



Gerald L. Baliles, Director

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## **President George W. Bush Selects U.Va.'s Miller Center To Conduct His Official Oral History, Says It Will Offer Comprehensive Look at What It Was Like to Lead during Extraordinary Challenges**

President George W. Bush has selected the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia to conduct a comprehensive oral history of his presidency, the Miller Center and the George W. Bush Foundation announced today.

President Bush said, "I am delighted that the Miller Center of Public Affairs will record for history detailed interviews with key members of my administration. This oral history project will offer future generations a comprehensive look at what it was like to lead the country during some extraordinary challenges."

Scholars of the George W. Bush Oral History Project will conduct interviews with the key figures of the Bush White House and Cabinet, as well as with outside political advisers, members of Congress and foreign leaders. The Miller Center plans to do approximately 100 interviews during the expected five-year run of the project.

The Bush Oral History is a continuation of the work the Miller Center began in 1981 with its acclaimed Presidential Oral History Program, which has conducted extensive interview projects on Presidents Carter, Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Clinton. Each of these projects has been undertaken with the endorsement of the president being studied.

"We are delighted that we'll be able to continue the important work of preserving for posterity the inside history of the contemporary presidency," said Professor Russell Riley, chair of the Miller Center's Presidential Oral History Program. "Our core mission is to work cooperatively with each group of presidential alumni, encouraging them to speak candidly to history about what

they saw and experienced during the White House years, so that future generations will come to understand each presidency as it actually was.”

“The 43<sup>rd</sup> presidency was, by any standard, among the most consequential of all in American history. We intend to hear directly from those who led the country during an exceptional time, to find out what the Bush presidency looked like from the inside—including both its successes and failures,” Riley continued.

“This Oral History will provide future generations with a portrait of the Bush Presidency in the words of those who know it best, just as the Miller Center has done with four other presidents. I am immensely proud of our Oral History Program. The Miller Center is unparalleled in its study of the modern American presidency,” said Gerald L. Baliles, director of the Miller Center.

The Miller Center is the only institution in the country now conducting presidential oral histories on a continuing basis. The program’s interviews are tape-recorded but kept confidential, with interviews held for release until the conclusion of each project and they are cleared by each interviewee. Typically, Miller Center interviews are conducted by a panel of nonpartisan scholars and run for a full day or more.

“Oral histories are an especially valuable complement to the paper and electronic records of the modern presidency, because much of the most important work of every White House is conducted orally,” said Professor Riley. “Our oral histories also fill an important void in knowledge about each presidency caused by the long delays in opening official presidential records.”

The Oral History Program’s cleared interviews on Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan have already been opened to the public. Its projects on Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton are still in progress.

The program also is conducting an extensive project on the life and public career of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, which included nearly thirty interviews with the senator before his death in August. Those interviews provided the framework for Kennedy’s posthumously published memoir, *True Compass*.

*The Miller Center of Public Affairs is a leading nonpartisan public policy institution aimed at bringing together engaged citizens, scholars, members of the media and government officials to focus on issues of national importance to the governance of the United States, with a special interest in the American presidency.*

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