



MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

TERRY BABCOCK-LUMISH



As a woman leader in the Federal Government, what is one piece of advice you would give to aspiring women who seek to attain senior leadership positions?

Care for relationships. DC is a big city but a small town, and we all know way too many people who are purely transactional and lack empathy. In contrast, everyone remembers the hardworking problem-solver who is bright, creative, capable, and keeps in touch not only when she needs something.

What motivated you to pursue a career in public service?

From an early age, I spotted injustices and felt compelled to move beyond dialogue to action. It bothered me that adults weren't solving our problems – or worse, sat on the sidelines and complained. At age 19, I submitted an application to the Truman Foundation, thereby making a commitment to a career in public service. Upon being selected to represent Pennsylvania and traveling to Missouri to meet my fellow Truman Scholars, I quickly learned that this was no arm's-length check for grad school, but rather, a community of diverse, dedicated leaders who share a passion for improving our world.

Who has been a significant mentor or role model for you, and why?

A tireless champion for democracy, human rights, and public service, Secretary Madeleine Albright served as the president of the Truman Foundation for over 20 years. We could not have had a better example of principled, purposeful, patriotic leadership than her. It is now on all of us to continue her hard work – and lest we forget, “there’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.”

About You

Terry Babcock-Lumish is the sixth – and first female – Executive Secretary of the Truman Foundation, the “living memorial” to the 33rd president and national monument to public service. For 15 years, she led Islay, providing strategic guidance for philanthropic foundations and mission-driven organizations across six continents. Previously, she served in local, state, and federal government for both Democratic and Republican administrations, and as a researcher for two books by the Honorable Al Gore. Dr. Babcock-Lumish is an Honorary Research Associate with Oxford’s School of Geography and the Environment and a Distinguished Fellow at the Rothermere American Institute.

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