

TRANSCRIPT: **JIMMIE HOLDER** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Jimmie Holder · Former Banker

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Jimmie Holder, former banker. Holder is a Class of 1953 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted November 25, 2019 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

Please introduce yourself and tell us about your career.

I'm Jimmie Holder. I'm a Class of '53. I graduated from Mart High School, which is about 25 miles East of Waco, in 1949, and I came to A&M the same year. Spent four years on my undergraduate degree, spent three years in the air force, and came back to work on a master's. I had completed all my coursework in my master's degree and was about to start writing my thesis when Dr. R.J. Hildreth called me to his office. Dr. Hildreth was not an Aggie — most of the professors in the department were Aggies — but Dr. Hildreth, I think, got his PhD from Iowa State. He called me into his office, and I couldn't imagine why. You know I'd had him in one course my junior year. It was a course I enjoyed very much. So, I went in, and he offered me a chair, and I sat down, and he said, "Holder, I think you're headed in the wrong direction in your career." What would, what would you say to that? I said, "Dr. Hildreth, I don't understand what you're saying. Tell me more." He says, "You are a people person. You like people and people like you, and that's a big asset. The banking industry likes people with your personality. You'll be dealing with people in any bank you work in, so I suggest that you go to the placement office next Wednesday and interview the First National Bank of Fort Worth." Well, I was a little reluctant to do that because that meant I was going to leave my degree and not get my diploma. He had told me that the diploma didn't mean that much in the banking industry. If I was gonna teach, or write, or something like that it would be important. So, I went and interviewed the First National Bank of Fort Worth. Lo and behold, they asked me to come to Fort Worth for the interview and they hired me. That was the beginning of a 37-year career. I'll never forget Dr. Hildreth. When I retired and came back to thank him for his advice, he was deceased, and I didn't get to do that.

What do you value most about your experiences at Texas A&M?

Of course I value my degree very much. I think I made the right decision in the direction I was going, but what I think helped me more than anything back then was the Corps of Cadets. I was a commanding officer of my squadron and the experience I got from that... experience and leadership skills helped me tremendously later on in my career.

What impact has your degree from Texas A&M had on your professional career?

The A&M degree is highly regarded in the, in the community, anywhere you go, especially in the state of Texas. The degree from A&M is very important. I was hired because, I was hired by the First National Bank of Lubbock because I had an agricultural degree. That is a bank that's really heavy in lending to the farmers and the ranchers, so that's how I got my foot in the door at the First National Bank of Lubbock. I was the only Aggie in the bank, and I was for a long time.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career? How have you faced it?

There was a point in my career where there was a challenge. I was at First National Bank, as I mentioned. I had worked myself up from a vice president level to the senior vice president level, ultimately to an executive vice level. About that time, and I'm talking about in the '80s, there was a big change coming in the banking industry across the nation. Big banks were gobbling up smaller banks, smaller banks were merging with other smaller banks, trying to get a bigger size, and we, we, the bank I worked with, first of Lubbock, was offered a price that our directors could not turn down by Wells Fargo. Well, Wells Fargo came on board, and they quickly and very professionally advised the president and the vice, executive vice president, which was me, that those positions were going to be re— replaced by their men from their head office and that we could begin looking for other jobs or we could take a lower position in the bank. Well, I wasn't going to do that, so I had a good friend who had previously been my customer at First National Bank, and he had moved to another bank and offered a place on their board. So, he was the one I immediately contacted. I can remember vividly, he had breakfast with me on Friday morning. The next Tuesday I was hired by the staff at National Bank, so that was a great impact on me, a change in direction of what, who was working for and with, and it was a good move for me. I had spent 17 years at the First National Bank of Lubbock, and I spent another 13 years with the Lubbock National Bank.

Besides hard work, what does it take to be a successful professional?

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I can only answer that question to the banking profession, profession because that's all I know. In the banking profession, you're, you're thought to be a leader in the community, and as a leader in the community, you can't spend all the time by your... by under your desk, your feet under your desk. You need to be out in the community doing civic work, becoming members of organizations that help build the city, and, and you, you'll get the reputation as wanting to help the community, yet it's an opportunity to meet people that might want as customers.

What kind of goals do you continue to set? How do they help you to grow?

Well, let's see, goals... I tell you, when you're 87 years old, your goals are rather limited. You just want to have another birthday, but to be serious with you, I have seven great-grandchildren, all my children are Aggies, all my grandchildren are Aggies, and I have eight grandchildren, eight grandchildren, and they're all little Aggies now the oldest one is 15. I'm looking forward and it is my main goal to see that they get into A&M and and do well. They, each of them can sing the Aggie War Hymn, so I think they're pretty well indoctrinated in our Aggie spirit.

What advice do you have for Agricultural Economics students who are about to graduate and start their careers?

My advice to them would be, not when they're seniors, but at the end of their junior year. I would review my transcript and identify areas that I might be weak in. One of the professors or counselors in the department can help you on that. I regretted that I didn't have enough accounting major. I had two courses, two freshman accounting courses. I should have been taking accounting courses for the next two years. So, I'd give my transcript a real hard look. Don't dodge easy courses; take the ones that you know will advance you in your career.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I think my ag eco degree opened doors for me that I might have had not have had opened, and especially the . Dr. Ty Timm was an unbelievable head of the department. He was the first head of department, and that shows you where I came on scene. My degree does not say agricultural economics. If I had graduated a year later, it would have. My degree says agricultural administration. During that time my senior year, Dr. Timm was recruiting and hiring professors, and let me tell you, he did a great job. I can always thank him for Dr. Hildreth and what he did for me, but these other professors were equally as helpful, and I think ag eco students today realized the same thing. Dr. Ed Rister is doing the same thing that Dr. Timm did.

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