Frank Sesno Biography

Frank Sesno serves as Director of the George Washington University Alliance for a Sustainable Future, which coordinates and amplifies the university's teaching, research, convening, and outreach around climate change and sustainability. The Alliance was launched in 2023 to increase the impact of the university's work addressing climate change and sustainability and educating the next generation of environmental leaders.

An Emmy-award winning journalist, Sesno is a professor in GW's School of Media and Public Affairs, which he led as director from 2009 to 2020, and where he teaches classes on environmental reporting. He is the founding director of Planet Forward, a multi-media platform that publishes stories by college students around the world about ideas and innovation to "move the planet forward." Sesno is host of Maryland Public Television's annual Chesapeake Bay Summit and has hosted programs for New York Public Broadcasting on climate change and sea level rise.

Author of *Ask More: The Power of Questions to Open Doors, Uncover Solutions, and Spark Change,* Sesno also teaches the art of the interview, helping students learn how outcome-driven inquiry, purposeful questioning, and active listening can lead to better journalism through discovery, understanding, and empathy.

Sesno's diverse career spans more than four decades in journalism, including 21 years at CNN, where he served as White House correspondent, anchor, Sunday talk show host, and Washington Bureau Chief. In those roles, he covered presidential campaigns and political conventions, superpower summits and arms negotiations, wars in the Mideast and Latin America. He was at the Berlin Wall when President Reagan declared, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," and on the West Front of the Capitol when Barack Obama was sworn in as America's first Black president. He led CNN's DC coverage as Washington Bureau Chief after the 9/11 attacks, and produced and reported a documentary about America's brittle energy supply lines after Hurricane Katrina.

Sesno has interviewed five U.S. presidents and engaged with some of the world's leading figures in politics, business, science, and culture including Bill Gates, Hillary Clinton, Colin Powell, Walter Cronkite, Benjamin Netanyahu, Nancy Pelosi, and Anthony Fauci. He has moderated a wide range of conversations and worked with many influential organizations including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Kavli Foundation, The White House Historical Association, and the Hospice Foundation of America.

Before joining CNN, Sesno worked as a radio correspondent for the Associated Press at the White House and in London. He has won several prestigious journalistic awards, including an Emmy, several CableACE awards, and an Overseas Press Club Award.

Sesno serves on the board of directors of the Global Council for Science and the Environment and is a member of the Poynter Institute's National Advisory Board. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves as an emeritus trustee of his alma mater, Middlebury College from which he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American History. He holds three honorary degrees in recognition of his work in journalism and civil discourse.

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In 2023, GW alumni Ted and Meredith Segal generously endowed The Sesno Series, which convenes high level conversations at the university about issues concerning American democracy and civil discourse.