



All the Best Podcast
Episode 31: The Bushes' Birthday Week!
Featuring Former Guests on the All the Best Podcast

Marvin: Dear kids.

Neil: Dear George, Jeb, Neil, Marvin.

Doro: Dear Doro.

Jeb: Dear kids.

Ellie: Dear special, wonderful, Ellie. Your mom told me you tried to call me. My message back to you is that I love you.

Marvin: And I want to rejoice in your victories be they political or business or family happiness victories.

Doro: It comes with a heart full of love.

Neil: I guess what I want you to know, as a father, is this: every human life is precious.

Ellie: If you ever need a shoulder to cry on, an arm to lift you up in the years ahead...

Man: If you need me, I'm here.

Doro: I hope you know, I'm sure you know.

Neil: I'm the luckiest dad in the whole wide world.

Jeb: Devotedly...

Ellie: Devotedly...

Marvin: Devotedly...

Doro: Devotedly...

Neil: Devotedly...

Together: Dad.

George H. W.: 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".

Music: We're Mountaineers, we're Volunteers
We're the Tide that rolls, we're Seminoles
Yeah, we're one big country nation, that's right

George H. W.: I remember something my dad taught 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.

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

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 H. W.: 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".

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

Sam: Welcome to a very special edition of "All The Best", the Birthday Edition. June is the month both of my grandparents were born and coincidentally my grandparents had birthdays that were four days apart. My Ganny's birthday is on June 8th. She would have been 95 years old. My Gampy

was born on June 12, and he would have been 96. So, in honor of their birthdays, here's a look back on some favorite memories of George and Barbara Bush shared by family, friends, and colleagues on all the best. To start things off, here's my mom, Doro Bush-Koch.

You know, some pretty incredible things can happen when your father is president. Here's one of her favorite memories that she shared with me during the debut episode of all the best.

Doro: Dad included us in so many things. To be able to have lunch with the Queen, to meet the Pope, those have all been remarkable experiences. One thing that was pretty remarkable, I'm the only person to have ever been married at Camp David.

Sam: Yeah, of course.

Doro: That's a little piece of history that I hold. I was always so worried because I thought, "I'll never be able to go back to visit the church where I was married." But lo and behold, George W. became the 43rd President of the United States. When he was president, he loved having his family around and I was able to worship and visit the church where I was married. But just spending time with dad when he was president and being there for him was a great privilege.

Sam: Continuing the stories from my immediate family, here's my sister, Ellie Sosa, recounting a favorite moment during my grandparent's time in the White House.

Ellie: I remember I was one day in the Oval Office with him, and he was meeting with some foreign dignitary, an important person, and press was in there. A lot of Gampy's staff were in there. I was playing quietly on the ground. All of a sudden, I had to use the bathroom. I went up to Gampy and I tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Gampy, I need to use the bathroom." I was asking his permission. He was like, "Okay, go ahead. It's right over there." I ran off. About 30 seconds later, I come back, tapped him on the shoulder, "Excuse me, Gampy, but did you leave that poopoo on the toilet?" Ganny told me years later that people would bring that up to him all the time. It's just kind of a perfect example of family was always around even if it was going to embarrass him like that.

Sam: Family was everything to both of my grandparents, and every year my family would gather in Kennebunkport, Maine at Walker's Point. My Gampy called it his anchor to windward. About this time last year, I got the chance to

sit down with some of my cousins and hear their favorite memories of our summer vacations in Walker's Point. Here's my cousin, Pierce Bush, to start.

Pierce: What I love most about Maine was it was this place where it seemed like time just stopped. You could go and it just felt like you were connected to something that was much bigger and much long-lasting. The fact it's been in our family since 1898, our grandfather went there every year of his life except for one summer during World War II, the year that he was shot down, and I think all of us have been there every summer at least for a week.

And so I feel like we're so blessed to have a place like that. You ask why are we a close family. It's because the time that we spent as a family in Kennebunkport.

Sam: Then my cousin, George P. Bush, shared his sentiments.

George P.: There was never any activity off the table. So, as a kid, if you were interested in camping, they'd let you camp out front. If you're into soccer, they'd put a soccer goal out there. They really invested their time, their passion in us. That's something that I will always treasure. But the boating, the fishing, just the great memories, the advice, the words of wisdom that I'm going to seriously miss, and their unconditional love. They were always there. I am going to miss Ganny's witty humor more than anything else, because I don't know of anybody that can really quite rise to that.

Sam: I'll also miss Ganny's sharp sense of humor although I may not miss getting caught by her when I got into a bit of mischief from time to time with my cousin, Jeb Bush, Jr.

Jeb, Jr.: Kennebunkport in Walker's Point means family. We might have caused gammy to get some gray hairs a little earlier than she probably wanted to but, if you could imagine, 20 grandkids and uncles and aunts and people just running around all kind of doing different things whether it's swimming or playing golf, tennis, backgammon, just having fun on Walker's Point and all doing it together as a family.

Sam: One thing that Walker's Point is great for is boating, and that's my cousin, Lauren Bush Lauren's favorite memory.

Lauren: One thing that I love and will always connect with Walker's Point is boats and that's very much connected to Gampy. He would personally sort of certify us, teaching you essentially the tricks of the trade and things that he

grew up loving and learning. It is just my happy place as I think it is for all of us.

Sam: Speaking of boating, that's also my Uncle Neil Bush's favorite memory of Gampy.

Neil: He loved boats. I loved boats. He had a boat on the Potomac River. One night he came home. He was working in the Congress so this would have been in the 1960s, probably '65 or '66. He said to the family sitting at the table, "I want to take the boat around to Chesapeake Bay." He said, "Are there any volunteers?" Of course, nobody else would. I raised my hand and so we packed up. It was night. We had had dinner. We were taking off basically in the dark of night. We took off heading up the river, and it started getting really foggy but he ploughed on. We didn't have GPS system at the time, so I don't know how the hell we stayed in the river. It got foggy. And then all of a sudden, a barge came in to our view in front of us and dad somehow missed the barge. We decided wisely to tuck away in a cove somewhere and it started raining that night. I was sleeping out. He was sleeping under the deck. He came out and pulled me back into the deck. But that experience was great.

Sam: Another great experience was when my Uncle Jeb Bush joined the 1980 presidential campaign trail.

Jeb: When my dad said he was running for president in 1979, I quit my job to work full-time as a volunteer in his campaign not because of politics but it was kind of payback time for me to payback the blessings that my mom and dad had given me growing up. I was his travel aid along with David Bates for a while. I went to 45 states, had some unbelievable experiences, humiliated myself in all sorts of different ways. I didn't really think about politics being cool or important. I was excited about the prospect of my dad fulfilling his dreams, but it was a formative experience in my life to work for George H. W. Bush and then for the Reagan-Bush campaign just extraordinary experiences and it was a wild ride for sure.

Sam: After the 1980 campaign, my grandfather went on to serve as Ronald Reagan's vice president from 1981 to 1989 and then was elected as the 41st president of the United States. Once president, he chose a senator from Indiana, Dan Quayle, to be his vice president. Here's Vice President Quayle remembering how they built their relationship.

Dan: We talked about this quite a bit at the beginning on how I would operate as vice president. One huge advantage that I had is that he had been vice president for 8 years, so he knew the ups and downs and in-betweens of being

vice president. He was there and very, very sensitive to how I would function in the White House and was very generous to make sure that I was included in everything.

He basically said, "You just do it your way." I said, "Well, I sort of like the Bush model. What you and Pres. Reagan worked out was quite good." He said, "That worked for us." He says, "But you need to develop a Quayle model." Two things that we talked about that were really imperative for any vice president in my opinion and his opinion as well: one, you need to be prepared if something happens to the president. The way that you're prepared is that you know everything the president knows particularly in the intelligence arena and what's going on in the government. The second one is to be loyal. From my viewpoint, being loyal to your grandfather was easy. If you look at some other vice presidents and relationships they had with the president, it was not necessarily that easy. But begin loyal and being prepared, those are the two essential requirements I think for any vice president.

I was at the Kennedy funeral and sat next to a couple of the other vice presidents. They always put us together and we'd start talking about the presidents. One—I won't name him—turned to me and says, "You're the luckiest of all of us because you had George Bush as your president." I sort of chuckled and I said, "Yep, you guys got that right."

Sam: After the years in the White House, both my grandparents continued to live vibrant lives and their commitment to service had never been stronger. It was about this time that Jean Becker who had previously been my grandmother's deputy press secretary became my grandfather's chief of staff. Here's her favorite memory.

Jean: Hurricane Katrina has ravaged New Orleans, and what very few people remember a week or so after Katrina, there was a terrible hurricane named Hurricane Rita that chewed up a big section of the Texas Gulf Coast and a big section of Louisiana. Everything west of New Orleans got chewed up by Rita, and the victims of Rita were just getting no attention. This town, Cameron, Louisiana...a man from Cameron called the office. We didn't know him and he said, "This town has been leveled. The only thing left was the courthouse." He said, "We need help." Your Gampy had a relationship with the town. When he was an offshore oil driller, Cameron, Louisiana is where he would go to go visit his offshore oil wells.

So, anyway, I talked to your grandfather and he says, "Well, of course we'll have to help Cameron." He says, "Find out what is the one thing more than anything else they need." His name was Richard. Richard said, "If we could just

rebuild the emergency room, the people in town need to have a place to go for medical care," and still to that day the offshore oil rig workers also use that emergency room. "We need an emergency room." So we raised \$2 million and, about a week before Christmas, your grandfather was going to go to Cameron to give them \$2 million check and we're going to break ground for the new emergency room.

So I'm showing your grandfather the schedule, and the governor was coming, and the mayor was coming. He looked at the schedule and he said, "Well, sort of boring." He says, "Jean, these people have had a really tough year. We need to make this event more exciting." With a little bit of attitude, I said, "Really? A former president with a check for \$2 million is boring?" I said, "What do you want to do?" He said, of course, "I have an idea. So, we're building an ER, right?" I said, "Yes!" And he said, "Why don't we call that guy George Clooney. He is the star of the TV show ER." And then he says, "You get it, Jean? ER. How cool would that be to bring George Clooney, the star of ER?" I looked at your grandfather. Here was the problem, Sam. He and your grandmother were watching ER in reruns on TNT. George Clooney had not been on ER for years. He was making all the Ocean's movies.

So I said, "Well, sir. Yeah, George Clooney. He's one of the biggest stars in the world. He's no longer on ER. I'm not sure ER was even on the air." He said, "No, no. It's on every single night." I tried to explain the whole thing of reruns to your grandfather. Here's the other problem. He's not on my roll of decks. He's a big liberal democrat so your grandfather picked up the phone and called his friend Jerry Weintraub who was the producer of all the Ocean's movies and guess what. Guess who came. George Clooney. He was amazing. He shook every hand in town. We did not tell the town he was coming, but to watch two Georges, as I called them, standing there and shaking every hand, it was truly amazing. On the way home, I said to George Clooney, "Why did you say yes?" This is what he said, "Every celebrity is in New Orleans. New Orleans is getting all the attention and it touched my heart that Pres. Bush wanted to help this little town named Cameron, Louisiana that no one was helping," and he said that's why he did it.

Sam: Speaking of celebrities, country music legend Reba McEntire remembers the time when George and Barbara Bush had her over for lunch.

Reba: Well, it was funny. We were there. I was sitting right beside him at lunch one afternoon at their house in Houston. Going into the house, Barb said, "George, won't you go up and show them our new swimming pool?" She said, "The only way you could see it is you've got to stand up on the bathroom toilet and see out the window," and I kind of looked at her kind of funny. I said,

"Well, okay." So we walked up stairs and she was sitting there needlepointing and she said, "While you're up there, make up the bed." I said, "Okey-doke." Of course, we didn't do that, but we looked at this room and pulled out back and we sat down for lunch and he said, "So you're going to go back over for sound check?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "What you all got do?" He said, "Well, we're playing in my funeral." I went, "What?" He said, "Oh, don't worry about it. We do it every year. Just be prepared." I said, "Okay." And I said, "Anything else going on?" He said, "Well, got me some new hearing aids." I said, "Oh, you like them?" He said, "What'd you say?" just real loud. I thought it was hysterical. I almost fell out of my chair laughing.

Sam: And after lunch comes dinner. During this particular dinner, the iconic sportscaster Jim Nantz found himself at the table with Barbara Bush, George H. W. Bush, and the 42nd president of the United States, Bill Clinton.

Jim: The first night we went out to stripers, and we had a little table in the back. We had a glorious time and your grandmother, God bless her, about halfway through appetizers, I'm sitting to her right. She elbows me. She says, "Jimmy, you've only got two presidents sitting here at the table across from one another. Be nice if you made a toast to these two guys," as if I shouldn't have already thought about it.

Sam: No pressure. She'll lay the pressure right on you.

Jim: Yeah, put the pressure on. She wasn't going to filter it all. She basically thought I probably should have already done it, but I didn't want to assume that I had any juice to stand up and salute these guys. So I took a deep breath and thought up. I got up and I think best I could recall...I'm sure through time it's gotten better in my head but I thought I delivered one of the best toasts of my career about how this message of these two guys. Nobody knows you're out here together, but someday the world will find you. What a wonderful snapshot this is about how America works. My gosh, would it be something if we could do something like that today? Leave it to your granddad though to unite people together. Look at these guys once political rivals who could now enjoy each other's fellowship and friendship.

Sam: It was amazing the way both my gammy and Gampy were able to bring people together, and it's one of the cornerstones of their legacy. You know, Gampy hated talking about legacies or the L word as he called it. He wanted to leave the legacy stuff up to the history books. But when you lived the life of George and Barbara Bush, it's hard not to talk about. Here's my Uncle Marvin Bush on the greatest legacy of my grandparents.

Marvin: They built a family where everyone loves and respects each other. They brought us together in Maine and in Texas and raised us to be good to each other. I think, if you're a grandfather and you've got 17 grandchildren, 5 kids, and 5 in-laws who would lay their body on a railroad track for you, that's a pretty good life.

Sam: Yeah, it's pretty amazing.

Marvin: People always ask, "What job are you most proud of?" or this or that. No, I mean he was just a great dad. He never lost sight of what's important.

Sam: On behalf of my family and everyone else who is inspired by my grandparents, happy birthday, Ganny, and happy birthday, Gampy. I'm Sam LeBlond, reminding me 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".

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

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 H. W.: 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.

