



**All the Best Podcast**  
**Episode 60: “A Year We Will Never Forget”**  
*A Best Of 2020 All the Best Podcast Recap*

Sam: December 30th, 1987. Grateful for friends. Grateful for the peace of mind I get from Kennebunkport. Just seeing a picture of it, as I am now on Air Force Two, brings me great relaxation. Grateful for my health. Grateful that Marvin seems to have come through with flying colors from his operations. Concerned about the insiders in Washington. Recognizing the need for total change, the total shaking up of things. The insiders always have a way of ending up on their feet. Insiders in foreign affairs, insiders in staff, insiders in personnel, insiders in whatever it is. Grateful for the relative peace of mind I have, not fearing the future, not all hyped up with ulcers or sweating what would happen if things don't go the way I want them to go. I am confident that I could do the job, recognizing that nobody has the answers to all the problems. Nobody possibly could. These are just some year end observations as the new year approaches.  
George H. W. Bush.

George: In the 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've 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."

Welcome to a very special year end edition of "All the Best." 2020 has proven to be a year unlike any the world has ever seen and its challenges have been felt by everyone. However, in the midst of all these challenges, human spirit inevitably discovers silver linings. Some say the silver lining of 2020 is a renewed appreciation for time spent with family. Others may say the silver lining is the redefining of leadership through the lens of compassion. Whatever the takeaway, we are undoubtedly looking ahead to a 2021 filled with optimism.

One of the silver linings this past year for the George and Barbara Bush Foundation has been the growth of this podcast. Each week, we're proud to share incredible stories of service and the legacy of George and Barbara Bush. So, this week as we close the book on 2020, we wanted to look back at some of our favorite podcast moments. To start things off, let's look back to October 14th, where I spoke with my cousin, Jenna Bush Hager, and one of my favorite parts of the conversation was when she shared her memories about celebrating Christmas in Washington during the presidential terms of both 41 and 43.

Jenna: One thing that Gampy did, and then my dad followed suit, is Christmases were always in Washington, D.C. They didn't want the Secret Service to have to travel on Christmas. But the other reason is that we could all be there. Once the White House is gone, nobody owns a house it's big enough to fit our huge family. You know, those Christmases was a place for us all to be and then we would go on to Camp David. And so those were 12 years of our lives together and it was amazing. We probably could have been anywhere just with this group, but the fact that we were in this historical, magical place that felt so foreign from our day to day lives and the fact that there were 10 grandchildren to play with, to run around with, like we just had such wonderful times.

Sam: And those Christmas celebrations would not have been complete without Jenna's father, President George W. Bush. He joined us on September 30th and shared what he learned from both his father and an earlier predecessor about being President.

George W.: One thing about your granddad and my dad that he understood that the office of the President is more important than the occupant and therefore the

occupant of the White House needs to honor that office. He was great at that. Secondly, a clear lesson of his, and one that I began to learn as governor of Texas, is that it's really important to surround yourself with excellent people. And Gamps had a great administration, full of solid, solid people. Thirdly, a clear lesson of his, one needed to be deliberative and decision making, but once you've made a decision, stick by your guns. I remember when he went into Iraq to protect Kuwait, you know, he's highly criticized. And I talked to him, I said, "Dad, hope you're doing okay." He said, "Son, I've taken my time. I've thought about it, I've listened to good people and I strongly believe I'm doing the right thing. So don't worry about me."

One of the key things of leadership is they have a set of principles that guide decision making. I learned a lot from Abraham Lincoln. One such principle for Lincoln was all men are created equal under God. Now, we take that for granted these days, but in 1864, that was a pretty daring concept. The other thing is he acted on it. Signing the Emancipation Proclamation was one of the great presidential acts ever. Secondly, Abraham Lincoln could look beyond the moment and Presidents have got to be able to look on the horizon. It's easy to get caught up in the short-term aspects of American politics, but Lincoln's great decision was to keep the union intact, which was a very unpopular decision at the time, but he could see that a United States of America would be much stronger than one divided by sectarian rivalries. And thirdly, he was a great Commander in Chief starting with the fact that he honored the privates and the sergeants and the officers.

Sam: Our next favorite moment came on November 25th when the former Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, described the friendship between him and my grandfather.

Prime Minister Mulroney: Well, we became very good friends, as you know. And I would see him regularly, not just on state visits. Sometimes he'd invite me down for lunch, or dinner, or we'd speak on the phone regularly. Sometimes he called me about problems he had in the United States and what did I think he should do. We were very close friends, and so we spoke about everything regularly. Now, in 1989, I was in a state visit to Moscow, I spent five days with Gorbachev. And we talked about the reunification of Germany, the possible end of the Cold War, the changes in the Soviet Union, and your grandfather's role, because he'd just been elected President. And so I came back from Moscow to a NATO meeting. And then at your grandfather's invitation, I flew right to Washington for dinner. And I went over everything of my five days with Gorbachev, to give him a better first hand view of what his key was going to be, what he was like, Gorbachev, and so on.

And when the visit had been arranged on a huge boat, I think in Malta, I came back down and met with the president again, and we went over the strategy that he should employ in dealing with Gorbachev for the first time in a formal way. He would say to me, "You're going to meet so and so, would you ask him what he thinks of such and such, because I want to do so and so? And tell him that I'm going to do it, and I hope he's ready to support me." That kind of thing, I did often for him. And it was credible, because everybody in the world circles knew that he and I had a specially close friendship. And when I passed on a request or a message like that, that I was speaking for him.

Sam: During my grandfather's presidency, his Vice President was Dan Quayle, who joined us on April 30th and one of my favorite moments from that conversation was when he shared the process that goes into selecting a Vice President.

Vice President Quayle: Well, every presidential candidate selects his running mate in a different way. Mondale in 1984 had a huge public ceremony of interviewing his prospective vice-presidential candidates. And he'd call them up to Minneapolis and they'd go in and have their hour interview then they'd come out and extoll the virtues of Vice President Mondale. You know, it was a big ceremony. Well, your grandfather didn't really like that. He thought that that was not becoming a vice-presidential candidate. So, he did it almost in the opposite way. He had an extraordinary vetting process, a guy by the name of Bob Kimmitt handled that. Golly, they went through finance records, health records, there's hours upon hours of interviews that you have. I mean, I told my wife facetiously, "I think Bob Kimmitt knows more about me than you do." She didn't think that was very funny but it was probably true.

Sam: One of the things I liked most about my grandfather was that even during his presidency, he always found the time to make memories with his family. And on June 24th, former tennis pro, Pam Shriver, joined "All the Best" and shared the story of the time she played a match against my uncles, Neal and Marvin.

Pam: Yes, well it was just a couple of months, as you mentioned, into your grandfather's presidency and he'd always wanted to see how his two highest ranked sons would fair against Chris Evert, who had won 18 singles majors, quite a few doubles, and Pam. I had just finished my partnership with Martina Navratilova. We were supposed to play at the White House but it rained that day so of course the President of the United States can get the court in Capitol right away. The court was cleared.

So we ended up playing indoors on a much faster service. I'm not making excuses; I'm just giving reasons why Chrissie and I ended up losing the match 6-4 in the third set. We could not break your uncle's serves. They came down and they felt like 150 miles an hour. We couldn't break them. They were so happy to win a match in front of their dad who was now President so Chrissie and I, wink-wink, we were happy to help the Bush family along with that nice tennis moment.

Sam: After my gampy left the White House, he struck up and unlikely friendship with his brother from another mother, former President, Bill Clinton. On May 13th, sportscaster, Jim Nantz, shared his front row account of the first time 41 invited 42 to Kennebunkport, Maine.

Jim: I can still remember, I was at the Final Four in St. Louis, this is Final Four 2005. I'm at the Friday shoot around practice and I'm talking to Roy Williams, the head coach of North Carolina. My phone keeps vibrating in my pocket and I'm wondering, is there an emergency at home?

So I happened, while Roy was...turned his back for a moment, I looked down and I saw my specially encoded phone numbers, said 41, so I knew it was your grandad. And I said, "Coach, good luck this weekend, I have a phone call to take," stepped aside and said, "Mr. President, I see you've been trying to call me." He says, "I need a favor." He said, "You know, I've been traveling all over with President Clinton, he's quite a guy. We're having so much fun. I really enjoyed getting to know him at a different level. I'd like you to come up, we've been talking about having a social visit together, a chance to kind of go vacation somewhere together." And ultimately I said, "You need to come up to Maine. That makes the most sense." So President Clinton said he accepts.

And then I told him, "We need an intermediary, we need somebody there to keep the conversation going." As you can tell, no doubt in this Zoom call, I have no problem conversing. He said, "We both agreed you should be the guy, I recommended you. President Clinton said, 'Sure, have him come.' So we want to know we're both not working, you're the guy that's working all the time, when can you do it?" So suddenly I had the date hinged on my schedule and I gave him a date. He did go back to President Clinton and asked him of that first date work and he was releasing a book about this time, the first date didn't work.

So he came back and asked for another date in June of that year and it worked. And next thing you know we got a two-day trip plan, nobody knows about it, that's top-secret. And part of the cool thing was the pickup, getting President Clinton on campus, so to speak. So he arranged for a book tour visit to a

bookstore somewhere in the upper reaches of Maine and we were gonna go pick him up on Fidelity Three, I think, at the time. So we did. We went to pick him up in this little harbor on a stormy day in Maine, shrouded in fog, pulling into these little port, agents and flanker boats, communicating with agents that are on the pier, and all of a sudden you can see something orange off at a distance, it was President Clinton in an orange Polo. They have a big warm embrace, these two guys. It was just awesome, there was nobody to take a picture of that or record that. He just thought it was gonna be great to be able to shuttle him back, it's about 45 minutes on the boat, by the way, back to Walker's Point. Problem was President Clinton had recently had a heart procedure and it was stormy day, so the ocean was rough. We've been jostled quite a bit and he said, "You know, I probably shouldn't do that, I don't want to knock anything loose, which might if we went back by car."

So this little detail had not been worked out. So President says, "Just come on, Jimmy, we're gonna go back by land." And we got into a Suburban, we didn't have the kind of convoy you think you would have with two Presidents. And we went down the interstate of Maine in traffic getting through Portland and no one had any idea. There were not sirens going off or motorcycle police leading the way, and we just took our time, and just listened to these two guys sit and reminisce all the way back to the compound.

Sam: On this podcast, we celebrate the legacies of both George and Barbara Bush and after my grandmother passed away, I think it was my cousin, Peirce, who posited the theory that without Barbara Bush, you probably never would've had a President Bush. And on September 9th, I asked the presidential biographer, John Meacham, if he agreed.

John: You know, I do, she didn't. We talked about that. She was a little dismissive of it. You know, one of the most remarkable things about their story always, to me anyway, into their 90s, there was a part of her that couldn't believe that Poppy Bush had chosen her. And there was a part of him who couldn't get over how lucky he had been to land Barbara Pierce.

And that's a wonderful infrastructure for a marriage. He told me, as, you know, your grandfather cried, you know, if the Mets lost so it wasn't unusual for him to tear up. But one of the things he did tear up about was the resilience and the spunk and the courage at some level that it took for her to go to Odessa and pick up and leave Rye and leave Greenwich and not have that, I sometimes describe it as you know, they could have lived in a New Yorker cartoon, and he would have been on Wall Street and would have maybe run for the House at some point or maybe the Senate, but their lives would have been circumscribed by that corridor that his own parents and her parents lives were part of. But

when he thought of going to Texas, she was all in. Same with China, same with running for President. She was always on board for the adventures that he wanted to undertake.

Sam: To those of you listening, we at the George and Barbara Bush Foundation wish you all the best in the adventures you undertake in 2021. Happy New Year and thanks for listening. 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.

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.