

Top 3 Moments: Terry Szuplat #1

1. Getting started as a speechwriter

From a young age, Mr. Szuplat knew that he loved history, politics, and public affairs. Growing up, he wanted to be a journalist and cover the news. He went to the American University in Washington, DC for college and found himself surrounded by internship opportunities.

During senior year, he got the opportunity to intern at the white house and work alongside the speechwriters there. While he was interning, he began to think about how incredible a job it was and realized it combined all of his interests. A few years later, he began working in speechwriting and eventually became a speechwriter for President Obama after he was elected.

2. Daily life

Most days, he arrives at the white house around 7:30-8 a.m. His day focuses on making speeches rather than attending meetings. Depending on the day, he could be writing about upcoming trips, the visitation of foreign leaders, or just policy announcements.

Most days, he would be working on multiple speeches at once. He could be:

- putting the finishing touches on one speech
- writing a rough draft for a second
- creating an outline for a third

When a speech was finished, it would be shared among his team members for revision, and then reviewed by the president. Sometimes they would even get to take their work outside of the office and travel places with the president while making those edits.

3. Challenging Moments

For Mr. Szuplat, the most challenging part of being a speechwriter was writing speeches after something bad happened, such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

President Obama had to help the country get through hard times, but for Mr. Szuplat, finding the right words to guide citizens through difficult moments was challenging.

4. Favorite Moments

Mr. Szuplat's favorite moments were when he got to write a speech about something good that happened, or when someone had earned something big or done something important.

Specifically, he enjoyed writing speeches for Medal of Honor ceremonies.