

SPEAKER 1: Thank you, Wendy, that was very generous. No one could be happier than I am. You're such a worthy replacement that I'm delighted you're here. Wendy, I think all of you know, started life in politics and social services and domestic things. I was very strongly involved with empowerment of women.

But in more recent years, has moved into the international sphere where she has been immensely successful and work for, I think, four Secretaries of State, and was the principal negotiator with Iran on the Nuclear Arms Deal toward the end-- in the Obama years. And has now joined us. So thank you, Wendy, for your introduction. And of course, Doris, welcome home. I did not know about the IOP meeting here at the IOP.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah. It was 78 Mount Auburn in those days, and that's where my office was in the Govern Department. And my husband came to finish a book. And because he had worked for the Kennedys, they got him an office on the third floor.

So he asked me out to dinner. I, of course, knew he was, and he knew I'd worked for LBJ. But I remember I came home and met two of my great friends still now, Arthur [? Siegel ?] and Patti Saris, and I told them I've met the man I want to marry. I knew that night.

So 42 years we were--

SPEAKER 1: 43 years. 43 years.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: He was the best.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. He did-- he just-- he died here on this-- 43 years, yeah. We're going to talk more about that good one. But let me just-- I give a bit more introduction to Doris because she's a beloved historian and public speaker, storyteller. She's coming here.

She's been on the trail with her new book speaking to audiences all over the country. But she graciously carved out time and she said she really wanted to come to the Kennedy School and talk here. So we're delighted.

You should know that her new book, Leadership in Turbulent Times, is her seventh book. She had four books on presidents. First, on Lincoln, and that book was then made into the Steven Spielberg movie, and Daniel Day Lewis. And Doris, I think, hit it off really well.

The second-- then she had the two Roosevelts, and the FDR book won a Pulitzer Prize. And then she moved to Lyndon Johnson, and that was, I think, where so many of us first discovered you. And she can tell you the story of that book herself.

But you should know that she and Dick Goodwin-- one of their sons graduated here from Harvard. After 9/11, went in the Army, served valiantly in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Came back

and went to the Harvard Law School and is now in a management position at the Bank of America where we want to see him back in public life, as I'm sure we will.

But they served the country, and more than just talking about theirs, they sent their son. And that was a-- that's a big deal. Dick Goodwin was only matched by Doris as a raconteur. I so enjoyed some evenings we spent together over the years.

And he was what was called a lion of liberalism and a voice of the '60s. His memoir on his time in Washington, starting with the investigation of Quiz Show way back when. But he's known also-- he and Ted Sorensen had the finest pens, I think, of anybody who wrote speeches for presidents in-- over that whole period of time.

And he was a wonderful husband, as well. So we miss him. We miss him. But life may hold additional chapters when you're with the life--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: He was working on a book before he died, which he worked on the last five years. So his best friend, and our best man at our wedding, are going to finish it. It was really about public service and what an extraordinary life he had had in committing himself to that.

He had graduated from Harvard Law School first in his class, editor of the Law Review, clerked for Justice Frankfurter, could have gone to any law firm in the country, but chose to go into public life. And he did. As you say, the first thing he did was to investigate the rigged television quiz shows, the \$64,000 question in 2001, which was made into a movie called Quiz Show.

SPEAKER 1: It was Dustin Hoffman in the movie, wasn't it?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah, it was great movie. And then after that, he became the second speechwriter with Sorensen. But then his most important years actually were with Lyndon Johnson. And he-- with all the Civil rights speeches, the Great Society speech, the Civil Rights speech on voting rights, and Howard University speech. He wrote Bobby Kennedy's Ripples of Hope Speech in South Africa.

But most importantly, the moment when-- if I could just tell this story before we begin. I think his finest moment in public life-- and sadly, he left about six months later because the war was even then heating up and he saw it taking away from all the things he really cared about. But on-- the Selma demonstrations were taking place in the spring, just actually around this time right now in March of 1965.

And he decided-- LBJ did on a Sunday night that he was going to give a speech on Monday night to a joint session of Congress calling for voting rights. And so my husband had only that day, Monday-- I couldn't have done this if my life depended on it-- to write the speech for a joint session of Congress. And Johnson knew enough not to bother him.

So all day long, Johnson's just waiting for pages to come. And my husband's very-- well, he just doesn't want it to come until it's right. And they're all dying.

But anyway, it's an incredible speech. If you look it up, it just starts out, "Every now and then, history and fate meet at a certain time in a certain place." So it was at Lexington and Concord, so it was in Selma, so it was at Appomattox, so it was in Selma, Alabama.

This is not a Negro problem, not a white problem, not a southern problem, not a northern problem, it's an American problem. And we are here tonight to meet that problem. And then he said, but even if we extend voting rights, there's still much more to do to get equality for Negro Americans, as they were then called, he said.

But if we do this, and then he used the anthem of the Civil rights movement, we shall overcome. And that means that's when change takes place in the country when the outside movement meets the inside person. That, of course, was the anthem of the Civil rights movement.

But then in some ways, my favorite part of the speech was Johnson only bothered him once that day. And he said, I'd like to talk about my experience in Cotulla. And Dick knew what that was.

What had happened is Johnson took a year off from Southwest State Teacher's College to work, because he had to to make money. And he became a teacher in a small Mexican-American school. And he always-- it was an extraordinary experience for him.

He saw it, as he said, the pain of prejudice on their face. He saw the poverty. He contributed his early salary to get them sporting equipment. He was the band leader. He was everything in the school-- principal of this little school.

And so he wrote into the speech, I never thought in 1928 when I was teaching there that I would have the power now in 1965 to do something for the sons and daughters of those kids that I taught back then. But let me let you in on a secret. I have that power now, and I intend to use it. I mean, it was a wonderful speech.

[APPLAUSE]

And then six weeks later, the Voting Rights Bill passes.

SPEAKER 1: That's right. That was-- that speech was credited with passing the Voting Rights Act.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: The reason why voting rights was an issue then was the Civil Rights Bill desegregating the South had just occurred the year before. So everybody is saying, you have to wait. You can't have these two huge things happening at the same time.

But Johnson understood the timing made that possible when the Selma demonstrations were televised, and the violence was used. And he was right. And they got it.

SPEAKER 1: Right. Let's segue. And you've written about not only Lyndon Johnson, of course, but about these all four of the presidents that you've written about before and brought the lessons together. I'm curious because we have a number of students here who may want to enter public office. We hope many of them will.

And all four of them ran for office the first time-- they're in their 20s. They were all young when they ran. To help us understand what that experience was like.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, for Lincoln, he was-- he had just moved into this little town of New Salem, Illinois, and he decided to run for the state legislature when he was 23 years old. And yet, you could see something unusual about him. They had to put out a hand bill in those days to say why you were running.

So he starts off, every man has his peculiar ambition. Mine is to be esteemed of, but mine is to do something worthy to be esteemed of by my fellow man. And then he said, I don't know many of you. I come from the humble walks of life. I will do anything I can if you elect me to make it worthwhile.

But if you don't, I've been too familiar with disappointment to be very much chagrined. But then he said, but if I don't win, I-- like he's warning them-- I'm going to try again. In fact, I think I'll try five or six times until it'll be so disgraceful, and then I'll never try again.

But then he talked about the importance of education, and that that was the key in America, that every citizen should be able to have an education so that their-- they could rise to the level of their talent and their discipline. And how important it was to understand the values of the country, and to understand civics in a certain sense. It's so important right now. So that was him.

He lost the election. He comes back two years later, and he wins because he had then extended himself to that contact and everybody knew the striking person that he was. The difference is when Teddy Roosevelt ran, he was also 23. But there the similarities end.

Whereas, Lincoln had to scour the countryside for books because he had only 12 full months of education. And he read everything he could lay his hands on. Teddy had only to ask for a book in his townhouse in New York and take anything down or express interest in something and it would magically appear.

And when he decided to run for office in '23 in the silk stocking district in New York, it wasn't because he wanted to make lives better. The way Lincoln already saw that in '23, he said, it was just for the adventure of politics. People in my class didn't go into local government. I thought it would be fun.

He admitted later that he didn't really have an interest in making other people's lives better. He just was interested in what he could do. But then once he got into politics, and this is the best thing about a political career, is that he then began to feel more empathy for other people that he had never crossed in his privileged background. He saw what it was like to child labor. He saw tenements where cigars were being manufactured.

He then became police commissioner. He saw what it was like to be in the slums in the middle of the night. He was a soldier in the Army and he was dealing with all sorts of people.

He then said he began to develop what he called a fellow feeling for other people. It was conscious, at first, to know I'm looking in on other people's lives. But then it became natural.

And he argued-- I was talking in David's class about this-- he warned that the rock of democracy will flounder if people in other regions and places begin to see each other as the other instead of as common American citizens, the very thing that, I think, is happening right now in our country. But FDR was more of a laggard. He ran at 28, but not because he had done anything amazing. He had been not a very good student at Groton, not a very good student at Harvard, not a very good student at Columbia Law.

But they came to him, the bosses, and asked him to run for the Dutchess County Democratic seat, a safe seat. And the reason wasn't that he'd shown himself as something special, but because they knew his wealthy mother could support the campaign. But more importantly, that the district had some Republicans in it, as well as Democrats. And so there would be older people that might think he's Teddy Roosevelt, and so they'll vote for him, as well as the Democrats voting for Franklin.

But the amazing thing is that once he got on the campaign trail, he knew this was what he was meant to be. He loved it. He did the barnstorming. He listened to people's stories. He started speaking 10 times a day.

And Eleanor, who was there at the time said, he wasn't a very good speaker at first, that he would pause so much between the sentences that they thought he would never go on. But then after a while, he got more confident. They thought he'd never go off the stage.

But he found what all four of my guys-- I don't mean to be disrespectful by calling them my guys. I just lived with them so long that I feel that way. All four of them found in public life what the philosopher William James said is that voice within that says, this is the real me. This is my vocation.

LBJ was only 23 when he was at a picnic in Texas. He still hadn't even finished school at that time. But they had a picnic where all the candidates for the offices were supposed to come and speak on their behalf.

And the guy who was running for governor didn't show up. And that guy had helped his father get a job. So when they were saying, like I was going, going, gone, LBJ just pops up, I'll give the speech. And he gave such an incredible stem winding speech, his whole body going into it, that people noticed him. And he was then elected to help become a chief of staff to a young Congressman.

And when he got to Washington, he knew-- he said, the minute he walked there, this is what I want. I want to be a Congressman and Senator someday. He said, there's a smell of power in the city. Power has an odor. Power has a smell.

And so then he works his way up and he eventually becomes Congressman. But they all knew when they first got into it. And sometimes it takes-- I think that's what we all want in our lives to find a vocation that answers that deepest side in you that says, this is the real me.

SPEAKER 1: And do you think-- David Brooks writes about the summoned self, that people feel summoned to take on these great purposes. And others say, well, it-- no, it really comes through crucibles, and you have these moments when you're tested and you discover who you are and what your purpose is. How do you think that process works from a historian's point of view?

Because that's-- we're regularly asking about it with regard to our students. How do you-- I think you call it the mysterious formation of identity. I think that was a phrase you used.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: No, I think you're right that-- I mean, they all knew early on that politics was what they wanted. But the fact that they were able to move as far as they did, and to withstand adversity and come through trials of fire, I think was what strengthened them all as leaders. I mean, Lincoln, after he was in the state legislature for four terms, suffered a terrible defeat.

He had sponsored infrastructure projects for Illinois. He wanted small farmers to be able to bring their goods to market. So it had to do with dredging harbors and building roads and strengthening all sorts of transportation.

And it was what he had promised the voters when he made that very first hand bill. So he was the chief architect of this multimillion project. And the State of Illinois went into a recession, and the projects were left half built.

And the state then suffered badly from his projects. They had debt for years. People weren't moving into Illinois. And he was blamed. He took responsibility for it.

And that same winter, he had broken his engagement to Mary Todd Lincoln, not sure he was ready to be married. And he went into a depression so deep because he thought his ambitions were undone that he stayed in his room.

And his friends came, they took all knives and razors and scissors from his room fearing he would kill himself. And his best friend came to his side and said, Lincoln, you must rally or you will die. He said, I know that. And I would just as soon die right now, but I've not yet accomplished anything to make any human being remember that I have lived.

So that same ambition that he showed when he was 23 got him through that, and he eventually then went-- finished his term in the state legislature, ran for Congress, won a single term. Tries for the Senate, loses, tries again, loses. And finally runs for the only office he hasn't lost, for the presidency of the United States. But having come through that moment, when he went through dark days during the Civil War, he could remember that. I think that's-- you've been through the hardest thing maybe that you've been through and you somehow came out the other end.

The same thing happened to Teddy Roosevelt. He was in his second term in the state legislature. In his first term, he'd gotten sort of a swelled head, and he was known as somebody who loved to be in the center of attention. They said he wanted to be the baby at the baptism and the bride at the wedding, and the corpse at the funeral everywhere he went.

And he got a swelled head that first time. He would pound the desk and yell at his opponents. And then he finally realized he was getting nothing done. So he learned from that and he had grown.

And by the second time in the state legislature, he was getting bipartisanship things through the state legislature. And then his young wife was giving birth to a child. And his mother, who was only 49, had come to New York City to be with her. Teddy's up in Albany, and he gets a telegram saying, your wife has given birth to a girl. They celebrate-- cigars. And then an hour later or so, another telegram come and says, you must come home, your wife is dying and your mother is dying, too.

And he got home and his mother died from typhoid fever, which she had contracted when she got to New York the week before. 12 hours later, his wife died of complications from childbirth. He was so depressed by that he left the state legislature and he went to the Badlands. He had to do something physical. That was his way of always dealing with difficulties in his life.

And it took a while. He said, he'd go that-- to ride his horse 15 hours a day. He had thought he would never love again. And physical activity prevented over thought. But more importantly while he was there for two years, he was a rancher, a cowboy. He began to see the beauty of nature, which becomes his legacy.

And he goes back, and he eventually marries a woman who had been his childhood friend, and they had a long sustainable marriage. But as he later said, he never would have become president if that experience hadn't happened. Not only learning from that adversity, but he was a Westerner then after that, as well as an easterner, so he was able to appeal to the entire country.

FDR, of course, when he's still in his 30s suffers that bout of polio. And he had been a pretty good state legislator. He'd been an assistant secretary of Navy, but kind of arrogant himself, too, like Teddy was.

And then he suffers the polio which makes him paralyzed from the waist down. And he goes through years of just trying to learn to manipulate his body. They tell him his upper body has the greatest chance of coming back. His lower body never would, never did.

So he had the humility, then to exercise every day. He would ask to be lifted from his wheelchair onto the carpet, and he would crawl for hours around the floor. And he said, you learn humility that way. What-- you have to learn it. And most importantly then, he created the rehab center at Warm Springs for fellow polio patients.

And he said that's where he learned to share his vulnerability with his fellow patients. They would be in the giant pool and he became-- he was so proud-- I became known as Doc Roosevelt, he said, the spiritual director, the therapy guy, the everything. And they would-- he would give fun back to their lives.

They would have wheelchair dances. They would play water polo and tag in the water. They would have cocktail hours at night. And the people who had gone there said they learned that they had joy in life again because of Roosevelt.

So of course, when he comes into power with a depression and people paralyzed, he's the person to give them confidence that you can get through that. Lyndon Johnson, despite that Cotulla experience, and despite being young, and being a new dealer, and having brought rural electricity to the hill country, when he lost his first Senate race, that adversity sent him in a different direction. Instead, it made him become more conservative to undo his New Deal legacy, to undo his relationship with FDR because he knew the only way to win in Texas was to become more conservative.

So adversity can go in a different way. He finally loses the election, then he lost that first election in '41, then he wins in '48. And he just is really climbing the ladder in the Senate. And he becomes the youngest Majority Leader in the Senate.

And then he has in his '40s a massive heart attack. And he's so depressed that they think he's not even alive. He's lying on the bed. Until finally one day he wakes up and he says, shave me, I'm back. And so I later talked to him, I said, what made you come back?

And he said that he began to think about the fact that if he died right then, there was nothing he would be remembered for. What would he be remembered for? It's amazing that this was something that is all of them. And so he then gets the-- he comes back to the Senate. He gets the first civil rights bill through the Senate since Reconstruction, and then as president, his first priority is civil rights.

So I think something happens to these people. Personally, they can get through adversity, but it makes them think about I want something larger to be remembered by when my time is up.

SPEAKER 1: So what emerges then is that from your portraits is that these four people differed in temperaments a lot. They've differed in their physical capacity. They've differed in the gifts that they were given.

But that they were united in other ways, and that is fierce ambition. Roose-- like Teddy Roosevelt's phrase, rose like a rocket. Yeah. But then things--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Felt like it.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. But then had this enormous adversity coming to their lives across their paths that they had totally unexpected. But there's one more element there that you stress in your book, and that is, the how hard they worked with the gifts they were given. They were given different gifts, but each one strove so hard to develop the gifts they had.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: It's such a simple thing, but it's so important. I mean, Teddy Roosevelt wrote a wonderful essay where he talked about two kinds of success in the world. The first is, if you possess a talent that no one else, no matter how hard they try to emulate it, will be able to do it. Like Keats writing a great poem, Ode to a Grecian Urn, or Lincoln perhaps at Gettysburg.

And he said, but most people's success-- and he considered himself in that group, but he thought he was a better model for people than one of these greatly gifted people-- was when they developed the talents that they're given, which may be ordinary to an extraordinary degree through the application of hard sustained work. And I think that's true. I believe in that totally.

I mean, it's almost like a religious mission for me that hard work is what does it. And for Teddy, what happened-- what happened is he had a gift-- he had some gifts. He had a photographic memory. He could remember everything he read or heard.

He had a curiosity from the time he was young. Lincoln had that gift for language. And I he was born with empathy, which the others had to develop.

FDR had the gift of an optimistic temperament. And LBJ had an unbounded energy. But still what united them all was ambition.

Ambition is a good thing. You have to have ambition to rise to success.

SPEAKER 1: Ambition for what?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, that's the question. At some point, the ambition for self, which starts out except for Lincoln maybe with all of them, becomes an ambition for a greater good. And that's when you become something larger than yourself.

SPEAKER 1: And Lincoln was, in particular, someone who recognized the importance of hard work. He had to do it all by himself.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Oh, it's incredible when you think about what Lincoln did. I mean, he had to-- as I say, he had to scour the countryside for books. He had to borrow books. He would have to walk miles to get a book and bring it back.

And he had to teach himself, essentially, everything. He taught himself law. He just had to-- he got the books and he read them and he became a lawyer. But then it was-- I was telling the story to David's class today, there's a certain moment when he's doing pretty well as a lawyer in Illinois, but he is told that he might be part of a big case.

Edwin Stanton, who's a very well-known national lawyer from Ohio has got a case, a patent case, that's going to be tried in Chicago. So they thought-- they sent a partner there to interview somebody who might be good for the case who would know the judges. So they come and interview Lincoln. They think he'll be fine. He's so excited. This will be a huge jump for him to work with this brilliant Stanton.

But at the last minute, the case gets transferred from Chicago to Cincinnati, Ohio, so they don't need Lincoln anymore. But they forgot to tell him. So he kept working on his brief. He went to Cincinnati all on his own. He goes right up to Stanton on the street corner, Stanton and his partner, and he says, let's go up to the courthouse together and a gang.

Stanton takes one look at Lincoln, he's got a huge stain on his shirt, his hair is disheveled, and his arm sleeves are too short for his long arms. And he turns to his partner, which is recorded at the time, and he said, we have to lose this long armed ape. He will hurt our case.

They never open the brief he had painstakingly prepared. They don't let him sit with them in the taverns at night. But Lincoln stays the entire time of the trial because he wants to hear Stanton argue. And he goes back to Illinois and he says, I have to work harder.

So he teaches himself the six books of Euclid. He teaches himself philosophy. He teaches himself, as I said, math. And at night when he's on the circuit in Illinois, he's staying up late at night, or waking up early in the morning, to learn. And then he becomes Abraham Lincoln.

And the incredible thing is, years later when his first Secretary of War has been forced to resign, everybody says there's only one man that can run the Union Army. The one man who can mobilize the war department, and that's Edwin Stanton. He's tough. He's mean. He's blunt. He's intense. But he's your guy.

And Lincoln is able to forget that embarrassing moment and go to Stanton and say, I'll have you as my Secretary of War. And Stanton came to love Lincoln more than anyone outside of his family, which is incredible to let those resentments go, which is something so important in private life, as well as public life.

SPEAKER 1: In our class earlier when we were discussing the importance of character and leaders, you made the argument that empathy is probably the most important quality that we need in our leaders, and it's not easy. It's not obvious how one acquires that or how one incorporates that into their persona.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: I think the most important way-- I mean, sometimes I do think it was inborn in Lincoln. I mean, even as a child, he would be upset when he saw his friends putting hot coals on turtles to make them wriggle because he said, they're feeling pain.

So he obviously felt it. There was something that was inside of him. But I think for the other three, it was something that was developed by going out and meeting people in different ways of life. Certainly, for the two Roosevelts coming from a privileged background, they had to learn what it was like to live in the slums, or learn what it was like to have no money, or learn what it's like to live in a rural area.

And the most important thing is they extended themselves. And as Teddy said, as I said earlier, you develop then what he called fellow feeling, but it really was empathy. Without empathy, without understanding other people's points of view, you can't even understand who you're working with in the state legislature.

I mean, they said about Lincoln that he could understand what the Democrats were going to do when he was a Republican. And he could then anticipate their arguments. And he could counter them because he could feel what they were feeling.

And so they always brought him in to be able to counter what the Democrats were going to do. And so it came to him, but it was developed in all the others, and David and I have talked about this, it's one of the reasons why I think the veterans that we have more veterans going into the Congress this year than for many years, there's probably a good reason why in the '60s and '70s and '80s there was more bipartisanship than there has been recently, because 70% of the people in Congress and the Senate had been veterans in World War II, or the Korean War, they know what it's like to be with a whole group of people that are not from wherever you've come from.

They know what it's like to have a common purpose that binds you together. And so I think that's where empathy comes from. You can develop it, but that's-- and we've talked about how good it would be if you could have a year of national service, where when young people come out of school, whether it's vocational school or college, or high school, that they can have a year where they go to another part of the country, maybe the rural kid goes to the city, and the

city to the rural kid, and they work together on some common mission and begin maybe to develop an understanding of other people's points of view, and other people's feelings.

SPEAKER 1: You'll be pleased to know, parenthetically, that due to the generosity of the Leon Black family in New York, we're offering 25 fellowships a year, and starting next year, to veterans.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah, that's great.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. Come here to the County Schools, the law school, the business school, most will come here. Yeah.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: That's great.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah.

[APPLAUSE]

We can't-- I think it's really important that we sort of look at our own turbulent times and what lessons you draw from the past about how we ought to be approaching things. How can we get out of this, what many people consider a dark chapter?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, I think that when I chose the title for the book, first of all, five years ago, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, it was before President Trump. So it just happens that it's even more relevant today, perhaps, than it seemed to be five years ago. Although, even five years ago, there was a sense that the people in Washington couldn't do anything together. That it was-- they were broken as bipartisans.

And I thought then in a smaller way that part of it had to do with in the old days, they used to stay in Washington on the weekends. They didn't go home to raise money. I think money is the poison in our system, and we have to do something about it.

We have to do something about congressional boundaries being drawn by nonpartisan commissions. Four states passed that in a ballot this time. And there's states that are talking about reducing or reversing *Citizens United*.

We need a political revolution in the country, as we've had social and economic revolutions before. Our system is not working, even before President Trump got into office. And the divisions have escalated since then.

So what-- when I think about 2020 and who we might think about for the leaders, I think the problem is that we just figure out who can-- they talk about it in the journalist world, who can get what part of the pie? An African-American might get South Carolina, or a woman might get

X, Y, or Z, or somebody might get the heartland. I know it's important to win, but that's not the way we should be looking at these people.

Before Tim Russert died, he and I talked about the fact that the way journalists were covering elections was who said what in a debate, who raised the most money, when you should be looking, they've all come from somewhere. They've been leaders before somewhere. And we should be able to look and see, do they have these qualities?

Do they have humility, empathy, resilience? Can they communicate with a certain kind of purpose? Can they control their negative emotions? I mean, when you look at all these qualities, it makes you look at the present person in the White House.

But it's more important even now to think about who in 2020 has exercised these qualities before. We need to look back at what kind of teams they built. What were they like when they were leaders before? And not simply who's going to get what part of the pie, or who says what in an opening debate.

I mean, how they communicate and how they create a message and what ideas they have are really important. But unless you can make those ideas such that they become laws, or become bipartisan, then it's not going to finally work.

SPEAKER 1: That's-- you also-- your view about leadership that there are people who are political leaders, but they have to be people who are in movements, or in protests, who are leading in their own way to get out front to in effect change the environment and make it possible for political leaders, like Lyndon Johnson, to do something.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: There's no question-- I mean, when you look at the history of our country, all of the movements really towards social justice have come from citizen activism. I mean, it was said about the revolution even that-- by an historian here, Bernard Bailyn-- I love this line-- that the revolution was won in the hearts and minds of the people before the first shot was even fired. In fact, that first shot was fired in my hometown of Concord, Massachusetts.

And the embarrassing thing is, every time I take people to see the Minuteman Statue by Daniel Chester French and we're talking about the first shot was fired, all I'm thinking of is that in 1951, the Dodgers played the Giants, and this guy Bobby Thomson hit a home run that was called, the shot heard round the world. And I'm thinking of Bobby Thomson. I'm thinking what kind of an historian am I, anyway?

But at any rate, then comes the Civil War, and Lincoln said, don't call me a Liberator. It was the antislavery people and the Union soldiers that did it all. And then clearly, the turn of the 20th century, which is the biggest echo to now, I think, the conditions in the turn of the 20th century, I think, are what created the context for the 2016 election.

The Industrial Revolution had shaken up the economy much like global revolution and tech revolution have done today. It was the first time you had a real gap between the rich and the poor. We had a lot of immigrants coming in from abroad, which were then blamed for the fact that people, especially in rural areas, felt cut off from the people in the cities at the turn of the 20th century.

There were a lot of new inventions that made people feel the pace of life was speeding up too much-- the automobile, and the submarine, and the telegraph, and the telephone. And as a result, you had a lot of populist movements that were anti elite, anti Wall Street, and just arguing in some radical ways for changes. But there was also a social movement in the cities and the states, a settlement house movement, and social gospel in the religious movements, and they were arguing for the kind of reform that could be achievable.

And as a result, Teddy Roosevelt comes along and he's able to build on that progressive movement that was already out there, and create what he called a Square Deal for the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the wage worker. And he was able to get big companies that would be antitrust undone. He was able to get corruption of railroads and laws passed, food and drug laws passed, because he was able to mobilize the citizenry that was already mobilized.

And similarly, of course, for Lyndon Johnson, without the Civil Rights Movement, he never would have been able to move on civil rights. So I think right now for young people, especially, that it's really important. And that's what was encouraging about the midterm elections, that there were more people that stood on lines than ever before.

Young people got more active than ever before. More women entered politics and won than before. Veterans-- and I think it shows that the citizens are taking hold of the situation we're in, the troubled situation, and maybe it's going to happen in the cities, in the states.

But it's-- and it's already happening there, and that's where we should be looking. But that's the key toward change. It can't just be at the top. It has to be [? bare-- ?] the women's movement, the gay rights movement, all of-- environmental movement, all these movements where the push from the outside that got into the inside.

SPEAKER 1: They do take a long time.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: They do take a long time, which is hard when you're living in the middle of it.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah, yeah. I mean, Civil Rights Movement, the women's vote to succeed--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: It's incredible how long the women's movement was. Ridiculous how long it took.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah, it was--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: It really is. I mean, I-- every now and then when I read about it, it just shocking. But anyway, women are on their march right now, I would say.

SPEAKER 1: Good [INAUDIBLE] OK. Why don't we open this up? There are some microphones here in the traditional places. If you would, remember the rules of the game. And yeah, that one question per customer. Please introduce yourself. And remember that a question ends with a question mark. Yes, sir.

AUDIENCE: My name is Gene. And Doris, I haven't read any of your books, but I'm familiar with your work on the Disney theme park attraction, the Hall of Presidents. And my question is actually a serious one. What were your challenges, and what are our challenges, as far as inspiring kids about the presidency, especially, in our current situation?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, it's interesting. I mean, I think one of the things that I think is important is that we need whatever forms of media to inspire kids. When the Lincoln Library and Museum was reopened 10 years ago, people were somewhat upset that it was like Disney like-- speaking of Disney-- because it had all sorts of attractions that young people would be interested in, and maybe wasn't as scholarly as it was supposed to be. I thought it was great. And they've had more people come to it than ever before because young kids could find something exciting about it.

That's why I think films, and documentaries, and television shows, even if sometimes they may not have the same density that a book has, if you can attract more people to be interested in those presidents through that, then it's possible that they will then start reading the books itself. So I think it's important for us not to be narrow in terms of how to excite people about-- I mean, I just-- I think it's teachers more than anything. I mean, when I think back to-- I had a teacher in high school who taught history, and she won an award as the best teacher in New York State.

And of course, that made a huge difference. When she was telling us about Franklin Roosevelt dying, she cried. And she-- it was just an amazing thing to think a teacher could feel that way about something.

And then of course, I could barely bring any of my guys to die. I hated the idea they were going to die. I was crying even before they died thinking they were going to die. But I didn't know that when I was 15 or 16 years old.

So I think a real key to creating interest in politics and interest in history is teachers. I mean, I-- my son teaches at-- one of my other sons teaches at Concord High School. And he's such a great teacher that I walk around the streets of Concord, people will say, you used to be important but my kid had your kid.

And we have to value our teachers. We have to-- I mean, they should be honored more than they are. They should be getting much more money than they're getting. It's so important.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. Sandra Day O'Connor closing years, such an advocate for civics that had disappeared from schools. It makes a huge difference what kind of civics program people have.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Without a question. Yes, in fact, I've been out there, too, to Sandra Day O'Connor's Institute. And that's what she was arguing for in all these last years was for civics education. And it's very interesting.

There's an extraordinary lecture that Lincoln gave when he's like 29 years old. It's called the Lyceum Lecture. They used to have these lectures where people would go and lecture.

And it was a time of great tumult-- turbulence, you could argue, in America that abolitionists, editors, were being murdered. There were lynchings in the South. He was worried about the rule of law not being followed in the country.

And so he said that when the rule of law is not followed, that that's for the time when a dictator could arise, somebody who wants to tear down rather than build up. And he talked about his worry about that. And the best solution he said was that-- why he was worried was that the scenes of the revolution were fading, so that the ideals of the country which had been instilled in that generation, now you were further from it.

So he wanted every mother to read to every child the Revolutionary history, and the ideals of the country, and the founding fathers, just as you would read the Bible to the child. And he said, that's our best protection against that kind of person arising is to remember the ideals of the country and what we fought for. And I think that's the deeper meaning underneath civics education having been undone.

And we used to sing these songs. I mean, we're old now, but we'd sing songs and you really did learn about that-- and history is being squeezed in schools right now. What used to be two years is maybe one year. And there's such a concern about STEM.

And I think it's-- I obviously love history. It's what I've loved since I was a little kid. But it's not just that parochial love, I think it's really important that we understand where we came from.

You learn from your parents and your grandparents. Of course, you're going to learn from these people who came before you. And you'll learn from their failures as well as their triumphs.

And it means that you're leading a layered life. I mean, I feel that's been so great about being involved in studying these past presidents. Each time I get catapulted back to a different era,

and I feel like I'm learning about what it was like to live in the Civil War, or the turn of the 20th century, or during the Depression, or World War II.

And I was saying to David's class that it may seem an odd profession to spend one's days and nights with dead presidents. I wake up with them in the morning. I think about them when I go to bed at night. But I wouldn't change it for anything.

My only fear is in the afterlife, there'll be a panel of all these guys. Yeah. Each one will tell me everything I got wrong. And of course, the first person to scream out will be Lyndon Johnson. How come those books on the Kennedys and the Roosevelts were twice as long as the book you wrote about me?

I just-- I wish history could-- I mean, it's so important.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. The Parkland students were here, the [INAUDIBLE] some months ago. And there was conversation about why were they-- why were they able to step up as they did? It turns out they have a very strong civics program at that school.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: And they had great teachers there, too.

SPEAKER 1: And they have very good teachers.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah, made a difference.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah. And now that they'll be stepping up and mentoring other people from here on, when you have that experience, when you're young, and you mobilize it, not just the sad part of it but mobilizing as they did to go around and talk about gun control, it was an extraordinary thing.

SPEAKER 1: Right, right. Please, sir.

AUDIENCE: Hi. My name is Blake. I'm a first year student here at the college.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: All right.

AUDIENCE: Earlier you--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: And I like your shirt.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. Earlier you highlighted the importance of looking at a candidate's leadership attributes and experience over traditional factors of viability. So my question for you is, as we look for candidates to support in 2020, should we consider their electability at all, or

should we focus on who we think is the best candidate and be idealists, regardless of whether we think they can win?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Clearly, we have to worry about electability. There's no question about that given the times that we're in. I'm just saying that if we're going to separate out some of the people who might be equally electable, whatever the word is, electable, then we should be also understanding who might be more likely when they get in there to do the thing. But I mean, this is-- I mean, in fact, that may not even be the right way I thought-- talked about it in terms of who can get what of the pie.

Who can actually and will-- hopefully, it'll work itself out as we see all the Democratic candidates performing even-- I gather-- I missed it, but I guess last night there was a great CNN town hall, and the Mayor of the South Bend, Indiana was incredible, they said. So that's great. I mean, that's exciting, that maybe there's somebody we don't know about right now that with his unpronounceable name that-- and I think there's something about being a mayor that you have to solve problems and you can't be as partisan as you are in Washington.

But anyway, yes, eventually, we have to look at that. I'm just saying we need to look at the leadership, as well. You're absolutely right in asking that question.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. It was so interesting about this young man who emerged last night. He was here earlier, too, and I think he's coming back. But we've reached a stage where people are celebrating the fact he has a gay husband.

And it's very interesting because when he was here, he had his husband with him.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: That's great.

SPEAKER 1: Yes, it really says a lot about what progress we're making.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah. No, I mean, whenever we get depressed about the state of the country and feel like we're going backwards in certain places where it does seem we are in terms of the racial situation in these last years and the anti-Semitic things that came out with Pittsburgh, and the anti-women's stuff that's come out, we have come a long way in social justice. I mean, it's in May-- it's wonderful to think about gay marriage. It's wonderful to think about women now doing what they're doing.

And it's-- I mean, that actually changed even quicker--

SPEAKER 1: Yeah.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: --the gay situation changed quicker than I think most people would have imagined. And it's a great thing.

SPEAKER 1: I agree. Please.

AUDIENCE: Hi. My name's Corey [? Tahara. ?] I'm a master in public policy student here, second year. I'm originally from New Zealand. And I remember actually many years ago reading your book, Team of Rivals, about Abraham Lincoln. That's my favorite book.

And I remember it was actually one of the things that got me most interested in politics, in US politics, and one of the reasons that I'm here. But having read that, I always-- I've always been struck by the question, which was sort of answered earlier in this discussion and maybe to some extent in the book, that Lincoln seemed to have this unique ability to look into somebody and understand what really motivates them, and how he could leverage that to manage ego and personality in pursuit of a common goal.

So if you could just explain, based on your knowledge, what was that about him that allowed him to have that clarity of thought? And then, which leader today, if any, do you think best mimics that?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, I can answer the first part. I don't know about the second. Mainly, because I honestly don't know enough about them. And I think that's what the process is going to have to bring forward, to just try and understand the depths of who they are and what capacities they have.

But for Lincoln, I mean, when I think about the Emancipation Proclamation, I mean, he had a cabinet that he deliberately put into place-- three chief rivals-- because he knew that he wanted alternative points of view around him. So he has a Democrat, a Republican, and a Whig. He has a radical, a moderate, and a conservative.

And it was taking a big chance, because people said, you're going to look like a figurehead. They're all more important than you. They all are more educated, more celebrated. Each one wants to be president instead of you.

But he said, I-- the country's in peril. These are the strongest and most able men in the country. I need them by my side. So that was the first thing that he was able to surround himself with the people close to him who he knew could argue with him, question his assumptions.

I mean, although, Lyndon Johnson would put it in less noble language, he liked to say, it's better to have your enemies inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in. But even with Franklin Roosevelt, for example, he had Eleanor there who was a welcome thorn in his side. So she was always bringing him alternative points of view.

You have to have them close to you to understand it so that you can't just imagine other people's points of view. If you're confronted with them every day, as Eleanor would confront Franklin Roosevelt with what other people were feeling and thinking and critical of new deal

programs in the country, and she'd bring it back and talk to him. And she-- he loved the idea that she was a thorn in his side.

So every leader needs that. But then what happened with the Emancipation Proclamation is he just listened to these people. They would argue about whether he should emancipate the slaves with a proclamation or not for months. And he listened and he understood where each one was coming from.

There were people in the-- radical people who were mad at him that he didn't do it right away. Conservatives said, if you emancipate the slaves, the war will never come to an end. The Union soldiers will desert. They're only here to keep the Union together.

Your Republicans will lose the midterm elections. And he listened to them all. But then at a certain point, he realized, I have to make this decision. And he decided, I'm going to issue-- and he went back to them and he said, I've now decided it's my own responsibility to issue an Emancipation Proclamation.

I know some of you may disagree still. And you can file written objections. I will let you-- of course, let you do that. But I'm just hoping we can hold together.

And by the time he issued it two months later, they all stuck by his side because he had listened to them. And he had understood where they were coming from. And he'd already answered their worries about what they were worried about.

So I think the key thing is that you have to be in environments, as we said earlier, where you're seeing other people. You have to surround yourself with people who are going to have different points of view. And then you absorb them. And that's where your empathy can be developed even more and more.

SPEAKER 1: Our late friend, Warren Bennis, pointed out frequently that in the early days of the Republic when we had a population of about three million, we had six-- at least six inspired leaders that you see very rarely, but at least six-- Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, Ben Franklin, and [INAUDIBLE]. The-- but the fact was that-- and with three million people, we produced half a dozen. And today, we have 330 million people. And we have a hard time finding one. Yeah.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Right.

SPEAKER 1: What's going on?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, the question is, does the times make the man, or does the man make the times? And that's what Abigail Adams said writing about the revolution. She said, great necessities create great virtues, that the great challenge is, what you want to live for,

and do they play off on each other? I mean, the same thing-- when I think about my town of Concord, all those people live there at the same time-- Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott.

And the revolution took place there. And then the literary revolution took place there. I mean, how is that possible? And I think maybe there's an environment that brings people out into public life. And that's the encouraging thing as I say right now, I think in these last years, it may be that when people looked at what was happening in Washington and nothing was getting accomplished, and there was nothing that you could really say when you passed something, maybe the Obamacare people felt that way.

But still it was one party that did it, not bipartisan, that they would be proud that their children could know that they had done this. Then you wonder are people willing-- best people willing to enter public life when there's a huge challenge as there was in the revolution, when you've got a generation of people like Seward, Chase, and Bates, and Stanton. These were big people, too. They were really big.

And in that day, politics was the way, if you're a young man, that you could rise through the system. It was honored to be a politician then. And then that's what I think has happened in these last couple of decades. It's become less honored.

People worry about whether their private lives are going to be exposed by journalists. They worry about how much time they have to spend raising money. And maybe the best people haven't entered public life. And maybe now that there's a sense of a real challenge, and there's a sense that something has to happen in the country, that more people are going to do that. We saw that in the midterms.

And that's the hope. And then maybe from these 330 million people, even if we get one, it'll be great. But we might be able to get 10. Maybe we'll get six, again.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah. And with women entering the numbers.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: I think women entering in the numbers, it's really big. I mean, a lot of those women hadn't been in public life before. A lot of people also hadn't been in public life before. And now, they're entering it. I mean, they'll have to develop and learn from it. But it was encouraging. I think that night was really encouraging.

SPEAKER 1: Yes, it was. Please.

AUDIENCE: Thank you so much. My name is [INAUDIBLE]. It's truly a pleasure to be here listening to both of you. I am-- I am the former minister of finance of Paraguay. I'm actually the first female to be a minister--

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: --for my country. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And my question is, I'm very curious to know what would be your message to women who are trying for leadership positions, presidential candidates, not only in the US, which we are still hoping the US will have a female president soon, but also for Latin American countries?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Well, I think you're a perfect example of it. I think the time is right for women. As more women go to school, as more women become active in public life, then more women will join. Because you need to see your fellow women involved in these organizations now emerge in the United States, which is helping to train women who are interested in going into public life to learn the ropes.

You've got EMILY's List that is supporting women. I mean, before there was a network that men could depend upon, and now that network is expanding to women. And I just think-- I don't know, I just feel as an older woman right now, as I said, I'd love to be a young woman right now. I think it's the time for women. I really do.

I think that the more women that get involved-- and maybe that'll be our answer to that. We'll have six great women--

SPEAKER 1: Exactly.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: --as those six old white guys.

SPEAKER 1: [? Going ?] on. They couldn't screw it up as much as men have, right?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Not right now. It seems like they couldn't screw it up more than the men.

SPEAKER 1: Great. Where'd she go? There was somebody here, just-- there. Please.

AUDIENCE: My name's [? Kiana. ?] I'm also a first year at the college. Also speaking of women and just in light of Women's History Month, I was wondering what you think are the biggest obstacles facing women who are running for president in 2020, and what might be the biggest obstacles for the first female president, if that is the outcome of 2020? Just in general, what you foresee for the future of women in America's Oval Office.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Great. I mean, I'm not sure I can answer the question by saying what I think the biggest obstacles before to women getting in public life was the major responsibility that women had for childbearing. And that it becomes a gap in your life. And it was really hard to decide that you're going to run for public office knowing you're going to have to be out until 11:00 at night going to dinners, and meals, and not be home with the kids.

And so the greatest changes that are beginning to take place are more men are becoming equal partners with women. I mean, it's still slow. My son, who teaches at the high school, I mean, he absolutely has those kids equal time. And I think that's happening more and more so that women can decide that they can have not just a political career, but careers.

But I think-- I grew up in Long Island on a block. Not a single woman in the block worked. And I think about all the talent that might have been there that was never-- I mean, it was great in some ways for us kids. They were home all the time.

But there must have been a sense of women knowing that they had talents that were never developed. Now, that's changed. I mean, more women going to college than-- more women in med school than men. More women everywhere.

And I think-- so these women are older, so their childbearing problems are not in the same way the ones running for president. And I honestly don't think that a woman is going to be-- I mean, there may be some ways that they're treated that are differently. But I don't-- I think we're ready for a woman president.

I think that Hillary Clinton did not lose because she was a woman. I think-- partly, I think there was some sexism against Hillary. But she actually didn't lose the election when you think about it. She won the popular vote by several million votes.

And I just-- maybe I'm being optimistic, but I think we've passed the turning point where being a woman will be a huge problem. I think it'll be a positive thing for women right now.

SPEAKER 1: That's good. Good. Why don't we have one last question here, please.

AUDIENCE: Hi. I'm [? Cayden ?] [? Brini. ?] We spoke earlier-- or I asked a question, so forgive me for monopolizing your time. But you're-- the title of your book is Leadership in Turbulent Times, and you've written about four leaders who brought us as a country through turbulent times. I was wondering if you could, in summation, talk about if there's anything that unifies their vision for the country that you see as their true north having worked in adversity in these turbulent times?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Oh, I think there is a sort of unifying thing which has to do with what the country that was founded stood for. I mean, when Lincoln was talking about why it was so terrible for the South to secede from the North, it wasn't simply that you break apart the physical structure of the country, that what you would break apart is the-- the reason the South was seceding is because he had been elected, and they would not accept his election as legitimate because he was antislavery.

And he said, if you start doing that, then the whole idea of our country's founding that ordinary people could govern themselves-- remember, when we were chosen to do that, when we were-

- when the founding fathers did that, most countries were led by kings or queens, or not people voting for that person. And they didn't think in a large country like ours it could sustain itself. And Lincoln worried if the South seceded from the North, the West might secede from the East.

But more importantly, the viability of an election would be undone and then we'd no longer be a beacon of hope for the countries at large, for the world at large. So I think each one in their turn in a certain sense expanded that arc of justice that Martin Luther King talks about. So that obviously ending the poison in the system of slavery for Lincoln was that.

And I think for Teddy Roosevelt, it was an economic sense that there had to be greater opportunity for small business. There had to be greater opportunity for people that were being led by political bosses that were corrupt. There was much in the system that had to be changed so that they could be a square deal.

And obviously, for Franklin Roosevelt, it wasn't simply getting through the depression and changing the structure of our economic system to make it fairer. And that obviously, social security was a big part of that, and the Securities and Exchange Commission, everything that he did in that 100 days. But then fighting in World War II where Western civilization was under attack by Hitler and the whole values of a democracy and of civilization were at issue.

And then when Lyndon Johnson comes along and the racial issue has reached a turning point, I mean, the marchers were in the streets, but the bill was stuck in the Congress and it didn't seem it would ever come out, and there was a fear that violence would erupt even more. And they each understood they had to move somewhere further along that arc of social justice. And that's what you hope.

Somebody comes into power. There's always further that we can move. As Lincoln said, we're never where we're supposed to be. But when he was arguing with Stephen Douglas in the debates, he argued that Douglass was bringing us backwards. And unless you can at least be moving toward that goal, even if you're never going to be able to reach it, then you can feel that you're on sure ground.

And that's what-- if you read those debates, when you think about the debates today, you'll see how incredible they are. And they went on for six hours sometimes. The first guy would talk for two hours, then the next guy would rebut him, and then he'd talk some more. And there'd be tens-- there'd be thousands of people there. They came to the debates as if it were a sporting event.

In fact, the crowd, if we would-- if we were Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, you'd be yelling back at us, hit him again, hit him again, harder, just like they do at football games, right? And there's a great moment when Lincoln-- somebody yells-- they yell out at the people, they'd say, Lincoln, you're two faced. And he said, if I had two faces, do you think I'd be wearing this face?

I mean, he was able to respond with-- self-deprecatory humor is something so lacking in most of our politicians today. And it's such an important thing. I mean, Lincoln said he could whistle off sadness by a good story, that he could-- a good story was better for him than a drop of whiskey.

And so I think we should be looking-- it's one of the qualities that we hadn't even mentioned. But I think a sense of humor and self-deprecation is a really important thing in a leader, and a sense of joy in what they're doing. You have to-- my husband was told by Frankfurter before he went to work for young John Kennedy, he said, the only presidents that are any good at all are those who really love the job. It's such a tough job that you have to love it.

Like when somebody asked FDR one time, how can you deal with all these pressures-- he said-- why would you ever want to be president? He said, why wouldn't you want to be president? It's the greatest job in the world. I love it.

And so Frankfurter-- I'm telling my husband that, and my husband then went to JFK and said, he says that the only people are any good at all are those who had a good time. And JFK said, you tell the justice I'm going to have a hell of a time in this job. So I think just to wrap it up in terms of that is that I think looking at these people in terms of humility, and self-reflection, and empathy, and resilience, and being able to control their emotions, and build a team that's based on sharing credit and shouldering blame, and being able to communicate so that you arouse the passions of the people and you can mobilize them, all of these things, I think-- and you connect to the people from where you are, you get outside of where you are.

I think all of these things are what we need in our next couple of public figures. And I just feel optimistic. We've been through worse times before.

People stop me on the streets sometimes and they think because I'm a historian, I'll have an answer. They say, are these the worst of times? And you can say, no. I mean, can you imagine if you were young, it was the Civil War and 600,000 people are going to die, or you're in the midst of the early depression and people's bank deposits have been taken away, and there are-- one out of four people are out of jobs and people are roaming the streets hungry, or World War II in the early days before we thought we could ever beat Hitler, or the early days of the Civil Rights Movement.

And that's what I think history tells us, that history gives us solace that we've been through these hard times before. America has come through. My husband in the book he was writing, he argued that America was not as fragile as we think it is, and we have to believe we still would rather live in this country than any other country.

It'll get us through. And I believe that. My optimism may be just born optimism. It may be because I was a Brooklyn Dodger fan and a Red Sox fan I had to wait so long for those teams to win.

But I honestly think it's born from history, that America's had these tough times, just as these people have, and somehow the strength is beginning to exert itself as we saw in the midterms. And I think it's going to continue. I hope, anyway.

SPEAKER 1: Doris--

[APPLAUSE]

--on behalf of everyone here, I want to thank you. I do hope you appreciate how you've become a national treasure. Thank you.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: I'm glad to be back. This is where I was.

SPEAKER 1: Thank you.