

TRANSCRIPT: CLAIR NIXON

Dr. Clair Nixon · Former Chief Financial Officer of StarVision Technologies and Professor Emeritus of Accounting at Texas A&M University.

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An interview with Mr. Craig Shook, Former Chief Financial Officer of StarVision Technologies and Professor Emeritus of Accounting at Texas A&M University. Nixon is a Class of 1977 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted July 25, 2023, on the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry YouTube channel.

Dr. Clair Nixon
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

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

My name is Claire Nixon, and I came to Texas A&M in 1975 after having an undergraduate degree at Brigham Young University and got my Master's in PhD in Agricultural Economics. I promptly moved over to the Department of Accounting in the Mays business school and spent 38 years on the faculty including Associate Dean, Endowed Professor in the Department of Accounting at Texas A&M.

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

Well, I had a broad experience. The most enjoyable part was working with all the students. I was, I taught the taxation of business entities for my whole career and taught several thousand young. Aggies that went out into the business world, and I believe had a significant impact all over the world, so I think the most important part was interaction with students that had enthusiasm for life.

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

Texas A&M is such an incredibly positive brand of wherever I've traveled in the world I've been able to tell people that I'm associated with Texas A&M. I've been. on all the different continents -- actually teaching classes in all continents, and every. time I would say I'm from Texas A&M University, people would recognize that brand, and so I think it is a brand of the Texas A&M that has made a difference. I think having. students with high ethics and a great work ethic has just made the difference as well.

What is your proudest accomplishment in your career?

That's a great question. A lot of challenges as you spend 42 years at one institution. Probably The one that sticks out is, you know, helping the challenge students. In the Mays Business School, we had a very competitive environment, and there were some students who just you know, just struggled and my heart always went out to them because they had peers that were just doing very well, and they just kind of struggled, and so that I think that probably was one of the greatest challenges -- how do you motivate and help someone who's really struggling? You know, I get calls and emails all the time, still, from former students, and these are people that have gone to Wall Street and faculty at different universities and, you know, partners in accounting firms as well as some former PhD students that I worked with in agricultural economics, and the best part is they say, you know, "You were a good mentor," and, you know, "You brought a positive view on life and family," and they recognize that to me family was much more important than the job, and so at the end of the day it is all about family, and so I feel blessed and fortunate that we had all of our children in College Station, Texas, and that's 10 children, and that's a good-sized crew, and it was just a wonderful place to be associated with Texas A&M.

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

Well certainly hard work is important, but planning is also important. You have to have a plan and a goal, and if you don't have a goal out there then you don't know whether you're achieving what you really set out to do. It's not just working hard a lot of people work hard but they tread water, so, it's working smart and hard and if you do that then I think you can be successful.

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

Well one of my goals, we have 38 grandchildren and so one of the goals is just to be a good example for a growing family and the other is I'm still teaching financial analysis. courses for a large oil and gas firm and it allows me to still have a lot of interaction all over the world with the professionals within the oil and gas business.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

I was in College Station, I spent almost a decade on the school board in College Station and so between being very active in our church activities, a large family, school board responsibilities of academic life, it's hard to balance all of it. I was blessed to have an amazing wife, but my family also bought him to the deal that you know I needed to have enough time to be able to keep my career going but at the same time I always made time for the family that was much more important than producing another research paper.

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

Don't get too anxious if you don't get a job in Agricultural Economics, there are so many other opportunities all you have to do is demonstrate that you will be willing to learn, be willing to locate or relocate, that's one of the big things I have found in Industry. Are you willing to go someplace that maybe others don't want to go? So people I've worked with from Africa, to Asia, to Europe, different places some of those are less favorable uh Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, may not be the places you want to go but those sometimes are the best opportunities. So look for opportunities, take the tough job, do a good job at it, and you'll always have the opportunity to get another job.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Probably the most important thing is love your life and just live life to the fullest, and don't get too hung up on what happened today because it'll be another day tomorrow. Think about sunshine and go about doing good. If every day you start your day thinking, how can I do something good for somebody else then you'll have a good life that's been kind of my motto. that looked to do something good for somebody else and your professional career will follow. It always does. People look for those that are willing to serve others. That's what I go by.

Transcribed by
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July 18, 2023