

TRANSCRIPT: LARRY FALCONER INTERVIEW

Dr. Larry Falconer · Professor and Extension Specialist Emeritus with AgriLife Extension

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An interview with Dr. Larry Falconer, Professor and Extension Specialist Emeritus with AgriLife Extension. Falconer is a Class of 1992 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.

Well my name's Larry Falconer. My career... starting now and going backwards, I'm a farm and ranch management economist over at Mississippi State University. I'm posted at the Delta Research and Extension Center, and I've been there about six and a half years. Previous to that, I've worked twenty-two years for the Texas A&M System in Texas. I guess it's Agrilife Extension Service now, or that's what was when I left. They rebrand occasionally, and I was posted at the Corpus Christi station. Prior to that, I got my PhD degree here. I earned that in 1992. In between 1980 and 1989, I worked in private industry. I got my bachelor's and master's degree in agricultural economics from Oklahoma State University. I was born raised on a farming and ranching operation in eastern Oklahoma.

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

The people I met and all the folks that helped me all gave me outstanding opportunities and chances to collaborate, and hopefully I was as big a help to them as they were to me.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career, and how have you faced it?

I don't know. I don't know if it was necessarily challenges or opportunities. That was back in the head professor of military science back in the, back in the day at Oklahoma State. He said just, "You know it's everything like that was just another opportunity to excel," so when things get tough, I think of that guy. He's, he's quite a fellow. The... over time, I think the biggest challenge in a—in my current position at Mississippi State, it's, it's not all that much of a challenge but it is having to raise money. To, to do—that's got increasingly more difficult, but that's not a particular problem in a position I'm currently in.

What is your proudest accomplishment within your career?

I'll tell you what. For a project that I worked with, with a gentleman named Rick Young, who was at that time the, the county agent at Wharton county, we put the program together that he was awarded the John Deere national county agent's outstanding achievement award for a program.

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

In my area, I would think that listening is probably the biggest thing because...and, and being patient because people... and to go back, I've told this story many times though I'd been asked to come back to talk to some students and they ask me what I've done, so you know working through here and a young person came up to me after the interview and said these are very interesting problems where do you find these problems, and that was kind of epiphany for me. I, I never knew there was a problem finding problems. So, people, people after you, if you can convince them that you, you can or you are interested in what they have to say and that you're gonna put, put forth an effort to try to provide some assistance to them, they'll, they'll come to you with all sorts of challenges, but the big thing is, is, is to figure out exactly what the problem is and you can't address that unless you sit and listen.

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

I hope to embark on kind of whatever is the rest of my life on a voyage of self-improvement. I've got grand-kids and gonna work with, gonna work with them. I'm going to take a chance to, to read things that I never had a chance to read or, or, went back there's all sorts of economics work now. I'm gonna be close to the Canadian border, particularly Quebec, so I'm gonna brush up on my French a little bit. You know, travel some. That's kind of what I plan to do.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

Balancing career and family life is kind of tough. One of the things is my son was growing up and he enjoyed it. There were times when I could take him along during the summer of particularly to, what we called it back in those days, crop tours, and there, the entomologist that was there at that time, Dr. Roy

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Parker, really like kids and he'd take him and show him the bugs, and this and that, and things like that. There were times, and I would like to thank my wife Linda and my son Warren, you know, when I was gone but.... yeah and there were there were... In my career I probably suffered a little bit, I probably stayed when I should have gone to particular things, national meetings some international meetings I didn't.

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

Find a job that you like and be patient because... and finding a job that you like. That, that sounds pretty simple but it's, it's not the case. You're going to graduate, where you go was, is they will probably train you in some way, shape, or form and the first couple of years is going to be difficult, but, but if you're patient and you stick with it and know that it's something that you truly like, you'll work through it and things will get easier.

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Transcribed by
Isabella Garza
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