

January 14, 2007

To Veterans and Principals,

As some of you know, I've had my hands full with some seemingly unrelated ("Murphy's Law") complications following shoulder replacement surgery a month ago. Lots of M.D.s trying to figure out what to do, which, I hope—and expect—will be sooner rather than later.

I'm not sure when I'll return to my office, although I'm keeping up with emails, correspondence, and the like here at home. But don't expect more speeches and papers for a while. (This lack will free up lots of your time!)

Midst all of this uncertainty, I recently implemented my *long*-planned retirement as chairman of the National Constitution Center. Preceded by a mayor who became governor, I'm followed by a former president of the United States. Enclosed is an article from the Inquirer reporting the change, as well as a lovely editorial generously describing my efforts. I confess that it sent my spirits soaring!

Best,
Jack

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

NATIONAL

Bush 41 will chair constitution center; Officials say ex-president will be actively engaged in leading the Phila.-based "jewel of America."

By Larry Eichel

Inquirer Senior Writer

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When he turned 80 a few years ago, former President George H.W. Bush made a promise to himself and his family: That he wouldn't take on any new challenges or causes unless absolutely necessary.

Yesterday, he broke that pledge, agreeing to become chairman of the board of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

The announcement came from Joseph M. Torsella, the center's president and CEO. Bush replaces John C. Bogle, founder of the Vanguard Group, who becomes chairman emeritus.

Torsella said the move indicated that the institution, which opened for business at Fifth and Arch 31/2 years ago, "truly has become a National Constitution Center."

Bush, 82, did not attend the ceremony; he is at home, recovering from hip-replacement surgery. He had the operation at the Mayo Clinic Jan. 3, the day after attending the funeral of former President Gerald R. Ford in Washington.

In a prepared statement, Bush said: "I am proud to chair this wonderful museum and education center, this jewel of America that brings the message of our constitution, a timeless document which continues to change and transform our world, to the nation."

Center officials stressed that Bush is taking on a job, not just a title. As board chairman, he will run twice-annual board meetings, one of which is held in Philadelphia, the other elsewhere. This year, the latter meeting is likely to be held at Bush's presidential library in College Station, Texas.

The former president also will be available to consult with Torsella. "He wants to be as involved and as active as his schedule permits," Torsella said. "Given that he's a former president and doesn't live in Philadelphia, there are obvious limitations to that."

Torsella said the center would not ask Bush to do fund-raising - a traditional role for the board chairman of a nonprofit organization - but added: "Do I expect this well help us to raise money? I certainly do."

The former president has had connections to the Constitution Center for years.

He helped organize its national honorary committee in 1996, narrated several videos on its behalf as it was getting off the ground, and made several visits here for center-sponsored events. On each occasion, his interest in the enterprise was well beyond the perfunctory.

His most recent visit to the center was Oct. 5, when he and former President Bill Clinton were awarded the 2006 Liberty Medal for their joint efforts in providing relief to victims of the South Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.

Shortly after the medal ceremony, center officials, knowing that Bogle wanted to step down, began focusing on Bush as a prospective chairman.

Torsella called Bush's office shortly after Thanksgiving to float the idea. Bush was out of the country at the time, attending a leadership conference in the United Arab Emirates.

So Torsella talked with Jean Becker, the former president's chief of staff.

"I immediately told Joe about the president's 80-year-old rule," Becker said yesterday in a telephone interview from Houston, noting that Bush had overlooked the rule only in the extreme cases of the tsunami and the hurricane. "I had to lower Joe's expectations."

In the end, Becker suggested Torsella write a letter making his case to Bush. She would show it to her boss upon his return. Torsella told her he was prepared to follow it up by traveling to Houston to make the pitch in person.

The journey didn't turn out to be necessary. The letter, which Bush read upon his return in December, did the trick, focusing on Bush's lifetime of "active citizenship" and how that tied in with the center's goals.

Over the next few weeks, through Becker, Bush asked a few questions of Torsella and made a few requests. On the Friday before Christmas, he called Torsella to accept the offer.

"For whatever reason, the president's always had a soft spot in his heart for the Constitution Center," Becker said. "He's been supportive of it since Day One. He believes in its mission."

To help with some of the week-to-week duties Bogle performed as chairman, Lawrence J. Kent, who runs a private investment firm in Wayne, was named chairman of the board's executive committee.

Torsella said he did not know exactly what impact Bush's involvement would have on the direction of the center in the years ahead other than to elevate the institution's image.

"This choice, and President Bush's agreeing to serve, sets the bar for leadership for generations to come," Torsella said. "And we have set the bar very, very high - exactly where it should be set."

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EDITORIAL

Editorial | National Constitution Center; Both leaders deserve our thanks

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Investment guru John C. Bogle can take great pride in being succeeded as chairman of the National Constitution Center by former President George H. W. Bush. But the one-time commander in chief may find that Bogle isn't an easy act to follow. The founder of the Vanguard Group Inc. led the Constitution Center during its critical final design phase, its construction on Independence Mall, its July 2003 opening, and beyond.

The cornerstone of Bogle's seven-year tenure on the board, of course, was a \$185 million capital campaign. He also presided over the center while it attracted other nationally known leaders and expanded programs to educate - while entertaining - three million-plus visitors about the nation's key founding document.

For Bush, the chairmanship announced on Thursday takes to a new level his long-standing interest in the interactive museum. It's also further impressive evidence of the former president's dedication to public service that he's willing, at 82, to assume these new duties.

Bush did plenty to help make the Constitution Center a reality. A decade ago, he narrated the earliest video on plans for the center. He has been associated with it ever since, serving on an honorary committee of living presidents and their wives.

The father of the current president joined President Clinton at the center in October to jointly receive the 2006 Liberty Medal for their tsunami and Katrina fund-raising efforts - skills that will be an asset in former President Bush's new assignment.

U.S. presidents swear to uphold the Constitution. The board chairmanship provides Bush with a special opportunity to support the museum's unique mission to bring the document to life for future generations.