

TRANSCRIPT: **ROBERT H. KENSING INTERVIEW**

Mr. Robert H. Kensing · Former Economist - Texas Cooperative Extension Service.

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Interview with Mr. Robert H. Kensing, Former Economist - Texas Cooperative Extension Service. Kensing is a 1960 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted February 23, 2011 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

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

Yes, I'm Robert Kensing, and I finished in January of 1960, and, and I was looking for a job and I finally found one with the extension service and they shipped me up to San Jose, which was a wonderful thing because I always liked San Angelo, and it was close enough to home that it was a wonderful job, and it was so good that I stayed with it 26 years. And... during that time it was my, my good fortune to get to know a lot of people and, and some nice people, some very fine coworkers and it made a nice career for me dealing with farm and ranch management.

Why did you choose to study agricultural economics?

Of course, I started, I was a freshman my first time in 1942, and so I, I was... wanted to be, I always wanted to be a county agent, and so then I thought, "Well, you're going to have to take animal husbandry." Not animal science but animal husbandry in those days. And so then I went a year and new problem. And then fooled around and got married, and we went to the army, and then went back to school, and I had in the meantime, we had done some ranching, and we knew how to produce things but I thought that ag eco would be very helpful in how to market and just know more about finances than normally you would know.

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

I was older, of course. I was old enough to, to know what I was wanting to do and what... I didn't want to fool around in school, and I wanted to get out, and so I, I was involved in all kinds of, of extracurricular stuff I imagine you'd call it, in ag council and ag eco club, and I think — I'm not sure about this, but I also belonged to [inaudible] and that was strictly animal science. I don't know why I did it, but I do know that one thing we, I was always happy to pitch in and do what I could, and with the San Angelo they had a rodeo, and, and so I have put that rodeo on and I found out that's not what I wanted to do, and, you know, there were so many opportunities because I was older, there were some other people in the same category that I was. We had been through the service, and we came back, and, you know, we just simply were able to get in touch with, with professors when we needed to. I think that's one of the worst things that could happen to a young person when you go into college is they don't really know how to interact with, with the professor when they need help.

What experiences influenced you in your life the most?

I... one thing of the things I enjoyed was sort of the thing to do was to be participating in this stock show and rodeo, and so I started doing that, and finally after years and years and years of being record superintendent, we didn't, we didn't we, we really worked on that thing because we didn't have computers in those days. We did it by hand. And, so we finally worked our way up, and and I was like the president of the senate of the stock and show rodeo, which as the big thing in that part of the country. And then when my two-year term was up, the gentleman who was coming along said I can't do it. I'm gonna be president of the fundraisers. I can't do both. Would you consider being executive vice president. I said, "Joe if that's what it takes, I guess I can do that." So, I put in eight more years of that, and this was a wonderful experiences. I got see how the rest of the world lives, and we were pretty successful, I think, because we went out and made some money and improved the facility. Let me tell you, you have to be, you need to be ag eco or something to deal with as many people as you deal with in the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo. We, we had a working crew, a paid group probably not over 3 or 4 people at any one time, and we had probably 300 volunteers. In my philosophy, and I don't know whether I learned this at Texas A&M or wherever I got, if you're going to ask someone to do something, would you please ask with enough authority for them to do this job right, and that was my deal I put for the work crew, I put up the bulletin boards and said here's the things you need to do, mark 'em off. And, the fellow that was our foreman, he was wonderful guy. I had a wonderful experience in working with people that had not been to college.

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

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When I think back about the ag eco department, ag eco anything, Dr. Timm was one of those people I, I don't like to use the term salesman, but that's really what it was. He sold the Agricultural Economics Department to a whole bunch of us, and, and there were so many opportunities to, to enjoy his philosophy, and his sense of humor, and to be present for that was undoubtedly kind of a difficult thing for him because we had one fella that was really different, and one day we were taking an exam, and I'll just show you how Dr. Timm handled it. Dr. Timm was teaching this course, and so we had this examination, and this guy said, "Dr. Timm, I ain't got no pencil," and he said, "Tom, Tom, it's 'I haven't a pencil.'" "Well, that makes two of us who ain't got a pencil." He said that and Dr. Timm just looked like, see, shook his head, and that was, but he was a wonderful fella to get to know as well as we did, and, you know, again being older and being married, we got to know, missed him, and there was another professor in the ag, in the agriculture building, in the horticulture deal, Dr., not doctor but Bryson, and those two gentlemen are... they affected my life period.

What would you tell students unsure of their career choices?

'Couse, I've never been one of those young students who didn't know what they wanted, so I really don't know, but I do know this: that, there are, when you go off to college, there are so many things that, that are required: certain amount of English, certain amount of...do the best you can in those, and you can use them later on no matter what you decide to do. So, you need to do the very best you can when you're going off.

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

Well, of course being, being a poor country boy, you wouldn't think that you'd ever get to where you were. When I started school, it was riding horseback to country school, and finally we transferred to a big school, and there were 12 in my grade and that was about as many as we had in the whole school before. I went to Texas A&M in the Fall of '42, and so help me I did not know what H₂O represented. We had no science, no... none of that. So, when you think about what you didn't know and what you learn, it's amazing because it's its', you know a lotta stuff!

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Transcribed by
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August 24, 2020