

# TRANSCRIPT: **FREDERICK D. MCCLURE INTERVIEW**

Frederick D. McClure · Managing Partner at SNR LLP

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## **TRANSCRIPT**

Interview with Frederick McClure. Managing Partner – Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP. McClure is a 1976 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted February 26, 2011 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

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

My name is Fred McClure, class of 1976 Texas A&M University. Currently I am the managing partner of SNR in Denton, an international law firm. I'm a managing partner in our Washington, D.C. office. Most of my career has been spent in the public policy space. I served as assistant to the president for legislative affairs for President George HW Bush, Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs for President Ronald Reagan, Associate Deputy Attorney General of the United States, and Legislative Director to United States Senator John Tower.

Why did you choose to study agricultural economics?

Actually, I didn't choose agricultural economics as my major initially. When I entered school at Texas A&M, I was actually a biochemistry major. Biochemistry at the time was in the College of Agriculture, and I had this thought that I wanted to grow up and be a physician. Sometime before I got to organic chemistry, I made the decision to switch to agricultural economics, and I've thought I enjoyed that because of the business part of agriculture and it's taking that as basis for my ultimate law degree.

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

Well probably, the service as Student Body President of the University. I was very involved in student government activities, as well as resident hall association activities, and clubs and associations associated with the College of Agriculture, and the singing cadets. But I think, probably, my service as Student Body President probably had more of an impact, but I think collectively, when you put them all together, it would be well-rounded outside, or other education if you will, that I got at Texas A&M.

What experiences influenced you in your life the most?

I think probably the opportunity to be in service type roles in the federal government. In other words, being in a position where I have been able to advise presidents, senators, and attorney general of the United States, and also corporate Titans on how they can be involved – how their involvement in the political process and the policy process, the impact that those actions have on American people's lives and actually lives of people all around the world. And so, I guess probably that part of my experience fits mostly within that category.

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

If I remember correctly, I believe I was in the first honor registry group that was chosen to – for this wonderful award, which is a recognition, of course, for contributions that Agricultural Economics graduates have had in their activities following their time here at the University. Named, of course, after one of our longtime leaders of the Agricultural Economics Department, Dr. Timm. It is a great honor to be so selected by your peers, if you will, to be recognized for your contributions and the fact that you, as an agricultural economics graduate from Texas

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A&M University, represent the College and the Department more specifically, in a credible and – hopefully, in a credible and a meaningful way.

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

One of the biggest challenges of my life I think particularly is when one begins participation in the work world is balancing these things and family and other types of activities, just sort of layer on, on top of what of course is your main responsibility, which is to hopefully figure out a way to continue to put bread on the table. Balance is a very difficult thing. You have to make difficult choices sometimes. I remember it was extremely difficult balancing work and family when I was working in the White House. My day was quite long and it started quite early, and often times, I didn't get to see my kids until late in the evening, which I think probably influenced the fact that they stay up pretty late now as a result of doing it at such a young age. But it is, it is a challenge of – for one to balance those things, but you have to keep at it. I mean it's something that you just have to keep working on because you don't want you or them to suffer in that process.

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

I was fortunate to serve after I left Texas A&M. I was fortunate to come back as a result of an appointment by our Governor, George W. Bush to serve as a member of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System. Other than financial support that many of us give back to the University either as a member of the Association of Former Students, on whose Board I also served two times, or the 12<sup>th</sup> Man Foundation, or any of the various development organization associated with the colleges, my opportunity to come back as a Regent and ultimately to serve as Vice Chairman of that group was, I think, a time when I was able to give probably the most back to my alma mater and the University, even though it was in a capacity that affected the entire system. It's important that this flagship institution continue to be strong in our great system we have here in Texas, and you add that to the extinction and the experiment station, both of which closely tie to the Department of Agricultural Economics and the rest of the College. It provides an opportunity to provide leadership in our service capacity, as well as our education and research capacity as a land-grant institution.

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

I hope that a student would choose not to perhaps have as many jobs as I've had during my career because that list gets to be fairly long. Fortunately, each of those opportunities I had though were moved in a direction that was what I consider something more than lateral, but in a direction where I was able to contribute more and hopefully, I gave back more. I think that you have to realize that in the final analysis, it generally is not your aptitude but your attitude that'll help determine where your altitude is in life. And so, one needs to be willing to realize that they have to be competitive and to continue to have a positive attitude which allows them then to sore to the heights that they might choose for themselves in terms of giving back, in terms of professional accomplishment, in terms of, ultimately service of this country.

What advice do you have for a student unsure of career decisions?

Don't be afraid to make choices. Don't be afraid to, you know sort of like to look at, at life as a big ole highway, you know, six-lane highway, and you're kind of going down it and you've got all these exits that you can choose and decide to take an off ramp. You take that off ramp and you get down there and maybe you'll find something interesting and exciting, but then if not, there's generally an on ramp that follows so you can get back on the freeway and continue experiencing what lies ahead. Don't be afraid to make a decision and then choose to do something else. I didn't like what I did when I chose to change to the College of Agriculture – I mean to the Department of Agricultural Economics from the Department of Biochemistry. I made a decision, and I thought I had that decision made many years before in terms of what I wanted to do professionally. And I decided to do something different. And I'm glad I made that choice. I was not afraid to make that choice. Make sure you make choices based upon as much information as you possibly can, and then don't be afraid to try something new.

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

You have a tremendous opportunity while a student here at Texas A&M University to have experiences that are just absolutely unfathomable. I mean that the numbers of clubs and organizations, whether it's through the MSC, or whether it's through various colleges at the University, or whether it's through the Greek system here, the opportunity that you have to exercise and learn leadership skills are tremendous. On top of that is the fantastic educational experience here at this University. So, I think that you need to try to be involved in as many things that you possibly can, maintaining a balance that also, you know get decent grades, in fact maybe fantastic grades. But utilize these years because once these college years are gone, they'll never come back again, and that's what I think one need to focus on during a wonderful time here at this place.

Thanks for listening!

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