

TRANSCRIPT: CREED FORD INTERVIEW

Mr. Creed L. Ford III · Co-CEO of Fired Up, Inc

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Interview with Mr. Creed L. Ford, Co-CEO of Fired Up, Inc. Ford is a 1975 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted February 22, 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 Creed L. Ford, III. I graduated from Texas A&M in 1975, degree in agricultural economics and basically I've been in the food business before and ever, and ever since I left A&M. I started out waiting tables and bartending there in college station. Ended going to work for Chili's, started at the very first Chili's in 1976 and stayed with Brinker International until '97 and after that started my own restaurant company.

Why did you choose to study agricultural economics?

Well, when I went to Texas A&M, like most, most students I really didn't know exactly what I wanted to get a degree in. However I was interested in the food business, working part-time in the restaurant business. So, I knew I wanted to work in some avenue of food retail or food production, and I think that the degree in agricultural economics gave me the broad spectrum to learn about all facets of food and food business, from the production end of it to the retail end of it, so that when I did graduate, if I didn't want to stay in the restaurant business or getting the food production side then I can lean that way, also. Having this very well-rounded degree, it really benefited me a lot.

What experiences at Texas A&M helped you the most in your career?

Well at Texas A&M...I was involved in the student council... what was it called the...

[interviewer: student government?]

I was assistant of the... I just helped in the student... was there a MSC, what was that called?

[Interviewer: MSC, it was student government, I don't know. Student affairs? But yes, okay.]

Yeah, student affairs. I volunteered, I volunteered in student affairs and, and basically just spent a lot of time in, in, in, you know, the agricultural economics department activities.

What other experiences outside of A&M helped you in your career?

Well, I played baseball and football in high school. I was a boy scout. I was a camp counselor. I did a lot of things growing up, a lot of activities in college and before college, so i think that helped, kind of grew me as a leader. I had a lot of mentors. I think that's very important—people that I can look up to like my parents, some football coaches, some people in, in the church, and Boy Scouts, and any, any aspect of leadership I think really helped me a lot, kind of gave me the opportunity to, to find out if I wanted to be an entrepreneur, if I could be an entrepreneur, and it really helped me a lot.

What do you feel about being included in the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry?

Well, I tell you when Dr. Rister called me on that and told me that I was nominated I was, I was absolutely thrilled because the people in that organization that had been honored...have kind of exemplified leadership and not only success, but character and, and so just to be a part of that group was just a great honor for me, and I hold it as one of my cherished honors that I've received throughout my career.

Could you comment on your continuing efforts to support Texas A&M?

I think when you when you, when you graduate from any university, the first thing, your number one priority is to take care of your family, to get a career, and to obviously make money and establish your goals and all the things that you talked about then you're... to yourself and college and really want, what you want to do in life, but I think a little bit further along you realize that in many cases you have a lot that you can give back to the University and give back to the college, and I've just really enjoyed going back to Texas A&M and the Department of Agriculture and talking to students about some of the experiences that I've had. You know, I think that those experiences and those stories that former students can tell students

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are probably some of the best education that they can have because it's real life experiences that they can apply with some of the things they worked in the university. So, I've enjoyed going back and speaking to the classes and talking about the restaurant industry and, and entrepreneurship.

How do you manage time between family, work, and other commitments?

Well, it's hard, and I think you need to just set goals and set priorities. I'm very fortunate that one of my partners is my wife and my family. Both, both of my children are graduat— graduates from Texas A&M University and they work in the business with us here in the restaurant industry. My wife is also one of my partners and we work side by side, so I'm very fortunate that we have a failing business that we can all work together. So, the balance is really responsive— is a responsibility for all of us because we have a tendency to talk about business and live our business every day, but we have so much fun that I think the goal in business and the goal in a career is to get something that you really love and it's not stress. It's not work, it's part of your life, and the restaurant business gives you that opportunity, the food business, and everybody has to eat, and so we know that we're in a career that should be everlasting.

What advice do you have for students unsure of their career interests?

Well, I think the best thing is just to not get so overwhelmed about it and not get in a hurry. You know, my generation and my parents' generation, they basically—a lot of them worked with one company for years and years and years, and over the period of my 30 years in the restaurant industry, I've worked for a number of different restaurant brands. Fortunately, I worked with one company for 20, 20 years before venturing out on my own with my wife to start our own company, but i think the best thing to do is realize that—to learn as much about yourself as you possibly can to try to find out what facet of ag business or business that you want to get in to make yourself happy. Don't get in a hurry. I think it's your responsibility to learn your assets and liabilities so that you can fall into a situation, though, that will make you happy.

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

No, I think that the... agricultural economics is, is a very well-rounded career. I think it gives somebody a lot of opportunity to look at so many different facets in the food industry and just agribusiness in general. This one degree, I'm very fortunate that i got it because i wasn't really narrowed into one particular area of business, and in my restaurant career I could always know about production as I knew about retail into the restaurant industry, so it's, it's a great program, and I encourage everybody to continue their involvement with the university and their colleagues and their friends that they met year after year, and I think you'll have a very rewarding, successful life.

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Transcribed by
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July 8, 2020