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October 20, 2015

What Eisenhower Taught Bill Marriott About Leadership

Watching a room full of 400 hotel developers, financiers and CEOs **sit in awed silence** for 30 minutes is something to witness, and **we did just that** yesterday when Marriott International chairman **J.W. Marriott Jr.** was interviewed by his daughter, **Debbie Marriott Harrison**, at *Bisnow's* annual **Lodging Investment and Innovation Series** at the Renaissance in downtown (a Marriott property, naturally).



The 83-year-old hotel **icon** discussed a broad range of topics, like leadership and **Millennials**, but he started out with the story of his company, which his father founded as a **root beer shop** in DC back in 1927. As the company grew in size and prestige, Bill got a major lesson in leadership from **President Dwight Eisenhower** when Ike visited the Marriott family farm in Virginia. Gathered around a fire on a cold December evening, the family **asked the president** what he wanted to do. The president turned around and asked a young Bill Marriott what he would like to do. "I thought

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Benjamin R. Eldridge, Jr. • Ingo Mayr, CCIM
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