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Winner of Princeton University's Phi Beta Kappa teaching award, Brooks is a distinguished lecturer on topics ranging from statesmanship and civic leadership to American political thought, the history of political philosophy, liberal education, and the ethics of science and technology. He has also taught at the University of Colorado, where he designed and directed the Engineering Leadership Program to explore the ramifications of technology on democratic society, and was Associate Faculty Director of the Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization, where he taught original works of the world's greatest writers and thinkers. Dr. Brooks has also held academic appointments in the Department of Government at Bowdoin College and the Program on Constitutionalism and Democracy in the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia.

Born and raised in West Texas, Brooks received his Ph.D. in political science from Boston College and his B.A. in liberal arts from the Great Books Program at St. John's College. He and his wife Siobhan have one daughter – Clementine.