gampy and Ganny as well?

Jeb Jr.: Really special. Gampy's really my only grandfather and to introduce him to my daughter, Georgia Helena Walker Bush, was really neat. And it was just as special as spending time with Ganny. And I've got some great pictures of Georgia and Ganny reading on the couch up there in Kennebunkport, which I'll cherish forever.

Sam: What does that place mean to you, Walkers Point?

Jeb Jr.: It means home. I think one vision, if you will, that Gampy and Ganny had is to have a common place where the family could meet every year at least for a day or two or hopefully longer than that. But it's interesting, as life gets crazy and we grow older with kids and it moves faster and faster, it's really special to have one place that is always a constant in our lives. Hopefully our kids will be able to say the same. But to be able to spend summers or even falls up in Kennebunkport, it's a really, really special thing.

Sam: Yeah, there was a time when we were younger, where me and you used to run roughshod all over that place. I'm not sure if the statute of limitations has passed. So I'm not sure if we can talk about all of the stuff we got into in our younger days.

Jeb Jr.: Another day.

Sam: Another day. Jeb, I'd like to end with this. You've shared some amazing stories about fishing with Gampy, but I have to ask about a favorite memory from Ganny. Can you share one with us?

Jeb Jr.: Sure. It might entail Uncle George as well and hopefully I'm not throwing him under the bus. But Sandra and I, I think it was the summer after we were married. And we happened to be there when Uncle George and Laura were there. We were having dinner with Gampy, Ganny, George, and Aunt Laura. I asked the question, I said, "Hey, so Gamps, what are some tips for a successful marriage? You guys have been married..." it was at this point, maybe 65 plus years, and they seem to do pretty good job with it. So I asked Gampy, and I could see he was thinking like whether do make a joke or have a serious comment. So he kind of maybe stuttered for a second. And then Ganny quickly

jumped in and said, "Never go to bed angry or upset at each other," which I thought was good. And then Uncle George jumped up and said, "Well, or separate bathrooms." And we all kind of burst out laughing. Ganny was not very pleased. My poor bride was first time maybe sitting down up there in Kennebunkport around the family. She didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Sam: That's a great story. Well, Jeb, thank you so much for joining us on "All the Best." I hope when the second inaugural George H. W. Bush bonefishing tournament is announced, I get the invite maybe as your skipper. I don't know if I can tie all the right knots but you can teach me and I'll try my hardest.

Jeb Jr.: You're in.

Sam: Thank you so much for coming on "All the Best" today, and hope to talk to you very soon.

Jeb Jr.: Thanks, Sammy.

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

Song: Yeah, we're one big country nation, that's right.

Mrs. Bush: 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.

Mr. Bush: 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.

