

# TRANSCRIPT: CHARLES E. GILLILAND INTERVIEW

Dr. Charles E. Gilliland · Research Economist and Professor at Texas A&M

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## TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Dr. Charles E. Gilliland, Research Economist and Professor at Texas A&M. Gilliland is a 1983 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted April 22, 2014 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

Could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your career?

I'm Charlie Gilliland. I started off with a undergraduate degree in liberal arts from Regis College in Denver, Colorado. A couple of years after I got that degree, I ended up down in the lower Rio Grande valley working for an irrigation district down there and working on the, the... involving appraisal and appraisal applications. Ended up working, going to work for A&M Consolidated School District in College Station and going to A&M graduate school in the ag economics department where all the activity and real estate was focused back in the '70s and got a master's, PhD there and, and, and went to work for the real estate center in the Texas real estate center when I was in graduate school, and I had the opportunity to continue on, head up the efforts in land market research at the, at the real estate center and, and what was going to be a couple of years in college station 30+ years later, and it's turned into a career.

Could you tell us a little about your experiences at Texas A&M?

Texas A&M was an interesting, interesting experience coming from the undergraduate degree in a different venue. I had never experienced anything quite like... at the Aggie spirit, which is still there, which is also very amazing because it's still there with 50,000+ students. It's not like any other institution that I've ever been associated with, so from that standpoint it was very interesting. I once had a former neighbor of mine who went to Colorado State University and had worked with a couple of Aggies. At one point he said, "You know, I'm going to come down, check out what you guys put in the water down there because the people that I've worked with, they, they weren't from Texas. They had no experience with A&M until they went to school there, but they're rabid Aggies now," and so that, that was the the experience with A&M. It was the spirit and the, the attitude there and that, that still permeates the place. A couple of years back, I was involved with the Phi Kappa Phi honor fraternity there, and every year Phi Kappa Phi would choose an outstanding junior for Texas A&M. They would interview the outstanding student nominated by each college and, and pick the, the outstanding junior from the, from that group, which wasn't always easy because they were generally a lot of outstanding people to, to deal with, but recurrent in all of those interviews was those students' appreciation for the spirit of Texas A&M so, it's may sound like a cliché but it's not like any other school. It just isn't. So, that, that was the, probably the most defining aspect of being associated with Texas A&M that I can think of.

Can you describe your early career?

Well, my early career started off as... with a degree in English literature, and I ended up working in an irrigation district in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, which part of the, the of our responsibilities was assessing property texts which involved doing appraisal work, and so that's essentially how I got started with the real estate real and estate appraisal. I moved from there to, we moved to College Station in 1975 and worked for, at that time for the A&M Consolidated School district tax office and that, that, in that capacity met Molly Jones, who was a professor in ag economics, and, and Pat Wooten, who was the director of the real estate center, and Ivan Schmedemann, who is also a professor in the ag economics department and through those associations began to go back to graduate school to learn more about this profession of appraisal and how it all worked, and the rest is kind of history because at the point that I was graduating. The opportunity was extended to me to stay on as a permanent staff member at the real estate center, and I have been there ever since doing... researching land markets and property tax issues from time to time and... whenever that becomes important and... as it does every time, there's concern about school funding, so that's essentially where I am. I turn around and look back now, it's been 30 years since I started on the land market research and we, we began at the, at the center land market outlook conference. The first year we had it at the Hilton there in College Station and we had something on the order of 70 participants. This year is our 24th year with that conference and as of Monday, we had 453 people registered for the conference itself, so it has grown through the years, and it's been kind of gratifying to see all of that happen.

What advice do you have for students of agricultural economics?

There are lots of opportunities in various endeavors that ag economics can give you a strong foundation for, and I once heard a professor saying that 'you show me an individual who knows what they're going to

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be doing five years from now, and I'll show you someone who is in their grave' and so the first thing is you have a strong foundation in ag economics that prepares you for a really good way to analytically attack problems and issues which opens the door up for a lot of different kinds of endeavors, so I would urge people to do their best while they're studying ag economics, but make sure you keep the door open for opportunities when, when they appear.

How were you able to manage time for family and other priorities throughout your career?

Very good question. Maybe not too well sometimes. It's, it's easy to over commit yourself, and you have to guard against that. I'm not sure that I found a real effective way of doing that. I'm just trying to, to make sure that I deliver on all of the commitments that I do make and at some point maybe think about, well, working a little bit too much, or I'm, I'm spending too much time at the office, not enough with my, my children and try to rearrange things so that, that, that they're more family-friendly, if you will. So, in the process that involved being a little league baseball coach, which was very, very interesting. I'd never, especially given the fact that I never played baseball, but I... and those sorts of things that we'd participate in, but it's a challenge to take on lots of things and get, get them all done properly, but in the end it's worth it.

In your opinion, what does it take to achieve success?

Well, I thought a little bit about that particular issue, and one of the things that I think that you need to, that needs to be done at the outset is to kind of understand what success means. For some people, success may mean making piles of cash, and if that's your definition of success, you can probably get there by just being single-mindedly focused on that, but I my definition of success would be something that's a little broader, something that gives you a feeling of having contributed and accomplished something above and beyond material success, and for that, from that standpoint, I think probably the most important quality is to not really care who gets the credit for what gets done. In other words, you know, do what it takes to get the job done and, and dedicate yourself to getting the objective of whatever endeavors you're involved with, and if somebody else gets the credit, so be it as long as you got across the finish line.

What are your thoughts on being selected to the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry?

I'm, first, very pleasantly surprised to have this kind of recognition extended, and I'm very gratified that the department has seen fit to, to recognize the contributions that I've tried to make to the people in Texas and, and the, the real estate industry in Texas and agriculture in Texas in general so it, it was... I feel humbled by the experience but I really am pleased at it.

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Transcribed by  
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