

TRANSCRIPT: **KATHLEEN M. GIBSON** INTERVIEW

Mrs. Kathleen Gibson · President of Central Region at Citibank

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Interview with Mrs. Kathleen M. Gibson, President - Central Region Commercial Banking, Citibank. Gibson is a 1981 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Mrs. Kathleen M. Gibson | Transcript
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

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

Yes, I'm Kathleen Gibson. I have had the pleasure and privilege of being in banking since I graduated in 1981. I started at Republic Bank in Dallas in the credit training program, and Republic Bank became Bank of America. I was there 25 years, enjoying Citibank four years ago in 2006.

Why did you choose to study agricultural economics?

Well, that was a good story because I had an advisor who said, "Do not study pre-law." I thought I wanted to be a lawyer and I said, "Well what do I study then?" and he said, "Well, what do you like?" and I said, "Well, I like, I like economics. I like international trade." He said, "You should study agricultural economics." I said, "That's what my father did." He said, "I know." So, I enjoyed agricultural economics. It was a very well-rounded great, great background in many, many things including economics, including trade, including all kinds of commodity things, and at one point I thought maybe I wanted to be in the commodities business. So...as it worked out, it was a good background for banking too.

What activities at Texas A&M most influenced your career?

Oh, many. I would say school. It turned out that in banking accounting was important, and I had enough accounting and, you know, a finance course here or there, that was very, very helpful. But, but aside from academics, the student government activities were really important. Anything having to do with writing, interestingly. It's not just accounting, it's not just finance, it's not just economics, but, but learn how to write and learn how to think and all of those activities that help you think and learn, it will help you in business.

What experiences influenced you in your life the most?

Well, having a wonderful family, having a wonderful school, having a tremendous series of opportunities to do many things, I think not being afraid to lead in some of the organizations on campus, certainly in high school that started with student government and other organizations, but, but on campus when you have a place like A&M where you can really grab many many different kinds of activities that interests you. For me, taking the opportunity to lead was not a natural, but learning that you can is extremely important because it will help you learn how to do it when you need to do it down the road in a safe way.

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

Well, that was a huge surprise and a tremendous honor, and, and I'll work to earn that honor hopefully someday, but Ty Timm was a personal and family friend of ours, and he had the highest of standards and I know why we have our award named after him, so to be awarded something based on a real hero and a real wonderful character means that that you have to take that seriously and work to earn that recognition. So, it was just a huge honor and surprise!

How have you managed to balance time for family, work, and other commitments?

Well, you do the best you can. That's not one that's ever going to be easy and there's no formula, but you try to find and keep balance, which is a word that is important, and getting too far away from from work or family or, or other things that you like to do will, will make you less productive. So, for me, you know, finding the right times not to be gone, for example, when your kids are young. That evening time was important, and so I worked many, many early hours instead of evening hours. During those years you just find ways to get things done differently. I also think people respected time more when you were clear about our requirements, and I learned to be a little more clear about time requirements here and there and, and that helped a lot, and I think that you've gotta have a good support system, so we built a lot of support into the system to get all that done.

Would you comment on your continuing efforts to support the Department of Agricultural Economics?

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Well, that's a, that's a place where I probably could, could do more in terms of balancing more time to A&M. I try very hard to, to work on our nominations process annually, I'm on that nominating committee. We've been on campus speaking from time to time, involved with the former students' association. Probably could do more with the college itself, so we need to look for those opportunities as well.

What advice do you have for students looking to match your own successes?

Oh, why it's hard to give too much advice because everybody has to find their own way, and, and I'd say,, you know, finding your way means your passions and finding what you do well. So, to, to find what you do well in college, I'd say pay attention to those things because where you find success is where you're going to be successful, and where you do things well is where you should pay a lot of attention because that's generally where you're going to be happy, so those things that make you happy in school generally are going to be skills that you're using that you want to find ways to use when you get out. And I don't know if I answered that fully, but...But I'd say my best advice is find, find people that you enjoy being with, things that you enjoy doing and, and lo and behold, you'll find that you're doing the things that you do well and that you enjoy doing the, people you enjoy doing them with and you're spending a whole lot of time at work, not to find ways and things that you do well. That will cause you to give back more and more and more to the work environment, and it will cause you to be in demand because you're doing things well in the not-for-profit environment, and so find the things that you do well because then all of a sudden your life becomes very full and you have lots of choices.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell viewers?

Oh, I would say hang in there because if we're talking to our students there are times when it seems like I really don't know what I want to do and I don't know what I want to be and I don't know what courses to take and I don't know what it will all be for, and, and those questions continue always, but, but finding that, that you found your way through a very rewarding experience at the university, finding your way through a very rewarding series of majors and an extraordinary campus and lots of activity and many, many opportunities — You've found your way through a complexity that a lot of kids who are going to smaller universities don't find their way through, so if you're finding your way through A&M, you're preparing yourself very, very well for finding your way through the next set of decisions and challenges and complex opportunities that are coming your way. Keep finding your way just like you have here. It's been, it's been incredibly rewarding to be a graduate of A&M because the network is strong and it will support you. You're not on your own, but it also was a tremendous and fulfilling background to have dealt with complexities, to have succeeded some, to have failed some, to have learned you can pick yourself back up and to learn that no matter what happens, it's up to you to keep going, and A&M I think teaches a whole lot of that good character building. It's not just about what you know, it's about who you are, and it's about the choices you make, and it's about the way you're grounded, and the way you're raised, and the way you continue on to help others, and for me, A&M with its core values is the way to really think about your life and about how you surround yourself with the right kind of people always, which is what I took away from A&M. The right kind of people are all around us here.

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Transcribed by
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