

JEFFERSON EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

Former President George W. Bush Highlights Jefferson Global Summit XIII Speaker Series

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A crowd of 1,800 came to Erie's Bayfront Convention Center to see President George W. Bush.

The greatest takeaway from the Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit XIII speaker series? That's an easy one:

Former President George W. Bush, relaxed and polished, owned the stage, the spotlight, and the crowd of 1,800 at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center on Nov. 9. He combined wit and charm with some pointed political remarks in a rare post-presidency appearance in Erie, Pennsylvania.

The event marked a number of firsts for the Jefferson: first time to host a former American president; largest crowd to see a Jefferson program in person; highest average attendance per event; and the dramatic appearance of former Gov. Tom Ridge, who introduced his famous friend to Ridge's appreciative hometown Erie audience.

President Bush, leaning back and often grinning as he poked fun and fielded questions from longtime Global Summit Chairman Steve Scully, offered insights about his presidency and his life post-presidency.

“We are so grateful for the Erie regional community’s support of our summit, which we’re proud to say took a major step forward by hosting a former President of the United States,” noted Jefferson President Ferki Ferati. “We are grateful to President Bush, for the other excellent speakers, and the many people and organizations that made the summit possible.”

While President Bush’s keynote appearance garnered the greatest attention, this summit provoked thought, entertained, and prompted excellent audience questions from start to finish. Notably, it drew the most diverse crowds yet for Global Summit events and turned out the greatest number of students in summit program history. Gannon University’s partnership in serving as the host site for five of the summit’s eight programs was also a clear difference-maker. All events were sellouts or near-sellouts.

The eight Global Summit XIII events were supported by major sponsor LECOM Health, and other leading sponsors that included Erie Insurance, the Thomas B. Hagen Dignitas Award, Gannon University, Logistics Plus, Erie Community Foundation, Printing Concepts, Inc., ECGRA, PNC, Brock Institute, Erie News Now, RBC Wealth Management, Your Erie Jet 24/Fox 66, Northwest, WQLN, MenajErie Studio, Humes Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, Marquette Savings Bank, McDonald Illig Jones & Britton, Erie Reader, Jewish Community Council of Erie, Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority, Knox Law, Curtze Food Services, National Fuel, and Brith Sholom Congregation.

Following is a brief summary of Global Summit XIII as the events took place from Nov. 1 through Nov. 12.

**Clayola Brown with DeWitt Walton, Nov. 1 at the Jefferson Educational Society:
*The Impact of Systemic Racism in Communities of Color***



Clayola Brown and DeWitt Walton kick off Global Summit XIII at the Jefferson on Nov. 1.

Brown, president of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute in Washington, D.C.,

discussed racism in both its blatant and subtle forms. This labor and civil rights activist provided a number of personal examples as she made the point that racism hurts all races as it manifests itself in workplaces and the culture at large. Likewise, Walton, a Pittsburgh labor leader, advocated government policy solutions and the continued need to raise awareness of racism's negative effects on the economy, workplaces, and society.

Jeffrey Rosen with Lisa Adams, Nov. 3 at Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom in Waldron Campus Center: *An Evening with Jeffrey Rosen, President of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia*



Constitutional scholar Jeffrey Rosen answers a question from moderator Lisa Adams.

Author, scholar, and nationally acclaimed commentator on America's judiciary and court issues, Rosen showed his command of Supreme Court history, practices, and how ideology, context, and precedent affect court outcomes. With questioning from Lisa Adams of Erie News Now, Rosen offered remarkable detail and analysis of justices, their opinions, personalities, and the changing political nature of the high court. He also discussed the esteemed subjects of his books – Ruth Bader Ginsburg, William Howard Taft, Louis D. Brandeis, and others.

Camille Busette with Ben Speggen, Nov. 4 at the Jefferson Educational Society: *The Power of Policy Reform to Address Racial Justice in Erie*



Allegheny College career advisor Autumn Parker, third from right, makes a point as one of the panelists discussing policy reform to address racial justice in Erie. From left are Jefferson Vice President Ben Speggen, Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Camille Busette, Mary Desmone, Equity Coalition of Erie co-founder Kendrick Tate, Parker, Urban Erie CDC President Gary Horton, and PA United policy researcher Elspeth Koehle.

The Brookings Institution's Busette, accompanied by a panel representing the Better Together Council's Erie Racial Justice Policy Initiative and Jefferson Vice President Ben Speggen, discussed data and trends in Erie and comparable cities. Busette and the group's work addresses public policy issues and will also lay the groundwork for future policy reforms. The panel also discussed their own organization's viewpoints and challenges.

Anita McBride, Stacy Cordery, and Barbara Perry with Steve Scully, Nov. 8 at Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom in Waldon Campus Center:
The History and Role of First Ladies



Historian Stacy Cordery, at right, answers an audience question. With her moderator Steve Scully and former Laura Bush Chief of Staff Anita McBride.

This summit program, in partnership with the First Ladies Initiative at American University and the White House Historical Association, featured historian Cordery, former First Lady Laura Bush Chief of Staff McBride, and author and professor Perry (via remote video). First Ladies Eleanor Roosevelt, Jaqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon, Betty Ford, Barbara Bush, Hillary Clinton, Nancy Reagan, Michelle Obama, and Laura Bush were featured prominently. All agreed that Roosevelt and Clinton were in a class by themselves.

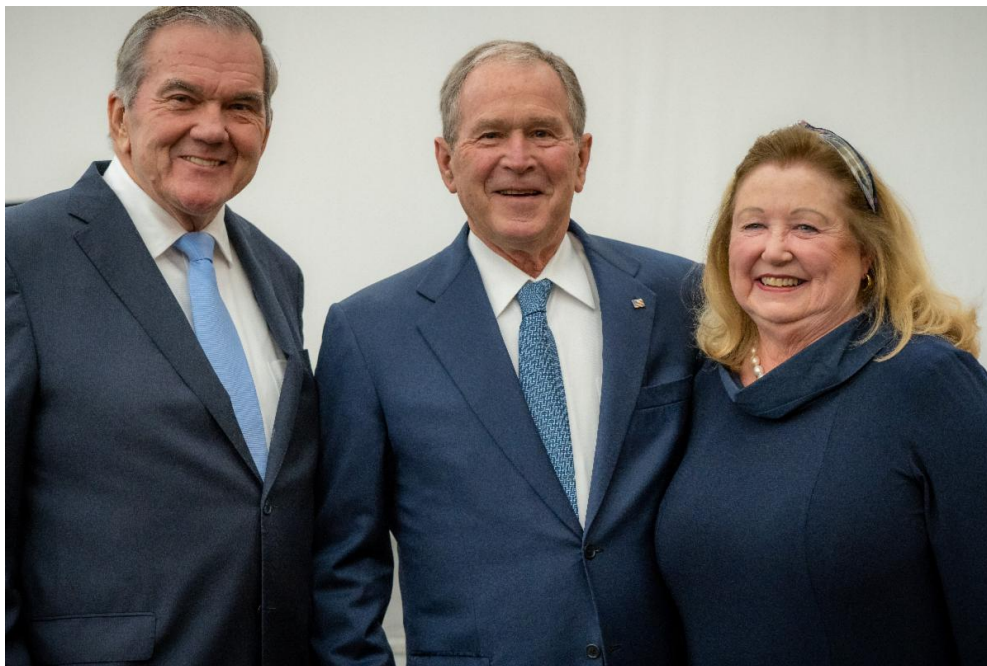
Former U.S. President **George W. Bush**, former Pennsylvania Governor **Tom Ridge**, and U.S. Senator **Pat Toomey** (R-PA) with **Steve Scully**, Nov. 9 at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center:
An Evening with President George W. Bush



President Bush chats with moderator Steve Scully, chairman of the summit.



U.S. Senator Pat Toomey and his wife Kris flank President Bush.



Former Gov. Tom Ridge and his wife Michele pose with old friend President Bush.



President Bush leans in to shake hands with Jefferson President Ferki Ferati.

In addition to the remarks discussed earlier, President Bush continually put the audience at ease with often self-effacing wisecracks and wry observations about the media, civility, and the need to heal division in America.

**Andrew Card and Mack McLarty with Steve Scully, Nov. 10 at Gannon University's
Yehl Ballroom in Waldron Center:
*A Conversation with Former White House Chiefs of Staff***



Mack McLarty, at right, chats with Andrew Card (middle) and Steve Scully.

Card, chief of staff to President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2006, wowed the crowd with humorous and touching stories about his coordinating role and key events of Bush's presidency, especially the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He also relayed a touching story of George W. Bush and his father, George Herbert Walker Bush, greeting each other in the Oval Office after the younger Bush's inauguration. McLarty, who served as President Bill Clinton's chief in 1993 and 1994, echoed Card's remarks about realizing the enormity of the job when their bosses were briefed on the nuclear codes once they entered the White House on their first day.

Doris Kearns Goodwin with Steve Scully, Nov. 11 at Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom in Waldron Center:
The New Deal to Great Society: FDR & LBJ



Steve Scully prompts a laugh from Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Historian Goodwin enchanted the sellout crowd with stories about many presidents, especially from the 20th century, but reserved her greatest praise for her personal favorite, Abraham Lincoln. Goodwin good-naturedly noted that the research and writing of her many presidential books invariably cover more years than her subjects' tenure in office. She also reflected on her love of baseball, the Brooklyn Dodgers, Boston Red Sox, and her dad, who inspired her research and writing career.

Robert Pape with Ben Speggen, Nov. 12 at Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom in Waldron Center:
Holding the Line: Political Violence in America and the Implications for Democracy



Author and professor Robert Pape, third from left, accepts the Dignitas Award from Erie Insurance Board Chairman Thomas B. Hagen. From left are Gannon Provost Walter Iwanenko, Jefferson President Ferki Ferati, honoree Pape, Chairman Hagen, Erie Mayor Joe Schember, and Jefferson Vice President Ben Spегgen.

Pape, an Erie native and University of Chicago scholar, reflected on his upbringing in Erie, the many people who influenced his life (the late Joanne Maxwell Mullen and others), and his team’s cutting-edge research that warns of the threat of more political violence in the wake of the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol to disrupt the certification of President Joe Biden’s victory. As the program unfolded, Pape received the key to the city from Erie Mayor Joe Schember and the Thomas B. Hagen Dignitas Award, the Jefferson’s highest honor, from Erie Insurance Chairman of the Board Tom Hagen.

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The Jefferson Educational Society office will be closed the week of Thanksgiving and will re-open on Monday, November 29. The JES staff would like to wish all of our members and patrons a happy Thanksgiving; from us and ours to you and yours.

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