

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships



"It is a grand mistake to think of being great without goodness and I pronounce it as certain that there was never a truly great man that was not at the same time truly virtuous."

— Benjamin Franklin, American Founding Father, inventor and statesman (1706-1790)

Upcoming Events

May 18-20, 2006
Regional WHF Meeting
Seattle, WA

June 8-11, 2006
Commission Meeting
Annapolis, MD

October 19-21, 2006
WHF Association Annual Meeting & Seminar
Washington, DC

Fellows Plan Visit to Central and South America

The current class of Fellows will travel to Panama, Colombia, Chile, Brazil and Argentina during the first two weeks of May.

Many thanks to all the Alumni and Friends of the Program who have contacted the office to offer assistance with arranging meetings or events.

If you have questions regarding the International Policy trip, please call or email Education Director, Candice Grandon at 202-395-7477 or cgrandon@whf.eop.gov.

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

What Mattered Then Matters Now

After our Fellowship year, Jeff Glueck and I started Site59, a website devoted to last minute travel deals. We grew the business with a great team of people, hit profitability after two years in operation, and sold the business for \$43 million to Travelocity in 2002. Since then, the six of us that founded Site59 are still together, and we've worked hard to turn around Travelocity – from a company that lost \$55 million in 2003 to a profitable company growing at twice the rate of its competitors in 2005.



What's been particularly interesting about this journey has been realizing that the things that mattered most when we were 80 people in one packed room are still the things that matter most now that we are 5,000 employees across the globe. The scale and scope are vastly different – but what works is remarkably similar.

The team matters most: Tragically, public opinion about corporate executives is at a low, and yet, no enterprise succeeds if it isn't full of talented, committed employees who believe in something bigger than themselves. So, how to bridge this divide? I believe being 'the boss' means it's my job to put other people first and to make sure my organization is full of people who are smarter than I am and passionate about winning. It's incumbent upon us as leaders to dare our team to think big, to be honest and direct with them, to be their champion for career growth, and to obsess about getting obstacles out of their way. Jeff and I learned this lesson profoundly after 9/11 when Site59, which was located two blocks off Ground Zero, suffered an enormous setback, with revenue falling 70%. We survived and prospered, ultimately beating our original pre-9/11 budget, for one reason only – we had a team of people that was committed to each other and that would not accept defeat. And, if you look at the Travelocity turnaround, the key ingredient is the same – a passionate team committed to winning.

I believe there is no greater correlation for success than how

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Alumni Update

Gene Dewey (68-69)

has been named a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Military Academy and will be honored during June Week ceremonies at West Point.

Steve Gill (92-93) has been named one of the top 100 talk radio hosts in the country by Talkers Magazine. He was also recently ranked as the most powerful media personality in Tennessee by Business Tennessee statewide business magazine.

COL Rich Hooker (92-93) is the Commander of the Support Brigade for XVIII Airborne Corps at Ft Bragg, NC.

Captain Eric Hothan (02-03) of the NYPD is now assigned to the FBI in New York City.

Ray Jefferson (99-00) will join McKinsey & Company's practice for the Pacific region in Singapore.

Jerry Johnson (04-05) is Vice President for Corporate Development for American Capital in Bethesda, MD.

More Alumni Updates on Page Three

passionate the team is about being a team and winning. And, so, Jeff, our leadership team, and I think and talk about our people all the time; we hold brown bag lunches with employees; we visit every office; we leave our doors open; we do weekly email letters to all employees; we survey every employee about how they are feeling; and we act on their feedback. Have we always gotten it right? Of course not. But, our team is our priority, and in today's age of skeptics, this matters... enormously.

Take risks: Startups realize you can't create without taking risks, and, yet often, large companies find risk-taking an easy concept to float, but a hard one to execute. Many leaders mandate, "Let's create the next big innovation. Let's take risks," but overlook that, fundamentally, taking risks *implies* greater failure. Too often, what leaders say sounds like "Let's hit nothing but home-runs." So the average employee is left feeling paralyzed, afraid failure will translate into professional setbacks. My job is to make sure our team knows I value the lessons learned from our failures almost more than I value the success stories. If people feel you won't tolerate failure, whether in a startup or a large company, you'll never get intelligent risk-taking. And, without this, creating something great is simply impossible.

Stay hungry: One last thought: it's easy to stay hungry when you are a startup. With a fixed amount of money in the bank, every moment counts. Yet, it's just as important in a big company to avoid complacency. At Travelocity, the hard-earned dollars our customers spend with us are an investment in their own hopes and dreams. It is a calling we can't ever take lightly. Online travel is hotly competitive, and, to win, each of us has to believe we can make a difference. Every interaction with a customer counts. Every time any of us touches code, or a marketing campaign, or a spreadsheet, we must expect greatness from each other. Simply wanting it badly is fundamental when you are an entrepreneur – and instilling this same sense of hunger when you are running a big company, while more complex, is just as critical.

For Jeff and I, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Contributed by Michelle Peluso ('98-'99)

Discovering the Value of the White House Fellowship

The White House Fellowship has been described as "America's most prestigious program for leadership and public service," yet relatively few people know the program, its history or magnitude. When recruiting for the program, I usually get questions about the significance of being a White House Fellow. I focus on the influence of the program on my life and career.

My first observation after completing the program was that my life had changed, yet I did not know how. In the months that followed the fellowship, I came to realize that I had been through a rite of passage, and as a result, my perspective of the world around me was different. My leadership skills had also been greatly improved. I am now more compassionate, analytical, creative and decisive. These were qualities that I had before the fellowship, but flourished as a result of

the experience.

Upon completing my fellowship year, I returned to California to resume my medical practice. Although I chose to stay out of full-time government service at first, I felt a need to participate at the board or commission level. With the election of Governor Schwarzenegger, I applied to serve on the Medical Board of California, as well as other smaller boards and commissions.

A few months passed before I received a call from the Governor's Appointments Unit asking if I was still interested in serving on the Medical Board. I was honored by the call, but I explained that I was a young physician, early in my career, and that the prestige of serving on the Medical Board should be reserved for more qualified senior physicians. There was a pause in the conversation after which the caller simply said: "Cesar, you were a White House Fellow. There is no one who would be more qualified than you to serve on the Medical Board." Humbly I accepted the appointment.

Last year I was asked by Governor Schwarzenegger to return to full-time government service as the Director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority. I was honored to assume this new leadership position, but also a little anxious about the operational responsibility of running a state department. I have been a leader all my life, but this was my first significant experience as an administrator.

The first week on the job seemed very familiar and the anxiety quickly dissipated. During the fellowship I served as a direct advisor to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. Except for the time devoted to fellowship activities, I spent my fellowship year observing, learning and being mentored by Secretary Thompson. The work placement was certainly prestigious, but its true value was not evident during the fellowship year. Secretary Thompson is a great administrator, negotiator and consensus builder. He leads by example, always speaks the truth and is passionate about improving the nation. Those were just some of the leadership lessons that I would learn from my mentor.

As I began to make decisions as a new state director, I noted Secretary Thompson's influence in my thoughts, ideas and actions. I quickly assumed the administrator's role as if I had been doing the job for years. By observing a talented leader in a similar role I had learned the job. Another gift from my fellowship year was being discovered.

For those that know the program, being a White House Fellow has served as an amazing calling card. My life has been blessed with opportunities, but the ones I have received since completing the fellowship have been beyond my expectations. My career is ten to fifteen years ahead of my peers, and I credit such success on having served as a fellow. The next few years are sure to reveal more gifts from the fellowship that are not yet evident.

Contributed by Cesar A. Aristeiguieta, MD ('02-'03)



More Alumni Updates

Lee Nunn (72-73) is the Middle East Regional Manager for NANA Pacific, LLC, headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska.

MajGen Ed Rice (90-91) is the Director of Air and Space Operations, HQ, Pacific Air Force at Hickham AFB, HI.

Stefanie Sanford (96-97) is the Deputy Advocacy Director, National Initiatives, for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Washington, DC.

Marshall Turner (70-71) is President and CEO of Toppan Photomasks, Inc. in Round Rock, TX.

LETTER FROM BAGHDAD

Hello from Baghdad to the community of White House Fellows worldwide. Recently I was reminded of the degree to which we are interconnected. I received an email from Steve Parker a White House Fellow in the Office of the First Lady. This year's class spent a day visiting wounded service members at Walter Reed and while there met an amputee who was wounded in action. Incredibly, he is a Soldier in my Brigade. As a result of that coincidence and the impact that meeting Specialist Lopez and his wonderful family had on the class, I was asked by the Director to share my thoughts on Iraq.



My class reported to the White House in early September of 2001 and all 12 of us were together, watching the towers fall, when our lives changed on 9/11. But my opinions that follow are not about the President's decision to go to war, and the strategic or operational decisions we've made since then, but instead are merely a lens to focus on what the volunteer military is doing for this country today.

There are many alumni of this program who have served or are now serving in military, governmental, and private sector positions connected to this endeavor. Many have already shared their insights in this forum, my goal is simply to provide one additional Army snapshot.

I am currently serving my fourth tour in the Middle East, this time as an operations officer in the US Army's 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad. Our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen here are performing superbly under the incredible stresses of ground combat and strains of separation from loved ones.

This war is personal for every American regardless of their politics or position on this conflict. Our connection to this war goes beyond geography or culture; we are linked by a phenomenon called the volunteer military. My cousin, a Marine Infantry Lieutenant and Platoon Commander was wounded in Iraq and lost his leg in a roadside attack in 2004. Two years after his life changing injuries, we are still in Iraq.

As a professional military officer, I do not engage in public debates on the complex arguments that are clearly articulated by both supporters and opponents of this war. As Americans, this discussion is healthy. I do not believe that our troops feel unsupported because our citizens are exercising their right to question, frame issues, and weigh options. The media is doing its job here, often at great risk, and we are doing ours; nonetheless, as I read the stories back home, I cannot help but think that something is lost in translation. From my vantage point on the ground, Iraq is at a critical juncture as it establishes its government and builds up the necessary diplomatic, political, military, legal, and essential services infrastructure required to support a society. The Iraqis with whom I work day in and day out tirelessly endeavor to improve their condition and deserve the effort and resources we are expending.

I will close by sharing insight into the Soldiers I serve alongside. They are a cross section of America, and I am continually inspired by twenty year olds who are committed to making a difference at such a young age. Our citizens patrol the streets of Baghdad in harm's way and build trust where it matters most: on the street, with the people of this nascent democracy. Soldiers are compassionate and thoughtful in the conduct of their duties. Make no mistake, they are trained to be lethal instruments of national power when necessary, but they are asked to do so much more. They build schools, attend local governance meetings, clear roads of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), work public health issues, assist in hostage rescues, and render immediate aid to the wounded. They even aid injured insurgents, demonstrating the value of a professional force that abides by the Law of Land Warfare. Perhaps most important, they build and train a just and disciplined Iraqi security force, designed to be capable of standing the tests of power and politics that inevitably loom in Iraq's near future.

Our Soldiers do all of this as a team, humanely and without complaint. It is very powerful and, frankly, humbling to serve with these men and women. I am proud of the Soldiers of the Cobra Brigade and look forward to the day we return to Fort Hood late this year.

Contributed by Lieutenant Colonel Rich Morales, ('01-'02)

**WHITE HOUSE
FELLOWS
GUEST
SPEAKERS
APRIL 2006**

Rick Hess

Director of Education and Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute

Christiane Amanpour

CNN Senior International Correspondent

Brit Hume

FOX News
Managing Editor

Wendy Kopp

President & Founder, Teach for America

Donna Shalala

President of the University of Miami

Ben Bradlee

Vice President, The Washington Post

Alberto Gonzales

U.S. Attorney General

Sam Brownback

U.S. Senator

LTG Steven Blum

Chief of the National Guard

General Peter Pace

Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

Bob Dole

Former U.S. Senator

Antonin Scalia

U.S. Supreme Court Justice

FELLOWS FORUM

Friendship, Leadership, and Renewal

We've all heard, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog," and as part of the Education program my class has heard this idea repeated by more than one prominent person.

This is usually offered as a joke, but a joke that is only funny because the teller believes it to be, for the most part, true. This is sad. And while I'm not a veteran of Washington—I've only been here six months—I also think that it is untrue. Friendship is not merely possible, it is essential.

Aristotle argued that Politics was noble because it aimed at the highest good--the good of the entire city--and his *Nicomachean Ethics* (a study of the good and how it can be lived) can be read essentially as an introduction to his Politics. His *Ethics* is divided into ten books, each book addressing a different subject. Only one subject receives two books; that subject is friendship.

Friendship is essential for many reasons, but among these is certainly that friends improve each other. Aristotle calls this 'mutual correction' so that "you will learn what is noble from noble people." Friends are essential to growth because they correct us. Emerson wrote, "Better to be a nettle in the side of my friend than his echo."

Part of the education of the Fellowship year is, for me, learning how our nation's most prominent leaders spend their time. Those that I find most impressive, usually have some regular discipline about creating time for real thinking, and also creating time for friends.

They avoid the trap of priding themselves on how 'busy' they are; how early they arrive, how late they stay. Of course long, demanding hours are sometimes necessary, but when time for thought and time for friendship are consistently lost to the demands of the Inbox, certainly our essential faculties degrade over time, and perhaps we lose also the sense of purpose, and joy, that we take from our work.

After the Fellows 40th Anniversary celebration I started reading John Gardner's *Living, Leading, and the American Dream*. I started, as Francesca Gardner recommended, with the essay on Personal Renewal. In the essay Gardner writes that we learn from our jobs, but also from our friends and families, and he writes that this kind of personal renewal through learning is central to living a balanced, full, meaningful life.

Coming into the Fellowship, all of the alumni comment upon how, for all of their wonderful experiences in the year, what is ultimately most meaningful to them is their relationships with the other members of their class. More than halfway through a year of incredible experiences, I think that this is certainly true for our class as well. And I wonder if part of the genius of the founder's vision for the Fellowship was to see that we would emerge not only with a real understanding of how the Republic functions, but, returning to our lives at the end of the year, we would emerge as well with a true group of friends.

Contributed by Eric Greitens, ('05-'06)



REGIONAL SELECTION PANELS

As of Friday, March 31, we have completed six out of the nine Regional Selection Panels. Thank you to all of our Panelists for participating this year, especially our Panel Chairs, who include:

Washington, DC I

Mr. William Hagerty, IV
Managing Director, Hagerty, Peterson & Company, LLC

Dallas

Mr. Ron Steinhart
Director, United Auto Group, Inc.

Atlanta

Mr. Jarvin Levison
Partner, Arnall, Golden Gregory LLP

Los Angeles

Mr. Jerry Silva
Strategic Information Manager for Public Affairs, Southern California Edison

San Francisco

Mr. George Drysdale
Chairman and CEO, Marsman-Drysdale Group

Washington, DC II

Mr. Frederick W. Chockley III, Esq.
Partner, Baker & Hostetler LLP

Chicago

Ms. Delilah Flaum, Esq.
Partner, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw

Boston

Judge Lloyd D. Macdonald
Administrative Office of the Superior Court
J.W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse

New York

Mr. Kevin Arquit, Esq.
Partner, Simpson Thacher and Bartlett

SPECIAL PROJECT ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Education Program Archives

As part of a project on the history of the White House Fellows Program, we are seeking copies of the Education Program from 1965-1980 for our archives. If you have a copy of the speakers and activities from your fellowship year, please send it to Education Director, Candice Grandon, via fax at 202-395-6179 or via email to cgrandon@whf.eop.gov.

Annual Meeting Invitations

We wish to honor people who have been particularly supportive of the Program over the years. We invite you to provide the names and contact information of one or two people who you believe had the most impact on you during your Fellowship year. The individuals you submit will be issued an invitation to attend a special event in their honor at the Annual Meeting in October. To request an invitation for your principal or other mentor, please visit the White House Fellows Association website (www.whff.org) and click on "Invitation Request Form," fill in the appropriate fields and click "Submit Form" at the bottom of the page.

Recruitment Seminars and Receptions

We are looking for Alumni who are willing to host recruiting events in their communities, at their places of business or other appropriate venues. If you are interested in helping with our recruitment activities, please contact Public Relations Director, Page Archer, at parcher@whf.eop.gov or 202-395-7297.

About the White House Fellows Program

The White House Fellows Program is a non-partisan program that offers exceptional young leaders first hand experience working at the highest levels of the Federal government.

Fellowship Selection Criteria:

- A record of remarkable professional achievement early in one's career.
- Evidence of strong leadership skills and the potential for further growth.
- A demonstrated commitment to public service.
- The knowledge and skills necessary to contribute successfully at the highest levels of the Federal government.

For more information, please visit our webpage at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fellows>.

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships

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