

# TRANSCRIPT: ROY MARTIN INTERVIEW

Roy Martin · Senior Vice-President for Ad Valorem Tax

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## TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Roy Martin, Senior Vice-President for Ad Valorem Tax. Martin is a Class of 1976 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.

My name is Roy Martin. I live in Boerne, Texas. I have retired from Valero Energy Corporation in 2017. I was with Valero for almost all of my career, and that spans some 37 years. What I did prior to Valero was the first job I had, which was when I graduated from Texas A&M through the real estate program. I worked with some real estate appraisers in San Antonio, Texas. JB Vine and Dusty Garrett. And these were, Mr. Garrett was a MAI and Mr. Vine was a farm manager rural appraiser. And I did work for both of these guys, learned a lot from them. Was there for almost two years, and then Valero came along and I took a job with Valero.

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

First and foremost, I would say the friendships that were formed here because they continue on and on and on. And secondly, and really as significant as the friendship was the education that I got here. I was here, I transferred in from a – from a two-year college prior – college in Kerrville, Texas, which I absolutely loved being in Kerrville. And to tell you the truth, it was like pulling teeth to come to College Station because the weather, climate is so much different. But it didn't take long to get in the grind here or get into the classroom here, get into groups here and meet fellow classmates. And as I progressed for this, you know, the first couple of years, I came in as a junior, and I met a certain set of friends and it seemed like a lot of those guys graduated. And one of them was a cousin of mine, was a brother of mine, and they had friends that I kind of got in their group, and those guys left. But there was always an influx of new, new friendships to be made. And certainly, when I go into graduate school, there was probably 18-20 of us and we all became very close. And not only at A&M but then later, after A&M, we all stayed pretty tight and communicated and actually worked together with some of those guys.

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

I would say a very large impact. I learned so much about things that I know I didn't think I'd ever even be interested in. But fundamentally it was the research that was put into the foundation of appraising. And by that, I know in some of the classes we had to go all the way back, or we had to go to the reading library, it was called the Browning Library, and research back to Adam Smith. And some of the tenants of appraisal, or economics actually, supply, demand and how things worked and the silent hand of free enterprise. And so, we studied not only that, but we studied, I remember land models from – from philosophers from Germany and all over the world and all during the centuries and it all, you know, made sense as you went forward. But that was the fundamental thing for me. They sent us to the library, and we were expected to know all those things they didn't really raise much in class. You did get tested on them. But I thought that was a fascinating groundwork for me because I really did rely on that because later on in my career, that became the quintessence of what I did for my employer, Valero, was to go back and dismantle some theories that were in practice, that nobody knew why they were doing it. It was just more like a custom and a practice. And I got to go back to those readings, and I got to go back to those land models and say no, I disagree with that. And

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it was very successful and persuasive of an argument over a period of time. And it, it helped my company a lot in terms of the tax disposition that it influenced and affected.

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

I had, I had to interact with government officials, and – you, you build a base, and in a lot of these elected officials, and then in three years they're gone, or four years they're gone and you have to start over. And there, you know, but – you know, there was just, there was not always continuity. A lot of times where you established a methodology and a way forward, a new guy would come in and a new woman would come in and it was just, that was out the window and you had to start over. That was somewhat frustrating.

What is your proudest accomplishment within your career?

Well I would have to say in 1987, I established a seminar, and it was the first annual seminar on Ad Valorem taxes. And at this seminar, we had a day and a half of instruction. And this was very needed because there was none of this going on at the time in, in the property tax industry. And so, I brought forth, a concept to bring not just one side to the table but both sides to the table. I brought the taxpayers and then the tax spenders or government workers, and there was always a difference of opinion because this is valuation and there's no exact answer. But I had experienced for seven years, I went to work with Valero in 1980 so, seven years later I put together this seminar. And my concept was: let's try to have both sides of the argument at the seminar and then let's just flush it out, let's just discuss it. And that seminar, we just finished our 31<sup>st</sup> annual seminar in property taxation. So, I would say for professionalism, that's my greatest accomplishment.

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

I think it takes – course the dedication, but it takes the idea of what you want to be. It takes an understanding that you have, you have goals and you set goals for yourself. No one else will set them for you if you really want a good goal. And then you pursue the goal, and you stay with it. And you look at it from time to time, and you see if you're still on track. If you're not, you whip yourself back on track and you keep going. And you never, never, never quit.

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

I look at – the way the industry has changed, and I see things that are – that need helped with and so I make new goals to go out and discover new people, new situations. They're a derivative of the old goals that I set, but there's always new people in the industry, there's always fresh ideas, and I've been able to apply, again the same reading library skills that Dr. Schmedemann sent us down to, as well as the coursework into these, these issues. And I'm pursuing that today. It never ends.

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How do you balance your career with your family life?

We do a lot of hunting and fishing, and we all like to do that. And the youngest daughter loves golf, so we all love golf. And then we have access to family ranches where we can all hangout, work, hunt, fish, that kind of thing.

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

I would say that you would want to make sure that you give yourself a chance – give yourself a chance to find out exactly what it is that you want to do. What is it that's going to drive you till the day you're not here anymore? What is it that's going to take you places and places that you probably don't even know, that you're going to be led down the path to? And these places are going to open doors and be receptive to the change of opening doors because the world does turn over and everything does change.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I can't say enough for the ag eco. People that helped us along the way. Dr. Schmedemann and all the professors, Chuck Gilliland (Charlie Gilliland) who was a classmate of mine. I mean there's so many people like those two that have dedicated themselves to helping other people. And I'm so appreciative of that.

Congratulations, Mr. Martin!

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