



All the Best Podcast
**Episode 63: “Inside the Bush School’s New Washington, D.C.
Teaching Site”**

Featuring Teaching Site Executive Director, Jay Silveria

Jay: September 1st, 2012. I was very surprised when a few weeks ago, our editor and friend, Lisa drew, called to say that Scribner was interested in re-issuing "All the Best," 13 years after it was first published. It has been a busy and sometimes tumultuous 13 years. A son became President of the United States, our country endured and survived 9/11. Bill Clinton and I became, according to Barbara Bush, the "Odd Couple" as we teamed up to raise money for disaster relief, both here at home and aboard.

And our family continued to grow and thrive as grandchildren married and started having children. And through it all, Barbara and I grew old, happily and peacefully together. I have indeed been blessed. All author proceeds from this revision will be donated to the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. Next to family, the Bush School students and their interest in serving their country is the most important thing in my life. I feel very good about leaving our world in their hands. All the best, 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."

Jay Silveria was recently named Executive Director of the newly established Texas A&M Bush School of Public and Government Services teaching site in Washington D.C. which will open just a few blocks from the White House, later this January. Silveria is the former president of the United States Air Force Academy. He graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1985 and later earned Master of Arts degrees from both the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and from the National Defense University. He was also a senior executive fellow at Harvard University and later returned to complete the Harvard Seminar for new Presidents. Silveria had a distinguished 35 year career in the United States Air Force, serving in leadership positions in Europe, the Middle East and the United States and retiring as a lieutenant general. Jay, how are you doing today? Thanks for joining us on "All the Best."

Jay: I'm doing fantastic.

Sam: Well, Jay, couldn't be more timely to speak as you are now preparing for the very first orientation for the very first class of students to study at Texas A&M's Bush school in Washington, D.C. What does this debut mean to you and everyone with the Bush school?

Jay: I mean we have to put it in context, right? Look around. Now could not be a better time for us to talk about governance and proper governing and policy making in the right policy choices being made by our public official's. So think about these young men and women that are starting their graduate program now in the middle of this and they're not going to go out and be policy makers right now but they will be in the future and they will always know and always say that the foundation of their learning began right in the middle of this. And so now could not be a better time for us to be stepping up in D.C. and opening up this program.

Sam: So, Jay, how many students are in the very first Washington, D.C. class and what are your ambitions for the teaching site?

Jay: we're starting with 12 students for this cohort and I think in context, the Bush School in College Station, its first cohort was 17 students and now there are well over 300 so I think we're going to be on that trajectory. But I think what's different about the site on L. Street, we're at 16th and L, right in the middle of it, is that we're going to be so much more than just a graduate school.

You're going to be able to walk off the ground floor and see Texas A&M, the logo and learn about the University, were going to have classrooms with the graduate degree, but also, we're going to have a place there that we can have forums, discussions, conferences and simulations and exercises for those policy discussions. And then we're going to have a space on top, on the 10th floor where we're going to have up to 150 seated to think about lectures and speakers. Part of the degree but also to have those conversations right in the middle of Washington, D.C.

Sam: Well, Jay, you've already told us a little bit about the space but I have to hear more. Why is opening a teaching site in Washington important for both Texas A&M and the Bush School and I want to hear more about the infrastructure.

Jay: We're going to have 47,000 square feet in four different floors and as I mentioned, the ground floor, you're going to be able to drive down L. St., walk down L. St. and you're going to see across the façade there of that building, the Bush School of Government and Public Service. So that's the first thing that we're doing is showing that Texas A&M is here in Washington, D.C. And then the rest of the spaces I described, yes we're going to have classrooms but, hey it's Texas, right? That's not enough. It's gotta be bigger. And so we're going to move to the 9th floor. And the 9th floor is University space. I think that's really important here.

It's Texas A&M University space, not Bush School space. And the Texas A&M University, it allows them an opportunity to have conferences and forums and have those discussions. And I mentioned the 10th floor where we'll have speakers and lectures. So let me go back a little bit to your question of vision. So put all that together and all of those floors, there's gonna be class going on, there's gonna be a discussion forum going on, there's gonna be people from undergrad programs that are visiting D.C. and using this space. People from the law school and the business school are going to be here doing internships and programs in Washington, D.C. So those floors represent all those different things that could be going on at the Bush School in Washington, D.C.

Sam: Jay, I want to talk about a perspective student. Why should they consider the Bush School?

Jay: Well, I'll take that in two parts. We're going to start first with a Master's of International Policy that will be for a mid-career professional. Someone who's been in government service or private sector for six years and then once we advance their education, you know, help out their career, that's the first program that we're offering. But in short order, next year, we'll be offering a Master's of National Security and Intelligence and that will be a more traditional Master's degree with recent graduates without the restriction of six years and it will give them an opportunity to have a study in International Relations and National Security Intelligence at the seat of the federal government.

You know, I've been in College Station and talked to a number of students at the Bush School and large percentage of Bush School graduates work in Washington, D.C. I just met with the D.C. Aggies which was an outstanding group. I met with them and they call themselves "Bushies," the Bush School graduates that work in Washington, D.C. And there are so many people that graduate from the Bush School and want to work in federal service so where else would they rather be than here? I can see a time in the not-so-distant future where we'll have students coming for one semester, we'll have faculty that are coming out here for one semester because your question about what do we bring, what do we bring that's different, right? Well, we have excellent faculty, we're in an amazing location. Well, there's a lot of schools here in Washington, D.C. that have excellent faculty and are in a great location but what do we bring? We bring the connection to the Bush School of College Station but we also bring a connection to Texas A&M University and the Aggie network. And none of those schools can offer that. That's our value proposition. That's what we're going to offer that those schools cannot offer.

Sam: Well, Jay, our main theme on "All the Best" is service. Everyone has their own path to service and your career is certainly emblematic of that. Can you take our listeners through your journey of service?

Jay: I was privileged to have a 35 year career serving in the United States Air Force and I loved every minute of it. And it was very clear to me at the end of that, I retired as the Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy which was just really a magical place to be. With young men and women, 18 years old, who were stepping up to serve our nation and I wanted to continue to be a part of serving and part of something that represented that and the Bush School covers that in so many ways.

Sam: Well, Jay, it seems that there's so many people who are down on politics today. What's the path forward and what would it take to get good people involved in public service again?

Jay: Well, now the time couldn't be better to have that exact conversation about what it means to be in public service. You know, if you struggle with what the government is doing, then this is an opportunity and a path for you to make a difference and we have that opportunity for them. We have a foundation that these graduates can see and a path that they can see to public service. So I think if anyone is down on politics, maybe they're down on politics but they can never and no one ever should be down on our government. And we're going to give people an opportunity to serve their nation. To be in public service and now could not be a better time to have those conversations.

Sam: Jay, I'd like to go back to the letter you read earlier in the show from my grandfather. He said, "Next to my family, the Bush School students and their interest in serving their country is the most important thing in my life. I feel very good about leaving our world in their hands." Jay, can you elaborate on why our listeners should feel the same way?

Jay: Well, I think they're going to be special people. They're going to get an education of the Bush School and they're going to get an education in Washington, D.C. and make those connections, you know, hopefully into public service of some sort. But ultimately to be service-minded. To be about making a difference whether it's in public service or the private sector but to be service-minded. The legacy that you mentioned is that connection back to the Bush School and people are drawn to that. They don't just want an education. They want to be part of something like that.

Sam: Well, Jay, I'll end with this and thank you so much for giving your time and stories and gosh, we're excited to have the Bush School in D.C. Why is it so important for young people to be engaged in public service?

Jay: Well, first off, about the Bush School being in D.C., I think that you and all the Bushies that I met, need to consider the fact that we're in Washington, D.C. and that our facility is a home for them. And those young people that are signing up see that. And perhaps they're looking at some of us and maybe I'm a touch older and they're looking at our generation right now about how we're governing and they have an opportunity now that they can start on a path to make a difference. And they can start on a path to service but make a difference in our nation and nothing better than to do that right in the shadow of the White House.

Sam: Well, Jay, I know they're in great hands with you at the helm there. We are here to support you and the rest of the students however we can. Good luck and thanks for coming on "All the Best."

Jay: Thanks, Sam, I appreciate it.

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.

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.