



All the Best Podcast

Episode 91. To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Required

91. Featuring Paula Trivette, Former White House Nurse

Paula: February 24, 1993. Dear Mary, Kim, Paula, Art, Ellen, and Debbie, your Valentine care package arrived. I was feeling a little grumpy when it came in, and then I cheered up. It was a joy hearing from you all. I love the book, addresses, special dates like your birthdays—hint, hint. The toys you sent me make me wonder what you think has happened to me, but all's well here. Our new house is starting up. We'll spend two-thirds of our time here and one-third in Kennebunkport. As to Kennebunkport, how about focusing in now on mid-June? Tell me it will work. I'm thinking of around June 11th through the 13th if weekdays are better, Wednesday the 9th through Friday the 11th would suit us fine. Here's the idea: Arrive for dinner on whatever night. Spend the next night and then the next and then out you go. Three nights and two days. How does that sound? Some of the time I will be looking busy typing, phoning, doing chores, but most of the time I will be taking you out on Fidelity fishing, golf, tennis, anyone? Debbie, you have to challenge up. In the evenings, cooking out. You do the dishes. Lobsters, music, if the Bertster shows up, will let him tell us about the vaccinations and I will give you my latest Marine Corps jokes. We'll sing Roger Whittaker ballads. No, Paula, no, please don't. We'll phone Roger. If he's not home, we will talk to Roger's wife and ask her what he's really like. We will not join the bawl baby patrol. I still bawl when people say nice things, but we will only permit laughing. We will let you call your spouses free on my long-distance line. Treatments, of course! The schedule

you proposed suits me just fine. Barbara Bush says, "No way," but I'm in charge and I say, "Hey, let's go." OK, talk to each other, figure out the best dates. If those June dates don't work, how about the next week? Any time 14 through 20 if you fly to Portland, Don will meet you in our truck. The bed on that truck is not clean, but it is comfortable. If you take a bus to Kennebunk, I will meet you if you fly to Boston, get budget rental to fix you up. We'll have a car at the point so you can buzz around town or go to L.L. Bean's while I'm looking busy. Is it a deal? Please say yes. Warm regards, George Bush.

Sam: Paula Trivette was born in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, the 9th of 18 children. During her senior year of high school, she received the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing Scholarship, which fully funded her nursing education. She earned a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from University of Maryland and a master's of Science in Health Care Administration from the University of Colorado. After graduation, Paula was assigned at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, Fort Carson in Colorado, The Ninety-Seventh General Hospital in Frankfurt, Germany, and Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. In September of 1987, she was assigned to the White House Medical Unit, serving during the administrations of President Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Paula retired from the army in 1993 and moved with her family to Greensboro, North Carolina, where she worked as a critical care and rapid response nurse. In 2012, Paula was selected as a North Carolina great one hundred nurse and retired from civilian nursing in 2019. We couldn't be more excited to have Paula Trivette with us here today on "All the Best". Paula, it's great to see you.

Paula: Thank you so much, Sam. It really is my honor and a privilege to be here. You do not know how special this is for me. The fact that the little Sam LeBlond I knew growing up is now honoring his grandparents in such a wonderful way to keep them close in our hearts and minds is just the most amazing thing for me, and you've done a fabulous job with these podcasts. And I hope that I do you proud.

Sam: Well, I'm sure you will. You certainly buttered the host up enough right there that was so nice of you to start out with. Before we get into your time at the White House with my grandfather, I have to ask you about your personal path to service. What inspired you to join the army and pursue the career of nursing?

Paula: Well, Sam, when you come from a large family—and as large as mine, my parents had 18 children—from the very get-go, the message was, if you want it, go get it for yourself. So they did not pay for high school education, so I knew they

would not have the finances to pay for college either. So I just started looking for any type of scholarship to get me to go to school. I had no idea if I wanted to be a nurse or be in the army. It was just, you know. When you're 18 years old, you don't know what you want to do, but I was looking for someone who would pay me to go to school, essentially. And I came across a fully-funded scholarship offered by the army in nursing, and it was offered by Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing or the WRAIN program. So I applied for the WRAIN program and was accepted in this four-year nursing scholarship. I owed them three years' payback after my four years of nursing school, and I was stationed at my first assignment in San Antonio, Texas, where I just happened to fall in love with intensive care nursing. And I might, as an aside, say I also intensely fell in love with the guy by the name of Bill Trivette, and that is 45 years ago this coming weekend. So it was a very wonderful assignment in San Antonio, Texas. So then we moved to Fort Carson, Colorado; Frankfurt, Germany; then back to Washington, D.C. And pretty much most of my nursing was in critical care, and I also did some administrative coordination, coordinating work, so that was really, it was because I needed someone to help me fund my education is how I ended up in the army and in nursing, and it, I think it was the best bet I ever took in my life.

Sam: So we thought we had a big family. We're not even close. Where did you fall in the 18? What number?

Paula: Well, of course I'm a middle child. So, well balanced.

Sam: Right in the middle?

Paula: Right in the middle. Number nine. So I'm right there and we have several that have passed away at this point in time, but I still consider myself a middle child.

Sam: Well, it takes a pretty special type of person to care for some of our most injured veterans, which you've done throughout your entire career. I know that you answered the call on many occasions. Can you talk about your experiences in Germany and at Walter Reed and how it prepared you, possibly, if at all, for your time in the White House?

Paula: Sure. It certainly prepared me for my time at the White House, but it also did not prepare me for my time at the White House. But the way in which it did, being a critical care nurse, now, in Germany, we took care of our active-duty

soldiers, their families, independent parents, children, spouses, whoever were there. We didn't see a lot of traumatic injuries from an act of war, but many critical things, heart attacks and problems with lungs and accidents and that type of thing. And caring for also brain injuries, strokes, that type of thing, which when I first came into critical care, I had no experience whatsoever with nursing, and my very first, I would have to say death, was of a 12-year-old girl who fell backwards off of a slide at Fort Hood, Texas. And at that point in time, I didn't know if I had the stomach to continue in critical care. That just really upset me on how someone so young could be essentially gone. But I learned to act, to react, and to not let my emotions overrule the fact that you had to, regardless of what the situation is, you've got to do your job. You can't faint at the sight of blood. You can't vomit when you feel like you just can't stand that stench anymore, you just have to go on and do what you are trained to do. And that pretty much is what I did in Germany. We would prepare, I can go on to say, we would prepare soldiers if they were in very critical condition or their family members to be Air Evac'd back to the states. And I got involved in the end of that as a nursing administrator, and a lot of what we did was prepare those flights for patients leaving Frankfurt Army Medical Center at the time and sent them mostly to Walter Reed. So then I end up being at Walter Reed and I was originally the assistant head nurse of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, which later became the head nurse of that unit, and it was the army's largest critical care unit. Learning to manage people and of course, that has to do with patients as well. And I tell people, no matter where you go in life, you got the good, the bad, and the ugly, and that is true in nursing and wherever you are. And fortunately, the good generally outweigh the bad and the ugly, Has been my experience. So at Walter Reed, that was really what tried my soul. I thought if I survived this, my marriage and my family and myself can survive anything from here on out. It was a very stressful time, and when my boss came, I just told my boss I think I was just burning out of critical care, and I told her that I just needed a change. And she came back a couple of weeks later and she says, "How would you like a job at the White House?" And I said, "The White House?" I thought she was talking about this restaurant up the street and get the heck out of nursing and, you know, go be a waitress or something. She says, "No, no, no, THE White House." And of course, I had no idea that there were nurses or anything at the White House. But she said, "Oh no, there is a position available." And so I won't go into all the particulars of that, but when I say how it prepared me for that position at the White House, you learn to react to act. Don't let your emotions rule you. You've got the good, the bad, the ugly people there, and you just have to do what you're trained to do. What I wasn't trained to do was clinic work. So first, our main job at the White House was the formulation of a plan in the event of a medical emergency for the

president and family. Secondary to that is the White House medical unit. There are about 2000 people on the compound of the White House at the time that I was there. And they are eligible to receive medical care. So as a critical care nurse, someone comes in with an earache, you know, I'm not too excited about that, but I had to learn, you know, it's a whole different set of skills that I had to learn in order to perform that job and to do that well.

Sam: How does that interview process go? Do you ever meet, at the time when you first started as a White House nurse, Ronald Reagan was in office. At what point did you meet the president? After you got the job?

Paula: Yes. But I can tell you, because the first day that I went for an interview was really a day that is emblazoned in my mind. Probably more so than my first day at the White House because I was just, I was nervous, but I thought, you know, "How do you prepare yourself for a interview at the White House?" Of course, I put on my spanking Green Army uniform, hopped on the metro, got off at the Farragut North exit, and walked a couple of blocks up to the White House. And I just kind of stood there and had one of these out-of-body experiences where all of a sudden the pearly gates are opening. There's the White Mansion in the distance and the Golden Road to the White House, and I see someone waving to me and I thought, Oh, that must be St. Peter. Well, that St. Peter was not. It was the nurse who preceded me at the White House. And so she took me in and took me upstairs to the old executive office building right across from the White House and introduced me to the medical unit staff, and that staff generally consists of the physician to the president. And then there are four other doctors, Army, Navy, and Air Force doctors. There were four nurses when I initially began with President Reagan, and we increased the six nurses by the time I left with your grandfather. Then we have technicians, Navy corpsmen to handle most of the logistics of things and scheduling, and civilian secretaries. So it was a good conglomeration of people. So I essentially, I talked to them, but there were a couple of doctors who were not available when I went from my first interview. So I was asked to return and I took that as a good sign. I thought, "Hmm, that must be OK." Well, when I came back for the second interview, then it wasn't, I can't say as friendly because it always was friendly, but it was much more "OK. What would you do if...?" So I think they were just, you know, the first time it was getting to know you, the second time it was getting to know what do you know and how will you react or how will you respond? Would you know what to do in an emergency of this nature? So I guess that I passed it all, but I have to tell you when, the way that I found out about being accepted as a White House nurse, my husband and I and sons were up at West

Point. We had a brother up there or I had a brother up there and we had gone to visit him. We had at that time, a Spanish-speaking nanny who lived with us. She also spoke English, and when we got home, she comes out to the driveway. She's holding a vase with three white roses, and she looks at me and she says, "Congratulations, you got to the job." And I just froze and I thought. "I got to the job, you mean they left that message with the Spanish speaker nanny and they didn't bother to call me personally," but so it was just the way in which it went into the on Monday morning, I called to confirm that yes, I had gotten the job.

Sam: And so you transitioned through Reagan's presidency to my grandfather's. Do you remember meeting my grandparents for the first time? Do you remember that transition? How was that like for a White House nurse?

Paula: Well, at the time that I was there as a nurse for, at the White House, we covered essentially President Reagan. But of course, your grandfather was the Vice President, so I had seen him and seen your grandmother, but I really didn't have a lot of interaction with them because the physician assistants were the ones that covered the vice president's travel. So really, the first time I actually saw your grandfather and was with your grandfather was inauguration night. And of course, he had attended, what, 13 balls or something like that. And you probably don't remember, but he was really coming down with a cold and he had to get some laryngitis going on him. And so I rode in the elevator with Dr. Moore, Dr. Larry Moore, and I covered all the events that night. And he, you know, even though he could barely speak, he just had this, you know, twinkle in his eye and just a glow about him that was ever so wonderful. And I just thought, Well, you know, because I really hated to see President Reagan go, and I thought, "Hey, this might be fun, after all," you know, because you you hate to see one go out. But then it turned out to be just a wonderful, wonderful experience which I will never forget.

Sam: Hmm. Well, Paula, one of your duties was to travel with my grandfather when he was president, all over the world. One of the more infamous trips you made with him to Japan in 1992 with a banquet with Prime Minister Miyazawa. My grandfather fell ill, causing a bit of a news story globally, to say the least. What do you remember about that trip to Japan in 1992?

Paula: Oh my, I remember almost every single detail of that trip. First of all, I have to preface it to say that we had flown from Washington, D.C. to Tokyo, and as soon as we get off the plane, he, President Bush is invited to play tennis with Kiichi Miyazawa the prime minister. And of course, he plays tennis with him. But

unfortunately, he lost the game of tennis and you know how the Bushes are at losing in sports events, but I'll go no further with that one. So I think we're in a bit of a not such a good mood to begin with. Well, immediately after playing tennis, he is offered sushi by the prime minister. And of course, he loves sushi as much as he loves broccoli, and we know how much that is. But ever the accommodating guest, he will eat the sushi. Now, I am not insinuating whatsoever that it was bad sushi. Whenever anything the president eats or drinks, it generally is prepared by the Navy stewards or the preparations overseen by the Navy stewards. They were not on the tennis court at the time, so he has the sushi. He goes to the Akasaka Palace and I get a phone call maybe an hour or so later. "Paulita, I need some help. He's got some tummy troubles." So I said, "Well, let me talk with the doctor," so I talk with the doctor. And, you know, we just decided better out than in and we'll just fix them up so he can go to the, there was a dinner that evening at the ambassador's residence, so we head over to the dinner. There is receiving line first prior to the dinner. So he shakes a few hands and is starting to not feel so good. Excuses himself, goes into the bathroom and probably throws up, then comes back out. He has got something on his tie. Secret Service gives him a new tie. He shakes a few more hands, returns to the bathroom, comes back out. New tie, shakes a few hands, and this is going on. So I told the doctor that we can count the number of times he wasn't doing so well by the number of Secret Service agents without ties who forfeited their ties for him. So we decided he's probably getting very dehydrated, and perhaps it would be good for us, it would behoove us, to move closer to him when he stood to give his speech. So as we are working our way, and that was Dr. Burton Lee and I are working our way to the head table, all of the sudden you see it going into Kiichi Miyazawa's lap, and I just felt so bad for him because here the whole world is seeing this event. Of course, then you see Secret Service agents jumping across the table. You see, you don't see, but I'm scurrying around the table to get to him. Cameras are playing through this whole event, which they should not have been, but, unfortunately, they did. And I get around the table. I look down at the floor and I just had to hold my breath. I mean, our president looked dead. He was gray and ashen as could be, and I immediately reached for a pulse, and there was something very rapid and thready. And that's not a good sign, but I wasn't sure if it was his pulse or mine that was rapid and thready. But then it took a few minutes. We loosened his tie. I'm not sure which agent had given him that tie, but we loosened his tie. And then he starts, you know, kind of coming around, and I knew that he would stand up and walk through the crowd of people. He was not going to go out on a stretcher or a wheelchair. He was going to stand up when he got ready to leave. I noticed a huge wad of vomit in his hair. I said, "I got to get that out of there. He can't go walk through those people with that vomit in his hair."

I don't even think about a napkin or a tablecloth. I just take my bare hand and I'm kind of just trying to get this vomit out of his hair. And when the videotape is playing later back, Secret Service are reviewing it, they say, "And there is Paula just patting his head, saying, 'It's OK, Mr. President, it's OK.'" So we go it with the motorcade back to the Akasaka Palace. Your grandmother, Mrs. Bush, is given instructions to finish giving his speech for him. And of course, your grandpa wants to just crawl into a hole and die at this point in time. I acknowledge I know that you just, you know, want to do that. And he says, "Oh, I'm fine now, I'm fine now. You can go, you can go." Well, I learned over the time that as long as you could present something positive for you, he would buy into it. So it didn't matter what I said about him, but the fact that I will find something positive. So I said to him, I said, "Mr. President, think about it. I have my own private suite next to the greatest leader of the free world. I have a TV, a VCR, a hallway full of Secret Service agents. Don't ruin it for me. I will stay and I will be with you until Mrs. Bush returns." So when she returns, I told her that I am here, you know, through the nighttime, I'll be checking in on him. And if you need anything in-between time, don't hesitate, you know, knock three times on the ceiling or whatever, and I, I will be there. And so the next day, you know, he did fine. We cut back on his schedule, and the following day we left and came back to America and I lived to tell the whole story. He knows that I tell the story occasionally, but he does not. He said, "Can't you come up with a better story?" But the only thing I forgot to tell you, Sam, though, is the only thing presidential I didn't get on my little red dress was vomit.

Sam: Well, that's good. Thankfully. Paula, I think it's obvious that there was a bond between you and all the White House nurses and my grandfather. I would love if you could tell or talk about that special bond. How did it develop? I mean, I know that's kind of towards the end of his presidency, but this had built up throughout four years, with you guys kind of bonding.

Paula: Exactly. Yeah. And I think too, we would talk about this, and why is it that we are so special to him? And when you think back, you look what the what was the medical unit to him? It was a sanctuary. That was a place he could come, nobody was going to ask him questions. Nobody was going to ask anything of him. He could just chill out. He could lay on the couch, take a nap, do whatever he wanted. And that was fine. That was a place for him to come alone. But he also loved to have fun. And so, you know, he was just such a practical jokester and we just, you know, loved our time with him. And the thing that I think every nurse would agree with me on is whenever a motorcade would arrive. Of course, we

were all in position as we got out of our. I was generally in with the photographer and press secretary, so we would get out, get in our position. And then the president, of course, would get out last and he would stand up and look around and scan the audience. You could just see him scanning, and as soon as he would see the nurse, it was either a "Hi" or wink of his eye or a nod of his head or something to say, "OK, my nurse is here, I'm good." And it was just, you know, and maybe that never happened, but we all thought it did. And we just thought, you know, we were all just so special to him. And then as time went on, we just, you know, did fun things, you know, with him and for him and, you know, just to be included. He treated us like we were family and who would not want to, you know, be a part of the Bush family. And I said the extension that we were was just phenomenal.

Sam: And well, I want to talk about one of those fun things because it's really funny and really fun. And I think not only did you become close, but you started a fan club with my grandfather dedicated to British singer-songwriter Roger Whittaker. Does that even sound right? I don't even know, who is Roger Whittaker? How did this start and how did this end up with Roger Whittaker visiting the fan club in person?

Paula: I know. It is very, very bizarre. But whenever your grandfather would come into the medical unit, we would have cassette tapes playing, and one of the nurses brought in one of the cassette tapes of Roger Whittaker. One of my favorite songs on that tape was, and I think it was your grandfather's too was "I Should Have Had Dogs," and we played that tape over and over and there was a celebration. There was just lots of, you know, just fun songs on the tape, which I knew that he would love. Well, somehow, inadvertently, the tape got destroyed. So he was just, you know, jokingly just and "Oh my gosh, what are we going to do?" You know, so he initially starts this Roger Whittaker fan club and the we had a theme and the theme was more Roger in our lives. He initially, President Bush initially was the president of the Roger Whittaker fan club, and he decided that, well, he really shouldn't be president of the United States of America AND the Roger Whittaker Fan Club. So he had a general Kim, well she was not general at the time, but Kim became a recording secretary or she became president of the club, and President Bush became the recording secretary of the Roger Whittaker Fan Club. Now this club was only open to the nurses and you had to request membership into the fan club. So when I requested membership, it was accepted, and if you want me to tell you all about my letter and what I did to get accepted into the club, I'd be happy to do that. Ok, so Roger Whittaker, of course, being an English balladeer, grew up in the back streets of London. And so in my letter, I said that I grew up along the back

streets of London as well, and I had met Roger and I thought, "Oh, this would be a great thing for me to combine my talent with Roger Whittaker." But as time went on, I realized, "Oh no, I think I've got to leave him and go become a nurse in the United States Army." But it is because of that relationship that Roger and I had, which never existed. I pined for Roger for the good times, and one of his songs was "The Good Times." Well, then I get out this guitar, I have a fake beard on, a mustache, and I am lip synching and playing the guitar to "For The Good Times," the name of his song. My beard starts coming off, the mustache starts going, and I'm still playing away there. But I got accepted and my letter says that I was number five, and I think I have a copy of that letter. Would you like to hear my acceptance?

Sam: I would love to hear your acceptance letter to the Roger Whittaker fan club.

Paula: Ok, so it says "Dear Paula Trivet. Congratulations, you have been accepted as a charter member of the Roger Whittaker Fan Club. The membership committee met behind closed doors and the discussion was vigorous (and it was probably only him). Your membership tape will be forwarded. It is Roger at his scintillating best. We will let you know of the meeting schedule. You might recall that you can be dropped from membership if you fail to attend any meeting. This is not a threat, but I'm not kidding either. Then he says, We are so very proud of you. You are a member number five, and that's of six people. Seven. We hope you will be able to attend the Roger Whittaker Memorial Church service. Attendance is optional, but we know you'll want to give thanks for this great talent. Details will follow. Joyously yours for more Roger in our lives. Sincerely Kim, who is the president of our club and George Bush. P.S. P.S. Your fantastic tape will be a part of the Roger Whittaker Memorial Library forever. So, so fast forward then to the letter that I first read to you where we were planning, where he is inviting us to come up in June of 1993 just wants us up there in the worst way. And of course, we wanted to go in the worst way and we all got, we came up in a van, but prior to coming up there, and now, we had no idea what we would be facing when we got up there, but we said, "Oh, we thought about fun things to do." So we had ball caps that had RW Fan Club--Roger Whittaker Fan Club--on the top and then T-shirts with our picture superimposed next to Roger Whittaker on these. And we all arrived at Kennebunkport wearing these t-shirts and ball caps. Well, President Bush always to one-up one on us, he had initially sent us these passes so that there wouldn't be any confusion when we got to Kennebunkport, just the passes are waiting for us when we go in. Well, we had no idea that Roger and his wife, Natalie, were going to be at Kennebunkport that weekend, but he had, so your grandfather presents us. We

had our t-shirts, we had our ball caps. He had gotten each of us a pair of sweatpants and on the backside of the sweatpant on the pocket, it said on one pocket "Nurses weekend, Kennebunkport, Maine, June 1993" and then on the other pocket it says "More Roger in our lives." And so of course, we had to wear these sweatpants. I still, I don't have the sweatpants, but I've saved the pockets from that. So it was just an amazing experience to meet Roger and his wife, Natalie, and he gave us two two-hour concerts in their, I call it the castle, in the castle up at Kennebunkport House. Yes, the big house. And it was just the most amazing time. We also went over to the docks, a little cottage and, you know, just had a had some little appetizers and things there before we went to the big house. So then the next event that we met him was at your grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary in Nashville, Tennessee. Roger and his wife, Natalie, were there, and so we have just stayed friends with them over time. Well, then I think it might have been two years before your grandpa died, we were visiting him in Houston because he had just gotten home from the hospital, I believe, and we face time with Roger in England, so the story goes on and it's just the most, you know, wonderful experience. Roger's still living. Unfortunately, I don't keep in touch with him anymore, but I might have to get that going.

Sam: Sounds like the fan club still lives on, though.

Paula: The fan club lives on. Yes, absolutely.

Sam: That's great. Well, Paula, you've made a priority out of giving back to your community, not just nursing and all the amazing things you've done in your career, but you've raised money for breast cancer, and I heard a story about you donating stem cells to a total stranger. Yes. What inspires you to continue to give even when you already give so much in your job? What is it?

Paula: You know, your grandfather had a saying, and I believe it's from Luke 14:28 in the Bible, "To whom much is given, much is required." And I've always felt that I have been given much. I want to have a meaningful life and part of having a meaningful life is giving back the most I can to as many people as I can. Now, I have two sisters who are breast cancer survivors, and so that's initially what led me to do the Susan Komen Breast Cancer Walk. It's a 60-mile walk over three days and I've done three of them and it's probably all I can do, now I have new knees and I don't know if I can do it another time or not. But the day that I was going to do the first breast cancer walk is when I found out that I was a total match for this complete stranger who, all I knew he was a man who was dying of leukemia. Later,

I found out that he had one day to live before, prior to receiving my cells, or he would have not been alive today. So that was, to me it's just so gratifying. I just, you know, I want to make life better for other people, as I've had a good life for myself. Now, my latest gig, I should say, about the past 15 years I've been volunteering; Well, since I moved to Greensboro, I've been volunteering for the Salvation Army and I have become now it's pretty much a full-time volunteer job. But it's a win-win situation. They're in dire need of help and it's fun for me and I love the people I work with and I couldn't be happier just to help. I was born to work. I told my husband he married a workhorse and I think he believes that now, after 45 years, he believes that.

Sam: Well, I know the Salvation Army is lucky to have you. Well, I mean, they're a fantastic organization, but I'm sure they really are thankful that you're in there still working hard for them.

Paula: They call me the bulldozer.

Sam: I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised, Paula. Well, Paula, it's been so much fun hearing your story and all the wonderful anecdotes from your time in the White House. I'd like to end with this. When you reflect on your time in the White House with George and Barbara Bush, what memories usually come to mind besides the Roger Whittaker fan club?

Paula: You know what really strikes me, and I know you've probably heard it over and over again, but it's just so true that they just made you feel like you're the only one that mattered whenever they spoke to you and they were, you know, they did things to or they got to know people. Me, someone that I had nothing to offer to them other than the medical care if they needed it. But you know, that was beside the point. But the lowest rung on the ladder were just as near and dear to them as any president or prime minister or any other important person. One thing that that does whenever I think about them, there was a state event, a state dinner, and the dinner was over. President Bush comes into the medical unit because we had to wait there until all the guests had left and then he'd say, "Hey, you can go now we're going up to bed." And so, but he walks in and he says "Paulita," which was his little pet name for me, he says, "Paulita, come out here. There's someone I want you to meet." So I walk in the hallway and it's Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith. And he says to me, "I just want you to know that I know important people, too." So and I thought, you know, he just loves to joke and have fun. And that's what they were just all about such a family people. Not a time would go by when I didn't see

him when he didn't ask personally about Bill or my two sons, Evan and Eric, and he even called down and spoke to my son after we left the White House, and were getting settled in North Carolina. He spoke to my son, who didn't realize it was THE George Bush. When he called, he thought his friends were playing a joke on him. So when your grandfather says "George Bush here," he goes, "Heya George!" which has mortified him to this day. But they're just the most honest, giving people in the world and to feel like I'm a part of their extended family just warms my heart, and I don't think we have ever had a more kind, giving, and caring president than your grandfather.

Sam: Well, Paula, thank you so much for being on the show. Thank you for taking care of my grandparents and being such great friends of theirs. It's great having you. I loved hearing about Roger Whittaker, I could hear, I could listen. I want to join the fan club, but I have to... Where do I put the letter in?

Paula: Yeah, you got to request membership. We'll meet behind closed doors. It would be a vigorous discussion.

Sam: Sounds about right. Well, Paula, thanks for being on "All the Best".

Paula: Oh, and all the best to you. It's been a thrill. Thank you so much, Sam.