1987

September
Bobbie Kilberg, then a candidate for Virginia state Senate, receives the “wholehearted endorsement” of Vice President George H.W. Bush, who hails Kilberg as “someone who is awfully bright.” (Washington Post, 9/19/87)

1989

March
Kilberg is commissioned by President Bush to serve as deputy assistant to the President for Public Liaison along with Mr. Sichan Siv who will serve in the same capacity. Her primary responsibilities include serving as liaison to business, consumer groups, Jewish groups and those involved in the child care debate. (Washington Post, 4/9/89)

May
Secretary of State James Baker delivers a speech at AIPAC’s annual convention on May 22, which takes a hard line against further Israeli settlements in the West Bank. (Christian Alfonsi, Circle in the Sand, New York: Doubleday, 2006, p. 137)

Two days later, Kilberg writes a memo to John Sununu summarizing the fallout from Secretary Baker’s speech: “[The] speech has generated widespread domestic political concern for us within the Jewish community…and we do not believe it is a one or two day story. While the controversy over the specifics of the speech may die down, the general anxiety within the Jewish community will persist… Several people noted that if [former Secretary of State George] Shultz had made the same speech he would have gotten away with it, because the Jewish community trusted him and felt warmly about him. They have not developed the same feeling about Secretary Baker.” Kilberg also commented on the repercussions of the speech for the Bush Administration’s already strained relationship with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s government: “This public strategy has undermined rather than strengthened Shamir’s position in Israel, and will have the ultimate effect of solidifying the far right led by Sharon.” (Alfonsi, pp. 137-138)

June
President Bush unveils his plans to revise the Clean Air Act. It includes goals to reduce acid rain, urban smog and toxic air pollution in America by the year 2001. Kilberg and the Liaison Office begin to arrange what would become more than three dozen meetings for industry, consumer, and environmental leaders to bring their highly divergent views to the attention of the White House policy staffs. Kilberg has since noted that the President was very informed about the issues and often challenged the advocates’ statements. However, she also noted that “there
were two or three issues that the president changes his mind about, after listening to people.” (Bradley H. Patterson, The White House Staff, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 179)

September
It is reported that Kilberg is involved in a “turf fight” with fellow staffer Doug Wead, who also works in Public Liaison and is a high-profile evangelical organizer. (Washington Times, 9/11/89)

October
White House records show that the Office of Public Liaison discusses a prospective trip for Kilberg to the U.S.S.R. for issues related to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. (10/6/89)

December
Kilberg is quoted stating that the White House is looking into creating an on-site day-care center for the children of roughly 1,700 people employed by the Executive Office of the President. Kilberg reportedly hired a local consultant to do a feasibility study on the idea (Washington Post, 12/7/89)

1990
May
Kilberg meets with Massachusetts Republican congressional hopeful Jim Nuzzo and a group of Fall River, Massachusetts “notch babies” at the Old Executive Office Building. Notch babies are individuals born between 1917 and 1921 and maintain they are victims of an inequality in Social Security payments. (Boston Globe, 5/13/90)

Kilberg is accused by conservatives of being responsible for the presence of homosexual groups at the signing of the Hate Crimes Bill. Conservatives also accuse Kilberg of cozying up to the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood (Washington Times, 5/25/90)

July
President Bush instructs Kilberg to invite Benjamin Hooks, president of the NAACP, and William Coleman, a prominent African American lawyer, to the Oval Office to discuss the civil rights bill that Congress passed earlier that month. The three meet for an hour and a half. Ultimately, Hooks and Coleman fail as Bush vetoes the bill. (Patterson, p. 177)

August
President Bush asks Kilberg to assemble a group of Arab-American leaders with whom he could have a dialogue about the escalating crisis in Iraq. Kilberg reaches out to the Arab-American community which, at the time, was largely unorganized. She encourages them to create a leadership council, which they ultimately did on August 3, the morning after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. (Patterson, p. 178)

It is rumored that Kilberg is behind the forced ouster of fellow staffer Doug Wead, a social conservative. This furthers the feeling among some conservative
groups that the Bush Administration has a penchant for betraying its conservative members. (Washington Times, 8/3/90)

Leaders of some conservative groups gather signatures on a “letter of outrage” over the firing of Doug Wead. The thesis of the letter is essentially that “the wrong people got fired” implying that Wead’s rival, Kilberg, should have been the one terminated. (Washington Times, 8/6/90)

A meeting of Public Liaison staff is reportedly held in Kilberg’s office where newly appointed special assistant, Lee Ann Metzger, meets her new colleagues. The subject of restructuring the office was reportedly discussed. (Washington Times, 8/8/90)

Social conservative groups publicly complain about a mid-July, 1990 meeting between President Bush and a group of magazine editors, one of whom was Christie Hefner of Playboy. Reportedly, a group called the National Religious Alliance Against Pornography (NRAAP) was also invited to the White House but was denied an audience with the President. Some conservatives suppose that it Dave Dermarest or Bobbie Kilberg was to blame, although the official White House line was that the problem was simply a matter of scheduling. (Washington Times, 8/14/90)

Reps. Bill Dannenmeyer (R-CA) and Bob Dornan (R-CA) are reported to be making inquiries of the White House regarding issues associated with the Office of Public Liaison. At the heart of the inquiries is learning whether or not homosexual activists were invited to the recent signing of the hate-crimes bill. Kilberg responded to questions from the congressmen saying, “Contrary to published press reports, no representatives of gay or lesbian organizations were invited to attend.” Kilberg continued saying it “would not be appropriate or acceptable in our society [to ask] about the personal background of individuals as they pass through the White House gates.” However, the Washington Blade reportedly published a photo showing Peri Jude of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Karen Friedman of the Human Rights Campaign Fund at the White House signing ceremony. The newspaper described both as “openly gay lobbyists.” (Washington Times, 8/16/1990)

A document surfaces on the letterhead of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force with a suggested guest list for the hate-crimes bill signing. Next to the list, in the writing of Kilberg’s assistant Sara DeCamp is the request “Remove [these names] from list but clear in for appointments for Bobbie Kilberg.” The implication is that Kilberg made appointments in her office with Jude and Friedman, who were not officially invited to the event. (Washington Times, 8/22/90)

September President Bush is reportedly encouraging Kilberg to run for lieutenant governor in Virginia. (Washington Times, 9/10/90)
President Bush announces that he will accept a tax increase, a decision reportedly made with no consultation with the business community. As a consequence, Kilberg finds that her relations with business organizations becomes rather frosty. She is reportedly forced to move out of a “collaborative mode” into more of a “selling” posture. (Patterson, p. 179)

October

A group of evangelical leaders issues a statement urging President Bush to “resist the faulty advice of your White House staff and return to the principles” that guided his campaign. The statement continues that the “wrong persons” are winning the cultural war on the White House staff: “We want you to know that you are not well served by staffers such as Bobbie Kilberg and David Demarest” charging both staffers with inviting extremist, anti-family organizations to the White House. Signers of the statement include Ed McAteer, founder of the Religious Right activist group; Jack Stanton, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Bill Carmichael, publisher of Virtue magazine; Nathan Urshon, general superintendent of the United Apostolic Churches; Kathryn Boggs; and Bob Hawkins. (Washington Times, 10/31/90)

1991

September

President Bush sends a conciliatory letter to American Jewish groups, hoping to calm the uproar over a proposed four-month delay in U.S. loan guarantees for Israel. Bush’s tough line on the loans and the disclosure that he wants to link them to Israel restricting future West Bank settlements continues to strain White House relations with pro-Israel groups and Congress. Kilberg serves as the first line of contact between the White House and Jewish groups. She receives high praise from Israel’s supporters. (New York Times, 9/21/91)

November

President Bush signs the Civil Rights Act of 1991 into law, a revised version of the 1990 bill he vetoed. In the intervening year between the bills, Kilberg had brought in various business groups where he heard pleas for closure and clarity rather than continued uncertainty. (Patterson, p. 177)

1992

January

Australian television’s Nine Network airs a one-hour documentary, All The President’s Women. Kilberg is one of five women profiled in the documentary. The group is considered to be the five most powerful women in the White House (Sun Herald, Sydney, 1/5/92)

March

Kilberg becomes director of the President’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs where she will manage White House communications and policy relations with state and local elected officials, including governors, attorneys general, state legislators, county officials, and mayors. (Bobbie Kilberg’s biography, Northern Virginia Technology Council)
It is rumored that Kilberg is feuding with Chief of Staff Sam Skinner and may soon be on her way out of the White House. Dan Quayle’s scheduler, Cecile Kremer, is rumored to be headed for the top slot at the Office of Public Liaison. (Washington Times, 4/25/92)

April

Kilberg, along with fellow “embattled” staffers Tony Snow and Marlin Fitzwater, attends an Anne Murray concert at the Kennedy Center with President Bush. The group sits in the presidential box. This is interpreted by some as a sign of support from the president to his staffers. (Washington Times, 4/9/92)

November

Kilberg announces that she will seek the Republican nomination for Virginia lieutenant governor in 1993 (Washington Post, 11/13/92)
**Bobbie Kilberg Suggested Topics**
*Prepared by Daniel McDowell*
*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 11/09/2009*

**Joining the Administration**
- How did you first come to be associated with George H.W. Bush? Were you involved in the 1988 campaign, and if so, in what capacity?
- What were the circumstances surrounding your appointment to a position within the Bush 41 administration? Were there other positions you were considered for at the time of your initial appointment? Did you have any discussions with the President or other senior White House officials about their expectations for the Public Liaison office at the time of your appointment?
- Did you have discussions with any of your predecessors about their experiences in the office to help prepare for the job?
- Did you have any role in the transition after the 1988 election? Describe the advantages and disadvantages of a same-party transition into the White House?

**Public Liaison**
- Did you make any changes to the structure of the office when you came in? How was the staffing of the office decided?
- Which other offices within the White House did you deal most frequently? Which did you find especially helpful? Which especially problematic? On which of your major issues was the President himself most actively engaged?
- Did you have any active engagement with members of the Cabinet, or with the executive branch bureaucracy in the departments or agencies?
- What were the major issues that occupied most of your time during your service in the Public Liaison office? Are there particular stories of success (or failure) that are important for understanding the Bush White House and how it operated?
- How much were you engaged on foreign policy issues, and how closely did you work with the NSC staff in such instances?
- Discuss the interest groups you worked most closely with. Which ones were particularly helpful to the administration in getting its priorities enacted? Which ones were especially problematic?
- Did you have much success in expanding the scope of the Public Liaison activity beyond traditional Republican constituencies? How receptive to overtures were the traditional Democratic constituencies?
- Discuss your perceptions about how well the Bush White House operated, including the roles of the Chiefs of Staff. Was President Bush generally well-served by his staff? Why or why not?
- Did you have much interaction with members of Congress? If so, who, and on what issues? Did you have much interaction with the press?
- Was Vice President Dan Quayle deeply involved with you in any of your work? If so, on which issues? Was George W. Bush in any way involved in your work? If so, on which issues?
- Describe how your constituencies reacted to the 1990 Budget agreement.
• Was there ever significant conflict within the administration between social-moderates and social-conservatives? If so, what was President Bush’s approach to such divisions?

**Intergovernmental Affairs**
• Why did you move into the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in March 1992?
• What issues occupied most of your time in this office? With whom did you work most closely, both inside the White House and within the broader executive branch? On which of your issues was the President himself most closely involved?
• Which state and local officials were especially close to the White House and helpful during your time there? Which, if any, were nuisances?
• To what extent did the conduct of the 1992 campaign shape your work in this office? Describe the mood of Republican state and local officials during your period in this office.
• What role, if any, did President Bush have in your decision to run for lieutenant governor of Virginia in 1993?

**Leadership and the President**
• Discuss your perceptions of President Bush’s greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses as a leader. Discuss the person who was President—what are his defining characteristics, the central components of his temperament, his outlook on politics, etc?
• On whom did President Bush rely most for guidance and advice in the Oval Office?
• Describe (where you are able to comment) on the President’s working relationship with his Chiefs of Staff, Brent Scowcroft, the Vice President, Marlin Fitzwater, members of the Cabinet, etc.
• What do the conventional portraits of President Bush omit that history ought to record? Are there overlooked success stories that should be remembered? Were there missed opportunities that might have provided for a Bush re-election in 1992?
TIMELINES

- Bobbie Kilberg Timeline, prepared by Daniel McDowell, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 10/05/2009

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY BOBBIE KILBERG

- Bobbie Kilberg, Presentation in a Forum at the Miller Center of Public Affairs, 1/23/1996.

SELECTED WRITINGS

