

TRANSCRIPT: **KIRK CLEERE** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Kirk Cleere · President of Sendero Drilling Company

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Kirk Cleere, President of Sendero Drilling Company. Cleere is a Class of 1981 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Please introduce yourself and tell us about your career.

I'm Kirk Cleere, I'm class of 1981 Texas A&M University Ag Eco major, graduated from Texas A&M in 1981 and dir—went directly into the petroleum land business, acquiring oil and gas leases. By 1982, I found out that there was a potential downside to the oil and gas industry, so I actually started Cleere—or got into the production business with KCP Energy and some other oil and gas operated companies. Luckily, we were fortunate enough to find some production. That evolved into actually being able to get into the drilling business in the mid '80s during a crash, which is where I found my real passion and that's the work with drilling rigs and, and people. From 19— from mid-1986 roughly through 2001 we had Cleere Drilling Company, which we had grown from a 3-rig company to 20 rigs. At the time, Cleere Drilling Company sold out we were, we had offices in Midland, San Angelo, and Pleasanton, Texas. We had rigs operating Gulf Coast all the way to far West Texas, sold to Patterson UTI, and we were the largest privately held drilling company in the United States at the time. In 2006, I reentered the drilling business with Lariat Services, a division of Sand Ridge Energy. We took that company public upon successfully having a public offering with Sand Ridge and Lariat. We then started another independent company with one of the large independents as a partner called Sendero Drilling Company. Sendero Drilling Company ramped up to 16 rigs operating. At that point, I actually acquired interest of my partners at Sendero, and so now we operate Sendero going forward, and we're looking for the next step to grow the business again.

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

The number one thing I like at Texas A&M is, is the... its emphasis on its core values that the university was built on, and the neat thing about it is, is that the whole time you're here, doesn't matter if it was faculty, staff, students, living by and nurturing and evolving, those core values are something that you can build on for the rest of your life. And, it puts you in touch with, you know, the Aggie network once you get out. Having the, that similar background and the core values to build on is what I think makes... gives all ag, all A&M students an advantage going forward.

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

You know, Ag Eco was a great degree to have, especially for someone like me. It gave you so much latitude and such a rounded education. You know, I learned— it, it helped me everything from finance to accounting, to people skills, to sales. You know, I would encourage anyone that has entrepreneur dreams to certainly consider Ag Eco as a potential major. It was the... I used something and had contact still at the University but I use something that I learned in, in school here every day and it's great. That you know, what an environment to launch from.

What is your proudest accomplishment within your career?

The proudest accomplishment I have in my career is I actually started in business, graduated in 1981, started in business for myself in 1982, and I was in the drilling business by '84 or '85, and I had, the core group, core management team that I put together when I first got into management, in the oil and gas business, is still with me. So, we've been working together for over 30 years and through multiple countries. There were times that we, we were not together in companies, where, you know, we may have sold the company and the one may have gone in one direction and one may have gone the other, but knowing that you made an impact in somebody's life, and they were willing to come back and do it again, I think it's a big— my proudest accomplishment to be able to have people stuck with me and continue to do so today.

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

The hard work is certainly something, but you also have to have a certain resilience, and when I say that... in order to be in business for yourself, they're—not every day is a great day, and there will be tests along the way, and there'll be times when you question your abilities and you know, whether or not you make a proper decision. The ability to look past that, and to have the motivation and the dedication to

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continue on, and the having confidence that your education and the people around you are there to support you and keep you going.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

I will tell you that when I was very young, I probably didn't balance it very well at all, However, I had, I've been married for 30 years. I have... you know, having a strong family to begin with that's supportive of your endeavors is a great asset. The other thing is, is that when you do have time to spend with your family, that you make it count. Again, you know you spend as much— make the time that you spend with your family quality time and always put, you know, your, your family—there'll be businesses, your business you can go back to and work on, but the time that you have with your family, you may not ever pass that road again, so make that, make it, make all those hours count.

What kind of goals do you continue to set, and how do they help you to grow?

You know, my goals have probably changed some as the older I get. Instead of being strictly... or instead of being so much financial goals, now my goals are more centered around seeing others succeed, and trying to provide an environment that gets somebody to carry on, and/or sharing the successes that I've been able to have up to now.

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

Number one is stay focused and, you know, keep... keep the momentum going that you get, get when you get out of school. Keep the excitement going, don't be afraid to try new things, and don't be afraid to fail. You know, not everything always works the first time, but being tenacious in what you do and, and utilizing the tools that you've been given: your education in Texas A&M and even more so the Aggie network once you get out. You know, certainly don't underestimate the power of the ring; it unlocks a lot of doors and gives you an advantage over anybody else.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Texas A&M University is an absolute—I've been, I've had the opportunity to travel all over the world and all over the country, and then I employed and worked with people from all different schools. There's absolutely no place like Texas A&M and there is nothing that compares to the student body and the network when you get out of school to Texas A&M. It gives you, it gives every student here the opportunities to succeed if you'll just take advantage of it.

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Isabella Garza
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