

TRANSCRIPT: **BILLY “BRITT” JARVIS INTERVIEW**

Mr. Billy “Britt” Jarvis · Attorney-at-Law and Agricultural Entrepreneur

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Billy "Britt" Jarvis, an attorney-at-law and agricultural entrepreneur. Jarvis is a Class of 1965 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.

I'm Billy "Britt" Jarvis from Hudson County, Texas. I've lived there all my life. I graduated from Morris High school in 1961, and Texas A&M in 1965, and Southern Methodist University School of Law in 1968. I started farming and ranching in 1960 as me and my brother, with guidance from my father, got to operate a farming ranch, and then I was, spent 1 year, 11 months, and 19 days in the US Army, and I've farmed and ranched and practiced law ever since.

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

I think my experiences at Texas A&M taught me to be willing to ride out any crisis, that it would all be over in due time, and it was a different school than it is now, and they saw to it you had a crisis every once in a while or constantly, however it was, and if you would persevere, well you could make the thing work out.

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

Well, the first thing it did was that I became a officer in the US Army, and I served in the Army Reserves for six years and nine months or so, and I was adjutant of my battalion, first position in the army, and I had wonderful health, and the people around me... I learned to listen. I learned to try to follow instructions, and I'm not real good at listening, and sometimes I don't follow instructions, but I had to learn that. I ended up making a list of things that I had to keep in mind there, and it I think was something like 17 things. It's now grown to 20, but I put it in front of me every day to keep focused on doing what I'm supposed to be, to do my duty like it is required, or like god and my country requires. My family, my community.

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

My wife and I moved 18 times in 5 years, and walking through life with my wife, we've been married over fifty three years, and it's a challenge for two very hard-headed people to get along with each other all that long, but we have succeeded, and I'm glad.

What is your proudest accomplishment within your career?

My brother and I had a successful farming operation beginning in 1960, and it still continues farming and ranching. I guess on my legal career my proudest accomplishment was I ended up having to appeal a case all the way through the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, and I wrote a writ of certiorari, and we ended up with a decision, not in my case, but one of the cases that they were considering taking where we ended up with the requirement that if you had a right to have a lawyer to represent you, you had a right to have a lawyer judge.

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

Well, you have to focus, and you have to develop a plan, and you have to be flexible with that plan. If you, if you just work hard you'll lose track of what you're trying to do, and you'll lose track of what it takes to convince other people. To a large extent, either as a lawyer or as a farmer and rancher, you have to be able to get along with other people and you have to be able to lead them, and you can't just walk out and say, "I'm the county attorney, this is what I want you to say!" I mean, that will not work. Your officers will do what they darn well please, and then you got to figure out what to do with the mess you're in: witnesses, clients.

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

Well, I grow every day, and you just have to listen and think, and if you forget to listen and think, somebody will probably bring it to your attention real quickly and unmistakably.

How do you balance your career with your family life?

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I listen to my wife.

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

Try to make good decisions every time you have a major decision to make. I came to Texas A&M, and I'm married, and I went in the army, and that was the three decisions I got to make for 10 years, and at times I questioned whether or not I should have gone in the Army or the Air Force. I chose the Army for two years of active duty, and the Air Force required four, and I, I really wondered about that from time to time. It's easier to sleep on clean sheets than it is dirty blankets.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Well, I am amazed that I'm here doing this interview, and I appreciate the people that are involved. I appreciate Dr. Timm. I appreciate Dr. R. C. Potts. I appreciate Colonel Baker, who was the commandant at the Corps when I was here, and I appreciate Earl Rudder. My first job was while he was commanding the 90th Infantry and I was a crewman on 106 millimeter recoilless rifle, which by the way was a 358 infantry battalion, which my daddy commanded some 20 years before.

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