

NJN Network

Not just the news

Former CNN anchor Frank Sesno finds an even more rewarding role

Renowned political journalist finds happiness in giving back to others

August 23, 2010



Frank Sesno

By Frank Sesno, Posse Foundation, [Washington Post](#) – During my work as a reporter, I went around with cameras and looked at what was wrong. One of the things I'm doing now in life through teaching and philanthropy is trying to fix those problems.

My heart has always been in education.

I have a disabled sister with Down's syndrome. I saw the fight to get her access to quality education. When she was born in the '50s, people with developmental disabilities would be warehoused. When the doctor told my mother that her daughter was "mongoloid" and encouraged her to place my sister in an institution, my mother threw him out of the room. She was not going to institutionalize her daughter. She was a crusader. She believed in standing up for what mattered. Now my sister lives semi-independently.

I decided to join the advisory board of the Posse Foundation because of my own personal commitment to diversity and young people.

I give to them annually and support individual projects and events. The foundation now has six schools and 240 students who are getting free education at colleges to which we have paired them.

I remember at an award ceremony for Posse graduates, one young man's father, an immigrant, told the audience that when he and his family came to America, he knew they could succeed if they had a dollar and a dream. He said they had a dream but not even one dollar in their pockets. Then the son spoke and told his family, "I told you I would succeed for you and all of us."

I anchored at CNN for years and was the White House correspondent. I loved it. I could sit in front of a camera and talk to a million people. But it doesn't come close to the reward of looking at one young person in the eye and having some sense that you will help that life in a real way.

– Interview with Vanessa Mizell

Chairman of the D.C. Advisory Board for the Posse Foundation, a nonprofit that provides college opportunities for public high school students; director of School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University; creator and host of Planet Forward, a Web-to-television project that addresses climate, energy and environmental issues.

Charitable giving highlights: provides personal financial and service contributions to the Posse Foundation, Middlebury College, Potomac School, and Marrekech, a residential and vocational program for people with disabilities.

Personal: Lives in the District with his wife. They have three grown children.

Wikipedia biography – Sesno received his Bachelor of Arts from Middlebury College in 1977, where he would later serve as one of its trustees. Sesno worked as news director at WCFR, a local radio station in Springfield, Vermont, where he hosted an interview show "Checkpoint" every day. Before joining CNN in 1984, Sesno worked as a radio correspondent at the White House and in London for the Associated Press. During his CNN career, he served in many parts of the world, as well as Washington bureau chief. He has also worked with PBS, producing several shows about political topics, including U.S. homeland security and Iraq. Sesno's diverse career spans over 25 years of experience, including 18 years at CNN, where he still continues to serve as a special correspondent. His current work at CNN involves producing documentaries, among other reporting and commentary responsibilities. Sesno has interviewed business and government leaders including U.S. Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan and former General Electric Co. CEO Jack Welch, the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He covered stories ranging from the Iraq War to the disputed U.S. presidential election of 2000.

Frank Sesno is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.[5] His most recent project, Planet Forward, serves to bridge the gap between conventional and emerging media to move the discussion of the environment in the direction of real-world solutions and discussion. Its hybrid web/television format focuses on energy, climate and sustainability issues. Sesno completes regular webisodes on the Planet Forward website through his Profile on Planet Forward.